



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME



*Conservation of coastal and
marine ecosystems and living resources
of the East African Region*

UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 11

Prepared in co-operation with



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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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/WHO/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.

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.

(ii)

The findings of the mission were used to prepare the following six sectorial reports:

- UN/UNESCO/UNEP: Marine and Coastal Area Development in the East African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 6. UNEP 1982;
- UNIDO/UNEP: Industrial Sources of Marine and Coastal Pollution in the East African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 7. UNEP 1982;
- FAO/UNEP: Marine Pollution in the East African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 8. UNEP 1982;
- WHO/UNEP: Public Health Problems in the Coastal Zone of the East African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 9. UNEP 1982;
- IMO/UNEP: Oil Pollution Control in the East African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 10. UNEP 1982; and
- IUCN/UNEP: Conservation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Living Resources of the East African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 11. UNEP 1982.

The six sectorial reports prepared on the basis of the mission's findings were used by the UNEP secretariat in preparing a summary overview entitled:

- UNEP: Environmental Problems of the East African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 12. UNEP 1982.

The overview and the six sectorial reports were used as the main working document and information documents for the UNEP Workshop on the Protection and Development of the East African Region (Mahé, Seychelles, 27 - 30 September 1982) attended by experts designated by the Governments of the East African region.

The Workshop:

- reviewed the environmental problems of the region;
- endorsed a draft action plan for the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment of the East African region;
- defined a priority programme of activities to be developed within the framework of the draft action plan; and
- recommended that the draft action plan, together with a draft regional convention for the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment of the East African region and protocols concerning (a) co-operation in combating pollution in cases of emergency, and (b) specially protected areas and endangered species, be submitted to a conference of plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the region with a view to their adoption (UNEP/WG.77/4). The conference is to be convened by UNEP in early 1984.

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INTRODUCTION

1. This report examines the status of conservation of ecosystems and associated living resources occurring in the coastal and marine environment of the East African region. The geographical location of this region is shown in figure 1.

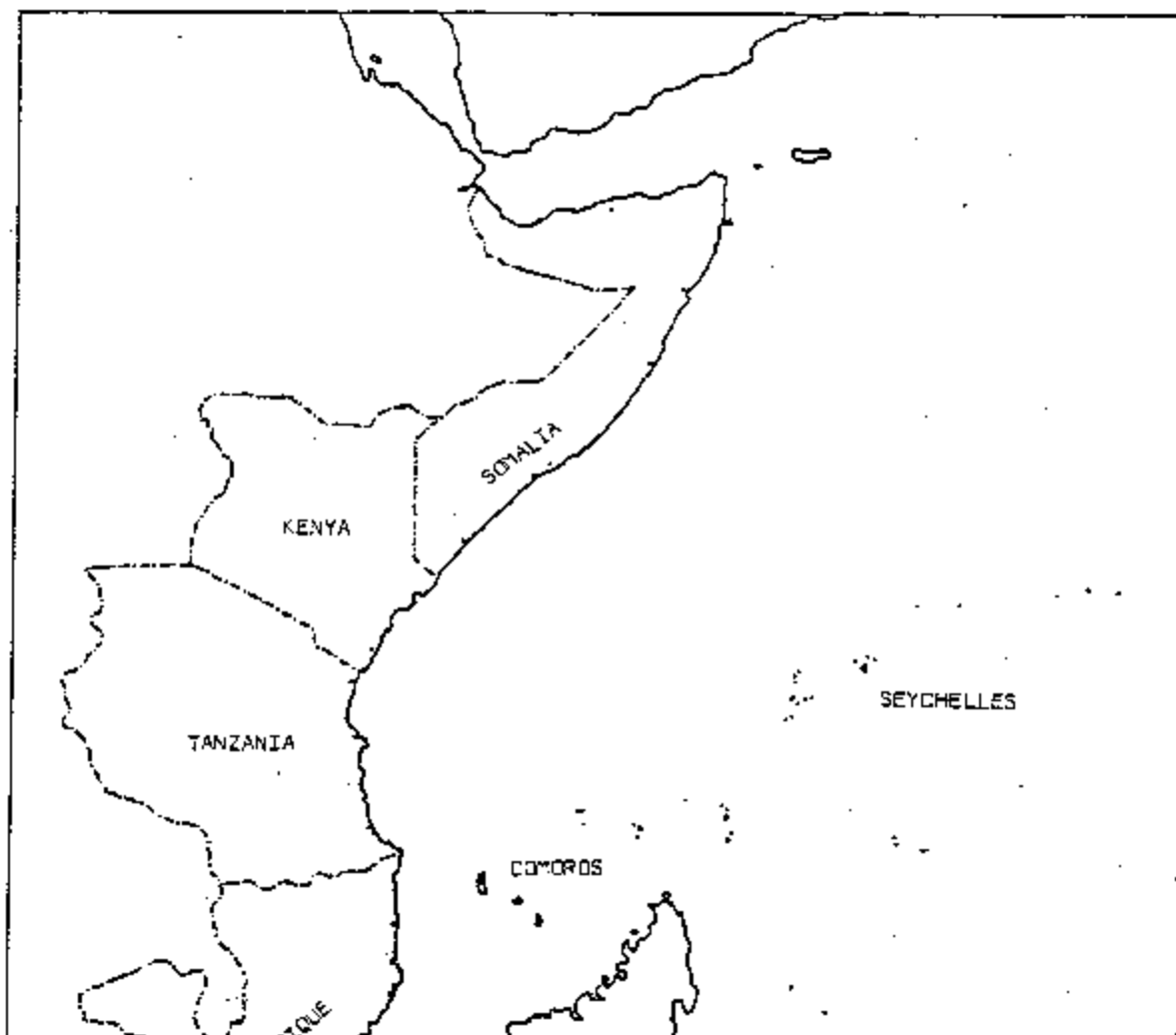
2. The scope of the report comprises:

- (a) Classification and survey of coastal and marine ecosystems and living resources;
- (b) Assessment of economic value of resources;
 - present use
 - proposed development
- (c) Identification of critical coastal and marine species and habitats and of environmental threats;
- (d) National policies, legislation and training relevant to conservation including legislation;
- (e) Conclusions and recommendations.

3. The diversity of plant and animal life is an essential storehouse of genetic material for meeting human needs of the region. This alone highlights how important and urgent it is that development be shaped in such a way as to protect living resources for long-term productivity. Sustainable economic growth should be inter-related with the conservation of life-support systems on which the people depend in their quest for food, health, fuel and shelter. Any deteriorating relationship between human communities and the ecological processes that sustain them may lead to an aggravation of the present situation.

4. The diversity of living resources of the coastal and marine ecosystems requires an integrated approach to management. This is even more complex along the coastal zone than in the management of marine living resources. For example, the coastal zone is likely to include the interests of: rural and urban development, agriculture, forestry, wildlife and land-based tourism, industrial development, etc., while the management of marine resources is, in most cases, under the department of fisheries and, very locally, the national parks departments and the harbour authorities.

5. Most of the information contained in this document was provided by the government agencies most directly charged with the management and conservation of forestry and fisheries resources and where possible, research institutes/centres



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