Newsbrief

Durban Hosts Successful 5th WIOMSA Symposium

"To achieve the theme of the Symposium, WIOMSA should strive to reach out for the youth in the remote rural areas and to encourage them to take up marine sciences as a career. Using the local radio stations is one medium of outreach." - **Honourable Rejoice Mabudhafasi, Deputy Minister of S. Africa.**

The Fifth Scientific Symposium of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) was held in Durban, South Africa from 22nd to 26th October, 2007. The event was attended by about 400 scientists, practitioners and policy makers from over 30 countries within and outside the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. The Symposium theme was titled: *'Advances in Marine Science in Eastern Africa Science, Policy and Management: Pressures and responses in the Western Indian Ocean'*. This theme was deemed appropriate for the year's Symposium as it signals the WIO region's preparedness to embrace contemporary science for effective formulation of policies essential for addressing the challenges facing the coastal and marine environment.

WIOMSA's scientific symposiums are held every two years in one of the member states. The first Symposium was held in Mombasa, Kenya in 1997 and then there was a gap of four years before Tanzania hosted the second one in Dar es Salaam in October 2001. The Third and Fourth were held in Maputo, Mozambique and Grand Baie, Mauritius in 2003 and 2005, respectively.

Deputy Minister Hon Rejoice Mabudhafasi with Rudy van Elst (ORI); Claes Kjellstrom (Sida/SAREC); Nyawira Muthiga (WIOMSA); Magnus Ngoile (WIOMSA) and Julius Francis (WIOMSA), after opening the Symposium

The biennial Symposium not only creates awareness on the current status of knowledge on coastal and marine environment, but also, more importantly it provides the participants with opportunities to network and explore possibilities for collaboration and creation of synergies at the personal and institutional level. It is evident from the number of participants, including regional and international organizations represented, that the Symposium is now a recognized premier event on the calendar of key activities in the WIO region. The event provides a forum for communication and dissemination of scientific results, and a platform for informing participants the on-going regional projects/programmes and an avenue for building new collaborations amongst individual scientists and institutions and strengthening existing ones. As a forum for knowing what is happening in the region, the Symposium contributes immensely towards minimizing the potential for duplication in research activities.

The Fifth Symposium was jointly organized by WIOMSA and South Africa's Oceanographic Research Institution (ORI). It was hosted at the Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel, located on the Durban beachfront.

The Official Opening was at the Hotel's Great Ilanga Conference Hall and the Guest of Honour was South Africa's Deputy Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Honourable Rejoice Mabudhafasi.

Official Opening

In her Opening Speech, the Honourable Minister reiterated the commitment of the Government of South Africa to keep the ocean clean by improving marine and coastal research. She noted with satisfaction that representatives from West Africa were also invited to participate and to share experiences from the Atlantic Ocean. In her speech, Hon Mabudhafasi urged the delegates to be practical in promoting marine science by penetrating into the remote areas of eastern Africa, away from the ocean to encourage the youth of Africa to take up marine science as a career. "WIOMSA needs to devise a strategy to reach out for the youth in the remote rural areas in order to achieve the theme of this Symposium. The Government of South Africa is committed to this approach", Hon Deputy Minister stated, "One way of doing this is by using the local radio stations as a medium of outreach".

Prior to the formal Opening of the symposium by the Hon Deputy Minister, the participants were welcomed to the Symposium by the Executive Secretary of WIOMSA, Dr Julius Francis. In his welcome remark, Dr Francis observed that he expected more than 350 participants from all over the WIO region, Europe, North and South America, Asia and Oceania to present their scientific findings of research conducted in our region. He explained that the themes on social dynamics in resource management as well as management systems and governance processes were among the newly introduced ones in this year's Symposium. "The new themes reflect the current situation in the WIO region", noted Dr Francis.

The representative of Sida/SAREC, Dr Claes Kjellstrom also addressed the participants. Dr Kjellstrom traced how the support of Sida/SAREC to WIOMSA and the regional marine science programme in general had evolved over the years from the 1980s to the present. He identified the major areas targeted for future Sida support in Africa as: Natural resources management and bioproduction, natural disasters as well as energy – with the overarching goal of effects of climate change on poverty alleviation.

