

SS043: Breaking the Silos: Coastal Futures in a Rising Sea- Collaborative Insights from Early Career Scientists in the Western Indian Ocean to Tackle Sea Level Rise

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Sea level rise is one of the most pressing threats to coastal communities and ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), affecting livelihoods, biodiversity, and infrastructure. Addressing this complex challenge demands transdisciplinary thinking, inclusive dialogue, and bold action particularly from the next generation of ocean leaders. This special session brings together Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) from across the WIO region to share innovative, collaborative, and community-centered responses to sea level rise. The session will highlight case studies of ECOP-led initiatives, including research, outreach, and policy advocacy that integrate traditional knowledge, climate science, nature-based solutions, and community resilience strategies. By “breaking the silos” between sectors, disciplines, and generations, this dialogue aims to foster synergies among science, policy, and practice in coastal adaptation. Participants will include ECOPs engaged in international collaborations, capacity-building initiatives, and local adaptation programs. The session will also feature interactive discussions to generate shared priorities and next steps for ECOP engagement in the climate-ocean agenda. This session seeks to amplify the voices of young professionals and reinforce their role in shaping coastal futures through equity-driven, knowledge-based, and action-oriented solutions.