

## Guinea Current countries to establish a permanent Commission

**Ministers of 16 countries have re-affirmed their decision to establish a permanent and independent Guinea Current Commission (GCC).**

Ministers attending a third ministerial meeting on the Interim Guinea Current Commission reaffirmed their decision to establish a GCC to be hosted in Accra, Ghana, and linked to the Abidjan Convention by a protocol. The ministers' decision takes the 16 countries of the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) to a step closer to joining the Benguela Current Commission as a formal commission dedicated to the sustainable use and management of the Guinea Current's marine and coastal resources.

The ministers met in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 11 May 2012. Their meeting was preceded by a meeting of technical and legal experts, and the 9th Steering Committee Meeting of the IGCC/ GCLME Project. At the meeting of technical and legal experts, two options were put forward for the establishment of a GCC. These were prepared ahead of the meeting by an independent group: the Environmental Law Institute. The two options were to establish the GCC as an independent commission under a separate international legal agreement; or to establish it through a protocol to the Abidjan Convention.

(The Abidjan Convention encourages cooperation in the protection of the marine and coastal environment of West and Central Africa.) The advantages and disadvantages of both options were analysed in detail by the technical meeting and a recommendation was submitted to the Steering Committee meeting and subsequently to the Ministerial Meeting for decision-making.

The ministers decided on the second option and also agreed to keep a transitional team in place to manage the affairs of the IGCC for as long as possible until a SAP implementation project could be launched. (A Project Identification Form [PIF] for a SAP implementation project was to be submitted to the Global Environment Facility [GEF] by September 2012 so as to facilitate funding for such a project.) Under the Abidjan Convention Protocol for the establishment of the GCC, any country acceding to the Protocol would automatically become a member of the Abidjan Convention.

At the close of the ministerial meeting, Côte d'Ivoire was declared chair of the IGCC for the next two years.



*The National IGCC Director for Benin, Mr Cesaire Gnangle, talking to the IGCC Interim Executive secretary, Dr Jacques Abe as Ichola Rihanath, National Programme Assistant for Benin looks on.*

*Dr Jacques Abe has been appointed as Interim Executive Secretary of the IGCC following the relocation of Dr Max Stephen Donkor to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.*

*Dr Donkor has been appointed as Senior Regional Adviser (Water Resources Development and Management) at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.*



*The third meeting of the Committee of Ministers was chaired by Remi Allah Kouadio, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Côte d'Ivoire (centre) and co-chaired by the current IGCC chairperson, Sherry Ayithey, (right) Minister of Environment, Science and Technology of Ghana. The former IGCC Executive Secretary, Dr Max Stephen Donkor is pictured left.*

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## UNDP-GEF launches publications



The experiences of African LME projects feature prominently in two publications released by the UNDP-GEF International Waters Programme in the run-up to the Rio+20 climate change conference.

*Frontline Observations on Climate Change and Sustainability of Large Marine Ecosystems* describes threats from climate change to the trillions of dollars in goods and services provided by the world's 64 Large Marine Ecosystems, and the steps UNDP and other GEF agencies are taking to sustain LMEs in a changing climate.

*International Waters – Delivering Results* highlights the substantial progress made in improving water and ocean governance through twenty years of UNDP/GEF support to advancing the sustainable management of 31 of the world's most important transboundary marine and freshwater ecosystems.

To download these publications, visit the UNDP site at:  
[www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage)

## Western Indian Ocean states discuss ecosystem monitoring network

The coastal zone of the western Indian Ocean supports a population of over 56 million people and the well-being of these people is dependent on the integrated and sustainable management of the region's marine and coastal resources.

This was the message that Professor Rolf Payet, Minister of Environment and Energy in the Seychelles, brought to a meeting of high-level government officials from the countries of the western Indian Ocean in July.

The officials were meeting in Seychelles to discuss the environmental challenges facing the Agulhas and Somali Currents Large Marine Ecosystem (ASCLME), and the Strategic Action Programme that will be developed by the countries to tackle some of these problems.

