

SS031: Bridging Science and Policy for Coral Reef Conservation in the Western Indian Ocean

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This session brings together stakeholders from the ten Nairobi Convention countries to collaboratively advance coral reef science and policy in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). Anchored around the WIO chapter of the GCRMN Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2025 report, participants will review regional findings and co-develop a roadmap to finalise the chapter. This process will serve as the foundation for a comprehensive WIO Coral Reef Status Report, the first since 2017, which aims to incorporate fish, sharks and rays, socioeconomic indicators, and the Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) findings. The session will also launch regional engagement in the global coral reef RLE initiative and explore how WIO data and priorities can inform the Coral Reef Rescue Initiative (CRRI) 2030 Strategy to support the protection of climate-resilient coral reef ecosystems. Strengthening regional coordination through the Coral Reef Technical Working Group (CRTWG) under the Nairobi Convention, the session will generate actionable recommendations for the WIO Science-Policy Dialogue and COP12. By connecting science and policy, and fostering collaboration across disciplines and countries, the session will contribute to sustainable coral reef management and support delivery of SDG 14, the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and the UN Decade of Ocean Science.