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**The Partnership on Science to Policy Forum**

*Mahe, Seychelles 11 -12 October 2016*

**THE PARTNERSHIP ON SCIENCE TO POLICY FORUM HELD AT MAHE, SEYCHELLES, 11-12TH OCTOBER 2016**

**Report of the Forum**

## A. Introduction

1. The meeting on the Partnership on Science to Policy Forum was organized by the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean region in collaboration with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in Mahe, Seychelles on the 11-12 October 2016. It was attended by about 60 participants including the Minister of Environment, Energy & Climate Change of Seychelles, Hon. Didier Dogley, Secretary of State in charge of the Ocean, Government of Madagascar, Hon. Dr. Ylenia Randrianarisoa, Directors of Environment and Fisheries, representatives of research institutions and universities, senior experts, regional partners and non-governmental organizations from Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania.

2. The meeting was supported and co-financed by a number of regional partners including WIOMSA, IOC, the Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep-sea Ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) project that is being implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Government of Kenya which supported the participation of various universities representatives from Kenya. International partners also supported the workshop and these included the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) from Germany, the United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP WCMC) from the United Kingdom, and the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) from France.

## B. Session 1: Official Opening of Science-Policy Forum

3. The meeting was opened by the Head of the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, Mr. Dixon Waruinge, who gave a brief opening statement introducing the Chair of the Bureau of the Nairobi Convention, Seychelles, represented by the Minister of Environment, Energy & Climate Change, Hon. Didier Dogley. Mr. Waruinge noted that the meeting was being held in response to the 2004 decision of the Contracting Parties of the Nairobi Convention that directed the Secretariat to take up the offer of WIOMSA to establish the Forum for Heads of Academic and Research Institutions (FARI) and the follow-up Decision CP8/12 of the Eighth Conference of Parties for the Secretariat, in collaboration with partners, to develop terms of reference, mode of operation and composition of the Science to Policy platform and transmit them to the Contracting Parties for subsequent approval by the Nairobi Convention Bureau. He noted that the deliverables of the meeting would be a *platform, terms of reference for the platform and mode of operation and composition of the platform.*

4. Hon. Didier Dogley officially opened the meeting, with an intervention on how evidence based policy development should be mainstreamed in decision making processes and how science could and should contribute towards these processes. Hon. Dogley stressed the importance of a solid science policy nexus in the face of global change. He noted that there was a growing demand for research institutions and councils to conduct research that bore economic and societal impact, characterised by increased evidence based policy making and increasing public engagement with research and related societal issues. The Hon. Minister stated that in the next few decades, governments would be making far reaching decisions in the management of coastal and marine resources and that they would need the best evidence possible from scientists to make informed choices, and therefore there were enormous opportunities for scientists to engage with policy.

5. Minister Dogley lauded the COP 8 decision to establish a science policy platform and called for the development of a mechanism that brought together users from the different sectors (policy, business and the wider society) to design and deliver innovative research that addressed the urgent challenges of environmental change in the WIO. He stated that he hoped the meeting would develop a road map for an inclusive multi-stakeholder forum involving scientists, researchers, experts, non-governmental organizations, civil society, policy and decision makers, who would work together towards productive dialogue, produce demand driven research and develop a mechanism for sustainable interaction between the various partners.

## C. Setting the Scene: High Level Panel Session Statements and Presentations:

6. The *Secretary of State in charge of the Ocean, Government of Madagascar* made her intervention in her dual capacity as a policy maker and as a scientist/expert on ocean governance. She noted that the meeting provided a good opportunity to share perspectives on the link between science and policy. She mentioned that the Department of State in Charge of the Ocean was a very new Ministry in the Malagasy Government that was created in April 2016 to deal specifically with technical issues of ocean governance and public policy. The Minister discussed the structure of the State Department in Charge of the Ocean, its mission and mandate, its strengths and weaknesses and its priorities going forward. Some of the strengths discussed that are applicable to a science policy forum include a mention that the creation of the Department of State in Charge of the Ocean is an expression of the shift of focus in Madagascar towards an oceanic vision or a maritime state; that the department is an evidence of the concrete link between scientists and policy makers; the department considers public opinion in its approach hence directly links citizens to science and policy making in Madagascar; all the decision making in the department is evidence based- from science and academic results and based on the implementation of existing tools. The department applies a multidisciplinary approach in its dealings; and the department is one of the rare ministries in Madagascar where the administrative arm serves the technical arm in a bottom up approach to management.

