

Issue No.1 (INAUGURAL)



LAKE VICTORIA BASIN DIGEST

A NEWSLETTER OF THE LAKE VICTORIA BASIN COMMISSION

Invest in Lake Victoria Basin...



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Lake Victoria Basin Digest!

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission, an institution of the East African Community, is playing an increased role as a coordinator of the sustainable development agenda of the Lake Victoria Basin. Although the Commission receives substantial regional and international media coverage, there has been a gap between its accomplishments and what is known by its stakeholders. After the inaugural issue, we shall embark on publishing the newsletter on a quarterly basis.



This inaugural issue of the Lake Victoria Basin Digest will give you an opportunity to read a message from the Executive Secretary, Dr. Tom O. Okurut, about the rationale behind publishing this newsletter and what we hope to achieve through this process. As part of the September 2010 World Water Week events in Stockholm, Sweden, the Commission organised a successful seminar under the theme: "Management of Transboundary Water Resources – the case of Lake Victoria Basin". Our lead story highlights the thematic areas that were discussed and analysed at the seminar as well as some of the participants' recommendations.

The Secretary General of the East African Community, Ambassador Juma V. Mwapachu, made two landmark visits to the Lake Victoria Basin during the second and third quarters of this year to familiarise himself with the ongoing projects and programmes of the Commission. In this issue, we bring to your attention the Secretary General's two visits; the first one in the Mwanza region of Tanzania and the second on the Kenyan side of the Basin.

Other important stories in this issue include the successful completion of the appraisal mission for the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Project; the kick-off of the Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin Project (TWB-MRB); the launching of the Commission's research vessel, RV Jumuiya and commentaries by our specialists on topical developments at the Commission.

I wish you good reading.

Charles-Martin Jjuuko

Editor
editor@lvcsec.org



LAKE VICTORIA BASIN DIGEST

Editorial Committee:

Chairperson:

Samuel K. Gichere

Editor:

Charles-Martin Jjuuko

Committee Members:

Ali Said Matano

Qureish Noordin

Doreen Othero (PhD)

Jackson Muhirwe

Mary Mwangi

Contact us: Lake Victoria Basin Commission, 6th Floor Re-Insurance Plaza, Oginga Odinga Street, P.O. Box 1510-40100, Kisumu, Kenya. Tel: +254-57-2026344/2023873/2023894, Email: editor@lvcsec.org

Message from the Executive Secretary



Dr. Tom O. Okurut Executive Secretary, LVBC

Dear Reader,

The East African Community Partner States recognised the economic importance of the Lake Victoria Basin and consequently designated it an Economic Growth Zone in its first Development Strategy (1997-2000). A Protocol for the Sustainable Development of Lake Victoria Basin was thereafter developed and ratified in December 2004. The protocol established the legal and administrative mechanism for sustainable development of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) as apex institution of the East African Community mandated to promote, facilitate and coordinate the different actors involved in the socio-economic development and poverty alleviation initiatives with the Lake Victoria Basin.

I am glad to mention that our newsletter, the Lake Victoria Basin Digest, will help to regularly inform our stakeholders about LVBC's progress in terms of projects and programmes. This information will be shared on a quarterly basis. On a personal note, I intend to use this column to provide you with information on topical issues concerning the sustainable development agenda of the Lake Victoria Basin.

During the "Second Lake Victoria Basin Stakeholders' Forum" held in Kisumu in October 2009, stakeholders who participated, including ministers, legislators, diplomats, central and local government officials, urged the East African Community to promote the culture of saving and investment amongst communities living in the Basin. It also called for the

search for sustainable funding mechanisms for investment in infrastructure, agricultural development, value-addition microenterprises, as well as the promotion of ICT use in sharing information to improve marketing systems, management and trade.

The Commission has since participated in the Third East African Community Investment Conference held in April 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, in order to increase the visibility of opportunities in the Lake Victoria Basin. Following LVBC's successful participation and exhibition at the Conference, the Commission was urged to organise an Investment Forum specific to the Lake Victoria Basin.

