

### Session 3: Supporting SDG delivery

#### Paper 1: SDG 14 as an entry to delivery of other SDGs *WIOMSA/Nairobi Convention*

##### **1 Sustainable Development Goal 14: A Pathway for Ocean Sustainability**

The ocean is vital to all life on Earth and fundamental for our survival and well being. In the Western Indian Ocean(WIO) region, it provides essential ecosystem services, food, and opportunities for sustainable economic growth, and many cultural and recreational activities for the 65 million people that live within 10 km of the coast (Burke et al., 2011). Further, the Nairobi Convention Contracting Parties derive US\$ 25 billion per year<sup>1</sup> (UNEP/ Nairobi Convention Secretariat, 2009) from tourism, fisheries, coastal agriculture, mining, mariculture, and ports and coastal transport sectors.

However, human activities in the ocean and around coasts such as pollution (especially from land-based sources), overfishing, shipping, overexploitation of resources and destruction of habitats combined with climate change, are impacting negatively on the health of WIO marine ecosystems. These practices threaten to damage and alter ecosystem structure and functioning crucial for providing food security, livelihoods, and sustainable economic growth. Additionally, climate change, is likely to have profound and unpredictable effects on WIO marine organisms and ecosystems including rise in sea levels, alteration of ocean circulation and thermodynamics, increase in sea surface temperature, change in rainfall patterns, increase in ocean acidification (Anderson and Samoilys, 2016; Samoilys et al., 2014), and changes in the duration and intensity of the Monsoon winds in the WIO (Lee, 2009; Backeberg et al., 2012), with implications for food security and many marine industries.

Urgent interventions are therefore needed. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, the international community placed ocean sustainability as one of the world's priorities for attaining sustainable development. The stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal 14, the ocean goal calls for the international community to: "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development."

SDG 14 offers a great opportunity to advance ocean sustainability in the WIO to address current and emerging threats. It is underpinned by targets addressing conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, seas and marine resources, including coastal zones, and targets referring to capacity building and ocean governance. SDG 14 recognises the role of the ocean for economic, social and ecological development and the need to address the most urgent and pressing issues affecting coastal and marine ecosystems including pollution from land-based sources, ocean acidification, overfishing e.t.c. (See Annex 1)