7. The *Director General, National Environment Management Authority (NEMA – Kenya)* noted that for management interventions to be successful, decision making needs to have a sound scientific basis hence

the need for closer collaboration between scientists, researchers, managers and decision makers. He outlined the processes in which the Government of Kenya is actively engaged in to establish and operationalize the Science to Policy Dialogue for informed decision making at national and regional levels. These include the development and negotiation of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol for the Western Indian Ocean region through the Nairobi Convention; the endorsement of the proposed GEF funded project on "Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities" (WIOSAP project); the establishment and active management of ten Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Kenya; the formulation and implementation of national acts, policies and strategies to enhance sustainable development and enhance environmental management (the Climate Change Act, 2016; the National ICZM Plan; the National Oceans and Fisheries Policy; and the Fisheries Management Act, 2016). He concluded his remarks by noting that the challenge lay in ensuring that effective implementation and enforcement measures were in place at national and regional levels in order to enhance joint management efforts. He urged workshop participants to give proper direction and guidance in establishment of the platform that will enhance the interface between our scientists and policy makers for informed decision making.

8. The *Director General, Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration, Mauritius*, delivered a presentation titled *"Science and Policy: Mauritius an Ocean State."* The presentation focused on his experiences in the science to policy interface within the project Extended Continental Shelf of Mauritius and Seychelles in the Region of the Mascarene Plateau. The presentation covered the following areas: Ocean Space: Maritime Zones Delimitation of the Extended Continental Shelf; Maritime Zone & Concession Area; Marine Research Regulations and Sovereignty; Ocean Exploration and Ocean Economy. He underpinned the important role of science in providing adequate data to justify the delimitation of the extended continental shelf through the provisions of the Law of the Sea and the active interaction between science (researchers and technicians) and policy makers from Mauritius and Seychelles in development of a joint submission to the United Nations. The presenter underscored the importance of the science-policy interface in the signing of the two 2012 treaties on sovereign rights and joint management of the Mascarene Plateau by the Seychelles and Mauritius; in the development of the legal and regulatory frameworks (codes) for managing the joint management area; and in the formation of institutional frameworks for the joint management area (a ministerial council, the joint commission and a designated authority to handle the day-to-day running of the area). He concluded his remarks by noting that a Strategic Plan had been developed for the Joint Management Area whose back bone is Marine Spatial Planning.

9. The *Chief Executive Officer, National Institute for Science Technology and Innovation, Seychelles*, delivered a presentation on behalf of the National Institute for Science Technology and Innovation, Seychelles highlighting the steps that the institute has taken in the process of drafting a National Policy for Science, Technology and Innovation for Seychelles. He highlighted the factors to consider in the development of the policy including creating and establishing access to a national data system, establishing a national innovation system that goes beyond supporting small and medium-sized enterprises through creating a conducive environment for them to get their innovations to commercialization; and establishing an implementation and monitoring mechanism. The presenter discussed the elements involved in the identification of a National Science and Technology Innovation Agenda in terms of interaction with policy, integrating stakeholders, the development of thematic areas, consideration of regional and global processes (SDGs and Conventions as well as national strategies and identification of sectors), quality assurance and standards in the sharing and access to data, and key areas of priorities. He also discussed the challenges experienced in the development and the drafting of the National Policy for Science, Technology and Innovation.

## D. The Adoption of the Agenda

10. The head of the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention led the meeting through the provisional agenda. The agenda was adopted.

## E. Session 2: Why we are where we are?

11. **Experiences in integrating science into policy –***Head, Nairobi Convention Secretariat – UNEP*
His presentation mapped the evolution of the Science to Policy Forum in the Western Indian Ocean and described the rationale for and the purpose of the Science Policy Forum. The presentation covered the need for Science informing Ocean Governance and how the establishment of such a science policy forum could change the landscape of ocean governance in the WIO while addressing the current ocean governance challenges. Some of the challenges discussed include: ocean governance decision making is political rather than science-based, hence the existence of several regional ocean governance bodies which are all making decisions that are not necessarily supported by a common shared science information base; the lack of synergy in the sources of generating science for policy in the region; uncoordinated interventions and lack of policy integration in Ecosystem Based Management coupled with the limited understanding of public policy processes, policy options and entry points amongst scientists.

