



## PRESS RELEASE

**“By protecting marine and coastal areas, Seychelles surpasses its commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals”**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

**Nairobi, 16 July 2021** – Seychelles has made significant progress towards increasing the total coverage of their Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), as the country has declared 16\* marine and coastal areas as protected, representing 26.4 percent\* of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), according to the [new Marine Protected Areas Outlook](#) by UNEP-Nairobi Convention and the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association.

The establishment of these Marine Protected Areas, or MPAs, mean that Seychelles has exceeded its 10% protection of its EEZ by 2020 commitment under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.5, and illustrates the country’s momentum as it prepares to achieve future targets under the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

*The Marine Protected Areas Outlook*, released today, indicates that these MPAs span a breadth of 353,663 km<sup>2</sup> square kilometers, and documents how they have increased the resilience of its crucial fisheries and tourism sectors and preserved the country’s natural beauty for the enjoyment and use by its citizens.

Moreover, they have created safe havens for more than 2,600 documented species, some of which are endangered.

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 – including fisheries and tourism – critical for Seychelles socio-economic development.

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 **Allen Cedras, CEO of the Seychelles National Parks Authority**. “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 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 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, and more.

“Seychelles has a lot of lessons to share about declaring and managing MPAs,” noted **Nanette Laure, Focal Point of the Seychelles to the Nairobi Convention**. “We are also looking forward to learning from the region at large about their approaches to MPA management from the MPA Outlook.”

Although the Seychelles has made significant strides 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 the country’s MPAs.

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

*\*At the time this publication was finalized*

## **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.