

# West Indian Ocean Environment Programme

## Project Characteristics:

- *High-level International Government Thematic Cooperation and Negotiation*
- *Environmental Program Coordination*
- *Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis*
- *Biodiversity Assessment*
- *Coastal Zone Management*
- *Project Brief and Project Document (successful)*

The West Indian Ocean faces serious environmental problems, many of a transboundary nature. The region supports substantial populations of fish, invertebrates, marine mammals, and seabirds, but many of these resources are threatened by land-based sources of pollution resulting from population pressure in the coastal zone. The coastal region of the mainland states between Somalia and Mozambique is home to 25 million people, and this population is expected to increase dramatically over the next few decades. Extensive urbanization and poor agricultural practices are causing unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, which has resulted in the loss of biomass, biodiversity, and diverse habitat, including reef communities.

To address this situation, the United Nations Environment Programme established the West Indian Ocean Programme in 1997. Efforts stalled, however, and in 2001, the UNEP brought in Woods Hole Group to investigate further the region's needs and gain consensus on plans for the project.

Working with members of academia and national leaders in the region, as well as the international donor agency the UN Environment Programme, Woods Hole Group:

- Assisted in developing specific intervention plans for halting land-based sources of pollution and mitigating the effects of pollution.
- Worked with national leaders and experts in the region to draft a full project document for the multi-year project.



- Completed a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and developed a draft Strategic Action Programme for the West Indian Ocean.
- Presented a project to the GEF Council that was funded in fall 2003.

The TDA is used by the UN's Global Environment Facility to identify and prioritize regional environmental problems.

The eight Western Indian Ocean nations, which are at different stages of both political and economic development, include:

- The coastal states of Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique
- The island states of Mauritius, Comoros, Seychelles and Madagascar.

For many years Woods Hole Group has played a leading role in international environmental policy formulation and management.