

# Marine Regions Forum

## Workshop towards a Marine Regions Forum conference in the Western Indian Ocean Region

### Summary report

Date: 29 November 2021

Time: 11:00 – 14:30 CET / 13:00 – 16:30 EAT

### Contents

Contents .....	1
1 Introduction .....	1
2 Workshop presentation, discussions, and breakout groups.....	2
2.1 Welcome and opening statements and panel .....	2
2.2 Panel discussion .....	3
2.3 Breakout groups session I: Current projects and initiatives of the WIO region - achievements, challenges, and future opportunities .....	4
2.3.1 Breakout group 1: “Regional resilience” .....	4
2.3.2 Breakout group 2: “Ocean governance in the WIO” .....	5
2.3.3 Breakout group 3: “Knowledge systems” .....	7
2.4 Breakout group session II: Towards a Marine Regions Forum in the Western Indian Ocean Region ...	8
3 Closing statements.....	9
4 Conclusion by moderators .....	10

## 1 Introduction

The next decade will be decisive for the future of the world’s marine regions: climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and the impacts of COVID-19 require novel solutions that deliver for a healthy ocean and dependent livelihoods. The Marine Regions Forum is set up as an inclusive space for dialogue and to support collaborative efforts for strengthened ocean governance within and across the world’s marine regions.

Following the implementation of the first [Marine Regions Forum conference 2019](#) in Berlin with a network of global partners, the second Marine Regions Forum conference will be co-hosted together with the Nairobi Convention and other regional partners to focus on the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). The aim will be to facilitate intraregional exchanges, highlight joint learnings, and co-design actions for addressing regional sustainability challenges with key stakeholders. The Marine Regions Forum conference is tentatively planned to be held and hosted in the WIO region in 2023, pending global COVID-19 developments. Applying a multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral approach, the Marine Regions Forum conference will bring together a diversity of actors in an inclusive and informal space to highlight key ocean governance initiatives addressing pressing sustainability challenges in the WIO, and advance integrated regional approaches and solutions across sectors and boundaries.

The aim of this workshop is to initiate the engagement process to co-create the next Marine Regions Forum conference in the Western Indian Ocean and kick-off an engagement process. It brought together about 60 actors from the Western Indian Ocean as well as other regions to i) discuss key challenges and opportunities of current initiatives and cooperation in the WIO region, ii) exchange on how and what the Marine Regions Forum should deliver to support transformative action for the region, and iii) explore what themes, topics, and key actors should be involved in the further process.

This online workshop was co-hosted by the Nairobi Convention, the Swedish Ministry of the Environment, the European Commission, and the Republic of Seychelles, together with the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), and TMG - Think Tank for Sustainability (TMG).

## 2 Workshop presentation, discussions, and breakout groups

### 2.1 Welcome and opening statements and panel

The workshop was opened by moderators Dixon Waruinge (UNEP Nairobi Convention Secretariat) and Alexander Müller (TMG – Think Tank for Sustainability).

**Helen Ågren** (Ambassador for the Ocean, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden) provided introductory remarks. Ms. Ågren stated that interregional cooperation is considered a key element to ensure the sustainable future of the ocean as well as strengthen capacity building. Each region has its own challenges and opportunities, providing the necessary conditions for tailor-made measures at the regional level. Climate change cannot be mitigated without taking the ocean into account. Ms. Ågren mentioned that the ocean is our ally and needs to be a central element of framework to solve the climate crisis, which requires a holistic, cross-sectoral approach that leaves no one behind. It was mentioned that Sweden is delighted to support the Marine Regions Forum for 2022/23 together with the European Commission, in cooperation with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, the Republic of Seychelles, and other regional partners in support of regional ocean governance and cross-cutting dialogue.

**Denis Matatiken** (Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment, Republic of Seychelles) continued the introductory remarks by highlighting that the Western Indian Ocean region is one of the most biodiverse and interesting marine regions. Being a small island nation, the ocean is critical for Seychelles – a state which has one of the widest exclusive economic zones (EEZ). It was mentioned that ocean governance in Seychelles has made considerable advancements by including the ocean in the national agenda and has committed to protect 30% of its national waters. Climate change is devastating for marine ecosystems, including coral reefs but protection strategies can be found in

nature, such as through nature-based solutions. Mr. Matatiken stated that the Marine Regions Forum provides a space for joint learning and sharing of experiences between states and regions which are necessary to protect and sustainably manage marine ecosystems.

