

# Conference Report...

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sustainable Blue Economy Conference Nairobi, Kenya, 24 – 29 November 2018

### *The Blue Economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

The Blue Economy is a concept that focuses on advancing sustainability efforts in relation to utilization of coastal and ocean resources and services in an innovative and sustainable way, and for the benefit of all. Lakes and rivers are also considered as part of the Blue Economy, particularly in Africa. Key to this concept is maintaining (or improving) the integrity of these ecosystems. Development in this area needs to be managed through informed decision-making, policy development and management plans that support healthy ecosystems to continue providing for future generations.

The first global Sustainable Blue Economy Conference was held at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi, Kenya and was co-hosted by Canada and Japan under the theme ‘The Blue Economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’. It was organized ahead of the United Nations 2020 Ocean’s Conference, which will be co-hosted by Kenya and Portugal. The SBE Conference was co-sponsored by various countries and organisations. There were over 16,000 participants in attendance, from approximately 184 countries, encompassing Heads of State, Ministers, and leaders from a wide range of sectors (including academia, government, non-government, private, civil society).

The conference sought to ‘harness the potential of our oceans, seas, lakes and rivers to improve the lives of all, particularly people in developing states, women, youth and indigenous peoples’<sup>1</sup> and ‘leverage the latest innovations, scientific advances and best practices to build prosperity while conserving our waters for future generations’<sup>1</sup>. Various themes included: smart shipping, ports, transportation and global connectivity; employment, job creation and poverty eradication; cities, tourism, resilient coasts and infrastructure; sustainable energy and mineral resources, and innovative industries; sustaining and management of marine life, conservation and sustainable economic activities; ending hunger, securing food supplies, promoting good health, sustainable fisheries; climate action, agriculture, waste management and pollution-free oceans; maritime security safety and regulatory enforcement; people, culture, communities, and the inclusive blue economy.<sup>1</sup>

The conference recognized the essential role of science and research in the development of a sustainable blue economy. It highlighted the importance of ‘evidence-based science to inform policy and strategy formulation and implementation’ by hosting a three-day Science and Research Forum at Nairobi University during the conference.<sup>1</sup>

Seychelles participated with a high level delegation, led by President Danny Faure, comprising a substantial number of participants from various sectors. The Seychelles delegation showcased the multi-sectorial, cross-cutting and participatory approach which Seychelles is aiming for. President Faure was announced as the African Union champion for the development of the Blue Economy in Africa. Seychelles was awarded the Blue Economy Award on African Maritime Sector, at an event organized by the African Union Commission. Seychelles also stepped forward as the 12<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Blue Charter Champion country and announced its commitment to lead the Marine Protected Area group. Furthermore, President Faure committed to empowering more women, through training, in areas relating to the Blue Economy.

Seychelles hosted a side event on the first day of the conference to demonstrate progress made in advancing the Blue Economy concept. President Faure, Minister Cosgrow and Minister Bastienne attended various bilateral meetings. Minister Cosgrow joined a panel at the side event on Marine Spatial Planning and Ecosystem Approaches and Minister Bastienne joined a panel at the Commonwealth Blue Charter side event. The Seychelles delegates also participated in various other side events during the course of the conference. The positive steps made by Seychelles were reinforced at the Seychelles’ Exhibition Booth which was open throughout the conference. During the conference, Seychelles highlighted their cross-cutting approach to advancing a sustainable Blue Economy. Follow-up actions are underway to ensure continuous support and progress in developing this, in a way that ensures a healthy environment, shared prosperity, and sustainable wealth.

**Kelly Hoareau**  
**Director,**  
**Blue Economy Research Institute**  
**University of Seychelles**

**Fatimé Kante**  
**Economist,**  
**Department of the Blue Economy**  
**Government of Seychelles**

<sup>1</sup> Conference Report on Advancing Global Sustainable Blue Economy:  
<http://www.blueeconomyconference.go.ke/documents/>