Deputy Minister Hon Rejoice Mabudhafasi delivers the Opening speech

Before inviting the Deputy Minister to deliver her speech and formally open the Symposium, the President of WIOMSA, Dr Nyawira Muthiga, highlighted some of the major achievements of the Association over the past two years. These included the following:

- Implementation of WIOMSA's Resource Mobilization Strategy;
- Continued Sida/SAREC Support for WIOMSA for 2007-2010;
- Acquisition of the WIOMSA building in Zanzibar to house the Association's offices;
- Recognition of WIOMSA's scientific journal by the International Science Institute.

Objective of the Symposium

This year's Symposium aimed to bring together practitioners, academics, researchers as well as students, to share knowledge, experience and solutions to the challenges experienced in the coastal and marine environment of WIO. The specific objectives of the Symposium were to present current knowledge on disciplines related to the theme of the symposium and to provide a forum for discussion and exchange of information and experiences on coastal and marine science issues in the western Indian Ocean region.

According to the information provided in the evaluation forms, these objectives were met. Participants were satisfied with many aspects of the Symposium, including the scientific content; standard of presentations; and overall organisation. Almost 37 % of the participants found the scientific content to be excellent while 61% found the scientific content to be good. The standard of presentation was found to be excellent by 20% of the participants and good by 63%. Roughly similar opinions were expressed for the poster presentation. More than 90% of the participants indicated the overall organisation as excellent (64%) and good (34%).

New features highlight the Fifth Symposium

Apart from the increased number of participants and papers presented during the Symposium, the Fifth WIOMSA Symposium was marked by the improved scientific quality as reflected from the participants' comments in the evaluation forms. The main highlights of the Symposium included:

- ***More social scientists***. The number of presentations on social-economic issues and governance processes increased substantially in the current Symposium. Consequently, the number of sessions was increased from two in the Fourth Symposium to five.
- ***Organization of competitions***. Two competitions were organized, one for the best student poster and the other for the best photograph depicting the WIO region and its people.
- ***Launch of a book***. The book entitled "Guide Pratique: Poissons de l'ocean Indien et de la mer rouge" (A Practical Guide: Fishes of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea), whose publication costs were partially met by WIOMSA, was launched during the Opening Ceremony
- ***Inauguration of the WIOMSA's Awards***. WIOMSA announced the first winners of the Association's highest awards the Honorary and Fellow Membership Awards. These year's winners were Prof Olof Linden for the Honorary Membership, and Profs Mats Bjork and Yunus Mgaya as well as Drs Tim McClanahan and David Obura for the Fellow Membership.
- ***Increased number of special events***. More regional and international organizations held events prior, during and after the Symposium compared to the previous WIOMSA Symposiums. Their decision to organize their events around the Symposium was in recognition of the opportunities the Symposium offered to them and their participants.
- ***Collaboration with West Africa***. A side event titled, "Building East-West Collaboration for Strengthening Marine Science in Africa" was organized on 26th October 2007. This event brought together scientists from East and West Africa to explore the possibilities of collaboration and networking between the two regions. This was a follow-up to the Meeting "Development Cooperation for Marine Research in East and West Africa Lessons learned and future directions", held in Stockholm in May, 2007

A cross section of the delegates attentively follows the presentation

Sponsors of the Symposium

The Symposium was co-sponsored by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida/SAREC), South African Association for Marine Biological Research (SAAMBR) through the Oceanographic Research Institute (ORI), eThekwini Municipality, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO), Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through the project addressing the land based activities of WIO (WIO-LaB). Other sponsors included: the World Wildlife Fund-Eastern Africa Marine Ecoregion (WWF-EAME), Sida/SAREC Bilateral Programme, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Foundation for Science (IFS), Foundation for Strategic Environment Research (MISTRA) and WIOMSA. To all of them, we say thank you.

We are also grateful to the anonymous individual for covering the costs of producing the document bags as well as the production costs of the Symposium Guide and Book of Abstracts. Our thanks also go to the following for donating prizes to the best student poster:

i) Prof Eric Wolanski for donating the book: 'Estuarine Ecohydrology' that was awarded to the best poster by a student who is a national of the Western Indian Ocean region.

ii) Drs Marc Taquet and Alain Diringer for donating the book: "Guide Pratique: Poissons de l'ocean Indien et de la mer rouge" (A Practical Guide: Fishes of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea) awarded to the student with the best overall poster.

iii) The Chief Editor of the African Journal of Marine Science for giving two online subscriptions for the year 2008 to the two winners of the best student poster.

