



**THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE**

**Opening speech by Honorable Hamad Yussuf Masauni (MP), Minister
of State, Vice President's Office (Union Affairs and Environment)**

**During the First Meeting of Eleventh Conference of Parties (COP 11)
Bureau of the Nairobi Convention in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 31
January, 2025**

JANUARY, 2025

Dr. Jared Bosire- Head of the Nairobi Convention;

National Focal Points to the Nairobi Convention;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All Protocols observed;

Salaam and very warm greetings from the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania

First and foremost, I would like to express gratitude to Almighty God for His mercy and blessings, granting us life and the opportunity to gather here today for the first Bureau meeting of COP 11 of Nairobi Convention which will be focusing on equipping Bureau members with an understanding of the mandates, roles and responsibilities, protocols, and ongoing and emerging issues related to sustainable Coastal and Marine environment.

It is great honor to stand before you today as we gather here in **Dar es Salaam, Tanzania** to reaffirm our commitment to the Protection, Management, and Development of the Coastal and Marine Environment of the Western Indian Ocean Region.

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

The United Republic of Tanzania is a coastal state located in the Western Indian Ocean Region. Tanzania's total land area measures 945,040 km², with 881,000 km² on the mainland and 2,650 km² on the islands of Unguja and Pemba and 52 small islets. The country boasts an abundance of water bodies, both large and small, enriching its landscape. The territorial sea covers an impressive 64,000 km², and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) spanning 200 nautical miles, encompassing a vast area of 223,000 km².

The Tanzania coastal area has a high diversity of marine resources which include sandy beaches, cliffs, major estuaries, mangrove forests, extensive seagrass beds, coral reefs and muddy tidal flats.

Tanzania's marine environment supports various species of fish, cetaceans, sharks and rays, turtles, corals, seagrasses and mangroves. Dugongs are also seen occasionally in the Pemba Channel, within the Rufiji, Mafia and Kilwa seascape, and within the northern areas along the border between Tanzania and Kenya.

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

In a very special way, I would like to convey a warm heart-felt greetings from **Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania** to Nairobi Convention Secretariat and the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention.

On the same token, on behalf of the government of the United Republic of Tanzania, I also wish to express my sincere and deep appreciation to the Nairobi Convention Secretariat for organizing this first Bureau meeting and for trusting the United Republic of Tanzania to host a series of meetings that took place this week including ***Validation of the Regional Ocean Acidification Action Plan; Regional Workshop on Ecosystem Monitoring; and Project steering committee meeting on; Western Indian Ocean Strategic Action Programme (WIOSAP), Sustainable Approaches to Promote the Protection of the Indian Ocean and its Resources (SAPPHIRE), and the Northern Mozambique Channel (NoCaMo).***

Considering that; the I hereby urge the Contracting Parties to fully cooperate in implementing the agreed Regional Initiatives and in case of any challenges, let us work together to solve those challenges at National and Regional level.

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

The United Republic of Tanzania was elected as a Chair of Bureau during COP 11 that took place in Madagascar in August, 2024. This position was dully accepted by the government of URT through the former Minister Hon. Ashatu Kachwamba Kijaji who fully assured the Contracting Parties, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat and Partners that the adopted and approved decisions during COP 11 and the approved programme of work (2025-2028) will be fully implemented.

In honoring its promises and full commitment to implementing COP 11 Decisions and the Nairobi Convention Programme of work (2025-2028), the United Republic of Tanzania hosted parallel Convention meetings that took place in Zanzibar from 21-25 October, 2024 focusing on Strengthening Measures for the Protection, Restoration, and Sustainable Management of Blue Carbon Ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) in line with global and regional policy commitments and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP).

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

The United Republic of Tanzania is proud to be a signatory to the Nairobi Convention, recognizing the critical importance of our marine and coastal environment to our economy, culture, and biodiversity. The Western Indian Ocean region, including the coast of URT, is a home to some of the world's most diverse and productive marine ecosystems, from the coral reefs of Mafia Island to the mangrove forests of the Rufiji Delta. These

ecosystems sustain livelihoods, provide food security, and support tourism, contributing significantly to our national development goals.

The Western Indian Ocean region contains diverse coastal and marine ecosystems that support local and national economies. The critical coastal and marine ecosystems also provide valuable ecosystem services including providing a habitat for marine biodiversity and are considered to be one of the most valuable ecosystems in the world. These ecosystems have also been of great benefit to coastal communities particularly as sources of livelihood, food and energy.

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

Despite that great benefit, we must acknowledge the challenges facing our marine and coastal environments. The challenges include climate change, unsustainable fishing practices, pollution, and biodiversity loss, which threaten the health and resilience of these ecosystems. The effects of these pressures are felt by coastal communities who depend on marine resources for their livelihoods. Therefore, it is necessary to take serious actions to preserve the life of our natural resources in the region for the benefit of present and future generation.

In response to these challenges, URT remains committed to the Nairobi Convention COP 11 Decisions as well as implementation of 2025-2028 programme of work. We have taken significant steps to strengthen marine protected areas, promote sustainable fisheries management, and enhance our capacity for marine pollution prevention and response to climate risks. Our efforts are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063, recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental conservation with broader development objectives.

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

The government of URT has intensified efforts to address plastic pollution, improve waste management practices, and promote sustainable tourism along our coasts. Additionally, there is a focus on empowering coastal communities through education, capacity building, and inclusive decision-making processes to ensure their voices are heard in conservation efforts.

We thank and commend the United Nations Environment Programme through the Nairobi Convention Secretariat for championing this agenda through funding the demonstration projects aiming at improving the lives of the fisheries communities in Mkinga District in Tanga Region, Tanzania. I understand that similar projects are also being implemented in Madagascar and Mozambique. We further appreciate the recent final disbursement of approximately 70,000 USD for finalizing the project on Upscaling and Amplification of the Msingini Waste Water Treatment Facility Model in Chake Chake Town, Pemba.

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

Let us use this opportunity here in Dar es Salaam to familiarize ourselves with the Convention's operational processes, governance structures and strategic priorities. This initiative aligns with recent approved COP11 decisions in Madagascar in August 2024, particularly strengthening governance frameworks and capacity building among the Nairobi Convention Contracting Parties.

The United Republic of Tanzania, the current Chair of the Bureau to the Nairobi Convention stands ready to collaborate with other contracting parties to the Nairobi Convention, our regional partners, civil society, and the private sector aiming at achieving our shared vision of a healthy, thriving Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Region.

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

Through our commitment to the Nairobi Convention, URT has implemented robust measures to protect and manage our marine resources. These actions are aligned with our national development goals and contribute to the overall health and resilience of our marine ecosystems.

These measures amongst others includes the launch of our National Blue Economy Policy of 2024 and its implementation Strategy (2024-2034) for Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar's Blue Economy Policy of 2020, National Guidelines for the development of Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) of 2023, National Environmental Policy of 2021 and the National Master Plan for Strategic Interventions for the period 2022-2032. Tanzania has adopted and signed the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ treaty) and the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol and currently ratification process is progress.

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

In conclusion, as a Chair of the Bureau, I look forward to fruitful discussions, bold initiatives, and concrete actions that will enhance positively the work of the current Bureau Members until the next COP (COP 12) scheduled to take place in Tanzania in 2026.

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

With these few remarks, I would like to formally declare that the **First Meeting of the Bureau of COP 11 of the Nairobi Convention is officially declared open.**

ASANTENI SANA