

# The Regional Conference on “Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation in the WIO region: Solutions to the Crisis”

21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2011

BALACLAVA, MAURITIUS

## SUMMARY REPORT

APRIL 2010





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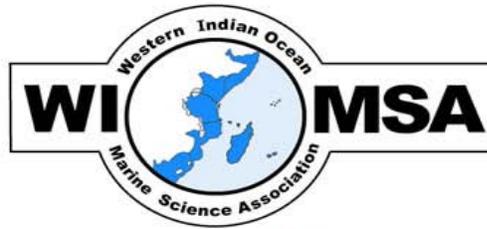
BALACLAVA, MAURITIUS

## SUMMARY REPORT





## CONFERENCE SPONSORS



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

WIOMSA would like to express its appreciation to organizations that had provided support towards the organizations of the Conference in a form of covering the core costs of the Conference, sponsoring participants and covering specific costs. The Conference was sponsored by WIOMSA, Swedish International Development Agency (Sida); UNEP/Nairobi Convention Secretariat, Indian Ocean Commission (COI), Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); ACCLIMATE Project, the African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD); International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Air Mauritius. WIOMSA is grateful to all these organizations that made the organization of the Conference possible.

WIOMSA would also like to thank all the participants for their constructive contributions in presentations and discussions, and also appreciations are to the chairpersons and rapporteurs of the different sessions for managing the sessions and taking notes of the ongoing discussions and comments.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Conference on “Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation in the WIO region: Solutions to the Crisis”, which was held at the Intercontinental Mauritius Resort Balaclava, Mauritius from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011, was jointly organized by WIOMSA, MOI, UNEP/Nairobi Convention Secretariat and COI. The Conference was attended by 146 key individuals working on climate change issues at different levels including senior Government officials, representatives of regional multi-lateral bodies, development partners, representatives of the business community and non-governmental organizations as well as, scientists and students from all the nine countries of the region as well as from eight non-WIO countries.

International and regional organizations such as the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM), Agence Française de Développement (AFD), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI); the Nature Conservancy (TNC); and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). Regional programmes such as the UNDP GEF Agulhas and Somali Currents Large Marine Ecosystem Project (ASCLME) and the WWF Coastal East Africa Network Initiative, also attended the Conference. The private sector was represented by the National Business Initiative of South Africa.

The Conference was officially opened and concluded by delivery of a number of opening and closing remarks. A combination of keynote and panel presentations, oral and poster presentations, and discussions in plenary and parallel sessions, were used during the Conference to achieve these objectives. The excellent presentations and interventions made in all segments of the conference were major contributors to the success of the conference.

One of the main highlights of the Conference was the presentations and discussions of the two draft Strategies for participants’ inputs. The draft strategies presented were the draft Regional Strategy for Climate Change Implications in WIO region prepared by the International Resources Group (IRG), on behalf of WIOMSA, and the Regional Plan (including a strategy) for adaptation to climate change (PARA) for the Island States, developed for Indian Ocean Commission by the ASCONIT-PARETO Consultants. These presentations and discussions were highly commended by participants as well as by the consultants who raised some important issues for consideration to be included in the Strategies.

Two special events were organized during the opening and closing cocktails, which were held respectively on the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> March and 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011. During the first cocktail, hosted

Thank you very much for a very well organized and most interesting conference - very interesting presentations as well as good opportunities for "networking". I can very well understand that it took a lot of effort and hard work to get this meeting going. – Claes Kjellstrom, Sida Representative

jointly by WIOMSA and COI/ACCLIMATE project, a photo exhibition of the best photos took place. Also during the event, the best three photos were awarded their presents. The best photos were selected from more than 600 photos from Mauritius, Madagascar, the Comoros, Reunion and Seychelles as part of the contest organized by the ACCLIMATE Project in partnership with IOM and UNDP. The second special event was the launching of the Third Edition of “A Field Guide to the Seashores of Eastern Africa and Western Indian Ocean Islands” was held at the Le Maritime Hotel during the cocktail hosted by MOI.

The Conference was by all accounts a resounding success. This was the opinion held by the participants who attended the conference. “I found the conference very useful, both in terms of learning more about climate change issues and options in the WIO, and in terms of meeting so many interesting, professional and competent people.”, said Dr Jeremy Webb from the Addis Ababa-based African Climate Policy Centre.

## INTRODUCTION

The impacts of climate change transcend the boundaries of nations, it is therefore essential that a regional approach is taken in order to facilitate information exchange on the status of knowledge on the impacts of climate change on coastal communities and the coastal and marine environment and share the experiences in and lessons learnt on implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies across the region. Such an approach will also assist the region to develop a common understanding of priorities for actions in relation to research and adaptation needs, management programs and actions, policies, and laws for recommendations to national and regional government bodies.