It is against this background that the Commission has organised the first-ever "Lake Victoria Basin Investment Forum". Under the theme "Realising Socio-Economic Benefits from Investing in the Lake Victoria Basin", the Forum will take place 5th – 8th December 2010 in the rock city of Mwanza, Tanzania. This event shall provide an excellent environment for business and government leaders to discuss opportunities in six thematic areas: transport and communication; tourism; agri-business and fisheries; trade and industry; investment-led research and development; and, mineral resources in the Lake Victoria Basin.

Let me encourage you to participate in this important event. Online registration can be done through www.lvbc.com.org or www.lvbinvestmentforum.eac.int
See you in Mwanza!

LVBC Stockholm Seminar addresses management of transboundary water resources



Dr. Okurut addresses seminar participants

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) on 5th September 2010 organised a seminar that addressed regional management of transboundary water resources. The seminar, conducted under the theme **Management of Transboundary Water Resources – the Case of Lake Victoria Basin** was attended by 100 experts from different parts of the world.

In his paper on the **Governance Mechanism of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission – Past, Present and Future Outlook**, the LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Tom Okurut, examined the principle of 'equitable and reasonable' utilisation of transboundary waters in relation to the established Protocols and Institutional Frameworks to mitigate concerns of riparians in line with their sovereign rights. While emphasising water governance issues in the Lake Victoria Basin, Dr. Okurut told participants that it is not possible to manage a joint resource individually.

He noted that management of shared natural resources called for a sober and defined approach that would minimise conflict and realise

maximum benefits for the communities. Dr. Okurut said that as part of the implementation of the sustainable development agenda of the Lake Victoria Basin, the Commission had a systematic approach for joint and coordinated management that is bound to deliver the desired results.

Several other experts made presentations during the seminar, which was opened by Mr. Johan Schaar and chaired by Dr. Anders Jägerskog of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida).

Presenters included Eng. Mohammed Badaaza of the Nile Basin Initiative, who presented a paper on **Promoting Regional Cooperation in East Africa – the case of the three River Basin Management Projects of Mara, Kagera and Sio-Malalaba-Malakasi joint investment projects**. Eng. Badaaza discussed the importance of the regional approaches to management and development of the shared water resources in the Nile Equatorial Lakes countries – Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda – implemented by the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Programme (NELSAP) under

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Ambassador Mwapachu addresses residents of Mbarika village after inspecting water project

EAC SG visits LVBC projects in Tanzania and Kenya

The Secretary General of the East African Community, Ambassador Juma V. Mwapachu, recently graced the Lake Victoria Basin Commission with two landmark visits to familiarise himself with its projects and programmes. The first visit took place in the Mwanza region of Tanzania in July and quickly followed by the second visit to the Kenyan side of the Basin in August.

Kenya

During his visit to Kenya, which was commenced on 10th August 2010, Ambassador Mwapachu visited customs offices at the Kenya-Tanzania border at Isibania and commissioned a community water project in Abala. He also visited the Lake Victoria Basin Commission Secretariat in Kisumu and the field activities of the Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECP).

On the first day of his visit, Ambassador Mwapachu visited and received briefings

from both Kenya and Tanzania customs officials about the progress in the Common Market operationalisation process. He then proceeded to Abala village, Homa Bay district, where he launched a community water project completed by the Abala Women Group, with the support of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) and funding from the United Nations University.

During the Abala launching ceremony, Ambassador Mwapachu hailed women for their leadership in the development process and promised to provide to similar projects in the Lake Victoria Basin in future.