Professor Payet noted that recent studies had indicated the impacts of climate change are likely to hit Africa hardest, and particularly the smaller island states. Specific challenges are sea level rise, coastal

erosion, overfishing, biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, pollution from land-based sources, marine pollution, invasive species and pressure to develop coastal lands.

In response, the ASCLME Project and the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Project (SWIOFP) have “embarked on an ambitious plan to create an ecosystem monitoring network, including the deployment of oceanographic and ocean-climate monitoring in the region”. The network is backed by extensive oceanographic research, remotely sensed data and a drive to develop more accurate and finer-scale climate models, said Prof Payet.

He noted that this information will help decision-makers to visualise and monitor the extent and speed at which environmental variability and climate change affect communities

and help to better prioritise and plan for mitigation and adaptation.

Source: Seychelles Nation



## Countries to endorse joint Strategic Action Programme

The ASCLME Project and the SWIOFP have collaborated to produce a single Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) for the Agulhas and Somali Current LMEs and are now working together to finalise and negotiate a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the region.

The TDA was compiled after an extensive consultation process that saw eight countries preparing individual Marine Ecosystem Diagnostic Analyses, or MEDAs. The MEDAs pulled together information from many different sources with the goal of helping the countries to accurately determine the status of their marine and coastal ecosystems and analyse the threats to these ecosystems.

“When the project first started work, the Western Indian Ocean was one of the least well-known regions of the world,” explained Dr David Vousden, Regional Director of the ASCLME Project, “but in five years, owing to the commitment of the countries, experts have come together and produced excellent MEDAs, and now the TDA.”

The countries should be proud of the TDA and the region is in a position to develop a very valuable SAP, said Dr Vousden.

### “New Nansen to set sail in 2016



The government of Norway has allocated around NOK 440 million (USD 77 million) to replace the research vessel *Dr Fridtjof Nansen*, which has conducted vital fisheries and oceanographic research in Africa for the past 20 years.

Work on the new *Dr Fridtjof Nansen* will begin in 2013 and the ship is expected to be completed in 2016.

“We have used the research vessel *Dr Fridtjof Nansen* to help poor countries survey their fisheries resources. Norway has valuable expertise and experience in

this area,” said the Norwegian Minister of International Development, Heikki Eidsvoll Holmås.

“It is of great benefit to Africa’s ministers of fisheries that they have access to information of the highest quality about their sea areas. This can help to promote growth and better management of the natural resources.”

The *Dr Fridtjof Nansen* plays a vital role in the EAF-Nansen project which is supporting the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) management across Africa. However, the ship has been in continuous use for almost 20 years and no longer meets all the scientific requirements of the EAF-Nansen project which is due to begin a new phase in 2015.

The new vessel is expected to provide a valuable platform for the collection of physical and biological information, and the training of local scientists in practical marine science and cruise activities.

### The “new” *Dr Fridtjof Nansen*

The vessel that is to replace the existing research ship *Dr Fridtjof Nansen* is designed for future research needs.

According to Norad, the new *Dr Fridtjof Nansen* will be capable of conducting research in waters of 15 to 4 500 metres. The vessel will be equipped to trawl to a depth of 2 000 metres and gather oceanographic samples to a depth of 4 500 metres.

In areas shallower than 15m work will be conducted from a smaller work boat.

With a length of 70 metres, the new research vessel will be substantially larger than the existing research platform. It will have 12 more cabins and 12 more beds, allowing it to carry a larger scientific team and ship’s crew.

The new *Dr Fridtjof Nansen* is to be equipped with seven laboratories and an auditorium.

Modern research facilities will enable scientist to carry out, among other things, stock assessment and studies of the interaction between live organisms and the physical environment; mapping of marine biodiversity; bottom contour mapping; benthos and sediment studies; and the collection of data in order to study and understand the effects of climate change.