It is realized that, given the limited resources, adaptation strategies must be targeted to those ecosystems and populations that are most vulnerable to climate change, and such strategies must also equip vulnerable communities with tools and incentives to facilitate and promote adaptation. In this context, it was intended that the information generated from the Conference will inform both policy and the responses made to climate change impacts with a view to minimizing threats to the environment and the people in coastal and marine areas of WIO.

The main objective of the Conference was to provide countries of the WIO region with strategically relevant and accurate information that will enhance their capacity to plan and implement response measures (adaptation and mitigation) and thereby reducing the detrimental impacts of climate change on communities and ecosystems. Strategies for protecting climate-sensitive ecosystems will be increasingly important for management, since impacts resulting from a changing climate system are already evident and will persist into the future. While there are inherent uncertainties associated with future climate change the response of ecosystems to climate impacts, and the effects of management, it is both possible and essential for adaptation to proceed using the best available knowledge.

Through this Conference, an assessment of the situation in the coastal and marine areas of the WIO region in relation to climate change was done, and in so doing, take stock of existing data and information on climate change, identify existing climate change response measures, and make an assessment of the key lessons that such existing response measures have to offer.

It was in this context that the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) in collaboration with the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI); the Indian Ocean Commission (COI) and the Nairobi Convention Secretariat organized the Regional Conference on “Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region: Solutions to the Crisis”, whose main objectives were:

- i) Share knowledge, experience and solutions on impacts of climate change and experience gained in implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- ii) Support and facilitate WIO countries in their quest to forge a common vision on how to deal with implications of climate change.
- iii) Develop a common stand in priorities for actions in relation to research, adaptation and mitigation strategies.

## **CONFERENCE SESSIONS AND THEMES**

The conference was organized in a total of ten sessions within the three days, with each of the sessions carrying a particular theme(s).

### **Session I: Opening Ceremony**

The opening ceremony was held in the morning of the first day of the conference, were an opening speech, conference statements were delivered, followed by a group photo of all the conference participants. The opening speech was delivered the Mauritius Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, and the welcome statement was then given by Nirmal Shah, the WIOMSA President. Other dignitaries who gave the opening ceremony remarks were Dr. Claes Kjellstrom, the Sida representative, Rezah Badal, the Officer-in-Charge of the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI), Hon. Ana Paulo Samo Gudo Chichava, the Mozambique Deputy Minister, Ministry of Coordination of Environmental Affairs and the chair of the bureau of Nairobi Convention, and Mrs Fatoumia Bazi, on behalf of the Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Commission (COI).

### **Session II: Setting the Scene**

Following the opening ceremony, a keynote statement on ‘Climate Change: Opportunities for Africa’ was delivered by Mr Richard Munang, on behalf of the Director and Regional Representative of UNEP-Regional Office for Africa, Mr. Mounkaila Goumandakoye. This was followed by the presentations on a WIO Climate Change Draft Strategy prepared by the International Resources Group (IRG) on behalf of WIOMSA. The second strategy was on the Regional Plan for the Island States (including a Strategy) for Adaptation to Climate Change (PARA) developed for Indian Ocean Commission by ASCONIT-PARETO Consultants.

### **Session III: Building the WIO Climate Change Strategy: Group Discussions**

The two strategy presentations: WIO Climate Change Draft Strategy and Regional Plan for the Island States (including a Strategy) for Adaptation to Climate Change (PARA) were discussed in detail in the group discussions under this session. These strategies are the main outputs of the d’Adaptation au Changement Climatique de la COI (Acclimate) project and the WIOMSA project on “Climate Change in coastal and marine environment of the Western Indian Ocean region: Assessment of Impacts and Adaptation Options”.

#### **Session IV: Oral Presentations**

Twenty oral presentations were delivered in four sessions on Evidence and Impacts of climate change; Vulnerability assessment and adaptation strategies; Governance response to climate change and Climate science, planning, monitoring and early warning. Eight poster presentations were displayed throughout the Conference. They attracted a lot of interest from participants as they covered some interesting issues ranging from coral culture to forecasting coastal storms in East Africa to sea level changes and impacts on mangroves from cyclones and floods.