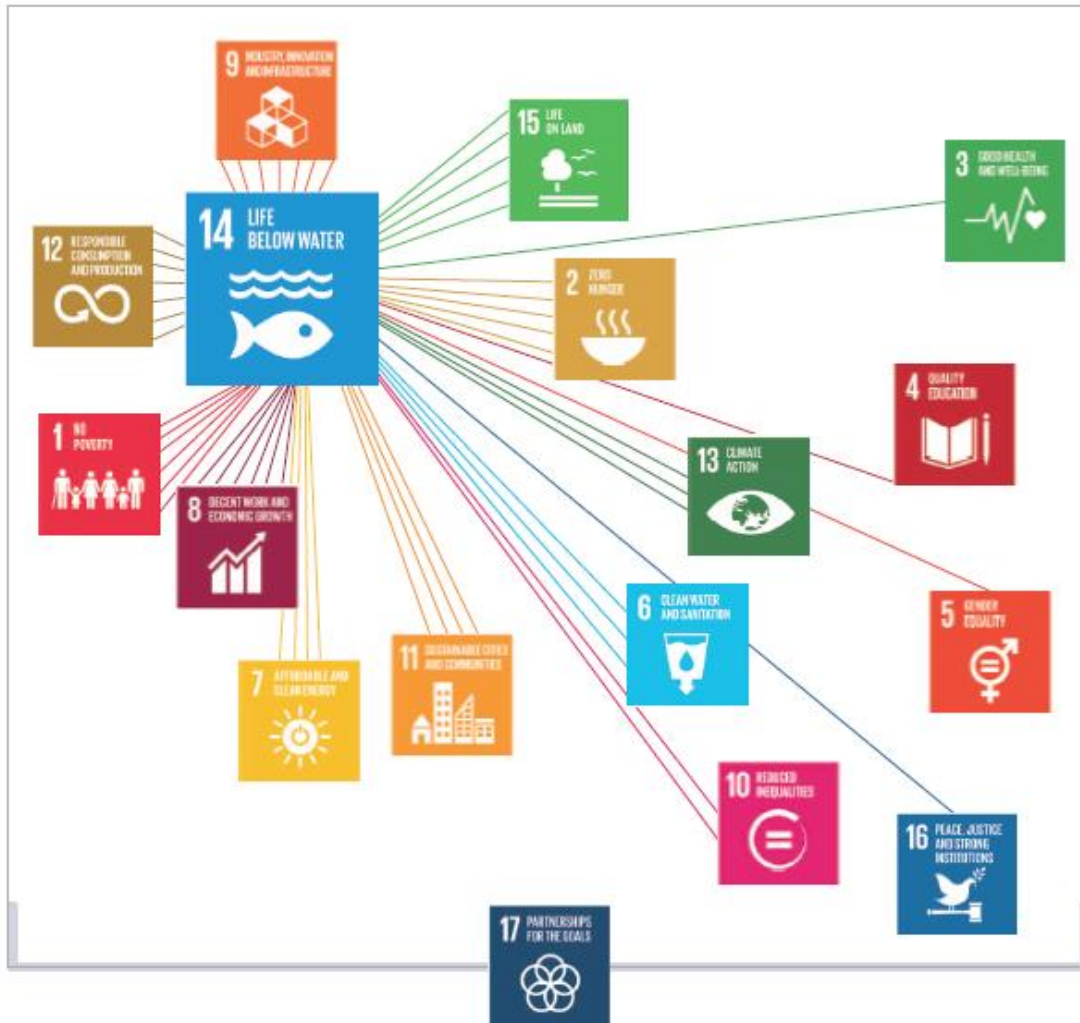
At the same time, SDG 14 has important interactions with other goals (Schmidt et. al 2017) and its implementation will assist in achieving a number of other goals. These interactions highlight the possible synergies among the SDGs into one conceptual framework for action (Nilsson et al 2016) where attainment of SDG 14 will also increase the return on investment for reaching the other goals especially those related to poverty alleviation, food security, sustainable blue economy/ocean economy and climate change.

- SDG1 'end poverty in all its forms everywhere', directly in islands and coastal communities, and indirectly everywhere and indispensable for sustaining (subsistence) livelihoods;
- SDG2 'End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture', with seafood from the ocean being an important source of protein and micronutrients, and indispensable for sustaining (subsistence) livelihoods;

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<sup>1</sup> Excluding the Republic of South Africa

- **SDG6 'ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all', where concern over ocean health can drive improvements in land-based water supply and sanitation;**
- **SDG7 'ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all', with ocean and off-shore renewable energy a large potential source of sustainable energy;**
- **SDG8 "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all', through the contribution the blue/ocean economy to innovation, and further growth and employment;**
- **SDG9 'build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation', where concerns about ocean health and its environmental integrity need to be integrated into the choice, design, location, and management of infrastructure and patterns of industrialisation;**
- **SDG10 'reduce inequality within and among countries', because a sustainable and equitable blue/ocean economy would, for example, ensure access for small-scale fishers, which constitute the largest employment category in the ocean economy and are among the bottom 40% of the population by income. This would benefit developing coastal and island populations, which are also part of the global bottom 40% by income.**



(Source: Unger et. Al 2017)

