

CELEBRATING WORLD OCEAN DAY WITH LOCAL YOUTH

| By Diana Körner and Ulli Kloiber



The competition winners during their excursion at Chumbe Island

World Ocean Day (WOD) on 8 June was a day to celebrate and take action for oceans all around the world, and to continue to grow involvement year-round. In Zanzibar, the internationally acclaimed conservation project, Chumbe Island Coral Park (CHICOP) used this year's WOD theme "Revitalization: Collective Action for the Ocean: Shedding light on the communities, ideas, and solutions that are working together to protect and revitalize the ocean and everything it sustains" to organize a range of ocean themed activities in partnership with the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries of Zanzibar, the French Embassy in Tanzania and WIOMSA.

WOD celebrations began with a press event on 7 June. An informative panel discussion facilitated by Austin Makani from AMMI discussed Zanzibar's vision for the blue economy. Participants included Captain Hamad Bakar Hamad and Dr. Makame Omar Makame (Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar), Diana Körner, Ulli Kloiber, Khamis Khalfan and Salim Abdalla Salim (CHICOP) and Laural Kivuyo, a youth environment ambassador.

The panel discussion was followed by a press conference, honored by the presence of Minister

Suleiman Masoud Makame, Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries and Minister Mudrick Soragha, Ministry of State, President's Office of Labour, Economic Affairs & Investment, who launched the premiere of the [Chumbe Island documentary](#) produced by AMMI. Maryvonne Pool, the Seychelles Consul, talked about the blue economy in Seychelles and its partnership with Tanzania. Cecile Frobert, Head of Cooperation and Cultural Affairs at the French Embassy highlighted France's support of the blue economy in the region with a focus on preservation of ocean biodiversity and sustainable tourism.



Mathias Igulu (WIOMSA) addressing guests during the prize giving ceremony

A group of selected journalists then visited Chumbe Island on a day trip, where they had the opportunity to interview Tanzanian environment ambassadors Laurel Kivuyo and artist Ben Pol about their impressions of Chumbe Island.

In preparation for World Ocean Day, a creative art contest was launched. It invited students (aged 15 to 17) from secondary schools in Unguja/Zanzibar to demonstrate artistically how individuals and communities can protect the ocean. A total of 60 drawings were submitted and the best 12 drawings were selected by an independent jury. The winning artists came from five different schools in Unguja and most of them were young girls. They won an educational excursion to Chumbe Island on World Ocean Day, 8 June.

Every competition winner got the chance to present his/her artwork and explain the message behind the art to the rest of group. This was a great opportunity to engage these young minds in a deeper conversation on how to protect the ocean

collectively. The highlight of the day was, however, snorkeling in Chumbe's protected coral reef sanctuary. The children were equipped with life jackets and a safety ring and guided by Chumbe's education team. They saw living corals for the first time, an experience that Salha Shamim Khamis (age 16), art competition winner from Lumumba Secondary Schools, described as "unforgettable".

Upon their return to Unguja, the group was met by WIOMSA representative, Dr Mathias Igulu and the CHICOP team for a small ceremony which involved certification and handing out exciting prizes, including WIOMSA's Field Guide to the Seashores of Eastern Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Islands - a "must have" for young ocean ambassadors who left the World Ocean Day event with a **famous Jane Goodall quote in their heart:**

“What you do makes a difference – you just have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”