12. He outlined where the Science Policy Platform would fit within the Nairobi Convention Structure and how it would support the Convention's thematic programmes and projects (WIOSAP and SAPPHIRE) as well as FARI's role within the Platform. He also reiterated the purpose of the science-policy forum meeting: to establish a formal dialogue process between science and policy; to establish who should be involved in the processes of Science to Policy Dialogue; to establish a network of senior policy makers and representatives of the Nairobi Convention focal institutions and scientists through FARI and to define how FARI should act as a formal advisory, scientific and technical body with a mandate to provide advisory services to the science to policy Forum and to governments.

13. **The Role of regional organisations in integrating science into policy –** *Focal Point for Indian Ocean Commission (IOC),* delivered the presentation on behalf of Gina Bonne,
Chargée de Mission of the IOC, on the role of regional organizations (ROs) in integrating science to policy. The presenter discussed understanding the purpose of ROs: the reasons for the creation of regional organizations and the existing regional organizations in the Convention Area .The presenter also discussed the role being played by ROs; the challenges faced by ROs in integrating science to policy. Lastly, she outlined the opportunities for ROs in the science policy arena.

14. **The 2014 science for policy consultative meeting –** *Executive Secretary, Western Indian Ocean Marine Sciences Association,* delivered a presentation on the process of initiating the development of the science-policy platform, specifically focusing on the science to policy forum meeting held in Naivasha, Kenya in 2014. The presenter looked at the objectives of the Naivasha meeting which included sharing the experiences of other regional and global science to policy platforms; and the nature, function, scope, participating entities and operational mandate of the proposed regional science to policy platform. He noted that while ideas had been generated in Naivasha, they were not properly explored due to time constraints and they would form the basis of the discussions in the current workshop. His presentation also covered Decision CP8/12 of the Contracting Parties in relation to the role of FARI in the Platform. This covered a brief history of FARI- the challenges the region faced that led to the establishment of FARI, what FARI is and its purpose; and the functions of FARI and whether these are suitable to serve the proposed science-policy forum.

## F. Plenary Discussions on Sessions 1 and 2

15. The chair led the workshop through a plenary discussion session on the presentations from sessions 1 and 2. Some summary points from these discussions are outlined in the sections below.

    a. There is need for clarity on the links and roles of each of the actors (FARI, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat and the Science Policy Platform) in the science policy forum and their functioning within the platform in order to avoid duplication and fragmentation amongst the actors. The role of FARI in the Platform is to act as the technical advisory body of the platform, to coordinate the various academic and scientific institutions in the platform and to facilitate the uptake of science results by policy makers. The science products of FARI that is linked to the science policy platform will be disseminated

to the Contracting Parties of the Nairobi Convention for decision making, to the technical committees that meet on thematic areas and to the various regional partners as needed.

b. There is a need to ensure some quality assurance in terms of the reliability and confidence in the science products that will be projected to policy for decision making and also in the mode of sharing data within the platform. The vision of the platform is to have quality assurance at two levels- the regular science peer review process and a second review that will be conducted at the national level through national validation workshops of the platform's products to take into account national sensitivities. From the presentations, it is evident that there is no linear link between scientists and policy makers both at a national and regional level. An example can be drawn from the National Institute for Science Technology and Innovation, Seychelles, which has defined a strategy to address the issue of how to share data between the different users and producers of science (scientists, NGOs, policy, civil society and the public) within an integrated governance system. The strategy has components of research and development and knowledge sharing; it highlights issues of quality assurance in data collection; the tools and standards of data collection and sharing; regulatory frameworks for sharing data; identification of the users of data and metrics- how to measure the effectiveness of policy interventions.

c. There is a need to emulate global science-policy platform models such as United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Science Policy Forum and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and how the platform fits or contributes to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

## G. Session 3: Group Discussions

16. The representative of the WIOMSA Secretariat, introduced the topics for group discussions. The participants were divided into two groups to discuss the proposed platform (its definition, its terms of reference, objectives and/functions, the operating principles and deliverables from the platform). Guidance documents were provided to facilitate the discussions. These included the outcomes from the Naivasha workshop, and documents from IBPES and UNEA. The summary from the group discussions is presented in the sections below.