Our special appreciations also go to the Africa Geographic for donating a copy of their August 2007 issue to all the delegates.

WIOMSA confers first Honorary Membership Award

On 22nd October 2007, the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) conferred its inaugural Honorary Membership to Prof Olof Linden from Sweden. He was accorded this highest award in the Association in recognition for his exemplary, outstanding and distinguished contribution towards the development of coastal and marine science in the Western Indian Ocean region.

David Obura receiving the awards for Honorary membership on behalf of Olof Linden

The awarding ceremony was held at uMoyo Restaurant in Durban, South Africa during the reception hosted by WIOMSA on the night of the first day of its Fifth Scientific Symposium which was taking place at the Southern Sun Elangeni from 22nd-26th October 2007. The reception was attended by at least 350 participants and invited guests. Due to prior commitments, Prof Linden was not present to receive the certificate and plaque specifically designed for the award. Instead Dr David Obura, on his behalf, received the award from the Guest of Honour, South Africa's Deputy Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Honorable Rejoice Mabudhafasi.

Prof Linden was born in 1949 in Sweden and holds the Nippon Chair in Marine Environment Management at World Maritime University. He also holds an Adjunct Professorship in Coastal Resources Management at the University of Kalmar in Sweden.

During the last 20 years Prof Linden has focused on the issues related to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), mainly in tropical developing countries, as well as on the topic of climate change and its impacts on the coastal environment in the Indian Ocean. In the Western Indian Ocean is credited with the establishment of the Sida/SAREC´s Regional marine research and capacity building program in East Africa in 1989. This program was the precursor of a number of initiatives that have contributed to the increasing profile and visibility of marine science in the management of coastal and marine resources currently being observed in the region. It was through his role as the Coordinator of the Regional Program that he played a key role in the:

i) Organization of two Ministerial Policy Conferences on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Eastern Africa and Island States in 1993 and 1996. These two conferences provided opportunities for the concerns and insights of the scientific community of the region to be discussed by high-level policy makers. Through this initiative, political will and commitment was generated to advance Integrated Coastal Management throughout the region.

ii) Establishment of WIOMlands". This is the first comprehensSA in 1993; the Secretariat for Eastern African Coastal Area Management (SEACAM) in 1997 and the Project on Coral Reef Degradation in Indian Ocean (CORDIO) in 1999.

iii) Encouraging multi-disciplinary research as well as promoting the involvement of social scientists in coastal and marine research. During that time it was still considered unfashionable for the social and natural scientists to work together. Through the Regional Marine Research Program, he initiated "Environmental Economics and Coastal Management" and "Social and Cultural Aspects of ICZM" projects.

iv) Production of the book: "A Field Guide to the Seashores of Eastern Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Isive field guide to the flora and fauna of the tropical coast of the region.

This award further acknowledges Prof Linden's untiring efforts and his strong commitment over the years, which have not only catalyzed a rapid growth of the ICM initiatives in the region but also contributed to the building of critical mass of well-trained marine scientists as well as institutional capacity of research and academic institutions. Equally important, the visibilities and profiles of several research and academic institutions have been raised within and outside the region, thanks to him.

"To be awarded WIOMSA's first Honorary Membership came as a great and pleasant surprise. I am honored by the gesture but wish to point out that a number of other people were involved in the development of marine science in the early 1990's, friends who deserve the recognition as well. I regard the award to me as a gesture of appreciation to this group of people which consisted of Adelaida Semesi, Magnus Ngoile, Ezekiel Okemwa, Ron Johnstone, Domingos Gove and in particular Anders Granlund who stimulated the discussion greatly and furthermore was instrumental in securing funding for the activities. It is great to see WIOMSA grow and the membership increase. This was our vision in 1990-91 when we started to discuss the idea of creating an organization for marine scientists in the region. Besides a Good Luck in the future, the only advice I wish to give to the WIOMSA community is to say that, in order to be relevant, make certain young scientists are recruited not only as members but also to leading posts in boards and committees" - Prof Olof Linden