- **SDG11 'make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable', with coastal regions at risk of being damaged or even lost because of climate change-induced storms and sea-level rise ;**
- **SDG12 'Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns', both of resources, products and services derived from the ocean, and of (land-based) production and consumption affecting the ocean (e.g. plastic litter);**
- **SDG13 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts', with the interface of 'ocean' and 'climate' being perhaps the most important interaction between any two SDGs. The Paris Climate Agreement (UNFCCC 2015) entered into force in November 2016 establishing a new regime under UNFCCC for climate protection. The Agreement highlights the ocean's role in the climate system more prominently than earlier instruments and clearly articulates the integrity of ocean ecosystems as a sink and reservoir as outlined in the UNFCCC<sup>2</sup>. The Paris Climate Agreement has been formulated in a broader mission to global sustainability as reflected in Article 1 'in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty' and can make an important contribution to the implementation of the SDGs. Thus strong synergies exist between the goals of the Paris Agreement and SDG 14 and other ocean-related goals. Ocean and coastal ecosystems are essential climate regulators, but are also directly affected by climate change. Restoring and protecting the health of oceans, coasts and marine resources (SDG 14) contributes to strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of both the natural and human systems to climate change (Schmidt et al 2017). Further, coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, saltmarshes and seagrass meadows contribute both to climate adaptation (e.g. protection from coastal hazards) and climate mitigation (through carbon sequestration). Further co-benefits arise from reducing risks and vulnerabilities and strengthening the resilience of coastal communities to climate-related hazards (such as by promoting poverty eradication, food security, sustainable livelihoods, capacity building or biodiversity (Schmidt et. Al 2017).**
- **SDG 15 'Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss' improves the resilience of ecosystems and supports healthy and productive oceans. While ocean conservation and sustainable use of marine resources contributes to the reduction of habitat degradation, biodiversity loss and species protection, conservation, restoration and protection of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems will also benefit the health of oceans and seas. Wildlife trafficking, benefit sharing of genetic resources or invasive species also concern marine and coastal habitats and species.**
- **SDG 16 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels' with ocean governance being a key component of building effective, accountable and transparent institutions, that are responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making, essential to achieve SDG 14. It will contribute to delivering peace, justice and strong institutions.**
- **SDG 17 'Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development' is an important building block for the 2030 Agenda, aiming at strengthening the means of implementation for all SDGs. Global partnerships for sustainable development are especially important in the context of oceans, seas and marine resources, owing to the global connectivity of marine ecosystems and the cross-cutting and often far-reaching effects of marine resource use. Achievement of SDG 14 will benefit particularly from the mobilisation of financial aid, strengthened technology exchange, capacity building, better policy coherence and multi-stakeholder partnerships.**

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<sup>2</sup> See Preamble, Article 5.1

## **2 Implementing SDG 14 in the Western Indian Ocean Region: Sustainable Development Goals as a Framework for Blue/Ocean Economy**

**SDG 14 is a critical enabler of poverty alleviation, and environmentally sustainable economic growth and social well-being ('blue growth'), particularly in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the region. Sustained incomes and economic benefits from fisheries, aquaculture and tourism sectors depend heavily on the health of oceans and coasts (Schmidt et. al 2017). Strengthening the resilience of oceans and coasts through conservation and protection of coastal wetlands, will help reduce shock exposure and enhance the resilience of poor coastal populations to extreme climate-related events. Technology transfer and research capacity building in aquaculture can help enhance and income generation for artisanal fishers. Further, creating marine protected areas (MPAs) can provide fishery benefits and remove pressure from key fishing areas such as spawning grounds and nurseries, and enable fish stocks in adjacent areas to rebound and conserve marine biodiversity.**

**Except for the Seychelles, Mauritius and South Africa, over 50% of coastal populations have low Human Development Index (HDI) values and live below the poverty line (Gössling, 2006; UNDP, 2006). Ensuring that the regions' critical habitats (coastal lowland forests, mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs) are protected, restored and managed (14.1,14.2, 14.5 ) is crucial to reducing poverty and increasing income for the 65 million people that live within 10 km of the coast. (Schmidt et, al 2017). With the value of Western Indian Ocean assets estimated at US\$ 333.8 billion (Obura et al., 2017), there is enormous potential create jobs, in marine and associated non-marine sectors to provide high revenues for WIO economies and benefit poor populations (goals 1.1, 1.2). For example, developing marine extractive industries such as offshore oil and gas exploration (where feasible) with proper environmental safeguards in place could provide economic benefits from income and saving on fuel imports that could be directed to poverty reduction programmes. Investing these proceeds from these non-renewable resources into long-term sustainable economic opportunities such as investment in infrastructure such as road networks, and other amenities in the coastal and beach zones, creating sovereign wealth funds, and building human and institutional capacities will reduce long-term poverty (1.2).**

