

**OPENING REMARKS OF THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF
THE MINISTRY OF BLUE ECONOMY AND FISHERIES,
CAPTAIN HAMAD BAKAR HAMAD, AT THE ZANZIBAR
CIRCULAR ECONOMY WORKSHOP FOR JOURNALISTS
AND COMMUNICATORS
10 – 14th March 2025**

- **Consuelo Natale, Swiss Embassy Representative**
- **Henrique Pacini, SMEP Program - UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**
- **Julien Chambolle, Africa 21**
- **Journalists and Communicators from Various Countries**
- **Invited Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

All protocols observed, good morning to you all.

First, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Almighty Allah for granting us the opportunity to gather here today. On behalf of the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, I am honored to welcome you to this significant workshop on the Circular Economy for Journalists and Communicators, which will take place from March 10 to 14, 2025. It is also my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you all to the beautiful island of Zanzibar!

We are thrilled to host this important event, bringing together a diverse group of journalists, experts, and stakeholders from across the African continent, particularly from coastal and island nations bordering the Indian Ocean. This workshop offers a unique opportunity for collaboration and knowledge exchange as we confront the common pressing challenges we face and explore innovative solutions that will shape a sustainable future for all.

Ladies and gentlemen, the circular economy is a critical topic for our region, especially for island nations like Zanzibar. Under the leadership of the President of Zanzibar, His Excellency, Dr. Hussein Mwinyi, whose focus in his eighth interim is on the Blue Economy, we understand the pivotal role the ocean plays in our

lives and livelihoods. Our communities are deeply connected to the sea, and economic activities like fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, oil and gas, and maritime trade are all inextricably linked to the health of our marine ecosystems.

Tourism and fisheries are the backbone of Zanzibar's socio-economic development, supporting the livelihoods of around two-thirds of the population. Fisheries contribute 4-8% to GDP, while tourism accounts for over 29%. More than 95% of Zanzibar's fisheries are nearshore, directly employing 60,000 people, with an additional 100,000 individuals working in the value chain, 17% of whom are women. The aquaculture sector, dominated by seaweed farming, provides employment for 15,559 people, 80% of whom are women. Other aquaculture activities, such as mud crab farming, sea cucumber, and finfish (milkfish), also play vital roles. In 2024, seaweed production alone reached approximately 19,000 tons. Additionally, 99% of Zanzibar's international trade is seaborne.

However, the open access and unsustainable practices of the past no longer serve the future we envision. It is time to adopt new, sustainable methods of utilizing our oceans—methods that prioritize resilience and sustainability for both the environment and our communities.

Here in Zanzibar, we recognize the urgency of addressing climate change, preserving marine biodiversity, and transitioning to more sustainable ways of using our resources. This is not only essential for environmental protection, but also for the continued social and economic development of our nation. Through workshops like this, we aim to foster greater understanding, share valuable knowledge, and strengthen the networks we need to address these challenges effectively.

The discussions and insights we will share over the coming week will focus on critical issues that are essential to the future of coastal and island nations across Africa: sustainable sourcing, eco-design, responsible consumption, waste management, and, of course, the blue economy. These topics are integral to the circular economy framework, and my hope is that by the end of this workshop, each of you will be better equipped to report on

and contribute to the ongoing efforts in our nations to create a more sustainable, circular economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are also proud to welcome the distinguished experts who will be sharing their knowledge and experiences with us. Their perspectives will be invaluable as we explore the potential of the circular economy in Africa, particularly as we prepare for the 3rd UN Conference on the Oceans (UNOC 3), where the protection and sustainable use of our oceans will take center stage.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Network of African Journalists Specialized in Sustainable Development and Climate Change for their unwavering commitment to raising awareness and facilitating dialogue on sustainable development. The role of journalists in shaping public opinion and advancing the agenda for sustainable development cannot be overstated. I am confident that the work done here will have a lasting impact.

Once again, welcome to Zanzibar. I look forward to the fruitful discussions, meaningful exchanges, and new partnerships that will emerge from this workshop. Together, we can build a future that harmonizes with nature, ensures the protection of our oceans, and secures a sustainable future for all.

Thank you for your attention.