**Laura Weiland** (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam, Germany) presented the concept, aim, and further engagement process of the Marine Regions Forum to the workshop participants.

## 2.2 Panel discussion

A panel discussion, moderated by Dixon Waruinge and Alexander Müller, explored the opportunities for multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral collaborations in the WIO region. It provided a first exchange on the next Marine Regions Forum conference being hosted in the WIO, specifically on what it should deliver to support transformative action for the region.

The following panellists had been invited to discuss and share their insights:

- **Aboud Jumbe** (Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar)
- **Angelique Pouponneau** (Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust - SeyCCAT)
- **Yvonne Waweru** (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit - GIZ)

The moderation started by familiarizing the participants with the scope of the panel discussion as well thanking the panellists for their contributions. The following was the first question asked by the moderators: “Regional coordination is key in the national implementation of global agreements, such as the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC COP 26, especially pertaining to the ocean. Given your participation in 2019 Marine Regions Forum conference, how can regional dialogue improve regional collaboration and national implementation?”

**Aboud Jumbe** replied by stating that ocean governance has gained traction in the WIO region. Further, although the blue economy is seen as an approach towards financial growth, it should be socially inclusive, and the focus should be placed on how to maximize benefits, while being contextualized according to the societal needs. Interregional dialogue can help in this matter as the challenge of deteriorating ocean health cannot be solved by one state alone. The Nairobi Convention could be leveraged to unify and bring states together to improve interregional dialogue starting by raising awareness for the multiple challenges they faced with regard to the blue economy.

The panel continued by the moderators asking **Angelique Pouponneau** the following question: “Seychelles is a pioneer of innovative blue finance models that could enable a sustainable blue economy. How could such models be supported by regional dialogue and collaboration?”

Ms. Pouponneau stated that the Seychelles is known for its debt-for-nature swap which is complemented by the sovereign blue bond. Looking at how to scale such initiatives to bring in additional capital could be aided by regional collaboration. She highlighted the importance of connectivity of ecosystems for which efforts should be pooled and that there is a need for ecosystem based financial instruments. Seychelles is keen to act as a model and share lessons learned on how these initiatives can be shaped and adapted to other countries as well as at the regional scale. Ms. Pouponneau continued by highlighting that the Marine Regions Forum breaks down sectoral silos, fostering the much needed multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach.

Continuing the panel discussion, the moderators stated that a multitude of different actors, sectors, and stakeholders should be engaged in different ocean governance processes, and that this is being advanced through different initiatives in the WIO region. They asked the panellists what challenges they have come across in engaging different actors and sectors, and how have these been overcome.

**Yvonne Waweru** took the floor and answered that resources and budget are often lacking to appropriately address environmental and social challenges, and that communities may act unsustainably as a result of disempowerment. She adds that there is little engagement with the private sector in the WIO region, and that where such engagement happens, it is often focussed on short-term activities or with little regard for the environment. There is currently a landscape of disjointed policies, actions, and efforts. Dealing with such issues requires elaborate solutions by providing spaces and platforms for co-design to co-create solutions which would further improve ownership by bringing actors to the table.

Dixon Waruinge and Alexander Müller closed the session by asking the three panellists what they expect of the Marine Regions Forum to further support the processes towards sustainability in the WIO region. Ms. Pouponneau replied by stating that the Marine Regions Forum could facilitate a process towards a road map or action plan for the region and that the recommendations formulated at the conference should feed into key global processes, such as negotiations on ABNJ, marine plastics, marine biodiversity, ocean connectivity, etc. Mr. Aboud added that the past Marine Regions Forum facilitated various actions and since its implementation in 2019, the WIO region has seen a lot of progress, from advancing marine spatial planning (MSP) in Tanzania, UNDP investing in blue economy programs, to European support for projects and roundtable discussion. Facilitating further progress should thus be the aspiration towards at the next conference of the Marine Regions Forum in the WIO region.

