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**The Seventh Conference of the Parties to the Convention
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the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western
Indian Ocean (Nairobi Convention)**

Maputo, Mozambique 10 to 14 December, 2012

CONFERENCE PAPER

Northern Mozambique Channel

The northern Mozambique Channel is one of the world's globally outstanding marine biodiversity areas and serves as a biological reservoir for the entire coastal East African region. Endemism is marked and overall reef diversity is second only to the southeast Asia's Coral Triangle, with an estimated 400 plus hard coral species. The oceanographic mechanisms that have created the Coral Triangle are strongly paralleled in our landscape. Owing to its consequent high productivity, it is one of the most important breeding and foraging areas for key indicator and flagship marine species. The provisional demarcation of this area includes northern Madagascar, the Comoros Archipelago, northern Mozambique and southern Tanzania, and may extend as far as the southernmost Seychelles.

This area is a strategic priority for WWF and its global marine conservation importance has been confirmed recently by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (as the northern Mozambique Channel will be the heart of an outstanding serial UNESCO world heritage site) and the EBSA process. Tourism and fisheries are the main contributors to the bordering nations' economy, and the northern Mozambique Channel offers important tuna resources for long-distant fishing nations (roughly 20% of the world tuna catches are from the southwestern Indian Ocean) and most coastal communities. The strategic location of this core diversity region in terms of shipping and oil and gas drilling provides sound justification for developing a multi-country and partner cooperation that effectively implements a synergistic natural resource and ocean governance agenda.

WWF promotes the Northern Mozambique Channel Conservation Area (NMCCA) concept and will strive to establish synergy with the World Heritage Convention for the complementarities of both organizations' efforts on this key transboundary zone. WWF will present this concept before member states of the Nairobi Convention during COP7 for a decision to: a) drive for a true engagement towards identification and implementation of key actions linked to a strategic, consensual and science-based definition of the NMCCA (including common vision, goals) and the needed ocean governance agenda process within existing regional partnership platforms, and b) inform and support national processes of engagement to achieve this. The concretization of the NMCCA will ensure preservation of key natural wealth and maintain optimal ecosystems goods and services of the northern Mozambique Channel area. The Contracting Parties bordering the NMCCA will be urged to support the activities of partners that will promote the establishment of the NMCCA in the

region. The governments of Comoros, Madagascar, Mozambique and Tanzania will be requested to develop a project on "coastal and marine resources in the northern Mozambique Channel of the Western Indian ocean region" (See UNEP-DEPI-EAF-CP.7.Inf25 for details).

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