



**Launch of the Western Indian Ocean  
Marine Protected Areas Management  
Network**

*8<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
Online*

**REPORT OF THE LAUNCH OF THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN  
MARINE PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT NETWORK  
(WIOMPAN)**

## A. Executive Summary

### *i. Background: WIOMPAN: Enhancing WIO MPA ecological and social connectivity.*

The growing number of MPAs in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region represents an increasing interest in marine conservation and fisheries management and the potential of planned and well managed WIO MPA network as a way of strengthening regional marine conservation efforts. The soon to be released WIO MPA Outlook recommends promoting MPA ecological networks as an important option to enable dynamic adaptation processes in ecosystems, and thus to combat the decline in the WIO marine biodiversity and preserve ecosystem services, especially in view of changing climatic conditions. The effective management of MPA ecological networks requires an array of elements. These include having adequate technical capacity of site managers, good science, committed leadership at multiple levels (sites, agencies, and policy makers), shared goals among MPAs, and monitoring of the network's ecological effectiveness. Importantly, the effective management of MPA networks also requires good connectivity among site managers – in other words, a social network. The WIO-MPA Outlook emphasizes the importance of building strong WIO MPA practitioners network to enable MPA managers to interact in decision-making by facilitating the sharing of technical resources and lessons gained. In the WIO region, consideration of the social connectivity associated with MPAs and MPA networks has only recently emerged.

The WIO-MPA network idea was proposed at a meeting of MPA managers held in Kenya in 2019. The MPA managers from 8 countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Seychelles, Comoros, Madagascar and Reunion) of the WIO who attended the meeting agreed to establish the network which they named the Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Management Network (WIOMPAN). WIOMPAN's mission is to promote the establishment, management, and sustainability of a WIO network of marine protected areas. Besides exchanging knowledge and experiences, it is envisaged that the network will also enable MPA practitioners in the WIO region keep one another motivated and inspired, as well as to develop a sense of community, therefore sustaining and strengthening the conservation and governance of the network's component sites. Additionally, the network will play a critical role in implementing the recommendations contained in the WIO MPA Outlook. With the help of the founder members and MPA managers in the WIO region, a number of activities have been completed since WIOMPAN's beginning in 2019, including the development of the network's Terms of Reference, the construction of the WIOMPAN website (hosted by WIOMSA), and the promotion of the network within the national networks.

### *ii. The Launch of WIOMPAN*

On World Ocean Day, 8 June 2021, WIOMSA and the Nairobi Convention partnered to launch the Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Management Network (WIOMPAN). The network has been established as a platform for marine protected area (MPA) managers, community members and scientists so that they can collaborate, share knowledge and learning, and exchange information, experiences and resources to support the management of MPAs in the western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. WIOMPAN aims to support the professional development of MPA personnel and to provide a unified voice for MPA practitioners in the WIO region. The launch was attended by 136 participants from the WIO Region and beyond.

**B. Opening of the launch – *Dr. Arthur Tuda, Executive Secretary of WIOMSA***

1. The meeting was called to order 1505 hrs. by Dr Tuda who welcomed participants to the launch. He presented the objective and the programme of the launch which was subsequently adopted.

**C. Remarks from the Interim Chair of the WIOMPAN Network and introduction of the interim Executive Committee- *Dr. Karine Pothin, Director, Réserve Nationale Marine de La Réunion***

2. Dr. Pothin, the chair of the WIOMPAN Interim Executive Committee noted that the launch of the network was an auspicious occasion coming after three years of behind-the-scenes preparations. She presided over the introduction of the interim Executive Committee officials including John Komakoma (Vice Chair), Allen Cedras (Secretary) and the other members of the team- Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy (Madagascar), Housseni Houssoyni (Comoros), Anè Oosthuizen (South Africa), Robin Adams (South African MPA Forum), Miguel Gonçalves (Mozambique), Willys Osore (Kenya), François Baguette (Mauritius), Tiana Rahagalala (Madagascar) and Pierre de Villiers (South Africa).

**D. Remarks from WIOMSA- *Dr. Julius Francis***

3. Dr. Julius Francis gave opening remarks on behalf of the WIOMSA President, Dr. Jacqueline Uku. He noted that the journey to the establishment of WIOMPAN started years ago with several initiatives which attempted to bring together marine protected area (MPA) practitioners including the Group of Experts on Marine Protected Areas, the Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS), the regional MPA managers training course; to name a few. Dr. Francis stated that in 2019, WIOMSA commissioned a region wide survey to determine the need for a network for MPA and locally managed marine area professionals and the potential services that such a network could provide to MPA practitioners. It is through that survey that the idea of WIOMPAN was fostered. He concluded his remarks by noting that the establishment of the network was timely as the MPA community would benefit from the various regional products and opportunities being prepared to support MPA management such as the Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Area Outlook to be launched in July 2021.

