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Report of the Africa Regional Seas Programme,

2008 - 2010

1. The Africa Regional Seas Programmes including the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions, have over the period 2008 to 2010 continued to assist Contracting Parties of the Conventions to respond to the need for more effective management of coastal and marine ecosystems that are under increasing threat of degradation attributed to both natural and anthropogenic factors. The programmes directed efforts towards enhancing the technical, legal and management capacities of African coastal states, including Small Island Developing States, for the sustainable management of the Western Indian and Atlantic Oceans environment.
2. The Nairobi Convention for Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region extends from Somalia in the north to the Republic of South Africa in the south, covering 10 states, five of which are island states in the Western Indian Ocean. The Contracting Parties to the Convention include Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania and the Republic of South Africa.
3. The Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African region on the other hand covers 22 countries with three distinct large marine ecosystems, namely: Benguela, Guinea and the Canary Current ecosystems.
4. The Conventions offer regional frameworks through which the Contracting Parties address critical national and transboundary issues and share regional expertise and experiences to protect, manage and develop the coastal and marine resources as well as to create opportunities for sustained socio-economic growth and industrial prosperity. Through the implementation of their work programmes, the two Conventions have over the period 2008 to 2010 developed a number of instruments aimed at enhancing the capacities of Contracting Parties to sustainably manage the coastal and marine environment. The instruments include:
 - a) the Strategic Action Programme for the Protection of Coastal and Marine Environment of the Western Indian Ocean from Land Based Sources and Activities (SAP);
 - b) The Amended Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean (Amended Nairobi Convention);
 - a) the Protocol for the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBSA Protocol); and
 - d) The Draft Protocol to the Abidjan Convention Concerning Cooperation in the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment from Land Based Sources and Activities (LBSA)

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The Development of the Strategic Action Programme for the Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment of the Western Indian Ocean from Land- Based Sources and Activities (SAP)

5. Through the UNEP- GEF funded project entitled 'Addressing Land Based Activities in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-LaB) the Nairobi Convention in 2008 formulated a comprehensive Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) of the problems and causes of degradation of the shared coastal and marine environments in the Western Indian Ocean region. The TDA which involved a scientific and technical fact-finding analysis of the relative importance of sources, causes and impacts of trans-boundary waters problems, identified priority issues and potential areas of intervention related to land-based sources and activities that impact on the capacity of shared marine and coastal environments to sustain local livelihoods and national economies.

6. At the national level, the Nairobi Convention supported Contracting Parties to undertake national integrated assessments of the state of marine and coastal environments towards better understanding of the complex processes and trends at work in the coastal and marine environment. The assessment included status of resources; land based activities and sources of pollution; and socioeconomic issues, including economic valuation of goods and services provided by the marine and coastal ecosystems. The Secretariat in collaboration with the Governments for Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and Tanzania have prepared seven national state of coasts one of which, the Kenya State of Coast Report: Towards Integrated Management of Kenya's Coastal and Marine Resources was finalised and launched in March 2010 during the Sixth Conference of Parties which was held at UNEP Nairobi Kenya from 29 March to 1 April 2010. These assessment reports will be consolidated into the regional state of coast report for the Western Indian Ocean which will subsequently contribute to the global assessment report as a regular process.

7. The TDA and the national assessments provided the basis for the formulation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for addressing the challenges faced by countries in the region in dealing with increasing pollution of coastal waters, the destruction and degradation of critical habitats, changes in freshwater flow (both riverine and groundwater) including sediments loads, as well as challenges resulting from global climate change. The processes for the formulation of the TDA and SAP involved the participation of over 500 stakeholders and experts drawn from various institutions and organizations in the WIO region.

8. The SAP which was recently endorsed during the Sixth Conference of Parties (COP6) on 1 April 2010 in Nairobi Kenya incorporates strategies for assisting countries to achieve an overall regional vision of: "People prospering from a Healthy Western Indian Ocean" through a collaborative framework with partners in the region. This overall vision is supported by four main environmental quality objectives that are intended to be accomplished by the year 2035, as well as specific management targets and actions for achieving each of these objectives. The objectives and targets as defined in the SAP are:
 - a) Critical coastal habitats in the WIO region protected, restored and managed for sustainable use;
 - b) Water quality in the WIO region meets international water standards by the year 2035;
 - c) River flows in the WIO region are wisely and sustainably managed; and
 - d) By 2014, stakeholders will collaborate at regional level in addressing transboundary challenges.

Development of New Protocols Additional to the Conventions on Land Based Activities

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9. Through the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions Secretariat and regional coordinating units in the region, signatories to the two conventions have over the reporting period accelerated efforts towards development and adoption of new protocols for preventing, reducing, mitigating and controlling pollution emanating from land-based sources and activities.
10. The protocols are aimed at addressing threats to the marine and coastal environments from land based sources and activities. The protocols address issues of land-ocean connections in the region because significant pollution arises from cities, harbours, industries, agricultural systems and other socioeconomic activities along the coastal areas that lead to physical alteration and destruction of habitats. Major pollutants include municipal wastewater, industrial effluent, marine litter and agricultural chemicals run-off. The effective implementation of the protocols will safeguard the productivity of the oceans and subsequently livelihoods of coastal communities who traditionally depend on the health of marine ecosystems. The enforcement of the protocols will be important in their contribution towards restoring ecosystem resilience through, for example reversing localized and regional destruction of habitats and marine biodiversity and declines in water quality as well as through activities to address coral bleaching, ocean acidification and rising ocean and atmospheric temperatures.

