

COP 11 ENDS WITH RENEWED COMMITMENT TO ENHANCED OCEAN CONSERVATION AND GOVERNANCE

| By Melisa Wandia and Winnifred Akiso



The Eleventh Meeting of the Nairobi Convention Conference of Parties (NC COP 11) for the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region ended with decisions aimed at ensuring the health and sustainability of the region's marine ecosystems.

Held in Antananarivo, Madagascar from 20 to 22 August 2024, the meeting witnessed unprecedented participation from governments, the private sector, academia and regional economic communities, fostering multistakeholder collaboration across the ten contracting parties.

The need for practicality and ambition in conservation efforts

Speaking at the conference, Elizabeth Mrema, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, emphasized the need for practicality and ambition in conservation efforts, urging: “be practical, ambitious – and above all, collaborative – as we look at ways to protect and conserve the marine and coastal resources of the western Indian Ocean region.”

“We can plan for the impacts of climate change and save and restore biodiversity on which our lives depend,” she added.

Her words set the tone for the discussions, highlighting the importance of unity and foresight in tackling environmental challenges.

Flavien Joubert, Minister for Agriculture, Climate Change and Energy, Seychelles, echoed this sentiment.

“By coming together with high ambition, we can also help accelerate change at an international level necessary for attaining the major targets on biodiversity, climate and ocean,” he said.

His call for a unified regional approach highlighted the need for concerted efforts to meet global environmental goals and targets.

Shared responsibility and regional collaboration

Leah Wanambwa, of the Africa Union, underscored the importance of shared responsibility and regional collaboration.

“Through regional collaboration, innovation and commitment, we can address the challenges from marine pollution to overfishing, climate change to habitat destruction and achieve our shared goals of a healthy, productive and sustainable ocean,” she said.

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For the first time at COP the private sector actively participated by sharing statements on their partnerships. Notable contributions came from [Plastics SA](#) and the [Kenya Association of Manufacturers](#), represented by Douw Steyn and Miriam Bomett, respectively. Key partners like the [African Circular Economy Network](#), [the ACEN Foundation](#) and the German Development Cooperation at the [Partners](#) meeting and the [Heads of Delegation](#) meeting also emphasized their commitment to a sustainable WIO.

The United Nations Environment Programme's leadership stood out at COP 11, with impactful contributions from Susan Gardner, Director of the Ecosystems Division and Elizabeth Mrema. Dr Gardner emphasized the Convention's pivotal role in regional ocean governance during her [opening remarks](#) at the Focal Points Meeting and later highlighted the urgency of decisive, collaborative action to protect oceans in her

[keynote address](#) at the third United Nations Ocean Conference special session. Meanwhile, Elizabeth Mrema, in her [opening statement](#) at the Heads of Delegation meeting, called for practical, ambitious and united efforts to safeguard the marine and coastal resources of the WIO.

Focal points from [Mozambique](#), [Seychelles](#), [Comoros](#), [Kenya](#), [Mauritius](#), [South Africa](#), the United Republic of [Tanzania](#) and [Madagascar](#), alongside the African Union on behalf of [Regional Economic Communities and Commissions](#), affirmed their dedication to the Convention's goals with strong joint statements. Collectively, these statements highlighted the need for collaboration to secure a sustainable future for the WIO.

[For a full recap of COP11 read more here.](#)