

WEST AFRICA LAUNCHES RAMSAR NETWORK

The West African countries have launched a network to control and monitor the wetlands of their coastal zones as part of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention.

The West African Coastal Zone Wetlands Network (WacoWet) was launched in June 2007 in Cotonou, Benin. It brings together all the countries belonging to the Gulf of

other countries, the government of Benin convened a meeting from 20-22 June 2007 to officially launch the West African Coastal Zone Wetlands Network (WacoWet) initiative.

The meeting brought together participants from Benin, Cote d'ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria, and Togo, who reviewed and approved

They also sought collaboration with other similar initiatives before the next meeting.

Benin is to host the WacoWet Secretariat in the interim period of at least three years under the Benin Environment Agency (ABE).

The Ramsar Secretariat will provide guidance and funds for three years



Participants at the African Regional meeting on Ramsar held in Tanzania in 2005

Guinea region and who are signatories to the convention.

The government of Benin was given the mandate to spearhead the initiative by the other members by preparing the relevant documents which were discussed and approved at the Council of Parties (COP9) Africa Region preparatory meeting in Arusha Tanzania in 2005.

After several consultations with the

WacoWet's charter, protocol, strategic plan and rules of procedures.

The members decided to prepare a regional initiative to focus on marine and coastal wetlands in the region.

The Cotonou meeting also discussed among other things the WacoWet Secretariat, the role of Ramsar, the work program, and fundraising options.

as approved by the COP.

Participants agreed that part of the resources that were allocated to WacoWet should be used to recruit a consultant who will produce a work program for 2007-2008.

*For more information visit:-
<http://www.africanoceans.net>*

NAMIBIA SUPPORTS LONG-LINE REGULATION

The Government of Namibia has thrown its support behind a damaging report which showed how millions of marine species were being decimated within the Benguela ecosystem through irresponsible fisheries.

The report, funded by Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) and compiled by World Wildlife Fund and Birdlife, gave shocking statistics which revealed that seven million sharks and skates, 34,000 sea birds, 4,200 sea turtles were annually killed through long line fishing.



Weighted lines one of a number of simple measures that can reduce the needless slaughter of albatrosses and other seabirds.

This high number of bycatch in South African, Namibian and Angolan waters has severe economic implications in the countries which have vastly developed fisheries sectors.

During the launch of the report the Namibian Minister of Fisheries, Dr Abraham Iyambo, said that his government supported any moves to try and stop the wasteful carnage and called for more research and monitoring.

Dr. Iyambo made it clear that he personally supported the recommendations stated in the report adding that education and awareness

needed to be intensified to foster an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. He concluded by adding that the report was a valuable asset to policy makers, scientists and the industry.

"It is very encouraging to see the growing support amongst government, fishers and fishing industry leaders for the need to reduce regional impacts on our marine ecosystem," said Aaniyah Omaidien, WWF Sanlam Marine Programme Manager.

WWF has launched constructive talks with government and fishing industries in the three countries to address the issue.

"This report provides a platform from which informed decisions can be made that will reduce the impact on these threatened species in the region. These impacts need to be taken seriously by the governments of the three countries, as well as relevant intergovernmental regional fisheries organizations." said Samantha Petersen, manager of the Birdlife & WWF Responsible Fisheries Programme.

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EDITORIAL

After decades of grappling with environmental problems alone, mostly without success, African governments have realized that it is easier to take a holistic approach to them.

From Tanzania and Mozambique on the Western Indian Ocean to South Africa, Namibia and Angola in the Benguela Current region, countries are joining hands in trans-frontier efforts to deal with severe environmental problems which threaten their economies and their peoples.

After all, oceans have no boundaries and that which affects Tanzania will most likely affect Mozambique and even Kenya to the north.

This common sense approach to dealing effectively with problems that continue to plague our continent is a wake up call to other countries that are possibly fighting losing battles alone.

It is also manifested in the now firmly accepted "eco-system approach" to handling a wide range of issues which shows that the continued integration of African regions into continental and even global approach to issues is finally paying off.

