



# REGIONAL SEAS

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

## *Environmental Problems of the East African Region*

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## PREFACE

The Regional Seas Programme was initiated by UNEP in 1974. Since then the Governing Council of UNEP has repeatedly endorsed a regional approach to the control of marine pollution and the management of marine and coastal resources and has requested the development of regional action plans.

The Regional Seas Programme at present includes ten regions 1/ and has over 120 coastal States participating in it. It is conceived as an action-oriented programme having concern not only for the consequences but also for the causes of environmental degradation and encompassing a comprehensive approach to combating environmental problems through the management of marine and coastal areas. Each regional action plan is formulated according to the needs of the region as perceived by the Governments concerned. It is designed to link assessment of the quality of the marine environment and the causes of its deterioration with activities for the management and development of the marine and coastal environment. The action plans promote the parallel development of regional legal agreements and of action-oriented programme activities.

Decision 8/13(C) of the eighth session of the Governing Council of UNEP called for the development of an action plan for the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment of the East African region. As a first activity in the region, UNEP organized in October and November 1981 a joint UNEP/UN/UNIDO/FAO/UNESCO/WMO/IMCO/IUCN exploratory mission which visited the eight States of the region 2/ in order to:

- assess each State's interest in participating in a future regional programme;
- consult with Governments with a view to identifying activities that may usefully be included as part of a comprehensive action plan;
- make a preliminary assessment of the environmental problems in the region, including the problems related to the environmentally sound management of marine and coastal natural resources and activities influencing the quality of the marine and coastal environment;
- collect available scientific data and information pertaining to the development and implementation of the action plan planned for the region; and
- identify national institutions that may participate in implementing an action plan once it is adopted.

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1/ Mediterranean, Kuwait Action Plan Region, West and Central Africa, Wider Caribbean, East Asian Seas, South-East Pacific, South-West Pacific, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, East Africa and South-West Atlantic.

2/ Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, and United Republic of Tanzania.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm 1972) adopted, inter alia, the principle that "the marine environment and all the living organisms which it supports are of vital importance to humanity" and recognized that "proper management is required and measures to prevent and control marine pollution must be regarded as an essential element in this management". Furthermore, the Conference recommended that Governments take early action to adopt "effective national measures for the control of all significant sources of marine pollution, including land-based sources, and concert and co-ordinate their actions regionally and where appropriate on a wider international basis" (recommendation 92).

2. The subsequent meetings of the UNEP Governing Council repeatedly endorsed the regional approach to the control of marine pollution and requested the development of regional action plans for the parts of the ocean where such plans do not yet exist. Consequently, in 1974 the Regional Seas Programme of UNEP was initiated.

3. The overall strategy to be followed in the development of regional action plans was defined by UNEP's Governing Council as:

- promotion of international and regional conventions, guidelines and actions for the control of marine pollution and for the protection and management of aquatic resources;
- assessment of the state of marine pollution, of the sources and trends of this pollution, and of the impact of the pollution on human health, marine ecosystems and amenities;
- co-ordination of the efforts with regard to the environmental aspects of the protection, development and management of marine and coastal resources;
- support for education and training efforts to make possible the full participation of developing countries in the protection, development and management of marine and coastal resources.

4. Since each regional programme is aimed at benefiting the States of that region, Governments are involved from the very beginning in the formulation of the action plan. After acceptance, the implementation of the programme is carried out, under the overall authority of the Governments concerned, by national institutions nominated by their Governments.

