Avenues for future collaboration in Marine Sciences in Zanzibar: key findings of a 4 years Tanzanian-German Postgraduate Program (SUTAS)

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During the final workshop of the SUTAS graduate program in Stonetown (September 2016) future avenues for the collaboration in marine sciences between Germany and Tanzania the following priority areas were defined: (1) Assemblage and mapping of data (using a GIS based multilayer data base) of research that has been conducted on coral reefs, sea grasses and fisheries to obtain a complete vision of the present state of knowledge; (2) Development of a fisheries monitoring programme, which allows for data optimization at lowest monitoring effort/costs; (3) Assessment of the artisanal fishery for large pelagics in conjunction with the assessment of offshore stocks harvested by the West Indian Thuna commission to get a clear picture of stock status; (4) Water quality as cross cutting research theme for all research groups. Eutrophication, heavy metal contamination, microbial contamination through sewage effluents, all impact on the quality of coastal waters, directly affecting the health of nearshore ecosystems (sea grasses, coral reefs) but also inland (drinking) water is greatly impacted. Drinking water salinisation is already occurring and water quality in terms of Coli and other bacteria seems to be critical in some areas. Integrated research needs to contribute to solve these problems of water supply; (5) Zanzibar, as an island Socio-ecosystem greatly driven by tourism development, is considered an ideal case study system to investigate and model system change over time as driven by local and global environmental and socio-economic drivers. Since coral reef biodiversity and endemism is high as is the landscape beauty and its cultural heritage (Stonetown), the value of this island for conservation is also high. This implies that research on conservation is imperative.