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"Coasts and Oceans: Hope for Africa"



IMO SOMALIA INITIATIVE GETS BACKING

The United Nations Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, fully supports radical interventions adopted by its members to deal strongly with renegade forces responsible for piracy and lawlessness in the Horn of Africa.

He said during a meeting in London in June 2007 that the recent action taken by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was both timely and appropriate.

Such action could include giving consent to naval ships or ships on Government service - as defined in Article 107 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to enter the country's territorial waters when engaging in operations against pirates.

This is more so against pirates and armed robbers endangering especially the safety of crews of ships

Mr. Mitropoulos took the opportunity to apprise Mr. Ban of IMO's efforts, in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to address the problem of migrants taking to the sea in overcrowded or sub-standard vessels. Mr. Ban stressed the importance of the various UN agencies, programmes and funds to work together in areas of common interest to avoid duplication.

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NEW DATA PORTAL FOR GBIF
The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) has recently launched a new data portal.

"This new portal will make a significant contribution in building the capacity of countries including repatriation of data to countries of origin, and in promoting free exchange of biodiversity information among countries." Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary of CBD said during the launch of the portal at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris in July 2007.

The GBIF portal will also complement the convention's clearing-house mechanism (CHM- <http://www.cbd.int/chm>) which seeks to support the convention's thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work by promoting cooperation and exchanging information.

GBIF is an international organization whose mission is to make biodiversity data freely and openly available via the internet.

More than 130 million biodiversity records have been mobilized and are available for download to help parties in the implementation of their national obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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He promised to raise the issue with the UN Security Council.

Mr. Ban was briefed on the resolutions of the London meeting during a session with IMO Secretary-General, Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos.

The IMO Council, at the meeting in London last month, authorized him to request Mr. Ban to bring the piracy situation off Somalia, once again, to the attention of the UN Security Council.



Mr. Ban Ki-Moon UN Secretary General

The Security Council is then expected to request the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to take action to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships sailing off its coast.

carrying World Food Programme (WFP) humanitarian aid to Somalia. In 2005, the number of reported attacks on ships off the coast of Somalia prompted the IMO Assembly to adopt a resolution, which first brought the matter to the attention of the UN Security Council. This action

resulted in a UN Security Council Presidential Statement, issued in March 2006, encouraging UN Member States with naval vessels and military aircraft operating in international waters and airspace adjacent to the coast of Somalia to be vigilant for piracy incidents and to take appropriate action to protect merchant shipping.

TANZANIA AND MOZAMBIQUE IN JOINT CONSERVATION BID

Mozambique and Tanzania are forming a joint trans-frontier conservation body to maximize on the huge potential they share in the tourism sector.

The Leader of Marine and Coastal Environment Management Project, Dr. Magnus Ngoile, recently noted that the joint effort would create huge opportunities in the sector and provide integrated tourism products. "There is a need for these two nations to explore opportunities for establishing a coastal and marine trans-frontier conservation area," he said.

According to Dr. Ngoile, the discussions on Ruvuma Estuary Trans-frontier conservation area have been initiated by the World Bank Funded Project - the Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Management Project (CMBMP).

Ministries of natural resources and tourism, agriculture, livestock and environment of the two countries would spearhead the implementation of the project.

The project will support the establishment of the trans-frontier marine conservation area. A



Dr. Magnus Ngoile Leader of Marine and Coastal Environment Management Project in Tanzania

feasibility study be commissioned and supported by CMBMP.

Dr. Salomao Bandeira, the Head of Trans-frontier Conservation Area from Mozambique said that the Tanzania and Mozambique Conservation Area is the home to numerous endemic species.

Other important species include wild-dogs, elands and a large population of elephants.

Dr. Bandeira said that the project aims to develop a resource management framework that

both address the problems that development will bring, as well as maximizes its opportunities.

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Bazaruto archipelago in Mozambique

The project will also promote socio-economic development in the region and improve rural communities to achieve optimal benefits for all stakeholders.

