

PRESS RELEASE – Monday 25 October, 2021

Exchanging traditional and scientific knowledge about the Macaneta wetlands: the launch of the Festival of the Incomati Estuary

On Thursday 14, the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), the University Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), the French Embassy, the cooperative Repensar and Marracuene District came together for an exhibition opening cocktail at the Macaneta Boat Club to highlight the importance of ecosystems conservation. This meeting also marked the start of the Festival do Estuário (Festival of the Estuary) that took place over the week-end.

Context:

Under the French Presidency of the Indian Ocean Commission 2021-2022, France coordinates the Indian Ocean Blue Year together with Mozambique, South Africa, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Tanzania and the Seychelles. This program aims to strengthen regional synergies in the field of the Blue Economy, promoting the sustainable management of coastal and ocean economic activities, along with the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity. In this context, France supports local initiatives, awareness-raising activities and scientific research projects in Mozambique. The Festival do Estuário is part of the Blue Economy Days and took place in Macaneta on October 15-16-17 and is building upon an ongoing IRD and UEM research project on the Incomati River.

The meeting:

Mr Sidique Mahomed Aly, President of the Committee of the Macaneta Boat Club started the meeting by expressing his wish for the Macaneta Boat Club to develop ecotourism. The Rector of Eduardo Mondlane University, Prof Orlando Quilambo, then proceeded to explain the ongoing successful cooperation between UEM and IRD, emphasizing the significant role of research in ecosystem conservation and the value of science-civil society meetings. Next, Mr Shafee Sidatt, Marracuene District Administrator, stated that sustainable development and tourism are a priority for the District. Following his intervention, Mr Laurent Perez-Vidal, Cooperation and Cultural Action Attaché to the French Embassy in Mozambique and Eswatini, expressed the great support of the French Embassy to local scientific initiatives that have an holistic approach. Mr Laurent Perez-Vidal also announced the launch of the Festival do Estuário, as part of the Indian Ocean Blue Year, to which Mrs Stéphanie Duvail, IRD representative in Mozambique, added on by introducing the research project at the core of the event and detailing the festival programme.

The speakers and the audience discovered, in avant-première, the captioned photo exhibition displaying the multi-user landscape of Macaneta and its rich biodiversity, enjoying music played by the Mbenga-Mbira duet on unique Mozambican instruments. The meeting closed with a cocktail as an opportunity for all parties and audience to network.



About IRD

The Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) supports an original model of equitable scientific partnership and interdisciplinary, citizen, sustainability science committed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

About Eduardo Mondlane University

Founded in 1962, the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) is the oldest and largest university in Mozambique, it is active in all spheres of science, in the Incomati its current involvement is in research for sustainable development and nature conservation. It consists of around 40,000 enrolled students.

About Repensar

Repensar is a Mozambican cooperative, active in environmental and waste management issues in Macaneta. Its objective is to contribute to environmental education of young people, children and communities, through the joint efforts of founding members, collaborators and partners.

About the Festival do Estuário

A research project is being carried out on the Incomati estuary and delta through a collaboration between EMU, IRD, the Institute for Hydrological Education (IHE-Delft) and an expertise from CIRAD. The objective of the Festival is to highlight the role and functions of the estuary and its floodplains, which are known to the inhabitants but unknown to visitors, as well as its exceptional biodiversity values.

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