



The First Vice President gets a tour of the exhibition.

neighbouring the Zanzibar Port, adequate then to cater mainly for Fisheries struggles to accommodate a fully fledged Institute of Marine Sciences. Nonetheless, IMS has grappled to resolve these challenges-as it celebrates the 50th anniversary of UDSM; the Institute is the only one in the country housing all the main marine scientists under one roof. IMS is the biggest institute of its kind in the Western Indian Ocean and the only one providing postgraduate training in marine sciences including a special MSc in marine sciences by course work and dissertation. In its research programs, the institute has so far trained 16 MScs and 30 PhDs by thesis and currently has 16 MSc and 25 PhD students.

Prof. Mukandala reiterated that premises remained the greatest challenge for the Institute to date. With the intention to relocate the Institute, the government of Zanzibar allocated 125 acres for construction of IMS premises at Buyu, south of Zanzibar Airport. The Union Government paid for the land and construction started in earnest with the foundation stone being laid down on the 11th January 2004 by the then Prime Minister, Honourable Frederick Sumaye. However, construction later stalled due to delays in the payment of the construction instalments.

This sentiment was echoed by Asha Juma- cashier at IMS turned poet- who entertained guests at the launch ceremony, with a poem entitled “50th anniversary of UDSM.” .“How can the University of Dodoma, funded by the same government and on which construction begun later and cost a lot more, be completed before IMS”, lamented Asha. Ms. Juma regaled guests with an almost scientific recount of the history of UDSM and IMS.

So touched was the 1st Vice President by Asha’s poem, that his speech begun by a solemn promise to find out the reason for the stalled construction and try to speed up the process even if it meant talking with the President of the United Republic of Tanzania. His Excellency lauded the University of Dar es Salaam for its contribution in many areas in Tanzania; including manpower where it has trained presidents such as Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, the President of Uganda, Honourable Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Vice Presidents, Prime Ministers etc. “The University has produced other Universities including Sokoine University of Agriculture, Ardhi University and Muhimbili College of Health Sciences” he added.

He praised IMS for all its achievements including its being a centre of excellence in coral reef research, geographical information system (GIS) and Tanzania Oceanographic Data Centre. He also thanked IMS for research and extension in fish, seaweed and shellfish including pearl farming. He emphasized the importance of the ocean and resources thereof and urged IMS in embark in research that will address climate change and advise the stakeholders including the government accordingly. Declaring the “open door” officially open, the 1st Vice President urged IMS, in the week long celebrations, to show the people of Zanzibar these achievements thus disseminating the results to the communities.

Dr. Kyewalyanga led the chief guest together with the other alumni to an official group photo and on a tour of the laboratories, posters and the trade fair by women from IMS demonstration sites in Fumba Peninsula and Kidoti.

Historic technical meeting on dugong research and conservation held in Madagascar

By Patricia Z.R Davis¹ and Donna Kwan²

As the one of the first Signatory States of the UNEP Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)’s Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout its Range, it was particularly apt that Madagascar played host to the first regional technical meeting on this species. The meeting was held between 4th and 6th August 2010 at the Colbert Hotel in Antananarivo, with government, UNEP/CMS and fisheries/wildlife management representatives in attendance as well as NGOs currently engaged in dugong research. Representatives from the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, the host agency and sponsor to the Secretariat of the Dugong MoU were also present at this significant event. After the three days of sharing of information and brainstorming, the meeting was felt to be a resounding success by its organizers and participants.



Group photo

¹Community Centred Conservation (C3) www.c-3.org.uk

²UNEP-CMS Office, Abu Dhabi www.cms.int

Opening speeches were given by the Honorable General de Brigade Herilanto Raveloharison, Minister of the Environment, Forests and Water and Dr Donna Kwan, the Program Officer from the UNEP/CMS Dugong Secretariat in Abu Dhabi and the momentous event was broadcast on national television, raising awareness about this elusive and highly endangered marine mammal, believed to be the source of the legendary mermaid myth.

