



# WIOCC

WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN  
COASTAL CHALLENGE

“When you live on an island, climate change is a reality that you wake to face every day.”

—H.E. James A. Michel, President of the Republic of Seychelles



## Vision of the WIOCC

“By 2032, in the face of climate change threats, the Western Indian Ocean Coastal Challenge (WIOCC) will be a strong and vocal partnership of WIO island and coastal countries and stakeholders, working together to build and implement climate-resilient development options and strategies to achieve a balance between enhanced coastal livelihoods and economies and effective conservation of biodiversity, ultimately contributing to greater levels of social security among coastal communities.”

First called for by the President of Seychelles, the WIOCC mobilizes the political, financial and technical commitment at national and regional levels to achieve the goals of existing Conventions and Strategic Action Plans such as the Nairobi Convention, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Framework for the Convention on Climate Change. It achieves this by inspiring leadership and facilitating collaboration towards the shared, long-term vision.

This will be achieved through:

- ★ Building strong political commitment
- ★ Effective engagement of and ownership by stakeholders
- ★ Setting-up sustainable financing mechanisms to sustain action over time
- ★ Technical and policy support
- ★ Strengthening collaboration and broader experience sharing
- ★ Using science-based decision support and adequate knowledge management systems
- ★ Promoting integrated management and ecosystem-based approaches
- ★ Addressing information needs and gaps through focused research
- ★ Communication and social marketing; and
- ★ Improving capacity at multiple levels.



## Key Facts

- ★ More than 30 million people in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) islands and East African coastal communities rely on the coastal environment for goods and services and as a source of livelihoods and income
- ★ The economic value of ecosystem goods and services is estimated to be over US\$25 billion annually<sup>1</sup>
- ★ The ecosystem service value of coral reefs in the WIO region alone is estimated to be greater than US\$7 billion per year, while that of mangroves is closer to US\$9 billion<sup>2</sup>
- ★ Tourism is the largest source of income directly linked to the coastal and marine environment, the region attracts over 20 million tourists that inject US\$6 billion+ into economies annually
- ★ Fisheries play an important role in WIO national economies providing from 5.0% to 99.1% of national agricultural exports<sup>3</sup> as well as sources of employment, income and animal protein
- ★ At sub-national level fisheries may be the most important activity in some areas, providing the main source of employment, income or tax revenue in a certain province or district<sup>4</sup>
- ★ Sustainable resource management contributes to food security

The natural resources that fuel the WIO regions economic activity are under pressure from issues such as overfishing, overdevelopment, pollution and environmental degradation. Climate change is exacerbating these problems and present mounting challenges to the sustainable development of the region. In 1998, coral bleaching at an unprecedented scale caused widespread coral mortality across most of the western Indian Ocean, altering the goods and services provided by these reefs<sup>5</sup>. There is urgent need for governments and stakeholders to come together and take action to combat climate change, conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable livelihoods to build resilience.

The Governments of the Indian Ocean islands and Coastal East Africa have signed onto a range of international and regional agreements, projects and activities that address issues including climate change, biodiversity conservation, desertification and sustainable development. The WIOCC will build on this to ensure that momentum is created for implementation of these agreements over a long time scale.

1 UNEP/Nairobi Convention Secretariat, 2009. Strategic Action Programme.

2 UNEP/Nairobi Convention Secretariat, 2009. Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis of Land-based Sources and Activities Affecting the Western Indian Ocean Coastal and Marine Environment, UNEP Nairobi, Kenya 378p. It should be noticed that it is believed that the actual value of the WIO marine and coastal environment may be substantially higher.

3 FAO. FAOSTAT on-line statistical service. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations; 2002 [available on-line at /http://apps.fao.org/].

4 S. Walmsley, J. Purvis, C. Ninnes, 2006. The role of small-scale fisheries management in the poverty reduction strategies in the Western Indian Ocean region.

5 Cinner, J.E., et al., Vulnerability of coastal communities to key impacts of climate change on coral reef fisheries. Global Environ. Change (2011), doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2011.09.018



## Mobilizing Action

The WIOCC was first proposed by the President of Seychelles in 2007 as a “platform to galvanize political, financial and technical commitments and actions at national and regional levels on climate change adaptation, promoting resilient ecosystems (marine and coastal resources), sustainable livelihoods, and human security”. To realize his vision, consultations have been held with country representatives of the WIO and East Africa as well as with development partners in the region and at significant international meetings hosted by the Government of Seychelles.