**The Science Policy Platform**

### *i. The definition of the platform*

17. The groups refined and expanded the definition of the platform as provided for in Naivasha and developed different descriptions and modalities of the platform.

18. **Group 1** defined the Science Policy Platform as "A multi stakeholder platform comprising of representatives of formal and informal knowledge generating institutions, practitioners, policy makers, communities and the private sector within the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region which serves as an intermediary body to bridge the gaps between science, policy and practice".

19. **Group 2** came up with two modalities of the Science Policy Platform:

a. Boundary Agency: The Science Policy Platform will, in a manner somewhat similar to the functioning of the IPCC, assimilate, digest and compile scientific information in such a way that it can be used by policy and decision makers in member countries (Contracting Parties). The outcomes are shaped by the body of knowledge produced by the science community. The products of the Science Policy Platform will be "pushed", independent of the "pull" from policy-makers. This will allow for the production of knowledge in response to current funding priorities as the driver of overall regional priority;

b. Transdiscipline: The Science Policy Platform will, by way of a transdisciplinary approach, create equal opportunity for scientists and policy and decision makers to express their needs and intentions in order to negotiate common regional priorities. In this way, the platform will create a forum to bridge the science-policy divide. This includes the sharing of scientific knowledge, the expression of policy needs and the identification of common challenges.

### *ii. The objectives or aims of the Platform*

20. **Group 1** considered the objectives of the platform from the IBPES guidelines and upon discussion developed the following broad objectives:

    a. To focus on government or countries' needs, based on priorities established by them or conveyed to it by multilateral environmental agreements related to the coastal and marine environment.

    b. To identify and prioritize key information needs for policymakers and contribute to formulation of the research agenda at appropriate scales and catalyse efforts to generate new knowledge.

    c. To commission regular and timely assessments on agreed priority topics at regional, sub-regional, national or local levels as requested by the countries, on biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interlinkages.

    d. To maintain a catalogue of relevant assessments.

    e. To catalyze development of policy relevant tools and methodologies, for use by decision makers.

    f. To prioritise key capacity-building needs to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels.

    g. To facilitate the establishment of a common platform for data collection, sharing and management.

    h. To monitor and report on the effectiveness of regional interventions and where appropriate recommend their amendments.

21. **Group 2** developed the following aims or objectives

    a. The Science Policy Platform "translates" science through negotiation to result into action

    b. The Science Policy Platform will be a "bridge" between science and society for the purpose of facilitating sustainable development

    c. The Science Policy Platform will provide the Conference of Parties (COP) with a clear position on issues that is compiled from the body of science produced in the region.

    d. The Science Policy Platform will use scientific evidence to inform decisions relating to the management of human activities in the coastal and marine environment of the region.

### *iii. Terms of Reference of the Platform*

22. **Group 2** endorsed the functions proposed in Naivasha and added the following functions:

    a. The Science Policy Platform will act as an intermediary or boundary agent between science and society

    b. The Science Policy Platform will develop an understanding of national processes required to incorporate the objectives of the Nairobi Convention and the supporting scientific outcomes into national (economic) development plans. This requires a departure from the current perception that the Nairobi Convention only deals with the "environmental sector". The ocean economy discourse requires a wider conception than the environment sector. This also has implications for the composition of focal points since most are drawn from environmental functions or units.

    c. The Science Policy Platform can facilitate a regional research agenda and priorities that could assist member states in validating or confirming their own agendas. The groups felt strongly that the Science Policy Platform could not extend its functions to overlap with those of national agencies.

    d. The Science Policy Platform could also be valuable to report on scientific consensus on contentious or conflicting scientific outputs.

