



PRESS RELEASE

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

Nairobi, 16 July 2021 – The [Marine Protected Areas Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets](#), released today, analyzes Tanzania’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 United Republic of Tanzania has declared 18 marine and coastal areas as protected on its mainland, an area covering over 2,143 square kilometers, representing 0.92 percent of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and an additional eight conservation/protected areas covering 2,282 sq. km in Zanzibar (approximately 1% of its EEZ), according to a new Marine Protected Areas Outlook by the UNEP-Nairobi Convention and the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association.

The Outlook further documents efforts to designate as four additional protected areas in the mainland and one in Zanzibar, illustrating the country’s commitment as it prepares to achieve future targets under the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Although the ocean provides us with rich resources essential for socio-economic development – like food, employment, and even oxygen—the world is damaging and depleting it faster than ever. Without immediate mitigation measures to conserve and protect our ocean and its constituent coastal and marine ecosystems, all countries in the WIO region (Tanzania included) may soon no longer be able to count on the many jobs, health, and economic benefits that the Western Indian Ocean provides.

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 Maria Pentzel of the Mafia Island Marine Park. “They can increase food security by preventing the overexploitation of fish stocks; create and protect jobs in the tourism, fisheries and aquaculture 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 on 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.

Though Tanzania has made 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 MPAs.

By seizing on the opportunities presented in the MPA Outlook, the United Republic of Tanzania 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.