



Blue Economy in Zanzibar: Policies and Priorities



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Abstract: Apart from addressing concerns such as resource scarcity and waste disposal, Zanzibar has massive potential for developing the blue economy and aim for holistic and sustainable development along with enhancing human welfare. As Zanzibar is an Island this paper elucidates the opportunities, best practices and challenges in promoting blue economy in Zanzibar. Given limits to national capacities, South-South cooperation is crucial to develop blue economy in Zanzibar and in Tanzania as a whole.

Introduction

Blue economy is viewed as the integration of ocean economy development with the principles of social inclusion, environmental sustainability and innovative, dynamic business models (IORA, 2016). There are many traditional and emerging sectors of blue economy covering agriculture, manufacturing and services which offer tremendous opportunities for value addition and job creation. With suitable technologies and regional partnerships, the blue resources in the Indian Ocean region can be efficiently harnessed (Mohanty, Dash, Gupta and Gaur, 2015). Being located in the Eastern Africa region, Tanzania is endowed with diverse ocean resources including fishing, minerals and tourism, and possesses enormous potential to contribute to regional cooperation for promoting blue economy with Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) framework. The principle objective is to develop blue economy in Zanzibar and utilize the enormous benefits offered by maritime resources.

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Marine Profile of Zanzibar

Zanzibar is located in the Indian Ocean Rim with a long coastline and vast ocean resources. The total population of Zanzibar was 1.3 million in 2012 with a density of 530 people per square kilometre. The future population of Zanzibar is estimated to increase to over 1.5 million by 2020, two millions by 2030 and over three million by 2040. This is effectively a doubling and will dramatically increase population density from the already high levels. A large proportion of employment and livelihoods of the local population is associated with weather-sensitive activities, in particular agriculture crop production. Some other sectors such as fisheries and tourism are also impacted by climate change. Along with population growth, growing pace of urbanisation would increase the pressure on land, which, in turn, would induce further conversion of agricultural land to other activities purposes e.g. housing, industry, etc. Given the constraints of land on the islands, and coastal risks, early planning is critical to the development of blue economy as well as overall development of the islands.

Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous part of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) which comprises of two major islands - Unguja and Pemba - and a number of smaller islets. The two islands have important differences in their terrain, topography, land cover and resources. The total surface area of Zanzibar is 2,550 sq. km divided over Unguja with 1464 sq. km and Pemba with 985 sq. km. The highest points in the islands reach just about 120 and 95 metres respectively. Zanzibar enjoys a tropical climate with mild temperatures with an average annual high of 30.3 degree Celsius and low of 23.5 degree Celsius.

The islands in Zanzibar have relatively high levels of precipitation with long rains in March to May, and shorter rains in November to December. Unguja has a flat to gentle undulating terrain with large areas of coral rag scrub, and relatively large underground water aquifers. While the west and northwest areas are relatively high, large parts of the south and east are low-lying coral rag areas. In contrast, Pemba has a more rolling and hilly

terrain with many steep slopes and more surface water. While the inner terrain of both islands is relatively high (20 to 100 metres above the sea level), they both have large areas near to the shore that are low lying (ZNEAP, 2012). Many of the surrounding islets are small and low lying, and have no access to fresh water. The islands are also the site of extensive coral reefs, which surround by shoreline of both islands and many islets. The islands also have important forests, including mangroves. These marine and terrestrial areas support many livelihoods and provide critical ecosystem services, being the location for key endemic island flora and fauna.

Thrust on Blue Economy for Meeting SDGs

Like other countries of the world, Tanzania - has adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which covers 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 underlying targets, including SDG 14 which specifically emphasises conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources is therefore not only important for sustainable economic growth, food security and poverty alleviation but also for achieving the SDGs. Being important from economic, social and environmental perspectives, coastal area in Zanzibar is indeed a national asset that requires special attention. As a small developing island, Zanzibar is particularly at high risks of climate change. Large areas of both islands of Unguja and Pemba, and nearly all the smaller islets, are low lying and thus vulnerable to sea level rise. This is a critical concern for Zanzibar where, in line with the global trends, sea level is expected to rise, with projected increases of 0.2 to 1.0 meters over the next century.

The increase in sea level will have potential effects for many low lying areas of the islands, including salinization of shallow coastal aquifers, inundation of low lying agricultural fields, and breaching of dykes. Yet, despite these challenges, the islands have undertaken several initiatives

to build the foundations for tackling climate change and developing a sustainable society. The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, through the Second Vice President's Office is spearheading the implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy to build a climate resilient and sustainable Zanzibar by 2030. Furthermore, the United Republic of Tanzania has prioritized blue economy as a sector to drive the achievement of 2030 Development Agenda. On 28 January 2019, the United Republic of Tanzania through the Vice President's Office initiated the National Technical Committee on Blue Economy with the principal objective of bringing together all the key national stakeholders for the purpose of inter-institutional consultations, sharing of experiences, and for addressing the national commitments towards blue economy and ocean governance in line with the recommendations from the national delegation which was mandated to steer development and guide policy development and implementation on matters of blue economy.