Visit to LVBC and KMFRI

Ambassador Mwapachu on 11th August 2010 visited the LVBC Secretariat in Kisumu. The LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr Tom Okurut and his staff, provided the Secretary General with an update about the ongoing projects and programmes of the Commission, including: the Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation

Programme (MERECP); the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II); the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation (LWATSAN) Initiatives Project II; the Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin Project (TWBHH-MRB); the Maritime Communication for Safety on Lake Victoria (MCSLV) Project; as well as the EAC/AMREF Lake Victoria Partnership (EALP) Programme on HIV and AIDS.

On the same day, Ambassador Mwapachu visited the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Institute (KMFRI) to learn about the operations of the Enhanced Fish Market Information Service (EFMIS) and the Lake Victoria Biodiversity Informatics Project (LAVIBI) based at KMFRI. He was impressed by the use of new information technologies for fish marketing and biodiversity conservation and noted the good partnership between KMFRI and LVBC.

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Universities' Research Fund for Mara River Basin launched

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) recently signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with three Universities: Ardhi University (United Republic of Tanzania), Egerton University (Kenya) and Maseno University (Kenya) to support critical studies in natural resources and landscape conservation in the Mara River Basin. The ceremony took place at the Imperial Hotel in Kisumu, Kenya.

The MOUs triggered ongoing collaboration between the Commission and the Universities in the area of applied research on Biodiversity Conservation in the Mara River Basin and the Environmental Flows Assessments of the Mara River. The research includes wildlife and habitat conservation; conservation enterprise; and, capacity building and leadership. An initial US\$60,000 was disbursed by the LVBC, with US\$20,000 going to each of the three Universities under the partnership.

The new collaboration is part of broader initiatives being implemented under the Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin Project (TWB-MRB) supported by USAID/East Africa and implemented by the LVBC. The Mara River Basin is one of the basins of the Lake Victoria Basin and is essential for the survival of wildlife anchoring Kenyan and Tanzanian tourism. The survival of this ecosystem depends on the flow of the Mara River. The collaboration between the Commission and the Universities will play an essential role of supporting a long term capacity development for science based management system of the ecosystem.

Mara River Basin Reports

Under the recently-

concluded Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (BSAP) for the Mara River Basin, various measures to be undertaken will target improving policy, legislation and institutions,

Action Plan for the Mara River Basin and the study on Assessing Reserve Flows for the Mara River were prepared by the WWF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional



Dr. Okurut exchanges MoUs with the Universities' representatives

economics, investments, applied research, communication, education and awareness-raising. Both the Biodiversity Strategy and

Programme Office and LVBC, with support from USAID/East Africa and the Global Water for Sustainability Programme.



Universities' Research Fund for Mara River Basin launched

The reports were on April 22, 2010 launched by Hon. Dr. Noah Wekesa (CGH, MP) – Minister for Forestry and Wildlife, Kenya at an event in Nairobi graced by the presence of the East African Community (EAC) Deputy Secretary General for Productive and Social Services, Mr. Jean Claude Sengiyumva, along with dignitaries from USAID/East Africa, WWF and representatives of the EAC Partner States.



A dance troupe welcomes guests with traditional Sukuma songs

On 12th August 2010, Ambassador Mwapachu made field visits to restoration sites inside and outside the Mount Elgon National Park. He held meetings with some of the communities implementing the MERECP activities at grassroots level. Community leaders elaborated their successes and shared their concerns with the Secretary General. Ambassador Mwapachu hailed the ongoing endeavours to link environmental management to livelihood security and poverty alleviation in the Mount Elgon area.

Mwanza visit

Earlier in July 2010, the Secretary General 21st June 2010 concluded a visit to LVBC project sites in the Mwanza region of Tanzania. On 21st June 2010, Ambassador Mwapachu, in the company of the LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr Tom Okurut and

pilot water supply project supported by LVBC; and, sites with high a tourism potential.

