Overview of oceanographic data and research for improved ocean governance in the Western Indian Ocean Region

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Abstract

Ocean governance underlies the concept of Sustainable Ocean Economy which is one of the desirable outcomes for the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14. Innovative and improved ocean governance requires essential data and information obtainable only from oceanographic and other ocean-related research. In line with the ecosystem approach to management of natural resources, ocean governance requires consideration for the ecological assets, the social and economic consequences of management actions and ability of regulatory agencies to achieve management objectives in the face of external impacts. This requires multi-facetted research and multiplicity of data and information. To enable scientists and managers to determine reference points and baselines against which changes in ecosystem can be measured and how the systems respond to changes in management interventions as well as external influences such as climate variability and change, it is necessary to have adequate and good data on essential ocean variables. The national institutes carry out ocean science research in national waters, including undertaking the collection of oceanographic data along with other ocean data that are necessary for good governance. Data centers are very important facilities that are essentially networks of connected servers, primary objectives of which are to secure, store and disseminate data. National datasets are not always readily available online and are generally scattered over more than one national institute. Monitoring of ecosystem processes is reliant on the availability of data therefore it is necessary to set up agreements with various organizations and institutions in the WIO region to facilitate data availability for this task. It was recommended that the Contracting Parties of the Nairobi Convention request the Secretariat to support the strengthening of National Data Centers to collect, analyze and share data and information in the region through the following actions:

- Prepare an action plan for the further development and support of National Data Centers as provided under the SAPPHIRE project.
- Support capacity development initiatives aimed at strengthening the capabilities of the National Data Centers as well as the data center managers.
- Ensure linkages between National Data Centers and regional mechanisms such as the Nairobi Convention Clearing House Mechanism are established to ensure the efficient and effective sharing of, and easy access to regionally relevant information.

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