#### **Session V: Science of Climate Change: Evidence and Impacts of Climate Change: Keynote Presentation and Panel Presentations**

A key note presentation was delivered by M. Rouault, on 'the recent warming of the Indian Ocean'. This presentation was then followed by panel presentations on: 'Observed trends in indices of daily and extreme temperature and precipitation for the countries of the Western Indian Ocean, 1961-2008' by Prithviraj Booneedy, 'Indian Ocean modes of variability and its linkage with East African rainfall' by Christopher Oludhe, and on 'Identifying and responding to climate change impacts in the Western Indian Ocean region through adaptive management and governance strategies' by David Vousden.

#### **Session VI: High Level Discussions: Policy Session**

The policy session was proceeded after a key note presentation on 'Introducing the African Climate Policy Center (ACPC) by Jeremy Webb. The keynote presentation on ACPC provided a good background to the 'High Level Discussions: Policy Session'. This session was chaired by Hon Ana Paula Chichava and the panelists were Mr Ali Mohamed, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Environment and Mineral Resources, Kenya, Prof Micheni Ntiba, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Fisheries Development, Kenya and Eng. Bonaventure Baya, the Director General, National Environment Management Council (NEMC), Tanzania. This Session brought into the Conference a practical policy perspective into the discussions, which has always been missing in many scientific Conferences.

#### **Session VII: Poster Session**

Eight poster presentations were displayed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> days of the conference. They had attracted a lot of interest from the participants as they covered some interesting issues which ranged from coral culture to forecasting coastal storms in East Africa to sea level changes and impacts on mangroves from cyclones and floods.

## **Session VIII: Climate Change Financing and Private Sector Involvement**

This session was composed of a key note presentation on ‘Climate change financing in Africa’ by Sheila Kiratu and then followed by two panel presentations; ‘The South African business response to climate change’ by Valerie Geen and ‘Cousin carbon neutral initiative and launch of a new initiative “Investing in carbon credits-How local groups can participate in global climate change adaptation and mitigation”’, delivered by Nirmal Shah.

## **Session IX: Special Sessions**

Four parallel special sessions were convened by different organizations:

- i) Evaluating fisheries and conservation management options to mitigate climate change impacts in WIO coral reef using an ecosystem simulation model, which was convened the Wildlife Conservation Society
- ii) From Concept to Reality: Advancing REDD+ Innovations in WIO. The conveners of this session were the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI); the European-funded project, Mikoko Pamoja, Blue Ventures and UNEP.
- iii) Migration and Climate Change, which was convened by the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- iv) Indian Ocean Climate Outlook Forum (INDOCOF) convened by Meteo-France

### ***Special Events***

Two special events were organized during the opening and closing cocktails, held on the evenings of 21 March and 23 March 2011 respectively. The opening cocktail was hosted by WIOMSA and the ACCLIMATE project of the COI. It was during this cocktail that the winners for the regional photo competition organized by ACCLIMATE, UNDP and IOM and sponsored by Air France entitled “100 photos for the adaptation to climate change” were announced. The competition was launched on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 and was open to the five member states of COI (Comoros, Mauritius, France/Reunion, Madagascar and Seychelles). The objective of the competition, which drew 600 photo entries, was to sensitize regional populations to the particular vulnerability of our islands to climate change and the urgent need to mobilize and put in place measures of effective adaptation. The best 30 photos were displayed during the cocktail.

The second special event, the launching of the Third Edition of “A Field Guide to the Seashores of Eastern Africa and Western Indian Ocean Islands” was held at the Le Maritime Hotel during the closing cocktail hosted by MOI.

## **Session X: Discussions on the Statement of the Conference**

Following fruitful discussions and presentations, on the challenges of climate change on coastal and marine environment of the WIO region and the opportunities it presents to the region, over the course of three days, the Conference was concluded with a consensus statement (Annex II) highlighting a number of pertinent climate change issues vital to the coastal and marine environment of the WIO region. It also notes that climate change provides an opportunity to pursue a sustainable development path; the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change continue to threaten development gains and also to constrain present and future development.

It was agreed that amongst others that for the WIO region adaptation remains the top priority for tackling the impacts of climate change and variability and there is no single approach fits all future challenges posed by climate change and that adaptation responses will need to come from a range of treatments and practices selected and combined to fit unique situations.

The Conference also agreed that sufficient funding should be provided to support adaptation for coastal and island communities that are at the frontline of climate change, and a special Coastal Adaptation Fund be created. Furthermore, the Conference agreed that the Nairobi Convention, the COI, and other intergovernmental regional institutions be strengthened as platforms for promoting ecosystem based management approaches for the management of non-climate stressors to enhance ecosystems healthy and resilience to climate change and variability. Also, the Statement will feed into the upcoming relevant regional dialogues on climate change.