## Milestones

**March 2012** First Regional Technical Meeting of the WIOCC in Seychelles establishes the vision of the WIOCC.

**June 2012** Rio+20, the Vice President of Seychelles announced that the WIOCC has received funding from the European Union through the Indian Ocean Commission ISLANDS Project to support mobilization of WIO country level engagement and that Seychelles was committed to supporting efforts to build a common vision and regional strategy that addresses climate change impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems.

**October 2012** Second Regional Technical Meeting of the WIOCC, Mauritius, results in Declaration outlining next steps to achieve the vision.

**December 2012** Seventh Conference of Parties for the Nairobi Convention (COP7), Mozambique, Decision CP7/16 on the WIOCC: requests Contracting Parties and other partners to support and encourage participation in the WIOCC as a means to mobilize political will and resources necessary to achieve the objectives of the Challenge and its strategic work. Requests the Secretariat and invites the IOC and other partners to continue supporting the WIO-CC through their respective work programmes.

**July 2013** Seychelles sends high level delegation to visit Mauritius who shows its interest to formally join the WIOCC.

**July 2013** Third Regional Technical Meeting of the WIOCC, Seychelles, resulted in a plan of action to formally launch the WIOCC.

**August 2013** Seychelles sent a high level delegation to visit the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar who gave their in principle agreement for the President of Zanzibar to formally join the WIOCC during the 2014 UNSIDS meeting. Zanzibar has further passed a bill related to Zanzibar’s support to the WIOCC.

**January 2014** Celebration of the founding agreement of the Indian Ocean Commission “the Victoria Agreement” to open the 2014 International Year of Small Island Developing States and meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs around the WIOCC.

**September 2014** interested countries will formally launch the WIOCC during the Third International Meeting of Small Island Developing States (UNSIDS 2014) meeting, Apia, Samoa.

## Next Steps

The WIOCC will be formally launched at the Third International Meeting of Small Island Developing States (UNSIDS 2014) to be held in Apia, Samoa in September 2014. Countries interested in formally joining will commit to visionary and measurable targets that will contribute to realizing the vision of the WIOCC.

In preparation for the launch of the WIOCC, interested countries will work to:

- ★ Define targets and potential commitments for the WIOCC
- ★ Contribute to development of a governance framework for the WIOCC
- ★ Work towards putting in place sustainable financing mechanisms, such as a regional trust fund, and support resource mobilization efforts
- ★ Contribute to develop and operationalize the climate change observatory
- ★ Contribute to coordination of the WIOCC

Support partners, such as the Indian Ocean Commission ISLANDS Project, the Consortium of the Conservation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-C) and the African Biodiversity Consultative Group will provide technical and financial support the countries to help operationalize the WIOCC.

The Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) will support efforts to share experiences from similar regional island initiatives such as the Micronesia Challenge and Caribbean Challenge Initiative which originally inspired the WIOCC. GLISPA, co-chaired by the Presidents of Seychelles and Palau, has helped to catalyze more than US\$130million dollars to support on the ground action for conservation of island biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods.

PHOTOS: AGRICULTEURS BIO@THOMAS GIRAUD; PLANTING MANGROVES IN MAURITIUS ©MATTHEW GRAY; TAKING OF CUTTINGS OF SPINOSUM AT SHIMONI\_PACT KENYA

## Engagement Principles

This Challenge is proposed as an initiative that:

- ★ Is open to national or local governments in the Western Indian Ocean and to local, national and international agencies and organizations who share its goals and objectives
- ★ Supports commitments based on national, regional, global and/or organizational priorities
- ★ Encourages collaboration among governments and partners
- ★ Complements and supports, without duplicating, existing commitments that create synergies to ensure the effective use of limited human and financial resources

## For more information:

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Supporting the WIOCC to become a reality:



INDIAN OCEAN COMMISSION



UNEP



Convention on Biological Diversity



GLOBAL ISLAND PARTNERSHIP