**Thus, the implementation of SDG 14 as the framework blue/ocean economy in the WIO can improve the health and productivity of ocean ecosystems, reverse the current cycle of decline, and enable the achievement of other SDGs. Better ocean governance, valuation of WIO ocean assets, developing national blue economy strategies, and developing capacity for marine spatial planning and other area-based management tools to reduce conflicts among uses, can ensure financial sustainability, ecosystem integrity and prosperity, and promote long-term national growth and employment in WIO countries.**

## **3 Conclusion: Developing a Regional Approach for SDG 14 Implementation in the WIO from COP 9 and Beyond**

**The responsibility to transpose the 2030 Agenda commitments and the SDGs into standards and policies, establish monitoring mechanisms and provide regular reporting on actions undertaken is first and foremost the responsibility of the Contracting Parties. The implementation of SDG 14 will however fall short of the transformative ambition of the Agenda 2030 without an effective coordination between States, especially at the regional level (Wright et. al 2017). Nairobi Convention Contracting Parties already registered a regional voluntary commitment at the Ocean Conference held in New York in June 2017 to strengthen coordination among Contracting Parties for SDG 14 implementation and enhance integrated and ecosystem-based management. As the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs unfolds globally, there is opportunity for further regional engagement in the WIO to implement SDG 14 and other related SDGs, supported by decisions of Contracting Parties at the Ninth Conference of Parties as outlined below:**



### 3.1 Blue/Ocean Economy

Over the past few years, the Nairobi Convention has proved to be effective in facilitating regional dialogues on blue/ocean economy to foster peer-to-peer learning and understanding of blue/ocean economy principles. Contracting Parties are encouraged to continue advancing blue/ocean economy approaches in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 14 as pathways for sustained incomes and economic benefits from natural blue capital including fisheries, tourism, oil and gas development, offshore renewable energy, and other maritime activities. In this regard, Contracting Parties should develop ocean or blue economy strategies based on ecosystem-based management according to their national circumstances and engagement with all relevant stakeholders, including conservation, environment, and private sector. The strategies should ensure the environmental sustainability of all ocean activities and investment, broad access to opportunities, and fair sharing of benefits.

### 3.2 Capacity Development for the 2030 Oceans Agenda

Achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda in relation to oceans, coasts, and marine resources fundamentally relies upon strengthening capacities and institutions to achieve marine ecosystem-based management (Shackeroff et. al 2016). Common and comprehensive capacity development for Contracting Parties especially on blue/ocean economy can support coordinated action for SDG 14 and other ocean-related goals in an approach that links capacity needs with regional realities. Priority should be given to capacity development on Marine Spatial Planning in context of the growth and development of the blue/ocean economy as there is limited technical capacity in most countries.

In addition, knowledge and capacity building, and training and awareness programmes on climate change and technology transfer is a critical component for the implementation of the Paris Agreement by developing countries, and the achievement of SDG 14 targets. It will contribute to raising capacity on climate change adaptation and mitigation and ensure more effective climate change planning and management.

