



PRESS RELEASE

“The Republic of Mauritius’s quest to declare and manage Marine Protected Areas documented in new publication”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nairobi, 16 July 2021 — The Republic of Mauritius has declared 18 marine and coastal areas as protected, an area covering some 155.2 square kilometers, representing 0.009 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 Marine Protected Areas Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework Targets, released today, analyzes Mauritius’s efforts in its commitment to conserving at least 10% of its marine and coastal areas by 2020 under Sustainable Development Goal 14.5.

The MPA Outlook further documents efforts to designate as protected an additional area covering almost 97 square kilometers between Flic en Flac and Le Morne, illustrating the country’s momentum as it prepares to achieve future targets under the Global Biodiversity Framework.

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, which may compromise the ocean’s potential to continue supporting jobs, health, and economic benefits in Mauritius.

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 Francois Baguette, Research Team Leader at Reef Conservation, the civil society organization managing the Roches Noires and Anse La Raie Voluntary Marine Conservation Areas. “They can increase food security by preventing the overexploitation of fish stocks; create and protect jobs in the tourism and fisheries sectors; build resilience to climate change; and protect species and habitats, 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 rules are being respected; incorporating research and monitoring programs on biodiversity and ecosystems into decision-making in MPAs, among others.

“We would like to congratulate the Convention for this laudable initiative. We are pleased to share Mauritius’ experiences and knowledge in the management of Marine Protected Areas, and to learn from other countries as well for a healthy ocean and sustainable management of our coastal and marine resources ,” noted Mr. Ramchurn Seenauth, Alternate Focal Point for Mauritius to the Nairobi Convention.

Though Mauritius has made significant strides forward—and is still making major efforts 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. By seizing on the opportunities presented in the MPA Outlook, Mauritius 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.

Background to the Nairobi Convention

The Western Indian Ocean is being degraded by human activities that harm marine life, undermine coastal communities and negatively affect human health. These threats make it more important than ever for governments in the region to work together to strengthen protection of the ocean.

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