## **Session XI: Closing Ceremony**

The Conference was concluded by delivery of a number of closing remarks. These were delivered by Dr Nirman Shah, WIOMSA President; Dr R. Moothien Pillay, on behalf of the Officer-in-Charge, MOI; Dr Claes Kjellstrom, the Sida Representative; Ms Gina Bonne, representing COI and Dr Denis Vasseur representing the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM). The Conference was formally closed by Hon. Ana Paula Chichava, the Mozambique Deputy Minister, Ministry of the Coordination of Environmental Affairs and the Chair of the Bureau of the Nairobi Convention.

## **Annex I: CONSENSUS STATEMENT**

### **CONSENSUS STATEMENT**

*We, senior experts from the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region,*

*Having met* in Mauritius from 21 to 23 March 2011 at the First Conference of Experts, Stakeholders, and Policy makers on Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation in the WIO region;

*Noting* that, while climate change provides the opportunity to pursue an equitable and sustainable development path, the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change continue to threaten development gains and also to constrain present and future development;

*Noting further* that, although Africa and or including small island states of the region contribute a negligible amount of greenhouse gas emissions (less than four per cent of global output), it is the most vulnerable continent to the adverse impacts of climate change largely due to the inadequate adaptive capacity and poverty alleviation challenges facing the continent, as well as geographical location;

*Aware* that over 60 million people who inhabit the coastal zones of the WIO region are at the frontline of climate change and variability and will suffer disproportionate impacts from ocean warming, sea level rise, extreme weather events, and ocean acidification, among others;

*Aware also* of the positive contributions that oceans and coastal areas play in the mitigation of global warming through the environmental services they provide including their role as natural carbon sinks and in regulating climate and temperature;

*Noting* the need for WIO countries to be sufficiently prepared for the challenges and opportunities brought by climate change and variability;

*Noting also* that climate change is likely to exacerbate on-going declines in coastal fisheries and agricultural resources in the WIO region, due to higher sea temperatures, ocean acidification and loss of important habitats like coral reefs, seagrasses and mangroves;

*Recognising* the role of poverty alleviation and attainment of millennium development goals in strengthening resilience in populations as a bulwark against climate change impacts;

*Also acknowledging* that there is a crucial need for consideration of population growth in the region and the implications this can have for climate change impacts;

*Noting also* that adaptation and mitigation can reduce some of the adverse impacts associated with climate change and variability, and that in this regard some of the countries in the WIO region have begun developing adaptation strategies, although coastal and marine environments have been afforded only limited attention in these strategies;

*Noting also* that there is need for further research into the potential impacts and outcomes of climate change in the WIO region;

*Noting further* that no single approach fits all future challenges posed by climate change and that adaptation responses will need to come from a range of treatments and practices selected and combined to fit unique situations;

*Noting further* the urgent and immediate needs of WIO countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and variability, especially the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), as well as those most affected by drought, desertification, extreme weather events and floods;

*Acknowledging* that climate change and variability and sea-level rise continue to pose significant risks to SIDS and their efforts to achieve sustainable development and, for some, represent the gravest of threats to their survival and viability;

*Concerned* that the adaptation cost estimates for coastal areas generally and SIDS are woefully inadequate, as are the adaptation resources currently available;

*Noting* that although climate change and variability has been identified as a priority issue by most of the regional bodies such as the UNEP-Nairobi Convention, Indian Ocean Commission (COI), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC), nevertheless there is no regional

framework for dealing with implications of the effects of climate change in the WIO region;

*Expressing* our appreciation to the Government and the people of Mauritius for hosting the present meeting,

*Expressing also* our sincere appreciation to WIOMSA, the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI), the Nairobi Convention Secretariat and the COI for organizing this conference, we urge them to organize follow-up meetings as appropriate to review the outcomes of this conference.

*We, the participants hereby recommend the following:*

## **I. Adaptation**

1. Recognition that for the WIO region adaptation remains the top priority for tackling the impacts of climate change and variability, we therefore call for the WIO countries and their partners to prioritize the following interventions:-

- (a) Strengthen vulnerability assessment studies in countries with low lying coastal, arid and semi-arid areas, or areas liable to floods and/or drought;
- (b) Establish or strengthen regional information sharing systems on climate change and variability;
- (c) Encourage and implement ecosystem-based adaptation strategies, including marine protected areas, through integrated coastal and ocean management entities at national, regional, and local levels to build the preparedness, resilience, and adaptive capacities of coastal communities;
- (d) Encourage WIO countries to develop and implement comprehensive action-oriented adaptation programmes, as appropriate, in key areas such as water, food security, nutrition, agriculture, coastal zones, desertification, health, infrastructure, biodiversity, ecosystems, forests, energy, urban development and management, and tourism;
- (e) Encourage the use of natural carbon sinks in coastal areas such as mangroves, sea grass beds, and coastal wetlands by including these ecosystems in the emission and climate mitigation protocols;