Four Scientists Awarded WIOMSA's Fellow Membership

The first four scientists to receive the WIOMSA Fellow Membership Award may be worlds apart in their nationalities, areas of specialization and background. However, they have one characteristic in common through their research work in the Western Indian Ocean region they have acquired international and regional recognition. These first Fellow members are: Prof. Mats Bjork; Dr Tim R. McClanahan; Prof. Yunus D. Mgaya and Dr David O. Obura

The awarding ceremony was held at uMoyo Restaurant in Durban, South Africa during the reception hosted by WIOMSA on the night of the first day of its Fifth Scientific Symposium which was taking place at the Southern Sun Elangeni from 22nd to 26th October 2007. The reception was attended by at least 350 participants and invited guests. Mats, Tim and David received their certificates and plaques in person from the Guest of Honour, South Africa's Deputy Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Honorable Rejoice Mabudhafasi. Dr Charles Lugomela of the University of Dar es Salaam received on behalf of Prof Mgaya who was unable to attend due to other pressing commitments.

These four scientists are being recognized for their outstanding research work in a range of coastal and marine ecological processes and ecosystems. Their extensive efforts in conducting research in these aspects have contributed greatly to understanding of the critical processes and ecosystems of the region. Mats is known regionally and internationally for his research work in eco-physiological processes in seaweed and seagrasses. He has supervised a number of PhD and M.Sc. Students working in the region but who are registered at the Stockholm University, University of Dar es Salaam or University of Edward Mondlane in Mozambique. Tim, on the other hand, has focused his research mainly on describing the status of coral reefs and the role of different management approaches on their ecology and biodiversity. In recent years, he has concentrated his efforts on examining the effects of coral bleaching on coral reef, fisheries as well as on household economics.

Yunus' achievements and experiences in research and academic work have enabled him to serve in management boards of various institutions with distinction. He also supervises undergraduate and postgraduate students in both his native Tanzania as well as Kenya.

Fellow members and recipients of certificate of recognition

David's research efforts have centered on assessing coral stress, bleaching and climate change impacts and adaptive capacity and human ecology under environmental change.

According to the Selection Committee, all the four awardees have transcended their individual areas of specialization to address the implications and applicability of the research work on development of institutional and regulatory framework for management of coastal and marine resources.

Award recipients

Mats Bjork

He is from Sweden and was born in 1960. Since 1992, when he completed his PhD in Uppsala, he has dedicated the major part of his research efforts in eastern Africa. His first years as an independent researcher were much influenced by cooperating with the late Prof. Adelaida Semesi at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Since 1996 Prof Bjork has been a researcher at the University of Stockholm and, last year he was appointed Director of Studies in Physiology and also lectures part time. The funds he has sourced to support research in WIO is on average US$ 190,000 350,000 per year over the past 10 years, mostly obtained from the European Union, Sida/SAREC and others. He has sourced funds to organize in the WIO region 7 international training workshops, courses and 2 symposiums mainly on algae, seagrasses and mangroves.

Prof. Bjork has especially contributed his expertise in the bilateral marine cooperation programme between Sweden and Tanzania, which he now coordinates after pioneering its establishment in 1990. Through the years this programme has supported a large number of students in eastern Africa details of which can be found at the programme homepage http://www.botan.su.se/bilateral/

Other research initiatives Prof. Bjork has been involved with in WIO since 1991 include the management of seaweed resources of Africa through the expansion of its databases and support for PhD students from WIO.

In collaboration with coworkers and his students, he started compiling material on the flora of the marine plants of the region, which was much needed. Eleven years down the line and with financial support from Sida the book entitled: "Marine Plants of Tanzania - A field guide to the seaweeds and seagrasses of Tanzania", was realized in 2006.

Prof Bjork has published over 33 titles in peer reviewed journals, and another 15 in edited/reviewed conference proceedings, edited three major proceedings of symposium and contributed chapters in books.

Ever since Prof Bjork started working in this region, one task that he feels has been most rewarding to his career is the mentoring of young marine scientists. The other task that has given him much personal satisfaction is being on the Editorial Board of WIOMSA's scientific journal WIOJMS as well as a member of the biennial Symposium Committee. "The experience I gained while performing the later task is probably what led to my appointment as Associate Editor of the International Journal of Phycologia", He says, "Which has placed me in a strategic position to make research findings available to all".

