



PRESS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nairobi, 16 July 2021 — *The Marine Protected Areas Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets*, released today, analyzes Mozambique’s efforts in its commitment to conserving at least 10% of its marine and coastal areas by 2020 under Sustainable Development Goal 14.5.

Mozambique has declared seven marine and coastal areas as protected, representing 2% of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), according to the Marine Protected Areas Outlook by UNEP-Nairobi Convention and the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association. The country has also proposed the Bilene Special Reserve to be declared a Marine Protected Area, 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—humanity is damaging and depleting it faster than ever. This continued degradation will compromise the ocean’s potential in supporting key sectors – like fisheries and tourism – critical for Mozambique’s socio-economic development.

Marine protected areas, or MPAs, offer one of the best options to reverse these trends in ocean resources degradation. “A well-managed MPA can bring significant economic, social, and environmental benefits to a country,” said **Miguel Gonçalves of the Ponta do Ouro Partial Marine Reserve in Mozambique**. “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 *Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets* examines the current and future status of MPAs at a regional and country 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 for how to make the impacts 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 regulations are being respected; incorporating research and monitoring programs on biodiversity and ecosystems into decision-making in MPAs among others.

“We are eager to share Mozambique’s MPA experiences and to learn about how our neighbors’ declare and manage effectively their MPAs,” noted **Alexandre Bartolomeu, Focal Point of Mozambique to the Nairobi Convention**. “By doing so, we hope management of all MPAs in the Western Indian Ocean region can be strengthened.”

Though Mozambique has made strides in protecting its marine and coastal areas, there are still several opportunities to build on this progress and ensure that people, the economy, and nature reap even more benefits from MPAs. The recently held Growing Blue Conference and the country’s drive towards adopting and implementing marine spatial planning as a tool for management are some of the Government’s commitments in this endeavor.

By seizing on the opportunities presented in the MPA Outlook, Mozambique 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.