Key Sectors of Blue Economy in Zanzibar

All the sectors of blue economy are important to the socio-economic development of Zanzibar and Tanzania in general. However, there are certain sectors which are vital from the angle of local entrepreneurship and employment generation. The three sectors that possess huge potential for value addition and job creation are fisheries, seaweed production and coastal tourism are briefly discussed below.

Fisheries

Fisheries contribute to national economy of the country both in terms of income and employment. Fisheries in Zanzibar are mostly artisanal with a small semi-industrial component. Most of the fishing activities are currently taking place within internal and territorial waters (12 nautical miles). The estimated size of fishing grounds for Zanzibar artisanal fishermen is about 6,720 square kilometers of which 4,000 square kilometers (59 per cent) are around Unguja and 2,720 square

kilometers (40.5 per cent) are around Pemba. Official estimates of per capita fish consumption in Zanzibar are around 17 kilograms which is slightly higher than the world per capita supply of 16.2 kilograms. Zanzibar exports fish averaging 1,806 metric tons per year. Moreover, fishery is a very promising sector with high returns. However, increasing sea-level, sea temperature, ocean acidification and other sources of marine pollution are affecting fisheries and ecosystem services, including fisheries in terms of biological stock and spatial distribution.

Seaweed Production

Seaweed farming is a well-established industry in Zanzibar. It has created more than 25,000 jobs for the indigenous people especially women. Zanzibar is the third largest exporter of seaweed in the world, after the Philippines and Indonesia. There are two main seaweed species cultured in Zanzibar. *Eucheuma spinosum* is dominant specie as it grows throughout the year and in almost all areas of Zanzibar. Another specie *Eucheuma cotton* available in Zanzibar which grows in some areas of the Zanzibar oceans and in some months of a year (usually during the cool periods). However, this industry is now facing the threat of climate change due to increasing sea temperature and higher peak temperature events affecting yield and quality.

Coastal Tourism

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in Zanzibar and has attracted more than 68 per cent of investment projects approved by Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority (ZIPA). The sector boasts a wide variety of tourism options ranging from the historical and cultural sites of Old Stone Town, to beach and leisure activities. It is a very promising sector with high returns. With more emphasis on eco-tourism, opportunities exist in hotels/resorts specifically chain hotels, sports tourism, conference tourism. Some other potential fields of tourist attraction that are directly or indirectly linked to coastal tourism are health tourism, heritage tourism, marinas, special cuisine restaurants, sports activities, amusement and recreation activities.

Importance of South-South Cooperation for Blue Economy

Zanzibar has taken several policy measures to develop its blue economy. However, national policies may not be adequate for certain resources and activities of blue economy in high and deep seas. It would require collaboration and cooperation among countries in the specific region in order to ensure better compliance and share knowledge and expertise. Lack of national capacity to ensure the security of our declared maritime zone thus has resulted in vast illegal capture and exploitation of our marine resources. The adverse impacts of climate change must be recognized and addressed by all the coastal nations. Acting on the damage on our environment, biodiversity, human health, crops, fisheries, agriculture, tourism, water, cities and settlements, economic services and activities, natural resources and physical infrastructure is fundamentally critical. We must cease working in isolation and start collaborating to tackle these challenges. Climate Change knows no boundaries. Feasibility studies are to be conducted to quantify opportunities of blue economy and maximize returns from investments in different sectors of blue economy. Lack of experts and limited knowledge hampers proper management of marine economy and its sustainability. In that sense, south-south cooperation provides an ideal framework for cooperation among coastal nations in Eastern Africa region involving Tanzania and others to efficiently harness blue economy resources in a coordinated fashion.

Regional Cooperation in IORA

Along with south-south development cooperation initiatives, regional cooperation among the Indian Ocean rim countries would be catalyst to development of blue economy in Zanzibar. Fisheries and blue economy have been important priority sectors for the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Several studies have indicated gains from mutual cooperation in

technology development, sharing of knowledge & expertise, capacity building and training and joint execution of projects in various sectors of blue economy in the Indian Ocean region. The regional organizations in the region such as Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) would be instrumental in fostering cooperation among the countries. Tanzania being a member of IORA can benefit enormously from the collection action adopted by IORA on blue economy.

Conclusion

Zanzibar in Tanzania is a fertile area for development of blue economy. For integrated and holistic development of blue economy in Zanzibar, it is important to maintain the capacity of marine ecosystems with an aim to provide food, nutrition, livelihoods and other life support services to the people. Zanzibar has undertaken several policies to promote blue economy and ensure compliance to conservation and management norms. With appropriate policies, relevant knowledge and management actions using the appropriate tools and concepts such as Marine Spatial Planning Zanzibar can enhance the contribution of blue economy to national economic growth and development of Tanzania. Blue economy should not be merely perceived as a way to preserve the marine ecosystems rather it opens avenues for sustainable business, and blue economy could be a trigger for Tanzania's transition from low income to a middle income country.

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