

Shaping Africa's Ocean Future: Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs)' Voices for Policy Action

Conveners

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This joint special session co-organized by IOCAFRICA, the FAO EAF-Nansen Programme, the Early Career Ocean Professionals Programme. Africa Node (ECOP Africa) and the Western Indian Ocean Early Career Scientist Network (WIO-ECSN) is dedicated to discuss policy recommendations in advancing the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in Africa within the next five years through the effective inclusion and professional capacity of African ECOPs in the Western Indian Ocean and beyond. The session will entail ECOP-led contributions in professional capacity building, ocean literacy mainstreaming, governance engagement, and socio-economic development that support the regional Ocean Decade priorities. Speakers from a diverse cultural and professional background will highlight regional needs and constraints and share successful case studies. Through the interactive dialogue, this session furthermore will co-create policy recommendations with the audience towards accelerating regional and national cooperation in capacity development, traditional knowledge integration, ocean literacy and regional networking to guide future Ocean Decade aspirations in the region. Moreover, it will increase the visibility of ECOPs more particularly in the WIO region as key players in shaping a sustainable and inclusive future for ocean science and stewardship in the region and beyond. The target audience will be interested stakeholders such as ECOP members, youth and community representatives, government officials and decision-makers, scientists, businessperson of the blue economy, multi-lateral and regional organizations, regional and national research agencies, policy makers and development partners, educators and representatives from WIOMSA, IOC-UNESCO, and Ocean Decade Commission.