## 2.3 Breakout groups session I: Current projects and initiatives of the WIO region - achievements, challenges, and future opportunities

Participants were allocated into three breakout groups, the themes and summaries of which are detailed below:

### 2.3.1 Breakout group 1: “Regional resilience”

*Co-hosted by David Obura (CORDIO – East Africa) and Sebastian Unger (IASS/TMG)*

**David Obura** set the scene by highlighting the importance of the nexus between biodiversity and climate change for coastal zones and people’s livelihoods. He emphasized the need to strive for ecosystem-based adaptation and explained how climate resilience, nature-based solutions and elements of local blue economy are founded on ecosystem resilience. He continued by stating that numerous good and best-practice examples from the WIO region are already in place, and while some might need improvement or innovation, the critical need of scaling-up individual, local activities was a main concern for developing the region further.

**Lavosa Dresy**, WWF, shared experience from projects supporting the development of seaweed farming in Madagascar. He explained that many initiatives in the region, related to small-scale fisheries supply chains, ecotourism and seaweed are often not interacting with the private sector. With the goal of turning these initiatives into scalable projects, WWF partnered with “Ocean Farmers” (<https://ocean-farmers.com/>) to actively develop seaweed farming in Madagascar. While the WWF provided the institutional organization, Ocean Farmers provided the funds. The project currently

comprises 400 seaweed farmers, of which 30% are women, working in 20 locally managed marine areas (LMMAs). Lavosa Dresy highlighted the increased income for seaweed farmers, compared to the regional average, as a success. As a challenge, the current monopole status of the project was identified.

**Tanguy Nicolas**, Flora and Fauna International (FFI), reported on FFI's work in Zanzibar (Pemba/Mwambao) supporting community-centred approaches to coastal and marine management, focusing on the lessons learned regarding the complexity of building local governance systems that can proactively facilitate socio-economic and ecological resilience. In the wake of conflict management, the importance to engage with diverse actors and vulnerable groups of local communities was highlighted, also to identify key socio-economic issues such as buyer-producer relationships and possible bottlenecks in value chains. Tanguy Nicolas emphasized that, to address climate vulnerabilities, projects need to focus on the community level (e.g., to restore degraded ecosystems); however, appropriate platforms would be needed to work together across sectors and governance levels.

The participants engaged in a discussion on what criteria constitute good-practice examples for projects to be scaled-up and concluded, that such criteria would need to address a variety of aspects relating to ecosystem and resource issues, social issues and governance, market value chains, and finance. This was followed by an exchange on challenges in this endeavour and accelerated action. Identifying bottlenecks in the fields of empowering and engaging local communities, fostering knowledge and capacity, including the private sector and financial mechanisms. Explicitly mentioned was the importance of communicating to actors both direct and indirect benefits from projects, as well as identifying potential incentives, i.e., for the private sector. Securing longer-term funding for projects was also mentioned as a crucial component. IUCN reported on the Great Blue Wall Initiative in the Western Indian Ocean as a new initiative with the aim to accelerate action for ocean resilience. The Great Blue Wall was launched this year at the IUCN World Congress and presented at UNFCCC COP 26. Under the project, seascapes and conservation/restoration sites will be identified based on country priorities, opportunities, existing efforts, local partners' needs as well as on available science and knowledge. During the discussion, the development of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement was also highlighted as critical lever for ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions. Whilst national administrations are responsible for submitting and implementing their NDCs, regional cooperation and coordination could facilitate the scaling-up. A critical success criterion in leveraging ocean resilience will be political leadership. Building on projects and initiatives outlined in this session, the Marine Regions Forum could help to foster such leadership.

### 2.3.2 Breakout group 2: "Ocean governance in the WIO"

*Co-hosted by Adnan Awad (The Nature Conservancy) and Klaudija Cremers (IDDRI)*

**Kieran Kelleher**, who authored *The State of Ocean Governance in the Western Indian Ocean Region* report, provided some reflections to kick-off the discussions. He noted that regional governance has generally meant cooperation between countries on issues of shared interest, and that more advanced forms of cooperation are emerging, such as the harmonisation and integration of legal and regulatory frameworks. He identified the need for a shared vision as a prerequisite to deeper cooperation, highlighting that in the WIO region this vision centres on strengthening political stability and developing an equitable blue economy. He noted that regional governance and cooperation is essential to achieving these aims, but that a range of external actors, such as distant-water fishing

nations, must also be actively involved. In this regard, there is a major gap in terms of linkages with regional economic organisations (RECs) and Regional Fisheries Bodies which have limited institutional capacity. With reference to regional legal frameworks, he noted that uptake of relevant legal instruments has been slow, e.g. only two countries have ratified the Lomé Charter since 2016. In this context, he urged to be pragmatic and acknowledge the hurdles posed by limited political will and resources to implement commitments already made.

