

Towards an Understanding of the Contribution of Coastal Ecosystems in the Wellbeing of Coastal Communities in Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique

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This paper looks at the contribution of coastal ecosystems services to human wellbeing in rural and peri-urban communities in coastal Cabo Delgado. It argues that coastal ecosystems services contribute significantly for the wellbeing of both rural and urban communities but are at risk of losing their role due to the effects of human activity and disruption of traditional forms of management. It contends that the rich marine resources in Cabo Delgado attract immigrants who bring new investments and expertise in the access of ecosystem services. This has resulted in resurgence, invention and reinvention of ethnic identities to prevent the outsiders from accessing coastal ecosystem services. This mobilization of ethnic politics at the grassroots, if not well managed can lead to unsustainable practices and ethnic violence. The research for this paper involved a multidisciplinary research team including ecologists, anthropologists and historians. It was part of a large research project entitled "Sustainable Poverty Alleviation from Coastal Ecosystem Services (SPACES)". The research methodology included the mapping and assessment of the condition of local ecosystems particularly mangroves, coral reefs, fisheries and fresh water. It also consisted on the conduct of a community dialogue about the historical and reciprocal relationship between local communities and coastal ecosystem services