

Partnership Dialogue 5

Statement by David Obura, representative of CORDIO East Africa (Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean)

Voluntary Commitment #15334 - Northern Mozambique Channel partnership

Excellencies, dear Colleagues.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

The Northern Mozambique Channel is one of the world's outstanding marine biodiversity areas and a biological reservoir for all East African coastal areas and the Indian Ocean at large. Six countries border this sub-region - the Comoros, France, Madagascar, Mozambique, Seychelles and Tanzania, including least developed countries and small island developing states.

The natural and economic assets of the Northern Mozambique Channel will emerge as drivers of national and regional development on a scale not previously realized in East Africa.

This Voluntary Commitment is made by NGO supporters of the Northern Mozambique Channel partnership, under a broader Voluntary Commitment spearheaded by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat (#18313 - Partnership for Implementing SDG14 in the Western Indian Ocean).

The focus of the commitment was obtained through national workshops and a regional workshop in April-May this year, in which country participants identified 4 main axes for joint action - on marine and land-based pollution, managing shared fish resources, oceans and climate change, and integrated ocean governance, as well as three cross-cutting themes, harmonization of policy, sharing research and knowledge, and developing innovative financing mechanisms.

The non-government partners working in the Northern Mozambique Channel commit to supporting the countries in the realization of these actions through our projects and fund-raising efforts, and working in alignment with one another, civil society groups, the private sector, the countries, and the broader regional networks under the Nairobi Convention and other regional and international processes.

This partnership has developed from a strategic focus on sustainable development, our core goal being development that builds on and maintains the health of ocean ecosystems, in appropriate ways for its citizens. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a multi-faceted framework for implementing this approach, while its targets and indicators can be used to guide marine spatial planning processes.

As noted in this conference, interactions among the 17 goals and their targets need to be considered carefully, and the blue economy approach treating biodiversity as a key capital

asset, to maintain and even rebuild through restoration, is essential. We acknowledge the key importance of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses. The ecosystem services from these habitats are the foundation for small scale artisanal fisheries and their health is critical to livelihoods and innovative economic opportunities such as in sustainable tourism, aquaculture and others.

We look forward to the coming years to meet targets 7, 2, 5 and a under Goal 14, as well as targets under other goals, in particular in sustainable fisheries, increasing resilience to climate change, improving the health and welfare of residents of the region, and building the partnerships needed to achieve all these.

I thank you for your attention.