Kieran Kelleher raised the question of the Marine Regions Forum's aim and potential role, suggesting that a loose "forum" framework could help smooth collaboration, and find and implement easy wins. He introduced the governance report and outlined a range of possible approaches. He also identified some possible opportunities: to foster flexible polycentric decision-making; develop a suite of regional Memoranda of Understanding concerning areas beyond national jurisdiction, ABNJ (as in the Collective Arrangement in the north-east Atlantic<sup>1</sup>); innovative financing for reef conservation; and facilitating engagement and collaboration with the private sector.

The participants suggested that identification of relevant organisations and their mandates would be a logical starting point for the discussion, noting that the WIO already hosts many organisations, such as RFMOs and RECs, most of which have indicated that cooperation and harmonisation is a priority. The next question is how to advance and build on this, bearing in mind the need to not overburden actors by adding many new meetings to an already packed schedule. One approach could be to strengthen coordination at the local and national levels, implementing easy wins, and seeking out opportunities for regional collaboration throughout that process.

Participants also highlighted that there is limited capacity to engage with international processes such as negotiations on an international agreement for marine biodiversity in ABNJ ("BBNJ agreement"), and limited scientific understanding of the impacts that offshore activities have on coastal waters and the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). They suggested that banks could be encouraged to provide microfinancing for sustainable ocean projects and asked how European or other external banks to engage.

Other participants noted the many ongoing efforts to engage governments in the region - especially from non-governmental organization (NGOs). It was reiterated to bring in private sector actors and RECs, especially as they have only recently started engaging with ocean governance issues. The discussion also highlighted the need to develop new financing mechanisms to support governance in the region, especially as funding is often project-based and does not provide the long-term security and stability needed.

During the breakout group, the need to be strategic was highlighted: firstly, by finding the major points of interaction and overlap between different sectors, such as fisheries and conservation; and secondly, by developing specific and actionable proposals, such as highlighting small-scale fisheries in MSP processes or collaborating at the regional level to measure seagrass carbon. Communities should have a seat at the table to generate a sense of ownership amongst all stakeholders and ensure effectiveness of any measures taken.

Supporting the earlier interventions participants reiterated the need to identify existing efforts and build from there. Participants highlighted the need to identify the biggest private companies in the region, beginning with engagement in regional governance but potentially leading to the development

---

<sup>1</sup> OSPAR Agreement 2014-09, see <https://www.ospar.org/about/international-cooperation/collective-arrangement>

of new collaborations and initiatives, such as the labelling systems that have proven useful in other regions.

### 2.3.3 Breakout group 3: “Knowledge systems”

*Co-hosted by Jacqueline Uku (Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association, WIOMSA, and Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, KMFRI) and Barbara Neumann (IASS)*

The hosts, **Jacqueline Uku** and **Barbara Neumann**, started the session by eliciting with the participants what kind of knowledge is needed and how this knowledge can be brought together to support informed, knowledge-based decision making (traditional, local knowledge, science etc.). The participants highlighted that it is important to clarify how knowledge and data are defined when engaging in dialogues, what the knowledge would be needed for, etc. Further, it was raised that data and information are scientific products, while knowledge is produced in conjunction with society for a specific reason. Two gaps were highlighted for the WIO region in relation to data and knowledge: i) there is a large stock of data and information on the region, but there are inconsistencies, and these should be harmonised such as at the regional level; and ii) the production of knowledge, including data and information, is inconsistent between different countries, sectors, and scales. For example, the knowledge needed for coastal communication vs. management of large marine ecosystems is different. There are improvements needed in terms of overview of all the mechanisms and common indicators. Participants mentioned that the kind of knowledge that is needed and the application of it should be contextualised according to the needs of each region as the needs vary substantially. In general, the WIO region already has a large amount of knowledge and data, but some knowledge types are less commonly used, such as indigenous knowledge and participation in processes. It was raised that the way the knowledge is packaged should be synthesised and tailored according to its purpose such as to inform policy. Further, there is a need to learn how to communicate with the private sector and other audiences that are outside of the more common communication strands (policy and lay public).