Source: Norad



### State of the art *Mirabilis* to boost Namibian fisheries research



The launch of the US\$44 million research vessel, *Mirabilis*, in Namibia in July is expected to greatly enhance the assessment of offshore fisheries stocks and the management of fisheries in general. With a length of 62m, the *Mirabilis* will replace the *R/V Welwitschia* (pictured alongside the new vessel) which was donated to Namibia by the government of Japan in 1993.

The modern and versatile research vessel accommodates 44 crew and

scientists and is capable of conducting swept area and acoustics surveys in deep water. It features three oceanographic laboratories, a fish handling area and a fish sampling laboratory.

Acoustic equipment includes a Simrad EK60 split beam echosounder for hydroacoustic biomass determination, a Simrad SX90 sonar for side detection of fish shoals, a Simrad EM710 for accurate bottom profiling and a Simrad ITI trawl sonar.



### West coast survey sets scene for regional plankton monitoring

A partnership between the Benguela Current Commission, the Sir Alister Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science (SAHFOS) and the South African Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) culminated in an historic survey by a continuous plankton recorder (CPR) along the west coast of southern Africa.

The inaugural survey, which was conducted from the cellular container ship *C/V Horizon*, and the simultaneous training of laboratory technicians in CPR training and maintenance, represent the crucial first steps in a strategy by the BCC to establish a self-financing, long-term regional CPR survey in the Benguela region. The voyage of the *C/V Horizon* was the result of many years of planning, budgeting and promoting the benefits of a long-term plankton monitoring programme for the Benguela region.

The BCC supported the initiative by funding a US\$140 000 project entitled *Development of a Continuous Plankton Recorder Sister Survey in the BCLME*, while the CPR was purchased by the DEA on the understanding that the data it generates will be used by regional scientific programmes such as those implemented by the BCC and, in future, by the Agulhas and Somali Current LME Project.

A regional CPR survey will contribute to a global database under the aegis of the Global Alliance of CPR Surveys (GACS), which was founded in 2011 to understand changes in plankton biodiversity at ocean basin scales.



*A basic Continuous Plankton Recorder. CPR technologies have changed very little in 40 years.*

### BCC inaugurates new offices in Namibia



*Namibia's Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Bernhard Esau and Hashali Hamukuaya, Executive Secretary of the BCC, unveil a plaque to commemorate the inauguration of the new offices.*

Namibia's Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Bernhard Esau, led a delegation of fisheries ministers and senior government officials on a tour of the new offices of the Benguela Current Commission in Swakopmund in June.

Shortly beforehand, the Minister unveiled a plaque commemorating the inauguration of the modern and spacious new office complex.

The BCC is sharing the accommodation with the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO). Both organisations previously rented office accommodation; the BCC Secretariat moved to Swakopmund from Windhoek, while the SEAFO Secretariat moved to the new complex from Walvis Bay.

"My ministry is delighted to accommodate BCC and SEAFO," said Minister Esau.

"In doing so, Namibia is demonstrating its unwavering commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainable management and conservation of the resources within the Exclusive Economic Zones of the BCLME countries, as well as in the adjacent high seas."



Dr Hashali Hamukuaya, Executive Secretary of the BCC, formally thanked Minister Esau for his support of the BCC and for

ensuring that the organisation was provided with offices by the government of Namibia.

The total annual saving in rental charges amounts to more than USD 85 000 per year.



*The new offices form part of Namibia's National Marine Information and Research Centre (NatMIRC).*



### Mangroves under the CCLME spotlight

A pilot project that promotes the conservation and restoration of degraded mangroves in Gambia and Guinea Bissau has won the support of the CCLME Project.

The pilot is a joint initiative between the CCLME Project, Wetlands International Africa and the World Union for the Conservation of Nature. It aims to establish a guide to monitoring mangrove ecosystems in the region and the implementation of income-generating activities for surrounding populations. It will also develop indicators for mangrove monitoring and review assessment methodology for the main mangrove ecosystems.

Importantly, the project will aim to improve communication with, and awareness of, decision-makers, NGOs and local populations about the importance of sustaining healthy mangroves.