### 3.3 Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

The Nairobi Convention Climate Change Strategy articulates regional collaborative actions required to address climate change impacts to complement the national adaptation and mitigation strategies in place. In its architecture, the Strategy focusses on climate change adaptation as its most transformative response to climate change impacts in the WIO<sup>3</sup> with four key strategic outcomes: a) *improved adaptation policymaking*; b) *improved decision support to policymaking*; c) *implementation of climate change adaptation is supported*; and d) *evaluation of climate change adaptation*. Building on the instruments and initiatives connected to Implementing the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the knowledge base of IPCC, implementation of these strategic objectives are of great importance and relevance to address the impacts of global climate change in the WIO. As the ocean is now better recognized in the global climate governance regime and policy, successful implementation of Nairobi Convention Climate Change Strategy in a manner that ensures long-term climate action and scaling adaptation efforts of the WIO region requires the development of a regional mechanism that develops policy interlinkages between the ocean and climate, and the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

### 3.4 Science to Policy Dialogue

A science to policy platform should be created to bring together scientists, blue/ocean economy practitioners, civil society organisations and Contracting Parties governments to enhance regional cooperation and exchange on science and research that feeds into relevant policy processes to improve

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<sup>3</sup> With regard to mitigation, countries are encouraged to contribute to mitigation in a modest way through localized emissions reduction, and actions that increase the local sequestration of carbon (enhancing the sinks) – or so-called “blue carbon” initiatives such as conserving (or re-planting) mangroves, conserving sea-grass meadows, and conserving coral-reef structures.

the knowledge base and scientific capacity for SDG 14 implementation, especially on sustainable blue/ocean economy. The science-policy platform could for example lead the process of developing regional indicators that could support follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, and facilitate harmonised implementation across SDG14 targets and other ocean-related SDGs especially for issues that are subject to different legal regimes and that cannot be managed effectively by one sector alone.

### 3.5 Developing Partnerships for the 2030 Oceans Agenda

A WIO regional partnership for the Oceans 2030 Agenda would bring together various sectors and actors in ocean management to develop a coordinated approach and roadmap for integrated SDG implementation. Contracting Parties are encouraged to build broad-based strategic partnerships by enhancing existing partnerships, and establishing additional partnerships. Broadened partnerships will leverage financial and technical resources from partners to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs for example from civil society and donors.

### 3.6 Development of Critical Habitats and MPAs Outlooks

Conducting regular and periodic assessments that map the state of the ocean and its ecosystems, and the ecosystem services it provides, including trends and the outlook, and impacts of the marine and coastal environment and their socio-economic impacts are needed to enhance better decision and policy making for blue/ocean economy in the context of SDG 14. By identifying risks and opportunities as well as formulating value propositions for the blue/ocean economy, thematic outlooks such as marine protected areas, critical habitats such as coral reefs, seagrass, mangroves among others can assist Contracting Parties to monitor progress on implementation of SDG 14 and other ocean-related SDGs and reporting at the global level.

### 3.7 Sustainable Financing

To meet the targets of SDG 14 and other ocean related-targets in the WIO will require sustainable financing in the short, medium and long term. Some possible avenues are explored below:

#### 3.7.1 WIOSAP and SAPPHIRE Projects

During the period 2018-2022, the Nairobi Convention will execute two Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded projects namely, the WIOSAP project on “Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities”, and the SAPPHIRE project on the “Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reforms”. The implementation of these projects addresses aspects of WIO-Lab Strategic Action Plan and joint ASCLME and SWIOFP Strategic Action Plan respectively. The two projects aim to implement most of the SDG 14 and other targets related to the ocean, coasts, and marine resources.

As Nairobi Convention Contracting Parties develop national frameworks aimed at intra-government planning and coordination necessary to implement the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, the WIOSAP and SAPPHIRE projects could leverage the much needed financial resources to bridge the financial deficits at national levels. However, there is need to develop synergy between the two (2) projects to ensure continuity and sustainability of the Nairobi Convention Work Programme 2018-2022, and better integrated and coordinated delivery of the Oceans 2030 Agenda.

#### 3.7.2 Climate Finance

Financial instruments are key to foster climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Nairobi Convention can mobilize climate finance solutions at the regional level from a number of international institutions such as the Green Climate Fund which is formally established within the UNFCCC, the World Bank, the GEF among others to support regional programmes on transition to resilient blue economy pathways in the context of climate change adaptation and mitigation and to support implementation of the Nairobi Convention Climate Change Strategy and ocean SDGs.