The breakout group went on by discussing the key players providing support for knowledge production and sharing in the WIO region. Although some States have comprehensive indicators, others are still developing these, and thus not all regions have mechanisms or capacity to monitor changes. A possible solution to this could be “regional hubs”. The UNEP Regions Seas Programme was mentioned as having ongoing efforts to bring experts together and work with institutions to synthesise data, develop indicators and track success. The challenge is though, that not all regions are the same and the terrain between States is not even. UNEP therefore developed a list of indicators that is most applicable to all (“Regional Seas Core Indicator Set”), so that regions can establish their most applicable set of indicators and set up region-specific mechanisms to track and compile data. The Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide an overarching framework to employ in marine regions region. Other bodies and initiatives that manage data or provide funding, or are shaping the regions knowledge production and application, include WIOMSA, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), UNEP’s Nairobi Convention, MeerWissen, WIO Symphony, and activities under the UN Decade of Ocean Science. Under the WIO Symphony collaboration, for example, a data tool for measuring of environmental impacts in the WIO region was co-developed and implemented by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SWAM) and the Nairobi Convention and its member States. It caters for specific needs of end users and can be applied, e.g., for MSP processes. But also, the Regional State of the Coast

Report, to which for example Kenya contributes through its own annual report on the state of fisheries and the state of the coast, could be tools to help synthesise data and information.

Further, it was highlighted that there is a gap in the WIO region concerning a mandate or framework to push for requirements. Activities in the WIO region have multiplied over the last couple of years and decades, which makes it difficult to keep overview – and raises issues of coordination of efforts, data harmonisation, accessibility, etc. The European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) exemplifies how mandates can be implemented and harmonization efforts be pushed for. The EU's MSFD approach could be used as an example to promote harmonised data production. When discussing the opportunities for data production and sharing, the Nairobi Convention Clearinghouse<sup>2</sup> and the IUCN were highlighted as examples, yet participants also mentioned that the wealth and diversity of data locations across other platforms can be disorienting. Many initiatives in the region have data and information management objectives, and also implement activities (e.g., SAPHIRE, NC-SWIOFC PP, Science to Policy Platform, WIO Symphony, Regional Economic Communities, etc.). There is need to better align these initiatives, and reach consensus on what data/info to collect, for which purposes, as well as how to handle data and Information. One participant mentioned that a coordinated information sharing mechanism would be desirable, an entity with the mandate to coordinate data collection processes, or even provide analyses. This, however, requires political will at the highest level.

## 2.4 Breakout group session II: Towards a Marine Regions Forum in the Western Indian Ocean Region

In this second breakout group session, participants discussed in groups the development and implementation pathways for the next Marine Regions Forum to be held in the WIO region (2022/23). The three main questions and their discussion points are outlined below:

1. *How could the Marine Regions Forum best support ocean action in the WIO and what should be the main topics to be addressed?*

Participants pointed out that the Marine Regions Forum conference in the WIO should build on and support ongoing work of actors in the region, to ensure uptake and continuity. Supporting the alignment of all the regional initiatives in their goals, while serving one another's objectives to maximize synergies was mentioned as another added value of the conference to strive for. The Marine Regions Forum should make sure it involves marginalized stakeholders and engages with the private sector.

Suggested topics included biodiversity and climate, capacity building, funding gap in blue economy, "common challenges" between the coastal communities and marine conservation, ecosystem-based approaches, and potential solutions from the WIO to the nexus of biodiversity-climate-oceans-people. The Marine Regions Forum should have a strong focus on climate change, particular on management and governance foresight to govern an ocean in a world that is likely heading towards 2°C warming. The urgency from the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) is not yet visible in our actions, and the forum should emphasize that the ocean we govern now may not be the same as the ocean we have to manage in 20-30 year from now - and the blue economy, too. It was proposed that the Marine

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nairobiconvention.org/clearinghouse/>



Regions Forum facilitates a dialogue to synthesize science and policy needed for ecosystem-based adaptation, in line with overarching global processes for biodiversity, climate and ocean health.

Other concrete suggestions made included a focus on supporting the delivery of the WIO ocean governance strategy and development of a funders round table bringing together global donors, States and regional organizations. The Marine Regions Forum can offer an opportunity for exchange and support the African wide ocean strategy and continuing support and momentum on this, such as on learning, bringing together data, and setting up a monitoring framework, bringing together the four Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans of Africa (Abidjan Convention, Mediterranean Action Plan, PERSGA/Jeddah Convention, and Nairobi Convention). It was further proposed that the Marine Regions Forum in the WIO could support the African regional seas in developing data and monitoring frameworks, e.g., by providing a platform for exchange, or support setting up networks of experts or developing of technical guidance.