Tim R. McClanahan

He is an American citizen born in 1957, but has spent almost all his professional years living in Kenya and working in the WIO region. He completed his PhD (1990) degree at the University of Florida under the Chairmanship of the world-renowned ecologist Prof. H. T. Odum. Soon after, in 1991 he began his work as Conservation Zoologist initially with the Coral Reef Conservation Project and later under the auspices of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Since 1992, Dr McClanahan has secured several awards and research grants to the tune of US$ 1.5 million for various programmes in Kenya and WIO. He is interested in the interdisciplinary field of ecology and the sustainable management of coral reef and other fisheries. His greatest strength is the ability to move across sub-disciplines in order to solve broad conservation science issues. In 1997, he initiated a regional internship program that has intensively trained 18 young graduates and government officers from the WIO countries on coral reef field methods. This internship program has developed a young cadre of coral reef field scientists using similar field methods.

Dr McClanahan's non-teaching role in capacity building including the organization of workshops where he has invited leading investigators to visit the WIO and discuss with managers of various marine resources, for example, during the Workshop on the Coral Reefs of the Western Indian Ocean (1997), Mesoscale effects of Coral Bleaching Workshop (2006) and others.

Through his personal efforts, Dr McClanahan has brought together individuals, institutions and relevant stakeholders for better management of Kenya's coastal and marine resources. An example is the MOU he instigated and drafted between Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) and Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) in 1993. This MOU has led to greater collaboration between marine researchers and park managers and resulted in a number of joint programs.

In 1995 he also developed a co-management program between Kenya's Fisheries Department and traditional fisheries leaders in the south coast of Kenya where he regularly collects data on fish catches and ecology and presented these findings to these two groups. This co-management program led to the elimination of seine nets in most study sites and reversed the decline of fish catches since 2000.

Dr McClanahan has surveyed a variety of reefs in WIO including northern Tanzania, Zanzibar, Maldives, Madagascar and Mauritius. This work has described the status of these reefs and the role of management on their ecology and biodiversity. Many of these studies were done both before and after the 1998 coral bleaching event and have produced a view of the Indian Ocean across this disturbance. He has also coordinated a survey of socio-economics in five WIO countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles) to examine the effects of disturbances such as coral bleaching on household economics.

His wide experience has won him membership on editorial boards of a number of leading international journals, including Marine Ecology Progress Series, Ecosystems, Environmental Conservation, Global Change Biology and Aquatic Conservation. He also reviews papers for many journals including the WIOJMS.

Dr McClanahan has published over 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals, 20 book chapters, edited four books, compiled seven symposium papers and produced 30 other publications including popular articles, editorials and book reviews. He won the Pew Fellows award for the most published fellow in 2002 and, according to an evaluation by the International Scientific Information (ISI) that summarizes the scientific literature, he is the second most cited coral reef scientist in the past 10 years.

Yunus D. Mgaya

Prof. Mgaya is a Tanzanian national born in 1957. He studied at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (B.Sc., 1986), the University of British Columbia, Canada (M.Sc., 1989) and the University College Galway, Ireland (Ph.D., 1995).

His career has all along been at the University of Dar es Salaam, where he was first employed as a Tutorial Assistant in 1986 and rose through the ranks to become a full Professor in 2006.

Over the years, Prof. Mgaya has gained wide administrative experience at the University. Recent achievements in his career include his appointment as Associate Dean in the Faculty of Science (2000-2002), the Dean of a new faculty of Aquatic Sciences and Technology (2003-2006). In December 2006, he was promoted to become the Deputy Vice Chancellor in-charge of Planning, Finance and Administration (DVC-PFA).

His experience has earned him key positions in various national Boards and Committees such as: Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Tanzania's Marine Parks and Reserves Unit (2004 − present), Chairman of the Advisory Board of Mbegani Fisheries Development Centre (2003 present) and Member of the Board of Directors of Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (2003 − present). Prof. Mgaya has been a member of the Editorial Board of WIOMSA's scientific journal − the WIOJMS since 2002, and a member of the Symposium Scientific Committee.