UPCOMING EVENTS

International Workshop on Climate Change and Adaptation in Africa - the Role of Space Technologies, 22 - 24 October 2007, Algiers, Algeria ([Link](#))

The Fifth WIOMSA Scientific Symposium, 22 - 26 October 2007, Durban, South Africa ([Link](#))

WIOMSA - Introduction to Marine Systematic Conservation Planning for application in WIO region, 27 - 31 October 2007, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa ([Link](#))

UNESCO/IOC Capacity Development workshop: Building world class teams and team work, 28 - 31 October 2007, Durban, South Africa ([Link](#))

Joint COP5 and COP8 of the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions, 5 - 8 November 2007, Cape Town, South Africa ([Link](#))

CECAF - Demersal Species Working Group Meeting, 5 - 15 November 2007, Banjul, Gambia ([Link](#))

Imaging Spectroscopy Training Course and Hyperspectral Workshop 19 - 22 November 2007, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa ([Link](#))

A course on Scientific Methodology in Marine Ecology a practical approach using tropical intertidal habitats funded by Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), 2 - 17 December 2007, Pemba, Mozambique ([Link](#))

SWIOFC - Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) - 3rd Session, 18 - 21 December 2007, Seychelles ([Link](#))

Aquatic Resources of Kenya II (ARK II) Past, Present and Opportunities for Future Development, 27 - 30 May 2008, KWS Training College, Naivasha, Kenya ([Link](#))



IMO LAUNCHES GUIDELINE FOR PSSA'S

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has launched guidelines on the designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs).

A PSSA is one that is deemed to merit special protection, through action by IMO, because of its significance for recognized ecological, socio-economic, or scientific attributes vulnerable to damage by international shipping activities.

IMO is the only international body responsible for assessing proposals for and designating areas as PSSAs and adopting measures applicable to international shipping. The new IMO publication provides the reader with an overview of all PSSAs, including their Associated Protective Measures (APMs), which

have been designated by the Organization since 1990 and will include all key legal documents



Mr. Efthimios Mitropoulos, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization

adopted by the IMO Assembly and the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC).

The publication will assist member governments in the preparation, identification and submission of PSSA proposals and will provide the MEPC with a robust method to review such proposals so as to ensure that the revised PSSA guidelines are duly fulfilled.

“This publication is an excellent example of IMO’s response to environmental challenges in sea areas that may be vulnerable to damage by international shipping activities. It will make all this important information readily available to mariners and administrations alike.” IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos said.

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USE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO REDUCE POVERTY, URGES IUCN

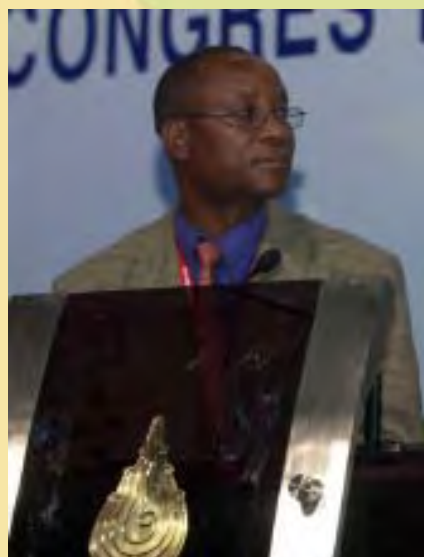
Development agencies should internalize the use of the ecosystem approach to effectively achieve poverty reduction programmes in the world.

According to Dr. Hillary Masundire, chairperson of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management, time was ripe for the approach to move from research status to real implementation through field learning.

In an address to the 12th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Paris in July 2007, IUCN argued that it was time to move from theory to practice.

“Ecosystem goods and services are vital for poverty reduction and for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Ecosystem Approach has

helped to clarify these relationships and to improve livelihoods through the protection and wise and



Dr. Hillary Masundire, chairperson of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management

equitable use of natural resources.” Dr. Masundire said.

