



For Immediate Release

The Launch of the Reviving the Western Indian Ocean Economy Report and the Western Indian Ocean Mangrove Book.

Nairobi, Kenya 31st May 2017. Reviving the Western Indian Ocean Economy (WIO); Actions for a Sustainable Future Report was launched today alongside the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Mangrove Ecology and Management Book.

The Blue Economy report estimates the WIO coastal and marine ecosystems ocean assets at US\$ 333.3 Billion, with an estimated annual gross marine product of US\$ 20.8 Billion. Essentially making it the 4th largest economy in the region if the Western Indian Ocean were considered as a country.

Kenya's ocean economy is calculated at US\$ 2.4 billion. Compared to Kenya's GDP of \$60 billion, this is only 4% of the total, indicative of the potential growth in the ocean economy.

The event which was presided over by Prof. Judi Wakhungu, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources was held as a pre-event for the UN Ocean Conference to be held in New York in June 2017. The UN Ocean Conference is being held to focus on SDG 14: [Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development](#)

The report shows that the region's most valuable assets are fisheries, mangroves, sea grass beds and coral reefs. Adjacent coastal and carbon-absorbing assets are also central to the wellbeing of communities and the health of the ocean economy. The analysis finds that the region is heavily dependent on high-value ocean natural assets that are already showing signs of decline. The report offers a set of priority actions required to secure a sustainable, inclusive 'blue economy' for the region, and thus to provide food and livelihoods for growing populations.

While delivering her remarks at the formal launch of the report, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources Prof. Judi Wakhungu underscored the importance of the global maritime business that is growing rapidly. "The world maritime sector is fast growing and increasingly becoming a key driver to the global business and Kenya has to strategically position herself to tap on this huge potential if the country has to be a middle-income nation by 2030" said Prof. Wakhungu. The Kenya government

has developed the Blue Economy strategy that requires concerted efforts by the different partners for effective implementation.

“Many countries in the world have developed their economies through their ocean wealth. Therefore, healthy oceans and coastal ecosystems underpin the wealth of the region and offer huge potential for sustainable development. Reviving the Western Indian Ocean Economy report demonstrates this potential.” Prof Wakhungu added.

The Chief Executive Officer of WWF-Kenya Mr Mohamed Awer, said, “This analysis shows that the leaders of the Western Indian Ocean face a clear and urgent choice: to continue with business-as-usual, overseeing the steady decline of ocean assets, or to seize the moment to secure the natural ocean assets that will be crucial for the future of fast-growing coastal communities and economies. The Western Indian Ocean still has the chance to get it right.”

The report is the result of an in-depth, joint assessment by The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), CORDIO East Africa and WWF. It combines a new economic analysis of the region's ocean assets with a review of their contribution to human development.

On his part, Dr. Jared Bosire who is the lead author of the WIO Mangrove Ecology and Management Book contends that although the WIO has relatively intact coastal and marine ecosystems, they are facing a number of threats and pressures. ‘The threats the WIO ecosystems are facing especially the mangroves include large-scale commercial and agricultural expansion, coastal development, industrial fishing, shipping, oil and gas exploration, and climate change. For instance Kenya and Tanzania has lost about 18% of their mangroves over the 25 years. The WIO Mangrove identifies these challenges as well and recommends proactive and cross-cutting interventions including green financing, improved governance, ecosystem restoration and marine spatial planning among others’ said Dr. Bosire.

Reviving the Western Indian Ocean Economy Report covers the 10 WIO region countries, namely Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa and Tanzania.

The WIO coastal and marine ecosystems are source of food and livelihood for over 60 Million people who inhabit the coastal areas. Both local and global trade in key natural resource products from this region is of major economic importance. They are all underpinned to healthy and productive coastal and marine ecosystems.

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