Prof. Mgaya has conducted various researches relating to aquatic resources, particularly in the areas of biology, ecology and management and produced results which have been published extensively. Some of the specific researches he has been involved with include studies on the effect of fishing on growth and reproduction of the Blackspot snapper on reefs of Mafia Island and investigations into habitat utilization by fish and the structure of the mangrove food web. Between 1992 and 2007 he published as a single author and co-author some 33 papers in peer reviewed journals and 23 papers in edited/reviewed conference proceedings. He has also co-authored three books. He has been involved in a number of consultancies focusing on environmental impact assessment, project evaluation and strategic planning.

His contribution to capacity building and the development of coastal and marine research in Tanzania and WIO include supervision and mentoring of students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level. He has also been the external examiner for Moi University based in Eldoret, Kenya. Prof. Mgaya has supervised and examined some 17 undergraduate dissertations. He has successfully supervised 13 M.Sc. and seven PhDs and he is currently supervising additional three M.Sc. and seven Ph.D. candidates.

Prof. Mgaya has taught a number of courses in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at the University of Dar es Salaam. Currently, due to the heavy administrative tasks that he undertakes as DVC, his teaching load has been reduced to a single third year course - Aquaculture Genetics.

David O. Obura

He is a Kenyan national born in 1966. His research interests focus on the ecology and dynamics of natural systems under the combined influence of climate change and impacts of human interactions with the environment. His concrete work has been in the areas of coral stress, bleaching and climate change impacts, adaptive capacity and human ecology under environmental change, Networking, communications and capacity building and policy and management.

Since 1999 Dr. Obura's primary employment has been the East Africa Coordinator of the activities of the project on Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO). In addition, his other current positions and commitment include: Chair of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Working Group on Climate Change and Coral Reefs, Adjunct Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Biological and Chemical Sciences (Centre for Marine Studies) at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, and Chief Scientist with the Phoenix Islands Conservation Project, Kiribati.

He is credited with raising more than US$ 1 million as personal research and institutional grants from various programmes, awards and internships since 1997. The sources include Rockfeller Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, National Geographic Society, IUCN, International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Department of Research within the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida/SAREC). CORDIO has been his primary contribution to building up research and capacity in the WIO region, as a vehicle for disbursing funds to other scientists and for training. Dr Obura's most significant contributions have been in: developing his own research programme in coral bleaching and regional reef resilience, developing CORDIO East Africa as a home-grown capacity building and research vehicle in the region, promoting the development of research areas outside of his own expertise (artisanal fisheries, socio-economic monitoring and presenting East African and WIO science and issues in global marine research and conservation forums.

He has produced over 100 publications many of them in peer reviewed journals and others as secondary literature, conference contributions and workshop outputs. He has also edited four books.

It is our belief that these awards will inspire emerging scientists to emulate these four distinguished scientists and excel in their fields of specialization. It is hoped that these awards will also be cultivating the culture of competition for quality and excellence in the region.

Selection Process

The selection process of the Honorary and Fellow members started with the invitation of nominations from WIOMSA members as well as non-members. Nineteen individuals with a broad range of backgrounds, disciplines, and institutional settings were nominated for the two awards. Upon accepting the nominations, the nominees were requested to submit their detailed CVs as well as their biographies highlighting their main achievements. These submissions were evaluated by a four member Selection Committee. The Committee comprised of eminent individuals with broad skills, experience and knowledge of the WIO region all of which equipped them well for the difficult task of coming with the priority list for onward submission to the WIOMSA Board of Trustees (BoT) for its final decision. The members of the Selection Committee were: **Emeritus Professor Chantal Conand** from University of Reunion; **Lynne Hale**, the Director of the Marine Initiative, The Nature Conservancy; **Amanda Younge**, an independent consultant and **Dixon Waruinge**, the Program Officer, Nairobi Convention Secretariat.