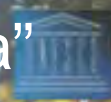
The Chairman highlighted the need to provide user specific guidance on how to apply the ecosystem approach in different sectors, such as water infrastructure, urban and transport development. These sectors he noted could greatly benefit from the system.

A separate meeting running parallel to the workshop featured experiences in implementing the ecosystem approach in Tanzania, the European Union and Latin America.

In addition, the event addressed case studies from Indonesia, Panama, Vietnam, Congo and the Niger/Nigeria border area.

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“Coasts and Oceans: Hope for Africa”



Regional Programmes UPDATES

BCLME: SHARE OR BE DOOMED – BCC MINISTERS AGREE

Declining fish productivity in the Benguela current countries has prompted them to move closer to jointly monitor and managing their marine resources.

Fisheries ministers from Angola, Namibia and South Africa met in Windhoek Namibia in July 2007 under the recently formed Benguela Current Commission (BCC) to negotiate the establishment of an ecosystems approach to manage their vast resources.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Abraham Iyambo, Namibia's Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources at the BCC headquarter.

Dr Iyambo was elected to chair the Benguela Current Commission in its first year. Namibia will also host the Commission.

There are rising concerns that the levels of off-take despite earlier fishing moratoriums on species like the popular hake and horse mackerel which form 50 per cent of the areas total catch were unsustainable.

Others who attended the meeting were Salomão Juheto Xirimambi, Minister of Fisheries in Angola, and Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in South Africa.

The Commission is expected to provide a formal platform for the three countries to negotiate the introduction of an "ecosystem approach" to managing the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME).

The BCLME stretches from the west coast of South Africa and Namibia to

Cabinda, the northern-most province of Angola.



Ministers from the Benguela Current region during the meeting held in Namibia to discuss contentious issues affecting the recently formed Benguela Current Commission (BCC)

It is one of the richest ecosystems in the world, with valuable commercial fisheries, an important marine diamond mining industry and Africa's second most productive oil and gas fields. These are located primarily off Angola.

"Our three countries have over the past ten years started to work closely on fisheries management, marine research, environmental monitoring, biodiversity management and the protection of our coastal waters." He said.

He suggested that the Commission could help the three countries to adapt to "the serious challenges posed by climate change and define long-term strategies for food security, employment and poverty alleviation for coastal communities".

Climate change and the impact it may be having on the fisheries of the BCLME has been in the spotlight since scientists identified a rise in sea surface temperature of about 1°C at the northern and southern extremes of the BCLME.

Scientists believe that the warming may be having an impact on commercial fisheries some of which have declined in spite of conservation and management efforts.

Off Namibia, for instance, pilchard stocks have not recovered, even though the fishing industry has been restricted to catches of between zero and 20 000 tons for the past seven years despite standing at an estimated 1.3 million tonnes in the early seventies.

South Africa's van Schalkwyk, noted that shared fish stocks should be jointly managed to end irresponsible fishing practices which could have "disastrous consequences" for the economies of both South Africa and Namibia.



Dr. Abraham Iyambo, Namibia's Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources

Both countries consider hake to be their most valuable commercial fishery. In South Africa, hake accounts for more than 50% of the wealth derived from the marine fisheries and sustain thousands of jobs.

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"Coasts and Oceans: Hope for Africa"



Regional Programmes UPDATES

WIO MARINE HIGHWAY TO BE LAUNCHED

A multi million programme in the Western Indian Ocean region to increase safety and efficiency of navigation in busy waters.

The 'Western Indian Ocean Marine Highway and Coastal Contamination Prevention programme' will be financed by 11 million US dollars grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which was endorsed by the GEF Council on April 19, 2007.

The programme was approved in May 2007 by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors and will involve eight countries in the

region. They include Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania.

The development of the Western Indian Ocean marine highway programme will be implemented in phases.

The first phase of the project will establish an electronically supported marine highway for limited area of the region's major shipping routes. It will also assess the feasibility of the concept and then finance preparation of a follow-up project agreed upon by the countries. The second phase of the project will build on the experience of the first phase and establish a full electronically supported marine highway covering all major shipping routes of the western Indian Ocean region.