5. Although the Regional Seas Programme is implemented predominantly by Government-nominated institutions, specialized United Nations bodies, as well as the relevant international and regional organizations, contribute to its formulation and may provide assistance to these national institutions. UNEP acts as an overall co-ordinator for the development and implementation of regional action plans although, in some cases, this role is limited to the initial phase of the activities. In the framework of UNEP a Regional Seas Programme Activity Centre has been established (1977) to co-ordinate the efforts of those involved in the Regional Seas Programme. Financial support to the regional programmes is initially provided

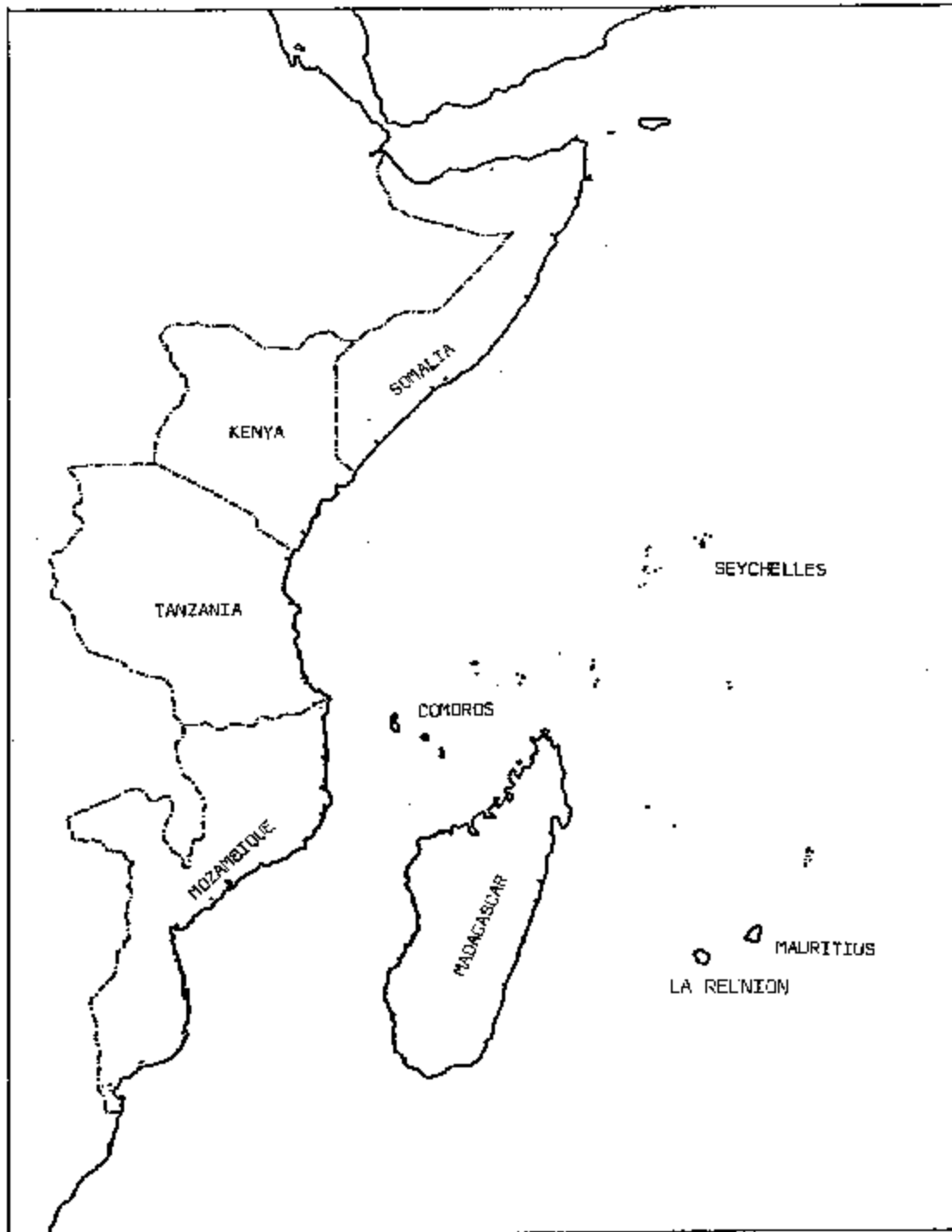


Figure 1 : The East African region

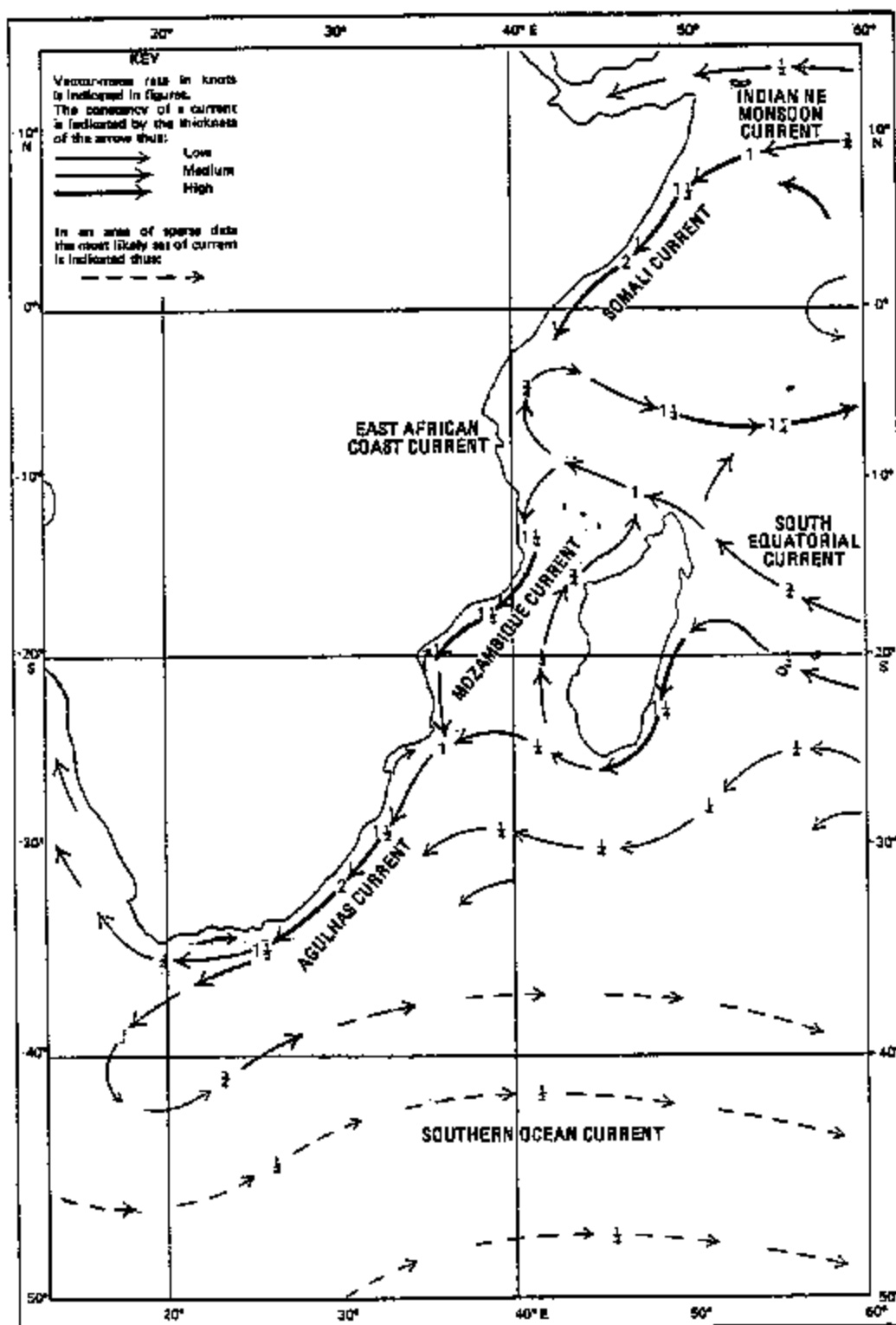
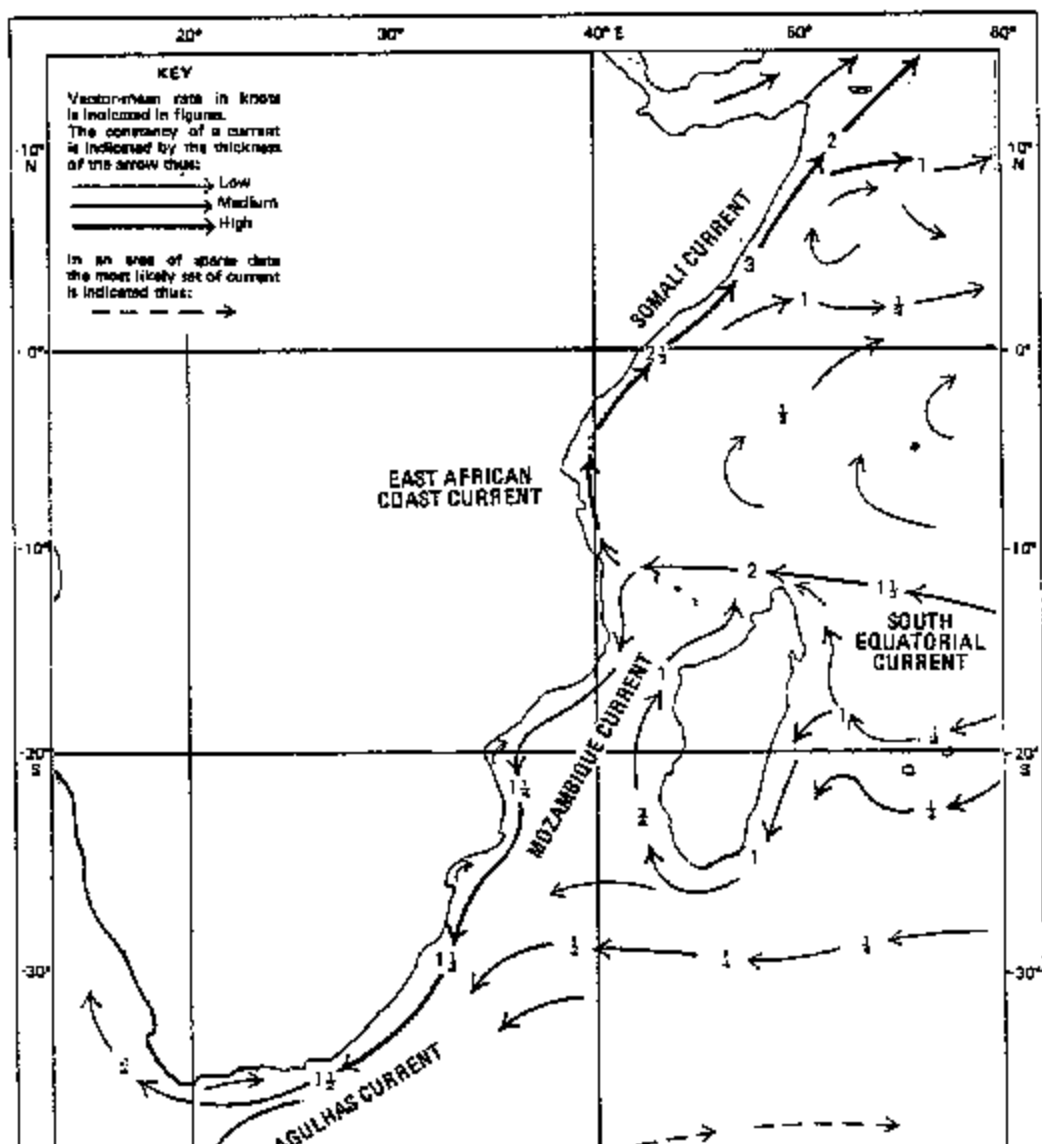


Figure 2(b) : Vector-mean currents for January



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