**E. Introduction to the Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Management Network – *Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy, MIHARI Network, INDRI Madagascar***

4. Ms. Vatoasoa Rakotondrazafy delivered a presentation on the WIOMPAN network. The presentation focused on the justification for the establishment of a social network for WIO MPA practitioners who work in a highly ecologically connected region, share the same challenges and therefore can work together to address some of these common issues. The presenter discussed the mission and vision of WIOMPAN, the services that will be provided to network members and what the network has accomplished including developing the terms of reference for WIOMPAN, planning for the inaugural training for network members on adaptive MPA Management (jointly organised by WIOMSA, the Nairobi Convention, the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) and MPA agencies in the WIO region) and the development of the [WIOMPAN](#) website.

**F. The Mediterrean Marine Protected Areas Network ([MedPAN](#))- *Pierre Vignes***

5. Pierre Vignes congratulated the Nairobi Convention and WIOMSA on the launch of the network. He delivered a presentation on MedPAN focusing on the Mediterranean MPA system and the history behind

the establishment of MedPAN, the constituents of the network, its governance model, the key focus areas of the network (technical support, policy support and knowledge development), the network's objectives and values, its key success factors and potential synergies with WIOMPAN. He also talked about valuable lessons learnt from the establishment and operations of MedPAN, which WIOMPAN could adopt in future.

**G. Links other MPA Processes in the region the WIO MPA Outlook- Dr. Jared Bosire, Nairobi Convention**

6. Dr Bosire's presentation focused on how WIOMPAN can support the implementation of the ongoing initiatives under the Nairobi Convention; specifically, *the Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework Targets*. The presenter discussed the mandate behind the development of the MPA Outlook and the purpose of the MPA Outlook. He stated that the objective of the Outlook was to track progress made by countries in the WIO region towards the achievement of SDG 14.2 and 14.5 as well as establishing a baseline for the Global Biodiversity Framework and increase momentum for achieving post-2020 GBF targets. Dr. Bosire discussed the key expected outputs and products from the review of MPAs and Critical Habitats in the WIO- notably the MPA Outlook, Critical Habitats Outlook, a 'Recommendations' Outlook, a Database of MPAs & Critical habitats, a dashboard of MPAs in the WIO region, contribution to the revision of the Protocol on Protected Fauna and Flora of the Nairobi Convention, adoption of the outcomes by countries, the establishment of WIOMPAN and contribution to the next edition of the Regional State of the Coast Report. He further outlined the structure of the MPA Outlook, the partners involved in the production, the key findings, key challenges and key recommendations coming out of the MPA Outlook.

**H. The Official Launch of WIOMPAN- Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi Convention**

7. The network was officially launched by Dixon Waruinge, the head of the Nairobi Convention Secretariat. During his address, Mr Waruinge, commended the tremendous regional effort to build effectively managed MPAs supported by highly trained MPA professionals. He welcomed the launch of WIOMPAN as a timely event and urged the network to focus its efforts on informing policymakers, particularly those tasked with the management of key environment ministries, about the socio-economic value of MPAs and the potential for MPAs to be the lynchpin of thriving blue economies in the WIO. Mr Waruinge's key message was that in addition to supporting the mentoring and training of marine conservation practitioners in the WIO, WIOMPAN must be the engine that drives the global biodiversity framework agenda of protecting and conserving at least 30 percent of the planet by 2030, through well-connected and effective systems of protected areas.

**I. The closing of the launch- Dr. Arthur Tuda**

8. As a closing item, a video of good will messages on the launch and a call to action from MPA Managers from different countries of the WIO was played. View the video [here](#).
9. The Executive Secretary of WIOMSA closed the event with a vote of thanks to the participants, the Nairobi Convention, partners including the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) and the IUCN, the Executive Committee of WIOMPAN and the network members. The meeting was closed at 1610 hrs. Click [here](#) for the [WIOMPAN launch](#) recording.

**ANNEX I PROGRAMME**  
**Launch of the Western Indian Ocean**  
**Marine Protected Area Network (WIOMPAN)**

**Programme**

8th June 2021

1500 – 1615

| <b>Time</b> | <b>Activity</b>   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| 1500 – 1505 | Calling the event into order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why the event?</li> <li>• Talk through the programme</li> </ul> | Arthur Tuda,<br>Executive Secretary   |
| 1505 – 1510 | Remarks from the Interim Chair of the WIOMPAN Network and introduction of the interim Executive Committee                             | Karine Pothin   |
| 1510 - 1515 | Remarks from WIOMSA   | Julius Francis  |
| 1515 - 1530 | Presentation of the WIOMPAN and MEDPAN Networks (Objectives, key focus areas, website)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy</li> <li>• Pierre Vignes</li> </ul> |
| 1530-1540   | Links other MPA Processes in the region (MPA Outlook, Critical Habitats, SDG targets) etc.  | Jared Bosire,<br>Nairobi Convention   |
| 1540-1555   | Official launch   | Dickson Waruinge,<br>Nairobi Convention   |
| 1605 – 1610 | Vote of Thanks  | WIOMPAN   |



**ANNEX II  
WIOMPAN LAUNCH LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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**ANNEX II**  
**WIOMPAN LAUNCH LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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**ANNEX II**  
**WIOMPAN LAUNCH LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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**ANNEX II**  
**WIOMPAN LAUNCH LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**