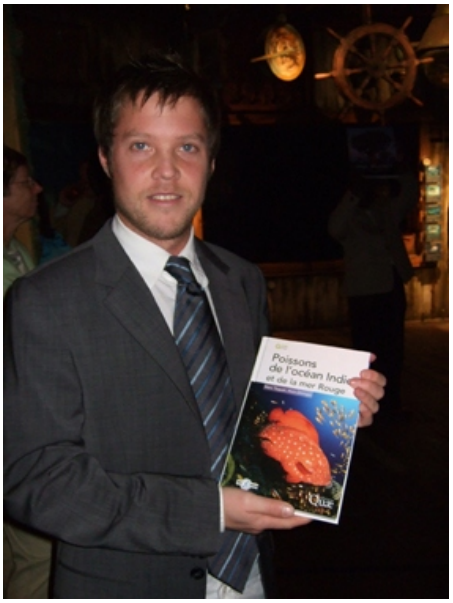
Among the eight names (three for Honorary and five for Fellow Membership) submitted to the Board for its decision, only one was selected for the Honorary Membership and four for the Fellow Membership.

Niklas Olson and Lilian Nduku Scoop Prizes for Overall Best Student Posters

Among the new events that featured for the first time in the WIOMSA Symposium this year was the competition for the best student poster. WIOMSA recognizes the fact that the information presented in posters by students often evolve, with time, into the oral presentations of the future symposiums. It is in this regard that the Association introduced a poster competition to encourage students, who are the upcoming scientists, to compose excellent poster for presentation at the Symposium.

This competition was open only to the student. Selection for the best posters was based on criteria such as scientific message, accuracy of the title, clarity, lay out and legibility. The Symposium Scientific Committee was given the responsibility of reviewing and selecting the best posters. The competition was in two categories as follows:

Category I: The best poster by a student who is a national of the Western Indian Ocean region. The prize for this category was a copy of the recently produced book entitled: '**Estuarine Ecohydrology**', which was generously donated by the author, Prof Eric Wolanksi. The winner of this category was Miss Lilian Daudi Nduku from the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, Mombasa. Her poster was entitled: Preliminary results of the population structure of the sea urchin Tripneustes gratilla in sea grass beds of Watamu, Kenya. Miss Nduku conducted this research under the MARG I programme. She is currently pursuing Msc studies at the Vrije University Brussels in Belgium and therefore one of the co-author, Dr Jacqueline Uku, received the award on her behalf.



Niklas Olson after receiving his prize

Jacqueline Uku, on behalf of Lilian Nduku, receiving the prize of the best poster from the Deputy Mayor of eThekwini Municipality Mr. Logie Naidoo

Category II: The best overall poster by any student, regardless of nationality. The prize was a copy of the new book launched at the Symposium entitled: "**Guide Pratique: Poissons de l'ocean Indien et de la mer rouge**" (A Practical Guide: Fishes of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea). The book was donated by its authors, Drs Marc Taquet and Alain Diringer. Mr Niklas Olson scoped the prize for this category. His poster was entitled: Describing the genetic structure of potential sources of populations of Seriatopora hystrix in Tanzania and southern Kenya. Mr. Olson is a student at the Institution of Life Sciences of the Södertörns Högskola in Sweden.

There were other well presented posters that attracted attention from many participants, and which also received a word of commendation from the Symposium Scientific Committee. They included:

- Mangrove structure, regeneration, phenology, tree morphology and deforestation degree in the northern and southern Trans-boundary regions of Mozambique. By Miss Faura Amade, University of Edouardo Mondlane, Mozambique.
- Role of Coastal Community in Cockles management: A Case study for Fumba Peninsular in Unguja Island. By Mr. Redfred Ngowo, Institute of Marine Sciences, Zanzibar – Tanzania.
- To investigate the home range and movement patterns of cat sharks in the Eastern Cape. By Miss Jessica Escobar-Porras, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Apart from the book prizes, the two winners of the best posters also received one year on-line subscription for the African Journal of Marine Science.

The prize giving ceremony was held at the world famous uShaka Marine World Aquarium and hosted by the Deputy Mayor of eThekwini Municipality.

Oskar Henriksson's "Mama Samaki" voted the best photograph

Oskar Henriksson, the winner of the Best Photo Competition displays his winner's prize

A photograph entitled "Mama Samaki" was voted the best photograph during the photo competition held during the recently concluded Symposium. Mama Samaki, the title of the winning photograph means "lady fishmonger" in the Kiswahili language. It is the common title given to the local women who peddle fish at the beaches, markets and the streets of Mombasa and other coastal towns of Kenya.