### 3.7.3 Other Innovative Financing Products

- In October 2016 the UN Secretary General announced the creation of a new platform for innovative finance for the delivery of the SDGs. The proposed Financial Innovation Platform will provide a new multi-stakeholder forum to help finance progress toward the Goals. This platform could help to raise awareness and engagement at the global level for ocean finance solutions, including those at the regional level (Wright et. Al 2017).
- Innovative financing mechanisms that draw on private sector sources (for example those that aim to access capital markets) can also be considered as a means to deliver finance at a regional level. The African Development Bank can play an important role in catalysing ocean and climate finance.
- Processes that help to standardise, verify and deliver specific SDG-compatible funding products, such as the Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI)<sup>4</sup>, may offer a further opportunity for improving funding flows, including from the private sector. Bonds certified under this process provide private investors with predictable cash flows whilst delivering finance for climate projects. (Wright et. Al 2017)

### REFERENCES

Schmidt, S., Neumann, B., Waweru, Y., Durussel, C., Unger, S., Visbeck, M. (2017): SDG 14 - Conserve and Sustainable Use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development. - In: Griggs, D., Nilsson, M., Stevance, A., McCollum, D. (Eds.), A Guide to SDG Interactions: from Science to Implementation, Paris : International Council for Science (ICSU), p. 174-218.

Wright, G., Schmidt, S., Rochette, J., Shackeroff, J., Unger, S., Waweru, Y., Müller, A., 'Partnering for a Sustainable Ocean: The Role of Regional Ocean Governance in Implementing SDG14', PROG: IDDRI, IASS, TMG & UN Environment, 2017.

### Annex 1

SDG Targets	SDG Indicators
14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution	14.1.1 Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density
14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	14.2.1 Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches
14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels	14.3.1 Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations
14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks	14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels

<sup>4</sup> Climate Bonds Initiative is aiming to mobilise the \$100 trillion bond market for climate change solutions by: developing a large and liquid Green and Climate Bonds Market that will help drive down the cost of capital for climate projects; growing aggregation mechanisms for fragmented sectors; and supporting governments seeking to tap debt capital markets. See Climate Bonds Initiative, 'About us' <https://www.climatebonds.net/about>.

<b>in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics</b>	
<b>14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information</b>	<b>14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas</b>
<b>14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation</b>	<b>14.6.1 Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing</b>
<b>14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism</b>	<b>14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a percentage of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries</b>
<b>14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries</b>	<b>14.a.1 Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology</b>
<b>14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets</b>	<b>14.b.1 Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries</b>
<b>14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of "The future we want"</b>	<b>14.c.1 Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources</b>

**Table 1: SDG14 targets and indicators**

Source: Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Paper 2: Regional Outlooks on Critical Habitats and Marine Protected Areas: Background, Purpose and Process  
Nairobi Convention/WIOMSA



### *The Background*

The Nairobi Convention through its GEF-funded project, '*Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities (WIO-SAP)*', which started in December 2016, is supporting Contracting Parties towards the delivery of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in general and specifically Goal (SDG) 14 with special focus on Targets 14.2 and 14.5. Target 14.2 calls for the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans by 2020, while Target 14.5 states that by 2020, countries shall conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on best available scientific information.

The WIO-SAP Project addresses priority conservation issues within the WIO Region as agreed on by Contracting Parties through the following Components:

Component A: *Sustainable management of critical habitats* focuses on the protection, restoration and management of critical coastal habitats and ecosystems recognizing the enormous value of healthy critical coastal and marine habitats for the future well-being of people in the WIO region.

Component B: *Improved water quality* focuses on the need for the WIO Region's water quality to attain international standards by the year 2035.

