



PRESS RELEASE

“Comoros’ quest to declare and manage Marine Protected Areas documented in new publication”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nairobi, 16 July 2021 – Comoros has declared one marine and coastal area as protected covering over 442 square kilometers, representing 0.28 percent of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), according to a new [Marine Protected Areas Outlook](#) by UNEP-Nairobi Convention and the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association. The country has proposed declaring three additional protected areas – the Coelacanth, Mitsamiouli-Ndroudé, and Shisiwani National Parks – illustrating the government’s commitment as it prepares to work towards future targets under the Global Biodiversity Framework

The Marine Protected Areas Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets, released today, analyzes Comoro’s efforts in its commitment to conserving at least 10% of its marine and coastal areas by 2020 under Sustainable Development Goal 14.5.

Although the ocean provides us with resources essential for survival—like food, employment, and even oxygen—the world is damaging and depleting it faster than ever. Soon, Comoros may no longer be able to count on the many jobs, health, and economic benefits that the Western Indian Ocean provides, unless concerted efforts are undertaken to turn the tide on the degradation of ocean resources.

Marine protected areas offer one of the best options to reverse these trends. “A well-managed MPA can bring significant economic, social, and environmental benefits to a country,” said **Mouchtadi Madi Bamdou**, Marine and coastal environment project manager of the **Moheli National Park**. “They can increase food security by preventing the overexploitation of fish stocks; create and protect jobs in the tourism and fisheries sectors; build community leadership within associations co-managing MPAs; and conserve endangered and endemic species, just to name a few benefits.”

The Outlook examines the current and future status of MPAs at a regional level. It documents the progress made by nine countries in the WIO region in increasing MPA coverage, highlights best practices and challenges faced by governments in managing MPAs, and provides recommendations on how to make the impact of MPAs even greater.

Key recommendations from the Outlook include the need for dedicated budgets for MPA management, adopting proactive law enforcement and compliance strategies to ensure MPA management guidelines are being respected; incorporating research and monitoring programs on biodiversity and ecosystems into decision-making in MPAs among others.

Indeed, although Comoros is making strides forward in protecting its marine and coastal areas, there are several opportunities to build on this progress and ensure that people, the economy, and nature reap even more benefits from MPAs through the declaration of the proposed new MPAs and investments in effective management.

By seizing on the opportunities presented in the MPA Outlook, Comoros and other countries in the region can capitalize on this momentum of expanding and improving MPA management—thereby safeguarding the WIO's immense natural beauty and resources for generations to come.

NOTES TO EDITORS

This Outlook was developed under the [Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Protection of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-Based Sources and Activities](#) project of the Nairobi Convention, funded by the Global Environment Facility.

The Nairobi Convention, signed by Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, and Tanzania, aims to promote a prosperous Western Indian Ocean region with healthy rivers, coasts, and oceans. It provides a platform for governments, civil society, and the private sector to work together for the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment.

The UN Environment Programme is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

The **Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association is a non-profit, membership organization** dedicated to promoting the educational, scientific and technological development of all aspects of marine sciences throughout the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region, with a view toward sustaining the use and conservation of its marine resources.