### iv. *Operating Principles of the Platform*

23. **Group 1** considered the Operating Principles of IPBES as provided in the guidance documents and modified the principles as follows:

a. Collaborate with existing initiatives on the coastal and marine environment, including multilateral environment agreements, United Nations bodies and networks of scientists and knowledge holders;

b. Be scientifically independent and ensure credibility, relevance and legitimacy through carrying out good science and transparency in its decision-making processes;

c. All products of the platform have to be reviewed for their scientific quality as well as their accuracy and relevance through a process that will be developed by the platform.

d. Use clear, transparent and scientifically credible processes for the exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies from all relevant sources, including non-peer-reviewed literature, as appropriate;

e. Recognize and respect the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge to the conservation and sustainable use of the coastal and marine environment;

f. Provide policy-relevant information, but not policy-prescriptive advice, mindful of the respective mandates of the multilateral environmental agreements;

g. Integrate capacity-building into all relevant aspects of its work according to priorities decided by the platform;

h. Take an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach that incorporates all relevant disciplines, including social and natural sciences;

i. Recognize the need for gender consideration in all relevant aspects of its work;

j. Address coastal, marine and inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interactions;

k. Ensure the full use of national, sub regional and regional assessments and knowledge, as appropriate, including by ensuring a bottom-up approach.

24. **Group 2** discussed the key characteristics of the Platform as follows:

a. Bi-directional discussion/exchange between scientists, policy- and decision-makers.

b. Multidisciplinary.

c. The policy boundary of the Science Policy Platform is the Nairobi Convention to which member countries are signatories. This currently excludes the areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ).

d. Simplicity in its definition to avoid a narrow conception that will limit future actions

e. Not generating new knowledge but primarily condenses/summarises and simplifies existing knowledge.

f. Preparation of information that can be shared with a much wider audience, from policy and decision makers to civil society.

g. Long-term/horizon institution that functions beyond political terms.

h. "Translating" and optimising science information for policy and decision makers.

i. Promote an exchange between science/scientists and policy and decision makers.

j. Promote cooperation and exchange of science appropriate for policy and decision making.

v. *Deliverables of the Platform*

25. **Group 1** discussed the deliverables of the platforms as follows:

a. Reports - means the main deliverables of the Platform, including assessment reports and synthesis reports, their summaries for policymakers and technical summaries, technical papers and technical guidelines.

b. Assessment reports- are published assessments of scientific, technical and socioeconomic issues that take into account different approaches, visions and knowledge systems, including global assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services, regional and sub-regional assessments of

biodiversity and ecosystem services with a defined geographical scope, and thematic or methodological assessments based on the standard or the fast-track approach. They are to be composed of two or more sections including a summary for policymakers, an optional technical summary and individual chapters and their executive summaries.

c. Synthesis reports - synthesize and integrate materials drawing from assessment reports, written in a non-technical style suitable for policymakers and address a broad range of policy-relevant questions. They are to be composed of two sections: a summary for policymakers, and a full report.

d. Summary for policymakers - is a component of any report providing a policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive summary of that report.

e. Technical summary - is a longer detailed and specialized version of the material contained in the summary for policymakers.

f. Technical papers - are based on the material contained in the assessment reports and are prepared on topics deemed important by the Plenary.

g. Decisions- the platform will make recommendations for approval.

h. Assessment tools.

**The Forum for Heads of Academic Institutions (FARI)**

26. The groups were also tasked with reviewing FARI and its terms of reference in the context of the platform; identifying inputs of FARI for the Platform as a technical and advisory body to the platform; and discussing the Terms of Reference for FARI members.

27. **Group 1** refined the purpose of FARI as follows: To communicate, collaborate and co-operate in support of marine and coastal research and outreach that will contribute towards the wise use of marine and coastal resources and the provision of sustainable opportunities for the people of the WIO region, in a healthy environment. The Group thought that the best way to look at the Terms of Reference (TOR) of FARI in relation to the Platform was to consider the deliverables of the Platform and see which functions could be attributed to FARI to avoid overlaps between the functions of the Platform and those of FARI. The group also suggested that the TORs of FARI should be reviewed to equip FARI to act as an advisory body. Due to time considerations, these points were not explored further by the group.

28. **Group 2** held discussions on FARI and the main points from their discussions are presented in the sections below.

i. FARI, as an institution, was not well understood by the group and very few members have been part of the previous FARI meetings. The membership of FARI was questioned with most of the group suggesting a more inclusive composition.

ii. FARI was broadly understood to be complimentary to the Science Policy Platform and to provide technical support. There were however questions about the rationale for FARI insofar it shares many functions with the Platform. Some of the group members also questioned the viability and