During the visit to the proposed regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre on 17th June 2010, LVBC and Ericsson staff explained how the new rescue system will operate. They told Ambassador Mwapachu that the Centre would have a coordination system based on mobile telephony that will cut

senior Tanzania government officials, commissioned LVBC's research vessel, RV Jumuiya and made visits to the proposed sites of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC); the offices of the Lake Victoria Environmental Project Phase II (LVEMP II) in Mwanza; a community-owned

emergency response time and save lives in Lake Victoria at an affordable cost.

Later, Ambassador Mwapachu visited the Tupendane Women Group which is implementing the Mbarika Water Supply Project in Mbarika village, Misungwi district. The pilot micro-project is one of three similar projects supported by LVBC with financing from the United Nations University (UNU). Ambassador Mwapachu was impressed by the progress of the project and accepted the community's request for more funding from LVBC to install a solar system to power the project's water pump.

On 18th June 2010, Ambassador Mwapachu proceeded to the Tanzanian offices of the Lake Victoria Environment



Leaders of the Mbarika Women Group read a statement of appreciation

Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II) in Mwanza, where staff explained the activities and challenges of the project. He later commissioned LVBC's research vessel, RV Jumuiya, at ceremony held in the Mwanza South Port. The vessel, provided by the British Department for International Development (DfID) is providing support to research initiatives on Lake Victoria, including the mapping of navigation routes. On 19th June 2010, Ambassador Mwapachu visited several sites in and around Lamadi village, Magu district.

He expressed appreciation of the great economic potential of the area and emphasised the need to strengthen the link between tourism activities on the lake and those on land within the Lake Victoria Basin.



Ambassador Mwapachu (centre) in the company of Dr. Okurut (left) commissions the Abala Water Project

LVEMP II holds regional technical meeting

The Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II, commonly known as LVEMP II, held its first regional technical staff meeting from 7th to 11th June 2010. The meeting held in Kakamega, Kenya, was held to harmonise work plans of all the teams coordinating the implementation of the project. It also considered the project implementation status, implementation modalities, the monitoring framework as well as the project reporting format.

Participants included staff from the Regional Project Coordination Team, which is part of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), project staff from the National Project Coordination Teams (NPCTs) of Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda. Representatives of the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation and the Cleaner Production Technologies also took part in the meeting.

The LVBC Deputy Executive Secretary, Mr Samuel Gichere, noted that all LVEMP II project implementation teams had been



LVEMP II holds regional technical meeting

constituted with specialists from relevant fields. He anticipated that this wealth of knowledge would help to ensure that the objectives of the eight-year US\$252 million project are achieved.

The LVEMP II Regional Project Coordinator,

Dr Raymond Mngodo, reminded participants that LVEMP II was a regional project which is to be implemented as one if its project objectives were to be achieved. Mr Gichere and Dr Mngodo used the same occasion to share information with media representatives in Kakamega about the project and its objectives.

LVEMP II became effective on 25th January 2010. The project development/global environmental objectives are to: (i) improve collaborative management of the transboundary natural resources of Lake Victoria Basin for the shared benefits of the East African Community Partner states; and (ii) reduce environmental stress in targeted pollution hotspots and selected degraded sub-catchments to improve the livelihoods of communities, who depend on the natural resources of the basin.

The meeting also accorded most project staff with the first opportunity to meet face-to-face with staff of the requisite regional and national teams.



The LVBC Deputy Executive Secretary (Project and Programmes), Mr. Samuel Gichere and the LVEMP II Regional Project Coordinator, Dr. Raymond Mngodo, share information with journalists about the meeting

the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI).

He highlighted the need for the Nile Equatorial Lakes Countries to work towards integrated water resources development and management as well as the healthy linkages NELSAP, NBI and LVBC.

Mr. Damas Masologo of SCC-Vi Eastern Africa, on the other hand, offered highlights of civil society interventions the management of the natural resources in the Lake Victoria Basin. In his paper, **Contributing to Transboundary Watershed Management – a case of Kagera**, provided perspectives on the land use forms and vegetation types supporting water flows in the Kagera region of Tanzania. Mr. Masologo interpreted satellite images that indicate a sharp decline in forest cover in most areas of the Kagera between 1984 and 1999 as well as a slight increase in cover between 1999 and 2007.

