

Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Outlook: Towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

The marine protected areas (MPA) Outlook, led by the Nairobi Convention in partnership with WIOMSA, the WIO member states and other institutions, reports the progress of individual countries and the region in achieving the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 2020 Aichi Targets and the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). More specifically, the “Outlook” presents the progress of the Nairobi Convention Contracting Parties to achieving Aichi Target 11 (conservation of 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water) through an assessment of the status and implementation of marine protected areas (MPAs) across the WIO region. The preparation of regular status reports is beneficial to member states as it promotes accountability and supports regional cooperation in achieving the conservation targets and exchanges of best practice and mutual learning. It is also helpful in mobilizing support to overcome shared challenges and identify new and emerging issues. The paper recommends that;

- Member states should develop as soon as possible, practicable ambitious national responses to the overall implementation of SDG 14.5 and the new biodiversity target 30% by 2030.
- Countries should integrate MPAs within broader marine spatial planning frameworks and apply systematic conservation planning to address MPA design issues, representatively, and connectivity.
- Member State should conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress in meeting SDG 14.5 at the national levels.
- Regional strategy to be developed for the establishment and implementation of an effectively and equitably managed WIO MPA network
- Regional approach and programme to sustain systematic monitoring and evaluation efforts across all important sites to be developed and regularly conduct MPA management effectiveness assessments and social assessment of MPAs using agreed methods that also describe biodiversity outcomes.
- Capacity building should be supported at all levels to address the variety of challenges to increase social responsibility among institutions and communities and strengthen the regional commitment to conservation and resource management

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