**Mangroves play an important role in tropical and sub tropical ecosystems by protecting coastlines, providing habitat for certain life stages of many animal species, sequestering carbon, and providing a wide range of goods and services, especially timber.**

### The African LME Caucus

Africa's five Large Marine Ecosystems encompass 33 coastal states with an estimated population of 600 million people, 50 per cent of whom live within 100 km of the coast and depend overwhelmingly on healthy ecosystems and sustainable fisheries for their livelihoods. The heads of four LME projects and their partners are represented on the African LME Caucus.

- The Agulhas and Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystems Project: [www.asclme.org](http://www.asclme.org)
- The Benguela Current Commission: [www.benguelacc.org](http://www.benguelacc.org)
- The Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project: [www.cclme.org](http://www.cclme.org)
- The Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project : [www.gclme.org](http://www.gclme.org)

**The newsletter of the LME Caucus strives to improve communication between Large Marine Ecosystem Projects and inter-governmental commissions across Africa. If you would like to receive a copy of the newsletter, please contact Ms Petrina Mutumbulua at the office of the Benguela Current Commission: [petrina.mutumbulua@benguelacc.org](mailto:petrina.mutumbulua@benguelacc.org)**



### Spacious new offices for CCLME Project

The government of Senegal has allocated spacious and convenient office accommodation to the CCLME Project. The Project has been working from the new offices in downtown Dakar since the beginning of the year.

"This measure reflects the will of the Senegalese authorities to ensure good working conditions for the success of this regional project," said Birane Sambe, Regional Coordinator of the CCLME Project.

### MoU captures partnership for the management of small pelagic Fish

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the CCLME project and the Sub Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) has set the scene for cooperation in the sustainable management of small pelagic fisheries.

The MoU was signed in April with the objective of ensuring cooperation between the CCLME Project and the SRFC through consultation, coordination of efforts, mutual assistance and joint actions, all in accordance with the ecosystem approach to fisheries.



## Ocean facts

Oceans are the quintessential sustainable development issue – essential to the economic, social, and environmental pillars of sustainable development – and perform vital life-sustaining functions for the planet.

They generate half of the oxygen on Earth, absorb 25 to 30% of carbon emissions, and regulate global climate and temperature. Nearly half of the global population lives in coastal areas, including in 21 of the world's 33 megacities.

Other ocean facts included in the Ocean Declaration circulated at the Rio+20 Conference include:

- The oceans cover 72% of the earth's surface, but 95% of them are unexplored.
- The fishing industry supports 540 million people.
- The international shipping sector transports 90% of global trade.

**The objective of the Oceans Day event was to gather high-level policymakers and leaders from all sectors of the oceans community to ask the world's leaders to take hold of the unique opportunity presented by the Rio+20 Conference and take tangible and urgent action for oceans, coasts and small island developing states.**



## Experts point to critical need for ocean management

**“Oceans are essential to supporting life on Earth and are of great economic, social, and cultural significance to all countries, including 183 coastal countries and island states.”**

This was one of the key statements prepared by a team of 375 stakeholders from 46 countries who took part in a special Oceans Day event at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference) on 16 June 2012.

The African LME Caucus was represented at the Oceans Day event through the participation of its chairman, Dr Hashali Hamukuaya, who contributed to one of seven panel discussions on a range of ocean-related subjects.

After a long day of discussions, the stakeholders released an “Ocean Declaration” that acknowledged the importance of the oceans and called for “strong and immediate action to meet the sustainable development goals for oceans, coasts and small island developing states (SIDS) at the Rio+20 Conference and beyond”.

**Included in the Ocean Declaration was a call to:**

- scale up ecosystem-based management and integrated ocean and coastal management efforts at the national and regional level and on the high seas (areas beyond national jurisdiction);
- Develop an integrated approach to addressing the interlinked issues of oceans, climate change and security, including (among other things) provision for stringent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and funding for adaptation support;
- Enhance the capability of SIDS and developing coastal countries to benefit from, and sustainably manage, their marine resources and adapt to climate change.

The Ocean Declaration was presented to heads of state at the Rio+20 High Level Ministerial Segment and circulated widely to stakeholders.