The proposed project will help to catalyze and coordinate support to protect the vital marine and coastal resources of the Western Indian Ocean region.

It will prevent ship-based environmental contamination, such as oil spills from groundings and illegal discharges of ballast and bilge waters and strengthen the capacity of countries to respond to oil or chemical spill emergencies in the region.



The proposed marine highway development

Other areas will include prevention of marine and coastal pollution, risk assessment and development of appropriate response strategies. It will also support the creation of site-specific pollution prevention and contingency management plans for coastal and marine hotspots, and develop a methodology to identify and assign values to the key environmental resources in the region. It is expected to develop a regional database and a geographic information system on marine environment and related activities.

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GCLME STAKEHOLDERS FINALISE LBA PROTOCOL

The Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) programme has finalized the adoption of the Land and Sea Based Activities protocol for the Abidjan Convention.

In a meeting held in July this year, the stakeholders also adopted the regional Strategic Action Programme (SAP) both of which are critical to the success of the programme.

The meeting held in Ghana was opened by the country's Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Environment Dr. Stephen Asamoah Boateng and was attended by more 50 participants.

The participants included GCLME countries' National Directors, UN agencies representatives, NGO's and consultants for the GCLME. Also in attendance were representatives from three non-GCLME countries but parties to the Abidjan Convention.

The Minister thanked the participants for their strong support for the programme saying that ownership of the same showed a strong resolve to counter the problems affecting their common destiny.

In September 2006, the 16 countries participating in the project established an Interim Guinea Current Commission (IGCC) to provide leadership and overall coordination of the GCLME Project with a view to ensuring responsible and sustainable fishing in the Guinea Current Region.

The LBA Protocol will be presented at the joint Conference of Parties of the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions to be held in South Africa from 5th - 8th November 2007 for adoption.

The SAP is due for signing at the GCLME Ministerial Meeting later in the year.

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KENYA: NEW STUDY ON TSUNAMI PREPAREDNESS

A new study which will help the National Disaster Agencies with enough data and information to plan the necessary contingencies in the event of another tsunami in Kenya's coastline is due for release.

The study is expected to provide a map with indication of the parts of the coastal area that will be affected by the tsunami including extent of the flooding and the energy of the waves impacting on the coast and

the eastern part of the Indian Ocean. The maps to be developed will be highly useful for the authorities responsible for the planning and development of the coastal area of Kenya, future research projects, as well as private investors operating in the area.



Part of the reef flat north of Mombasa: The waves are breaking at the reef crest and along the coast are seen contrasting sandy beaches and rocky cliffs

Kenya survived the December 2004 Tsunami partly due to the great distance from the epicenter of the earthquake, and partly due to the low tide at the time of impact.

This meant that the reefs covering two thirds of the coastline reduced the energy of the wave and hence protected the coast line.

The tsunami only resulted in an increase in water level comparable to a high tide.

The Kenya Coast was put on high alert in early September 2007 following another earthquake in the Indonesian archipelago which caused a lot of destruction. Its effect however did not reach the east African coast.

The study "Tsunami Damage Projection of the Coastal Area of Kenya" is funded by UNDP Kenya through the Danish Consultant Trust Funds and carried out by a Danish/Kenya Consortium. The Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland (GEUS) are the leading agency.

the coastal structures. This will be based on a computer simulation of a run-up model for a tsunami of similar energy as the one in 2004. It will also have a preliminary socio-economic assessment of the effects of a tsunami on livelihood, ecosystems and other sectors in the coastal area of Kenya.

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The study when released will enable disaster response agencies to mobilize resources and manpower effectively during disaster outbreaks.

A new set of aerial photographs of the whole coastal area of Kenya as well as an improved terrain (topographical) model for the land area neighbouring the coast will also be presented.

The project will prepare a damage projection for a tsunami of energy similar to the 2004 event, and provide a tool for contingency planning by national and local authorities.

The regional geology of the Indian Ocean indicates very clearly that an epicentre for an earthquake causing a tsunami, would most likely be in

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