



Media Release

Representatives of 10 African countries are meeting in Dar es Salaam this week to continue the process of intensively studying and, in time, collectively managing the marine resources of eastern Africa and its small island states.

Delegates from Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Réunion, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa and Tanzania are meeting at the Kunduchi Beach Hotel for the Steering Committee meetings of the Agulhas and Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystems (ASCLME) Project and the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Project (SWIOFP).

Both projects are funded by the Global Environment Facility and are being implemented in the western Indian Ocean region with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the French Fund for the Protection of the Environment (*Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial*).

The National Environment Management Council of Tanzania is hosting both meetings.

The ASCLME Project is concerned with introducing an ecosystem-based approach to managing marine resources, while the SWIOFP is focused on improving the management of commercial fisheries in the region.

Together the two projects are providing a vehicle for the 10 countries of the western Indian Ocean region to work together to better manage their valuable marine and coastal resources, for the benefit of their people.

They form part of a three-pronged intervention by the GEF to develop an ecosystem approach to marine resource management in the region. A third project, WIO-LaB, which focused on land-based sources of marine and coastal pollution and was implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), is now complete.

In the coming years, the ASCLME Project and SWIOFP will document the environmental threats—such as coastal degradation and declining fisheries – that are faced by the countries of the region and develop a Strategic Action Programme to deal with these threats.

“We are grateful to the Tanzanian Government for hosting this significant meeting of the countries of the western Indian Ocean and we look forward to working closely with our many partners, both regional and international,” says Dr David Vousden, Director of the ASCLME Project.

“This meeting of the steering committees will help to strategise for the development and implementation of effective long-term management and governance of these critically important marine ecosystems.”

Rondolph Payet, Director of the SWIOFP, emphasised the importance of marine and coastal resources in the western Indian Ocean, saying:

“The marine environment of this region is unique to the world and of major importance to the economies and community welfare of these countries. We are excited to be working in partnership with the governments of ten African countries, the ASCLME Project and a number of other international organisations with a common objective – to encourage and promote sustainable marine and coastal management in the western Indian Ocean region.”

The steering committee meetings take place from 13 to 17 September. Members of the media are invited to attend the opening ceremony of the two meetings. This will take place at Kunduchi Beach Hotel at 08h30 on Monday 13 September.

Issued by the Agulhas and Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystems (ASCLME) Project
10 September 2010

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