He also examined mitigation initiatives by government and non-government actors in building the capacity of communities for sustainable natural resources management.

Furthermore, Dr. Raymond Mngodo of LVBC's Lake Victoria Environment Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II)

contributed to the seminar with a paper on Addressing Water Resources Environmental and Water Quality Challenges in Lake Victoria Basin.

Prof. Joseph Obua of the Lake Victoria Research Initiatives (VicRes) – a regional collaborative research programme of the Inter-University Council for East Africa – delivered a paper on the Role of Research in Management of Transboundary Water Resources. Dr. Obua told participants that VicRes research activities are designed to reduce poverty among communities in the Basin and improve natural resources management and utilisation, including those that transcend boundaries. He argued that the development of Lake Victoria and its Basin cannot be achieved without research inputs.

Mr. Richard Joel Okonga of the Ministry of Water and Environment of Uganda made a deliberation on the Challenges of Transboundary Cooperation in Water Resources Management – a case of Lake Victoria.

Participants noted that the LVBC, as institution of the East African Community, was a prime example of good regional institutional efforts to manage transboundary water resources.



Participants listen to presentations in packed seminar room

Mara River Basin Project takes off

The 'Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin Project' of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) is now effective. The US\$3million project, also known as the TWB-MRB project, will promote harmonized Mara River Basin Management practices for sustainability.

Two staff have joined the LVBC family to support the implementation of TWB-MRB project. Mr Qureish Noordin is the Project Coordinator while Mr Leonard Majiji is

the Accounts Assistant.

According to Mr Qureish, the project which is funded by support from USAID/East Africa, shall meet five specific objectives: (i) promote transboundary management framework for Mara River Basin; (ii) improve protection management of protected areas of Masaai-Mara and Serengeti ecosystems; (iii) improve water resource management in the basin; and, (iv) build institutional capacity of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission to undertake

its regional mandate.

The LVBC is an institution of the East African Community responsible for coordinating the sustainable development agenda of the Lake Victoria Basin. The Mara River Basin is one of the basins of the Lake Victoria Basin and is essential for the survival of wildlife, anchoring Kenyan and Tanzanian tourism. The survival of the ecosystem depends on the flow of the Mara River.

Deforestation Avoidance in Mt. Elgon Ecosystem

The Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECP) under implementation by LVBC supports the governments of Kenya and Uganda to strengthen management of Protected Areas in the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem; namely: Mount Elgon National Park, Mount Elgon Forest Reserves, Chepkitala National Reserve Mount in Kenya and; Mt. Elgon National Park, and Namatale Central Forest Reserve, Uganda.

In addition, the programme is supporting sustainable development and livelihood improvement related activities in the six (6) Districts of Uganda and three (3) districts in Kenya. Under this programme the basic forms of payment for environmental service scheme are currently in trial implemented under cash payment for deforestation avoidance in Kapchorwa District in Tangween and Kapchebut and Chepkwirot

in Kenya. This is where intact natural forest still stands adjacent to the selected communities and settlements in the Mt Elgon area, and cash payments of \$50 per ha per year was offered to households through the CBOs for protection of these intact forest patches/trees.

Payments have been made based on performance: 100% protection deserves 100% payment. In addition, if CBOs engage in additional voluntary plantation outside the PA, they are entitled to receive an additional bonus of \$20 per ha; these payments are limited to a five year period after which the CBO and the settlement adjacent to this intact forest is be expected to protect it voluntarily as the community revolving fund (CRF) should have brought about additional livelihood benefits (MERECP Strategy, 2009). Cash payments for deforestation avoidance are channeled

through the Community Revolving Fund/ Project Account of the CBO.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/ Agreement between the Community Based Organisation and protected area agencies specifying roles and responsibilities and monitoring and evaluation is developed to guide the implementation of deforestation avoidance. The beneficiary households also provide voluntary labour to carry out protection activities to stop further encroachment into the protected zones of the ecosystem.