Component C: *Sustainable management of river flows* aims at promoting wise management of river basins in the region through implementation of a suite of activities aimed at building the capacity for environmental flows assessment and application in river basins of the region.

Component D: *Governance and regional collaboration* focuses on strengthening governance and awareness in the WIO region with a view to facilitating sustainable management of critical coastal ecosystems and habitats.

The Regional Outlook on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the WIO region is one of the main outputs of Component A, and together with the Regional Outlook on Critical Habitats is intended to inform policy-making with regard to enhanced coastal and marine conservation in the region. These two publications will feed into a third publication on recommendations for strengthening marine conservation in the WIO region, aimed at supporting contracting parties to meet their obligations, specifically under SDG Targets 14.2 and 14.5 and Aichi Target 11, and also under other SDGs.

All three publications are being developed in partnership with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), which with its strong connections across the scientific and MPA communities in the region is playing a vital co-ordination and commissioning role.

### *The Purpose*

The specific purpose of the Regional Outlook on MPAs is to provide a baseline assessment of existing coastal and marine conservation efforts in the region. This involves not only a quantitative assessment of the areas and habitats currently under protection, but also a qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of the protection measures in place across the region. Areas considered to be under sufficient levels of protection for inclusion in this assessment are those which have been formally proclaimed, under appropriate legislation as MPAs, and those under forms of protection which conform to the internationally recognised criteria for Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

**This Outlook will contribute to a larger process involving the development of an Outlook on Critical Habitats in the region, and a final Outlook on recommendations for the available future strategic options, including other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) for countries to achieve the 10% target based on the identification of critical habitats that require protection. The Outlook captures the spatial extent and management effectiveness of current MPAs, makes recommendations for enhanced management and also documents proposed MPAs as countries make progress towards the 10/20 target. The link between the MPA Outlook and the related Critical Habitats Outlook is that many habitats are found within these MPAs, although some, in particular the deep-sea habitats are not well represented. Understanding the degree of coverage currently afforded the regions critical habitats will help inform the recommendations for future areas to be brought under protection through the establishment of more MPAs and OECMs.**

#### *The Development Process*

The Outlook development process was initiated through a scoping workshop in Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles in June 2017. The objectives of this workshop were:

- to develop and agree on a process to conduct of an overview of existing regional MPAs as part of the implementation of the SDG Target 14.5; and
- to develop and agree on a process to undertake a regional critical habitats inventory in the context of biodiversity and existing and emerging economic activities.

With the intended outcomes of these processes to achieve:

- establishment of authoritative databases on the most critical habitats and the biodiversity most at risk;
- MPA coverage (size, maps, and the conservation value of the MPAs from a biodiversity and socio-ecological values)
- determination of the management effectiveness of MPA including adaptive management processes and requirements
- determination of participating countries' future options for achieving 10% MPA coverage (e) communication to countries on what they need to do to achieve the 10% target based on identification of critical habitats that require protection, and on the consequences of failing to meet the target, and
- a consistent monitoring and reporting framework at national and regional levels.

The process has involved the commissioning of an editor and of authors from each country to collate all available information on existing MPAs and areas under equivalent protection, and also on the rapidly emerging phenomenon of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs), and their equivalents in different countries. The Outlook also has a strong focus on management effectiveness of MPAs to which a section is dedicated. All draft chapters are being subjected to both internal and external review and a validation process is underway with all countries concerned.

The design and layout processes are being led by a publication design specialist in collaboration with WIOMSA, the NBO Convention and the editor. The aim is to have a final on-line electronic version of the Outlook ready for launch at the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Nairobi Convention on 31 August 2018, with a print version scheduled for the end of October 2018.

While the 10/20 target is the initial focus of this initiative, the Regional Outlook on Marine Protected Areas will provide a sound foundation on which to build marine conservation across the WIO Region into the future.

***Draft Decision on OUTLOOKS (as Part of CRITICAL HABITATS)***

- 1. Request the Secretariat to expedite the completion of the outlooks, subject them to validation and report on the same at the next COP**