



The Eastern Africa region comprises five mainland states (Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa) and five islands (Madagascar, Comoros, Seychelles, Mauritius and Réunion).

The environment in this region includes various bio-geographic provinces, with the highest ecological diversity recorded in Mozambique. Extensive and diverse coral reefs are prevalent, particularly in Madagascar, Mozambique and Tanzania. Mangrove forest are common in sheltered sedimentary embayments and act as important breeding and nursery grounds, while coastal sand dunes are associated with high terrigenous sediment discharge in the vicinity of deltas and estuaries. Hosting internationally significant wildlife, including marine turtles and dugong, estuaries in this region constitute highly sensitive ecosystems. Where water energy allows limited erosion, seagrass meadows often compete with coral growth and represent important primary producers on which all levels of the food chains depend.

The people of the region are dependent on coastal resources for subsistence to a significant extent. Fisheries rely on the trawable inter-reef areas and species-rich mangroves with their commercially important oysters, crabs and mullets. Coastal ecosystems are also important economically for tourism and recreation. Oil represents a potentially important pollution threat both to such ecosystems and to the local populations reliant on its resources. Indeed, because coastal tourism represents a major source of income, the whole economy of islands such as Comoros, Mauritius and the Seychelles could be jeopardised in the event of a major spill.

THE RISK OF OIL SPILLS

The strong southerly Agulhas current which lies off the south eastern coast of Africa and the dangerous seas encountered there represent most of the navigational difficulties in the Eastern Africa region. On the seaward edge of the continental shelf abnormal waves of exceptional height may develop under certain climatic conditions. Cyclones may be experienced in the Mozambique Channel, but mainly track from the Indian Ocean towards Madagascar. Elsewhere, tropical storms rarely reach the coast, while gales and gusts still occur in transitional months.

A major tanker route stretches along the East African coast, from the Middle East to Europe or the United States. Around 5000 tanker voyages per year are reported, carrying 30% of the world's crude oil production. Of these, 1200 voyages per year are by large tanker (>250 000 tonnes) and 4000 are by middle-sized tanker (~60 000 tonnes). Of the 700 million tonnes per year of crude oil sailing in the island waters of the Indian Ocean, 350 million tonnes are transported through the Mozambique Channel. Main ports in the region include East London, Port Elizabeth, Durban (South Africa), Maputo, Beira, (Mozambique), Dar Es Salaam (Tanzania), Mombasa (Kenya), and Mogadishu (Somalia).

South Africa aside, there are no major importers or exporters of oil within the region, which reduces the risk of intermediate spills. The numerous tankers, including Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCC), travelling through the region represent a constant, yet relatively low threat to the environment, since their route lies well offshore. However, as vessels get closer to the continental shelf off the south-east coast of South Africa, the traffic tends to increase in density, and a number of major accidents have occurred. The most significant cause of incidents is collision and heavy weather damage. That said, illegal discharges and spills originating from port activities represent the greatest risk of oil pollution in the region.

Major tanker spills of over 5,000 tonnes in the Eastern Africa Region since 1974

| Vessel Name | Quantity spilled | | Country | Year | Cause |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|------|-----------------|
| | (tonnes) | (Type) | | | |
| CASTILLO DE BELVER | 252,000 | CRUDE | SOUTH AFRICA | 1983 | FIRE /EXPLOSION |
| KATINA P. | 72,000 | FUEL (CARGO) | MOZAMBIQUE | 1992 | HULL FAILURE |
| VENOIL | 27,000 | CRUDE | SOUTH AFRICA | 1977 | COLLISION |
| MASTER STATHIOS | 22,000 | FUEL (CARGO) | SOUTH AFRICA | 1975 | FIRE /EXPLOSION |
| PACIFICOS | 10,000 | CRUDE | SOUTH AFRICA | 1989 | HULL FAILURE |

THE STATE OF PREPAREDNESS

With the exception of South Africa, national resources and stockpiles are often very limited within the region, which mostly restricts response to the protection of sensitive resources and manual shoreline clean up assisted by equipment of convenience. Broadly speaking, the oil industry has experienced difficulties in moving towards adequate preparedness. In most countries, they have been encouraged to develop Tier-1 response capabilities with a view to implementing joint Tier-2 stockpiles.

Most countries in the region have produced contingency plans, but, in many cases, they need to develop them further, integrate them into the national response system and practice them through full-scale exercises. On the government side, a strong political will is required to set up a comprehensive set of objectives for preparedness and response to oil spills and integrate related international conventions into national legislation. South Africa plays a leading role in terms of preparedness and response; therefore international assistance will mainly be sought from South Africa or Tier-3 Centres.

As at October 2003, all States in the region were party to the 1992 Civil Liability and Fund Conventions, except South Africa (which has ratified CLC 69 only) and Somalia. Acknowledging government's responsibility in preparedness and response to a spill, all Island States and Kenya have ratified the OPRC Convention.

Finally, a number of regional initiatives have been undertaken under the auspices of the IMO, UNEP, FAO and IOC. The Protection and Management of the Marine and Coastal Environment of Eastern and Southern Africa aims to develop national self-reliance in terms of prevention and emergency planning, amongst other things. This regional programme is currently implemented by the Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA) and enables fruitful networking among Marine Safety Authorities. In 2001 the Nairobi Convention and its Emergency Protocol were implemented in order to bring objectives in line with the recently ratified OPRC and to address the hazardous and noxious substances issue. The Indian Ocean Commission also launched a programme to develop effective national planning and regional co-operation. Training and assistance have thus been provided to industry and government designated persons on legal aspects (convention ratification, implementation into national law), the development of NCPs and sensitivity mapping, and acquisition of standardised, compatible, equipment for all Islands. The creation of a Regional Co-ordination Centre for spill response and preparedness is currently being discussed.

STATUS OF CONTINGENCY PLANS, TIERED RESOURCES AND CONVENTIONS

| | Comp. National Authority | National Plan | Clean-up Resources | | Subreg. Aggmnt | Nairobi Convention & Emergency Protocol | MARPOL | OPRC '90 | LLMC '76 | CLC '69 CLC '92 | FUND '92 | Inter-vention '69/'73 |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------|----------------|---|--------|----------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------------------|
| | | | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | | | | | | | | |
| Comoros | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes* | Yes | Yes | Yes | | '92 | '92 | |
| Kenya | Yes | Yes | Yes | Ltd | Yes** | Yes | Yes | Yes | | '92 | '92 | |
| Madagascar | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes* | Yes | | Yes | | '92 | '92 | |
| Mauritius | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | '92 | '92 | '73 |
| Mozambique | Yes | Draft | Ltd | | | Yes | | | | '92 | '92 | |
| Réunion (France) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | '92 | '92 | '73 |
| Seychelles | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes*,** | Yes | Yes | Yes | | '92 | '92 | |
| Somalia | | | | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| South Africa | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Acceding | Yes | | | '69 | | '73 |
| Tanzania | Yes | Draft | Ltd. | | Yes** | Yes | | | | '92 | '92 | |

* Indian Ocean Commission.

**Kenya, Seychelles and Tanzania have set up a Regional Centre for Search and Rescue, expected to evolve into a Global Maritime Distress and Safety Centre.



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