



UNEP - NAIROBI CONVENTION

Meeting of the Western Indian Ocean Science - Policy Platform

Theme: Addressing Global Targets in the WIO in Support of a Sustainable Blue Economy

Date: 5 - 7 December 2023

Venue: Maputo, Mozambique

Information Note

Introduction

Since 2004, a number of decisions made at the Conference of Parties of the Nairobi Convention clearly demonstrate the commitment of the Contracting Parties in ensuring that decision-making and policy formulation for the sustainable management of the marine and coastal resources in the WIO region are evidence-based and take into consideration the input of key stakeholders including scientists, administrators and policy/decision-makers. This is in recognition of the fact that sound scientific knowledge is required to assist policy-makers and resource managers in decision-making.

However, while acknowledging the important role that science plays in policy and decision-making, it is also evident that there are barriers between the two domains that limit the uptake of science into policy, and further challenges in converting policy into action also exist. Consequently, the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Science - Policy Platform (SPP) (hereafter referred to as WIO-SPP), was created to support the Contracting Parties to integrate relevant scientific evidence and findings into national and regional efforts to protect, manage and develop their coastal and marine environment sustainably. A number of science-policy dialogue meetings have been held over the years. This year's meeting is scheduled to take place from 5th to 7th December 2023 in Maputo, Mozambique. The meeting is organized by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat in collaboration with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) and other partners. The Mozambique National Institute of Oceanography will be the technical host of the meeting.

Objectives of the 2023 WIO Science - Policy Platform

The Nairobi Convention Secretariat has made efforts towards developing a new programme focusing on supporting the development of a sustainable and inclusive regional Blue Economy in the WIO region. The theme for the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting is "*Addressing Global Targets in the WIO in support of a Sustainable Blue Economy*".

Considering the elevated momentum in global and regional ocean-related initiatives including the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade), the recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty, and global and regional agreements related to plastics in the marine environment, the meeting will put special emphasis on these initiatives. Deliberations will help Contracting Parties to have further clarity on what is expected of them concerning the framework and treaties under consideration.



The overall objective of the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting is to promote the linkages between science and policy for evidence-based decision-making and to provide timely technical advice and policy recommendations for consideration in the development of decisions in the upcoming 11th COP of the Nairobi Convention

The specific objectives of the upcoming meeting include the following:

- Discussions on topical emerging scientific findings with potential policy implications for improved ocean governance and management of coastal and marine resources in the region.
- Presentation of progress in the development of various regional strategies and frameworks under the Nairobi Convention for technical input.
- Promote engagement and networking among various stakeholders engaged in the protection, management and development of marine and coastal resources in the WIO.
- Facilitate the contribution of scientific data and information in decision-making and policy formulation.
- Provide an opportunity for policy/decision-makers to engage with scientists on the best ways to consider scientific data and information in policy formulation and implementation.
- To support decision-makers to maximise synergies across the implementation, monitoring, follow up and review, as well as achievement of the targets and deliverables of the 2030 Agenda, the GBF, UN Decade of Ocean Science, BBNJ, etc
- Assess the contribution that the WIO region can make in the implementation of global initiatives and frameworks, and achievement of global targets of the same.

In order to ensure the inclusion of certain key initiatives in the discussion, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat will reach out to specific policy experts to prepare discussion papers on selected initiatives of relevance to the theme and sub-themes for the meeting. The idea here is to have policy-oriented papers aligned to the proposed theme and sub-themes for the meeting. The Secretariat will also send out a call for discussion papers that will potentially provide the scientific basis for decision-making at the national and regional levels with respect to the theme and sub-themes of the meeting.

The proposed sub-themes are as follows:

- i. Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework at regional and national levels in the WIO, with focus on Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) as Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs).
- ii. Opportunities for implementation of the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) in the WIO.
- iii. Operationalization of the international legally-binding instruments on plastics.
- iv. Approaches to collaborative regional ocean governance for a sustainable Blue Economy.
- v. Blue financing for sustainable management of coastal ecosystems.
- vi. Implementation of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
- vii. Progress made in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. SDGs 11,13, & 14)

The WIO-SPP should now be seen as facilitating the actions necessary for Contracting Parties to deliver towards global targets related to the implementation of relevant global initiatives. The discussion papers will address the science and policy support for implementation of the global



initiatives and how to take forward the recommended actions. The questions for discussion will include the following:

- a. Do we understand or are we prepared for the implementation of these instruments at the national or regional level?
- b. What progress have the Nairobi Convention Contracting Parties made towards meeting the 2030 targets?
- c. What could be the WIO region's contribution to the global debate on the subject?
- d. What are the policy limitations or science gaps that may hinder the attainment of these global targets?
- e. Should national targets be set, and is there a desire or mechanism available to monitor the targets?
- f. Is there anything that needs to be done at the regional level to enhance attainment of targets at the national and global levels?

Meeting Participants

Participants of the WIO-SPP meetings usually include the following:

- a) Focal Points of the Nairobi Convention
- b) Focal Points of the SAPPHIRE project and other projects of the Convention.
- c) Africa Union and its relevant bodies such as AU-IBAR
- d) Regional Economic Commissions and Communities (RECs).
- e) Consortium for the Conservation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-C).
- f) Forum for Academic and Research Institutions (FARI).
- g) United Nations agencies and other International Organizations working in the marine space in the WIO region.
- h) Regional Fisheries Bodies and Fisheries Management Organizations.
- i) Other non-state actors and the private sector.
- j) Potential donors.

In the upcoming meeting, it is proposed that the Focal Point institutions for the global and regional initiatives selected for discussions would be asked to nominate key persons to attend the meeting. This will ensure that the nominees will be those already equipped with the necessary knowledge and implications thereof of these global policy commitments as well as the responsibilities required of their agencies.

Expected Outputs

It is expected that the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting will provide an opportunity for scientists, policy makers and governance agencies to articulate their needs and thereby influence the setting of research priorities. It is also expected to facilitate access to appropriate data and information for policy formulation and implementation. Specifically, the meeting is expected to facilitate:

- i. Policy recommendations for consideration as areas of decisions at the next COP of the Nairobi Convention.



- ii. Validation of various strategies and frameworks under development for the WIO region.
- iii. Strengthening of partnerships between technical experts and policy makers.
- iv. Demystifying the type of scientific information needed to take into consideration in policy formulation and implementation.
- v. Identification of key areas where countries should invest in.

Ultimately, the meeting should also give a fresh perspective to the structure of the WIO Science - Policy Platform, as well as an indication of the provisional agenda for the next meeting. This should inform WIOMSA, as a major collaborator in the WIO-SPP, on the way forward for some of its programmes e.g. MASMA, to enable its members to make appropriate input into the Forum.

Additionally, the results of the meeting should enable the scientists to see what is missing and the current limitations in the required science to support emerging priorities and to direct future efforts. Papers presented in the meeting will be peer-reviewed and published in the second edition of the WIO Science - Policy Platform Series, a joint publication of the Nairobi Convention and WIOMSA.