

Western Indian Ocean Partnership

Resilient ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods, adaptation, and human security



Dense habitation zone in Comoros



Coprah processing in Seychelles



Remote island of St Brandon - Rep. of Mauritius



An aerial view of the tsunami-ravaged village of Kolhuvaantyaafushi, in the southwestern Mulaaku Atoll, Maldives

Approximately 30 million people in the WIO islands and East African coastal communities rely on the coastal environment for goods and services. Coastal and island communities are largely dependent on fishing, shipping and tourism for their livelihoods. UNEP's Africa Environment Outlook indicates that in the WIO islands fisheries contribute significantly to national economies, with fish processing and transshipment providing additional employment and revenue. In Mozambique and Tanzania, estuarine prawn fisheries make an important economic contribution as well. Similarly, the region is highly dependent on its natural resources base for its thriving tourism sector. For example, the World Tourism and Travel Council points out that in 2008 travel and tourism contributed 56.3%, and 30.2% of GDP in Seychelles and Mauritius, respectively.

The natural resources that provide sustainable livelihoods and fuel this economic activity are already under pressure from threat such as poverty, overfishing, overdevelopment, pollution, food security, and environmental degradation. The unavoidable impacts of climate change will only exacerbate these problems and present mounting challenges to the sustainable development of the region.

Western Indian Ocean (WIO) countries and territories face pivotal choices in response to these threats. Will the region simply be swept along in the wake of inevitable transformations? Or will governments and civil society work together to commit and implement actions to address the adverse impacts of environmental degradation and climate change and thus improve the prospects of the Western Indian Ocean region?

A sound response will require nations to integrate environment, climate change and development strategies, including the key role of natural ecosystems, into all aspects of policy development and capacity building in order to enable institutions and people to manage these threats and continue to advance the prospects for increased human development in the region.

There is an opportunity now for governments and other stakeholders to come together and work on the common challenges around climate change.

A WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN PARTNERSHIP



Low lying island in the remote group of Farquar—Seychelles

The Western Indian Ocean Partnership (WIOP) is proposed as an initiative that aims to promote national and regional commitments and actions at the highest levels to safeguard the resilience of the region's ecosystems so these can continue to provide benefits for sustainable livelihoods, address climate change impacts needs – particularly adaptation-, and secure human security in the region.

Led by the region's Governments, and supported by local, regional and international organizations, multilateral agencies and others, WIOP partners can work together to align and leverage multiple agendas and ongoing and future initiatives in the region. Within this context, the WIOP should avoid duplicating efforts and build and rely on existing international and regional institutions, platforms, framework, and projects to galvanize the regions and international community support.

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Proposed Goals

- Increase awareness of and attention to the environmental degradation and climate change impacts and adaptation needs in the Western Indian Ocean by the local, national and the international communities.
- Raise the region's institutional preparedness and capacity to address environmental and climate change challenges and promote synergies and complementarities among the environment, climate change and development strategies in the WIO.
- Identify and encourage actions on issues requiring collective approaches from countries and partners.
- Encourage adequate and sustainable financing to implement conservation and climate change abatement strategies.
- Create a network of pilot sites to demonstrate effective ecosystem-based adaptation strategies and best practices that can be replicated throughout the WIO.



Engagement Principles

This Partnership 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.



Creating Partnerships and Value Added

Building and achieving the goals of this Partnership will require bringing others to the table, including multilateral and bilateral development agencies, and other international, regional, and local institutions and NGOs. Some of the key partners and international / regional frameworks to which the WIO can be aligned include, but are not limited to:

Regional Intergovernmental Organizations / Initiatives	Regional / Local Institutions and NGOs	Multilateral Agencies / Organizations	Developed Countries	International Initiatives / NGOs
IOC – Indian Ocean Commission	CORDIO - Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean	European Union (EC)	France	Birdlife International
IOTC - Indian Ocean Tuna Commission	Sea Level Rise Foundation (Seychelles)	Global Environment Facility (GEF)	Germany	Conservation International
UNEP Nairobi Convention	WIOMSA - Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie	United Kingdom	Global Islands Partnerships
	National/Local NGOs	UNDP	United States of America	IUCN
		UNEP		The Nature Conservancy
		World Bank		Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
				WWF

For more information please contact:
**Ambassador Ronald Jumeau, UN Permanent Mission,
 Republic of Seychelles (seychelles@un.int)**

