

Leadership Renewal for Senior Officials and Policy Makers (Women) in Marine Policy and Ocean Governance in WIO Region

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Introduction

All the 10 countries of the Western Indian Ocean, namely Comoros, France (Réunion), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa and Tanzania are contracting parties to the Nairobi Convention for the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO).

Over 60 million people inhabit the coastal zone in the WIO region, which has very high rate of population growth and urbanization. Invariably many of the coastal communities rely on the sea for their economic, social and cultural security. The region has an estimated annual gross marine product (equivalent to GDP) of US\$ 20.8 billion indicating the significant economic value of the region's coastal and marine resources.

Major governance weaknesses related to oceans and the coastal environment of the WIO region have been identified, and include policy and legislative inadequacies, limited institutional capacities, inadequate awareness, inadequate financial resources and mechanisms, as well as poor knowledge management. The vast resources of the region are managed by various national institutions, organizations, agreements and commissions, with independent and often overlapping mandates. There is an apparent lack of mechanisms for effective coordination and inter-sectorial governance among institutions involved in the management of coastal and marine environment. Nevertheless, legal, institutional and policy responses appear to converge, acknowledging that anthropogenic activities do create pressure on coastal and marine areas with resulting environmental impacts that need to be regulated. In line with this, strengthening institutional and leadership capacities for sustainable management and ocean governance remains a top priority for countries in the WIO.

Rationale

The roles and responsibilities of men and women in the WIO region are evolving in response to changing social, political and economic contexts and the opportunities confronting them. The same can be said of women's engagement in coastal and marine resource exploitation and management, which varies from country to country, depending on traditions, supporting policy mechanisms and infrastructure for enhancing resource management and effective participation. In recent years, the number of women involved in science, marine policy and action has significantly increased, accounting for 30% of the world's researchers. There is an apparent need to promote gender mainstreaming in integrated management of marine and coastal resources.

The leadership renewal is organised in recognition of the role of women in leadership and the high impact of proactive and competent leadership to effectively lead and manage the path to sustainable development. There is a growing need to equip women in the WIO region with leadership skills for better advocacy, inclusivity in management, and for policy development. Leadership skills are necessary for the formulation of informed policies and decision making critical to the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources in the WIO region.

The leadership renewal training workshop is organized as part of implementation of institutional capacity building component of the Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reforms (SAPPHIRE) project planned to be delivered at national and regional level. Moreover, the training responds to outcome 1.2: technical and institutional capacity developed to deliver Knowledge-Based Governance approaches by delivering scientific results to management and policy makers for adaptive management decision-making and outcome 5.1: capacity for improved Ocean Governance strengthened through training and support as well as to Decision CP9/1.2. of the Ninth Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention on support and partnership for projects.

The policy harmonization and management reforms component of the SAPPHIRE Project seeks to ensure that gender-related issues and the different needs of men and women as well as youth are considered during the implementation of the project and the Strategic Action Programme. Notably, such efforts contributing to the attainment of SDG 5 and improved ocean governance under SDG 14.

Objective

The leadership workshop seeks to promote and empower women as champions and active participants in networking among Scientists, Managers and Senior Officers in the areas of coastal and marine resources management who can influence policy formulation and decision making. The workshop will equip the participants with leadership skills for better advocacy on the use of integrated approaches to the management of the coastal and marine resources in the region. These leaders and experts are tasked with the responsibility of managing coastal and marine resources and can significantly influence decision making processes and ocean governance in the WIO region. Secondly, it is expected that participants will be equipped with leadership skills for better advocacy on the use of integrated approaches to the management of the coastal and marine resources in the region.

Expected outcome

- Strengthened leadership capabilities of Senior Officials and Policy Makers in Marine Policy and Ocean Governance in WIO region in order to proactively lead, advocate for and efficiently coordinate environmental resource management and ocean governance at national and regional level,
- Enhanced exchange and learning among policy makers and leaders with increased opportunity for networking.