*2. How could the Marine Regions Forum conference in the WIO help to facilitate interregional learning between the WIO, other regions and the regional to the global level?*

Participants highlighted the need to engage in the WIO conference also with actors from other marine regions. In addition to supporting regional ocean governance in the WIO, the Marine Regions Forum should also provide an informal space for interregional learning and serve as an agent for regional ocean governance in global processes. Key steps towards the Marine Regions Forum in the WIO should therefore include contributions to UNEA 5.2 and the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon in 2022. In terms of facilitating interregional learning, it was suggested to have specific objectives, such as creating a number of lessons learned to be shared with actors from other regions (<https://panorama.solutions/en>). Addressing potential solutions from the WIO to the nexus of biodiversity-climate-oceans-people was highlighted as an area of interest for further interregional learning.

*3. What should be the process towards the Marine Regions Forum conference in the WIO region?*

Participants emphasized that there is a need for engagement with specific actor groups prior to the conference. Three actor groups were highlighted, including: the private sector (and funders), local community leaders, and representatives from small-scale fisheries. Connecting stakeholders in their respective interest groups and setting up peer-learning workshops ahead of engagement at the Marine Regions Forum conference would help identify areas of interests to these groups and strengthen their ability to contribute to ongoing discussions. It was recommended to inform specifically local stakeholders about potential funding availabilities regarding their conference participation, to ensure adequate representation.

### 3 Closing statements

**Aurore Maillet** (European Commission, DG MARE) provided the closing statement, announcing that she is delighted that there is such strong interest to strengthen regional ocean governance. The workshop has confirmed the importance of regional ocean governance to provide the crucial link between the global and national level competencies. The discussions presented that regional cooperation can indeed contribute to a wider global goals, which is how the European Commission also views the role of regional cooperation and developing a sustainable blue economy. In line with the European International Ocean Governance Agenda, and based on the experiences made by the

European Commission, there is strong support for the Marine Regions Forum in its success to bring key actors together and delivering key messages to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Ms. Maillet highlighted that the EU is looking forward to further supporting the forum in the WIO region to continue the dialogue and push forward the ocean agenda. Cooperation with Africa is very close along multiple strands, which contributes to the overall Europe-Africa partnership objectives, but also on specific objectives and shared interests, such as combatting ocean pollution or ensuring the viability of coastal areas through a thriving blue economy. Ms. Maillet concluded by inviting participants to the Blue Invest Africa event which will take place in Seychelles in 2022.

## 4 Conclusion by moderators

Dixon Waruinge concluded by thanking the participants for their diligent contributions and reiterated that the Marine Regions Forum is anchored in the work program of the Nairobi Convention. Mr. Waruinge further mentioned that the WIO Ocean Governance Strategy is being finalised which will contribute to the entire African continent.

Alexander Müller continued the closing of the workshop with four key messages:

The multitude of challenges faced by marine region is vast. These need to be identified and a common denominator should be applied to create solutions. The denominator should tackle multiple challenges and have multiple benefits in a systematic approach especially in a time when financial resources are scarce.

1. Communities and people: these must be at the centre of governance processes, and they should not be side-lined, therefore making their participation key. The work of the Marine Regions Forum should not only be technical and science-based, but it should also have a societal impact.
2. Learning and knowledge: can we systemise learning? What type of knowledge are we talking about, and how can it be organised? Who has the mandate to collect and share data? In the workshop discussions, this was immediately linked to data and its accessibility. The Marine Regions Forum is a platform for learning and knowledge, and digging deeper opens more questions.
3. Enabling environment: the Nairobi Convention hosted COP10 in November 2021 and developed a mandate for an Ocean Governance Strategy – this is a key pillar to an enabling environment. If it is possible to have a transparent pathway, this could be a role model - and be upscaled for other marine regions.
4. Cooperation: this should take place across the interregional and intraregional level while ensuring that the various sectors are involved. Key words include inclusiveness, interconnectedness, planning, linking investments of private sector and financial mechanisms. Cooperation should be in the interest of the region, rather than in the interest of players with the most financial resources. What is the bottle neck for cooperation? We need integration of sectors and planning, as well as the development of engagement strategies.