The Dugong MoU came into effect on 31 October 2007 after only 2 years consultation with experts and relevant officials from range state governments. A non-binding instrument, currently with 11 signatory states, it seeks to conserve and protect the dugong throughout its' global range across over 40 range states. A number of range states including those from the region have indicated interest in signing the Dugong MoU in the near future. In the lead-up to the First Official Signatory State Meeting of the Dugong MoU (to be held in Abu Dhabi on 4-6 October 2010), a number of sub-regional projects have been initiated, including the convening of technical workshops to support dugong conservation efforts in range states and the implementation of the Dugong MoU.

The workshop, organized by Community Centred Conservation (C3), a non-governmental organization now in its fifth year of dugong research and conservation in the western Indian Ocean region, saw the representation from the majority of range states in the region; Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mayotte, Mozambique, Somalia, Seychelles and Tanzania, . . . In fact, it was a historic occasion in that this was the first ever dugong meeting attended by Somalia. Of all the sub-regions of the Dugong MoU, this region is the one with the highest number of signatories, perhaps in recognition of the degree to which this species is threatened with extinction in the waters of the western Indian Ocean.

After decades and in some cases, centuries, of intensive hunting for its tasty meat, the dwindling remnants of dugong populations number only handfuls of individuals around small island groups and just hundreds off eastern African states. Clinging precariously to the coastlines where their sole source of food, seagrass, grows, they are frequently entangled in artisanal gill nets, currently the greatest threat to their existence.

The main barrier to dugong conservation in East Africa and the West Indian Ocean islands is the lack of technical and financial capacity to implement suitable actions. The Dugong MoU Conservation

and Management Plan (CMP) for dugongs in the West Indian Ocean now provides a framework to progress conservation and management actions in this region. This meeting provided a vital opportunity for the countries to present updates on the status of their dugong populations and associated habitat, as well as to seek grounds for future collaboration in the fields of both research and management. Furthermore, in-depth analyses were conducted on the current financial and technical capacities of range states to implement dugong research and conservation activities.

The UNEP-CMS Standardised Survey methodology was presented and explained in detail and will be launched in various countries in early 2011, supported in part, by small grants provided via the Secretariat and administered by C3. The surveys will help to identify key dugong habitat, population numbers and trends, and impacts including direct harvest, habitat degradation and fisheries by-catch. Since the methodology is questionnaire-based it is sufficiently flexible and low-cost to be adapted regionally and will yield comparable data, to be housed by the Secretariat in its coordinating role. The survey and an accompanying Project Manual can be downloaded from the Secretariat's website at http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/dugong_noticeboard.htm under the relevant notices posted.

UN Population Fund sponsors 'hugely symbolic' Madagascar conservation project

By Frances Humber

A pioneering conservation and development initiative in Madagascar has become the first conservation project in the country to receive support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Blue Ventures has secured a UNFPA partnership to continue its public health work in southern Madagascar, supporting villagers to develop strategies to safeguard the threatened marine environment on which their livelihoods and culture depend.

Working with regional health institutions and NGOs, the project provides clinical sexual and reproductive health services to 24 villages along the south western coast of Madagascar. These services empower and enable individuals to make their own reproductive health choices, and protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections.

Blue Venture's conservation director, Dr. Alasdair Harris, said: "The UNFPA's support is a hugely symbolic step. A human rights and health based organisation is supporting a marine conservation charity for the first time because of its recognition of the inter-relationship between marine resource sustainability, maternal and infant health, and population growth."

The news has received a similarly warm welcome from the organisation's clinical technician "It's wonderful news and great recognition for the project", said Fanja Rakotozafy. "Now the sexual and reproductive health team here is part of the UNFPA family, we have the support to expand and develop our work within Velondriake, the country's largest marine conservation region. This is good for the community here."



Young woman (approx 24) attending for contraception after birth of 4th child

The UN's Population Fund promotes universal access to reproductive healthcare, and strategically selects NGO partners where appropriate. Access to reproductive healthcare in southern Madagascar is lagging behind the rest of the country. Blue Ventures' established presence in the area makes it an attractive partner.

Victor Rakoto, the UN Population Fund assistant representative in Madagascar, says: "The UNFPA has found that collaboration between the two organisations could significantly increase access to reproductive health services including family planning services in the targeted region. Another very important development is that this partnership will make a link between the interventions in population and environmental protection."