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**The First Bureau Meeting
to the Convention for the Protection,
Management and Development of the
Marine and Coastal Environment
of the Eastern African Region**

Maputo, Mozambique 19 to 20 August, 2010

**Regional Conference on “Impacts and adaptation to climate change in the WIO region:
Solutions to the Crisis” 9-15 October 2010 in Grand Baie, Mauritius**

The Secretariat in collaboration with WIOMSA, African Union and the Government of Mauritius is organising a regional Conference on “Impacts and adaptation to climate change in the WIO region: Solutions to the Crisis” 9-15 October 2010 in Grand Baie, Mauritius.

Climate change threatens to deepen vulnerabilities, erode hard-won gains, and seriously undermine prospects for Africa achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The conference will deliberate on key climate change issues that Africa needs to address to strengthen its efforts towards the development and implementation of a comprehensive framework of African Climate change programmes and associated sub-regional frameworks and to lay the foundation for low carbon economies.

- 1.Many coastal states in Africa will face increase in droughts, floods, diseases and other extreme events leading to stress in water resources, food security, human health and infrastructure. It is estimated that by 2020 between 75 and 250 million people in Africa are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change, and yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50 percent;
- 2.Severe climate change scenarios will also alter quality and functioning of ecosystems, reducing their capacity to perform their role as important life support systems. Changes in ecosystems have large effects on the provision of ecosystems goods and services and wider socio-economic effects;
- 3.Sea-level rise will increase the high socio-economic and physical vulnerability of coastal cities. Towards the end of the 21st century, projected sea level rise will affect low-lying coastal areas with populations of up to 56 million in 320 coastal cities. Constraints in technological options, limited infrastructure, skills, information and links to markets further heighten vulnerability to climate stresses.

The objective of the conference is to bring together Ministers of relevant Ministries, Senior Government officials, representatives of regional bodies and the business community, scientists and members of key national and international NGOs, to share knowledge, experience and solutions on impacts of climate change and particularly experience gained in implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies, programmes and projects.

The Conference will also further define the recommendations of the Thirteenth African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) that are of relevance to coastal and marine issues of the Western Indian Ocean. The AMCEN meeting which was held in Bamako, Mali in June 2010 urged the African Union Commission, together with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and other partners to develop a marine and coastal environment strategy for Africa, taking into account the adverse impacts of climate change and the need to improve communities' livelihoods. It is expected that the Conference will develop a regional common stand in priorities for actions in relation to research and adaptation needs, management programs and actions, policies, and laws for recommendations to national and regional government bodies.

The Conference will be comprised of four sessions:

1. Workshop on knowledge sharing on impacts of climate change and adaptation experiences that will focus on presentations on impacts of climate change and possible solutions, and experiences from field-based projects on adaptation and mitigations.
2. Forum of Non-state actors which will focus on presentations by representatives of business community and national, regional and international NGOs actively involved in climate change activities.
3. Meeting of the Senior Government officials that will discuss experiences in mainstreaming adaptation strategies in their government plans and recommendations from foregoing Workshop and the Forum.
4. Ministerial Conference of invited Ministers and heads of regional organizations to present their statements on priorities for actions in their respective countries and deliberate on outcomes and recommendations of the three earlier sessions. They will also agree on a common stand in priorities for actions in relation to research and adaptation needs, management programs and actions and policies and further define the recommendations of the 13 AMCEN Meeting that was held in Bamako, Mali.

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