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THE RESEA PROJECT'S BLUE ECONOMY ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP EMPOWERS COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN VILANCULOS

7th July 2025, Vilanculos, Mozambique - Today, the Government of Mozambique and ReSea Project partners - Mission inclusion, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Muleide and OceanHub Africa, with the support of Global Affairs Canada, officially launched the Blue Economy Entrepreneurship Bootcamp, a transformative initiative aimed at unlocking inclusive, sustainable economic opportunities tied to ocean and coastal resources.

The bootcamp brings together 22 women and youth from 11 Blue Economy Entrepreneurship groups from Inhassoro and Vilanculos Districts, Inhambane Province who are actively involved in tourism, mangrove honey, processing and selling of marine products such as fish, for hands-on training in business development, innovation and climate-resilient marine livelihoods. The initiative seeks to strengthen local capacities and support community-driven solutions that contribute to both economic empowerment and ocean conservation.

Speaking during the opening ceremony of the bootcamp, **Mr Eusébio Jorge Almoço Director of Serviços Distritais de Atividades Económicas – SADE (District Services for Economic Activities)**, speaking on behalf of Administrator of the District of Vilankulo remarked, “The launch of this Bootcamp represents a valuable opportunity for our local entrepreneurs to acquire new skills, strengthen their businesses and contribute to the inclusive growth of the district. Protecting the environment is not only a moral duty, but a strategic necessity to ensure that future generations can also benefit from the natural wealth we have today.”

Participants will engage in a dynamic, week-long programme featuring workshops on sustainable enterprise development, marine value chains, financial literacy, and nature-positive business models. Expert mentors, industry leaders, and marine conservationists will provide tailored guidance to help participants turn ideas into action.

“At Mission inclusion, we believe that building a regenerative blue economy starts with investing in the people who live closest to the ocean. This bootcamp is about empowering coastal entrepreneurs—especially women and youth—with the tools, confidence, and connections they need to turn their ideas into impactful, climate-resilient businesses. It’s a step toward inclusive growth that values both people and nature.” **Perpetua Angima, ReSea Project Chief of Party, Mission inclusion.**

The bootcamp is part of the ReSea Project’s aim to catalyse local women-led, inclusive ocean economies in the Western Indian Ocean region, particularly in Mozambique, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar and Tanzania. It responds to the urgent need for coastal communities—particularly women and youth—to access skills and knowledge to catalyse their blue businesses.

"Women are a force that inspires and transforms the future of the Blue Economy," said **Rafa Valente, Executive Director, Muleide**. "With innovation, resilience and leadership, they drive sustainable solutions for the oceans and build a fairer and more prosperous world for all. This bootcamp allows

them to look to the blue economy with courage, innovation and purpose, paving sustainable paths for the next generations."

With a coastline of approximately 2,700 km and a maritime space of 562,000 km², Mozambique has one of the largest Blue Economy potentials on the African continent. The Inhambane region, particularly the districts of Vilanculos and Inhassoro, exemplifies the opportunities and challenges of the Blue Economy. These districts, with strong links to the ocean and tourism, are home to communities that have extensive traditional knowledge about marine resources but often lack modern business management skills. It is with the aim of uniting traditional knowledge and entrepreneurial innovation that the ReSea Project seeks to empower local entrepreneurs — particularly women and youth — with the knowledge and tools that allow them to create viable and regenerative businesses.

"At IUCN, we are proud to support the Blue Economy Entrepreneurship Bootcamp," said **Tara Pelembe, Interim Country Manager, IUCN Mozambique**. "Building strong, resilient, and regenerative seascapes requires empowering businesses that are founded in—and deeply connected to—our coastal communities. These entrepreneurs possess an intuitive and profound understanding of the natural, social, economic, and cultural contexts in which they operate. As such, they hold the key to driving meaningful and lasting regeneration."

"The business incubation bootcamp reflects a bold commitment to driving impact across three interconnected dimensions: social inclusion, environmental stewardship, and economic empowerment, explained Noor Jehan Docrat, Coastal Community Development Expert. We are supporting businesses that restore ecosystems, create dignified livelihoods, and build generational resilience," said **Noor Jehan Docrat, Coastal Community Development Specialist, OceanHub Africa**.

A key highlight of the bootcamp will be the official launch of the Blue Economy Entrepreneurship Manual and the Soft Skills Manual—two new, practical guides designed to equip Blue Economy entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth, with essential tools to navigate the complexities of starting and sustaining nature-positive enterprises. The manuals cover a wide range of topics including business planning, opportunity mapping in marine value chains, communication and leadership, financial literacy, and responsible environmental stewardship.

To the graduates, our appeal is clear: make the most of this training. Use the knowledge you acquire to innovate, grow and make your businesses more resilient and competitive. But do so responsibly. Economic development is only truly sustainable when it goes hand in hand with the preservation of our natural resources — in particular, marine resources, which are the basis of livelihood for many of our communities," urged **Mr Almoço**.

For more enquiries:

Cheila Naiene Communication Officer, Muleide	Audrey Masitsa Communication and Advocacy Coordinator- ReSea Project
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cheiladelurdes@gmail.com	Mission inclusion amasitsa@missioninclusion.ca
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