As the old adage goes - *A photograph speaks a thousand words*, WIOMSA organized its first photo competition during the *Fifth WIOMSA Scientific Symposium held in Durban, South Africa in October 2007*. The competition is seen as a way of encouraging photographing of the environment and the people of western Indian Ocean, and sharing them with others.

Prior to the Symposium, the Call for submission of photos was sent out and a total of 40 photos from different individuals were received. These photos were of varying qualities and were taken in different countries in the region, depicting various scenes of the coastal and marine environment as well as people and their activities.

Based on criteria such as uniqueness, message, artistic and technical quality, the WIOMSA Secretariat selected 23 out of all the photos received. These were then displayed during the Symposium to allow all the participants to view and select the best photo.

During the Symposium the competition attracted a lot of interest and enthusiasm, with some of the photographers even campaigning for their photos to be selected.

The following top three photographs, in order of merit, were selected by the participants:

i) "Mama Samaki", by Oskar Henriksson

ii) "Water ballet", by JerkerLokrantz

iii) "Young Mohelian boys on the beach", by Stephane Ciccione

The winner of the photo competition, Mr. Oskar Henriksson, was awarded a book entitled *"One Planet: A Celebration of Biodiversity"*, by Nicholas Hulot.

The prize book was awarded during a ceremony held at the uShaka Marine World Aquarium and hosted by the Deputy Mayor of eThekwini Municipality, Mr. Logie Naidoo.

Launch of a Guide Book on Fishes

Hon Deputy Minister R. Mabudhafasi receives a copy of the newly launched guide book from the co- author, Dr Marc Taquet

A new book entitled: "Guide Pratique: Poissons de l'ocean Indien et de la mer rouge" (A Practical Guide: Fishes of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea), was formally launched by South Africa's Deputy Minister Honourable Rejoice Mabudhafasi at the Opening of the Fifth WIOMSA Symposium in Durban, South Africa. The realization of this book is the reward of 25 years of hard work in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea by the authors - Drs Marc Taquet and Alain Diringer. From their base in La Reunion, the authors journeyed to Madagascar, to the Comoros and to the islands of Glorieus, Europa and Tromelin to capture the spectacular images presented therein. The guide further demonstrates the authors' vast knowledge of the Indian Ocean fish species from South Africa, Australia, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and the Red Sea.

This guide book, written in French, presents approximately 850 fish species excellently illustrated with photographs taken under water. It has 527 pages that describe the fish habitats, their general appearances including the physical characteristics, the shapes of the head, mouth parts and tail. For each fish, a photograph is presented showing a specimen in its natural surrounding. The guide describes the size range of the fish, its geographic distribution and the depths where they occurrence. Not only is the common name presented but also the taxonomic classification placing each fish in its Family, Genus and Species.

This Guide will not only be useful to professional scientists and researchers but also to practitioners as well as to individuals with interest on fish. More importantly, the Guide with its colourful photos and easy to understand descriptions could be an encouragement to the young people to study science and the environment in general.

On launching the book, the Hon Minister said she was pleased that the guide book, which is an important tool for knowing and understanding the fish in our oceans, has now become available for wider use.

The production of this book was funded in part by WIOMSA's MASMA Programme, through its component for support for publication of books.

NEW PUBLICATION!

During one of the pre-symposium events - the Sixth Meeting of the Grantees of the MASMA Programme, one of the participating projects unveiled a product of their research. The product was a book entitled: "**Commercial Sea Cucumbers: A review for the Western Indian Ocean**", edited by Chantal Conand and Nyawira Muthiga. The book, whose printing costs were covered by WIOMSA, is published as part of the WIOMSA Book Series no. 5. It was prepared as the baseline study of the on-going MASMA project entitled: Sea cucumbers, a poorly understood but important coastal resource: national and regional analyses to improve management. The editors of the book are also the Principal Investigators of this project.

The book provides the first comprehensive synthesis of the current state of knowledge on sea cucumbers in the WIO region. The information used in the review comes from various sources including journal articles, reports, theses and dissertations on all aspects of the sea cucumber in the region focusing mainly on Kenya, La Reunion, Madagascar, Seychelles and Tanzania. The review describes the historical and current state of the resource, its biology and ecology and the management and legal framework. The final chapter deals with the socio-economic aspects and also provides recommendations.

Copies of the book can be obtained from:

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