- (f) Develop national and regional level Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) frameworks and policies and promote the implementation of ICZM strategies and plans;
- (g) Prepare and document the legal, socio-economic, and humanitarian issues associated with the displacement of coastal populations due to climate change and variability, including the possible development of a climate risk insurance facility;
- (h) Encourage WIO countries to revise their national adaptation programmes and actions (NAPA) or national climate change response strategies (NCCRS) on climate change and variability, and develop biodiversity strategies and action plans that take into account the contribution of oceans and coasts in the mitigation of global warming through use of natural carbon sinks in coastal areas;
- (i) Promote collaboration between early warning systems and disaster risk management in planning logistics and formulating contingency plans ahead of time, to cope effectively with the consequences of extreme climate change-related events, and in this regard to obtain information from the end users to improve future prediction, forecasting and warning;
- (j) Integrate disaster reduction and risk management into national and regional development programmes and building economic and social resilience;
- (k) Strengthen public health systems in the coastal areas of WIO countries to enable all countries to cope with the threats posed by climate change and variability, and enhance their capacity to deal with climate change related public health emergencies;
- (l) Enhance capacity development, public education and awareness programs that are urgently needed to prepare national and local officials and the public in coastal areas to address climate change;
- (m) Call upon the WIO countries and their partners to allocate or seek new, additional, and adequate resources for coastal and marine environment to enable them undertake adequate climate change adaptation and nationally appropriate mitigation actions;
- (n) Provide sufficient funding to support adaptation for coastal and island communities that are at the frontline of climate change, and urge the creation of a special Coastal Adaptation Fund.

## **II. Mitigation**

2. We encourage WIO countries to take the opportunities provided by climate change to initiate policies that address poverty reduction and mitigation actions and in this regard, the countries should prioritize the following interventions:
  - a) Formulate a regional framework to promote energy conservation and efficiency in all sectors;
  - b) Develop clean and energy-efficient urban infrastructure systems including transport and waste management in the coastal areas in order to save energy, reduce carbon emissions and cut costs;
  - c) Implement and develop clean and renewable energy generation in the coastal areas, and harmonize regional power voltage through regional and sub regional grids;
  - d) Promote and improve sustainable agricultural practices, forest conservation practices for dry land areas and woodland management in the coastal areas;
  - e) Promote the development of ocean-based renewable energy, such as offshore wind power, wave energy, tidal power, etc.;
  - f) Rehabilitate critical coastal habitats and their components including coastal forest and seagrass habitats;
  - g) Enhance the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through forests by developing and implementing national and regional blue Carbon and REDD-plus programs and strategies with a trans-boundary focus as appropriate.

## **III. Means of implementation and supporting enabling measures**

3. The WIO region adaptation and mitigation actions should be supported through innovative partnerships, the transfer and adoption of suitable technologies, financing, and capacity building with particular reference to:

- (a) Strengthening Nairobi Convention, the COI, and other intergovernmental regional institutions as platforms for prompting ecosystem based management approaches for the management of non-climate stressors to enhance ecosystems healthy and resilience to climate change and variability;
- (b) Strengthening ocean management institutions at the local, national and regional level to achieve the preparedness, resilience, and adaptive capacities of coastal communities;
- (c) Improving the understanding of climate processes and their impacts on land and sea at the regional and local level;
- (d) Strengthening the documentation of, and tapping into, indigenous knowledge to complement scientific knowledge;
- (e) Establishing and strengthening research, innovation and other institutions that generate data and knowledge on climate change, and also providing support for demonstration activities;
- (f) Integrating and institutionalizing the sharing of information on the impacts of climate change and variability;
- (g) Developing education and learning frameworks for national and regional institutions on climate change and variability;
- (h) Developing and enhancing regional mechanisms for access to and the mobilization of resources for climate-related programs;
- (i) Enhancing and developing regional and national technology action plans for cooperative action on technology development and transfer;
- (j) Undertaking cost-benefit analyses on climate change impacts in order to more fully assess the consequences of different responses and approaches to climate adaptation and mitigation;
- (k) Building a climate change knowledge repository, based on reliable data and scientific evidence, if necessary with the support of development partners;
- (l) Supporting the development and implementation of regional and national climate change science plans and policies.

## Annex II: List of Participants

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