The Amended Nairobi Convention and the LBSA Protocol

11. The Amended Nairobi Convention and the protocol on land-based sources and activities (LBSA Protocol) were negotiated and finalised through a consultative process involving technical and legal experts in the region, at the end of 2009. The two instruments were on March 29, 2010 presented to the Conference of Plenipotentiaries for examination and adoption. The revision of the Nairobi Convention took onboard emerging issues and trends at both global and regional levels, particularly those that have implications on the management of the coastal and marine environment. More than that, the development of the LBSA Protocol to the Nairobi Convention was based on the wide recognition by the Contracting Parties that pollution from land-based sources and activities constitutes one of the major threats to the sustainability of the marine and coastal environment in the WIO region. The LBSA Protocol thus provides the legal framework for addressing pollution related to land based activities. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries unanimously adopted the two instruments whose Final Acts were opened for signature on 1 April 2010. To date eight Contracting Parties have signed the new instruments.

The Draft Protocol to the Abidjan Convention Concerning Cooperation in the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment from Land Bases Sources and Activities (LBSA)

12 After a series of consultations between Contracting Parties to the Convention and the Interim Commission of the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem over the period 2005 to 2007 the final negotiations on the draft Protocol on Land Based Activities were held in April 2009 in Accra Ghana.

13. The finalized text of the protocol will be submitted for adoption at a Conference of Plenipotentiaries. Thereafter the Protocol will be sent to all governments in the Abidjan Convention area for ratification or accession using their national processes and instruments.

14. Future activities of the Regional Seas Programme will therefore be towards promoting the domestication and enforcement of the protocols in the region.

Additional Achievements

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Partnerships

15. The implementation of the Work Programme requires concerted efforts of the governments, regional organisations, private sector and civil society. Through strong partnerships with Contracting Parties, regional civil society organisations (IUCN, WWF), Large Marine Ecosystem Projects (ASCLME, GCLME), scientific organisations (WIOMSA, WIO-C, FARI), the two Conventions have leveraged crucial expert input and additional financial support that has considerably strengthened the national capacities for management coastal and marine environment in various countries. The cumulative effect of such initiatives is among others evidenced by the fact that over the past few years virtually all WIO country governments have initiated the implementation of integrated coastal zone management, formulation of environmental impact assessment policies and legislation and expanded networks of marine protected areas. In many cases governments have established dedicated units for dealing with the coastal and marine environment. Efforts are underway to strengthen national capacities for integration of ecosystem based management approaches to development and planning processes.

16. The Secretariat to the Conventions continues to strengthen the Focal Points Forum, Focal Point offices, task forces and the Forum for Academic and Research Institutions (FARI) in the WIO region. In the recognition of the multiplicity of projects and programmes in the Western Indian Ocean region the NGO led Consortium for Conservation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-C) was formed in 2007. The Consortium which is anchored in the Nairobi Convention plays an important role in providing the relevant resources and expertise to contribute to the implementation of the Work Programme. The Conventions thus recognise the contributions of WWF, IUCN, UNDP, UNESCO and UNIDO, among others.

Support to Small Island Developing States

17. During the Joint Conferences of Parties for the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions in November 2007 in South Africa Contracting Parties agreed to develop further projects on adaptation to climate change, taking into account the specific situation of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), and leverage funds for these projects from the international community, including the GEF and the Adaptation Fund, among others. The Project Preparation Grant phase for the project *Implementing Integrated Water Resources and Wastewater management in the Indian and Atlantic Ocean Small Island Developing States* is underway. The full project proposal is expected to be submitted to GEF by the end of April 2010. It is expected that the project will contribute immensely towards building capacity of the SIDS which is also of great importance in the protection of the coastal and marine environment.

Decoupling the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions

18. The Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions have since 1999 been jointly implemented through a joint mechanism coordinated from Nairobi. The joint mechanism was able to facilitate the implementation of multilateral programmes addressing issues related to environmental protection and sustainable development of the coastal and marine areas in the Nairobi and Abidjan Convention areas. Under the joint mechanism four Conferences of Parties were organised and over the period 2008 to 2010 efforts have been directed towards the revitalisation of the Abidjan Convention to transform the Convention into a tool for sustainable utilization of the coastal and marine resources for the socio-economic development of the Convention region within the global context.

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19. In line with the request by the Contracting Parties, the United Nations Environment Programme concluded a collaborative framework with the IUCN Senegal Office to support activities for carrying a study and review the Convention's objectives programme of work including cooperation with major projects in the region including the Guinea, Benguela, Canary current large marine ecosystem projects and the Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme in West Africa (PRCM), and other major stakeholders and resources mobilisation,

20. Consequent to the study, UNEP organized, in collaboration with IUCN, a Stakeholders Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, from 1 to 3 April 2008 to examine the findings and make recommendation on the revitalization of the Convention. The meeting was attended by National Focal Points from 12 of the 14 Contracting Parties and 7 of the 8 Non Contracting Parties and by representatives of the Commissions of the three large marine ecosystem projects as well as other key stakeholders (UNDP, WWF, Wetlands International, NEPAD Interim Secretariat, PRCM).

21. Following the recommendations, the Abidjan Convention has now been fully revitalised and the Secretariat for the Convention was relocated from Nairobi to Abidjan in 2010 as per the work plan.