The overall the Agreement is to ensure that the Forests are well protected. The protected area institution in the ecosystem reduces the costs of policing in these areas. In event of fires which are very frequent (annual), the communities get involved.



Forest protection near Kapchebut, Tegeres (Kapchorwa District , Uganda)



Protected Forest in Chorlim, Mount Elgon National Park, Kenya

Three new staff join LVBC family



Mr. Stanley Matowo has joined the Lake Victoria Basin Commission as Deputy Executive Secretary (Finance and Administration). Stanley, who was born in Moshi Tanzania, holds a Master of Engineering from IHE-Delft, The Netherlands. He brings to LVBC 20 years of experience in managing water resources projects. He has previously utilised his experience in engineering design, especially wastewater treatment facilities for fisheries plants, to oversee water projects and general staff management in the Ministry of Water and Irrigation headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, as well as regional Water offices and the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (LVEMP).

Stanley is a former Principal Water Officer, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, United Republic of Tanzania, where mainly he supervised issuing of water users permits, wastewater discharge permits and also dealt with cropped water conflicts. He has also worked as an Adviser to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Private Secretary to the Minister and the National Focal Point Officer for the LVBC mainly to coordinate and facilitate implementation of the Lake Victoria Basin projects/programmes.



Mr Qureish Noordin is now part of the progressively growing Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) family. He joined LVBC in June 2010 as the Project Coordinator, Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin (TWB-MRB) Project. Qureish has an MPhil in Tropical Forestry Soils and Hydrology from Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya. Prior to joining LVBC, Qureish worked with World Neighbors as the Program Officer Africa Region, as well as the International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) among other reputable institutions. Noordin has a wealth of experience spanning over 17 years in Agroforestry, Integrated Watershed Management, gender mainstreaming in development projects, partnerships and networking, outreach and dissemination strategies, participatory rural appraisals, community driven development, integrated soil fertility management, farmer-led documentation and resource mobilization.



Mr Leonard Majiji has joined LVBC as an Accounts Assistant Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin (TWB-MRB) Project. Leonard has got a Bachelor of Commerce (Finance) from the University of Dar es Salaam. He was the Finance, Grants and Administration Officer of the International Youth Foundation (IYF).

LVBC PICTORIAL



17th June 2010: EAC Secretary General, Ambassador Juma Mwapachu (centre) and the LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Tom Okurut (right) listen to the Chief Executive Officer of Kamanga Ferry Ltd, Mr. Bent Andersen at a lake transport maintenance workshop in Kamanga, Tanzania. Ambassador Mwapachu was on a familiarisation tour of the infrastructure that support cargo and passenger transport on Lake Victoria.

8th September 2010: Uganda's Minister for Water and Environment, Hon. Maria Mutagamba (second left), the LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Okurut and Mr. Sylvester Matemu of Tanzania are all smiles at the end of a session during the World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden



8th September 2010: LVBC's Programmes Development Officer explains the mandate of the Commission in the exhibition area during the World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden. Lake Victoria Basin Commission was one of the exhibitors at the international event.



10th August 2010: LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Okurut introduces some of the people behind the successful conclusion of the Abala Water Project in Abala village, Homa Bay district, Kenya. The project was completed by the Abala Women Group, with the support of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission and funding from the United Nations University.



LVBC PICTORIAL

11th August 2010: Ambassador Mwapachu and Dr. Okurut respond to questions from journalists who attended the Secretary General's press conference held at the LVBC Secretariat in Kisumu, Kenya.



3rd August 2010: The Regional Programme Coordinator of the Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECP), Mr. George Sikoyo (front row, first left) and the LVBC Deputy Executive Secretary (Finance and Administration), Mr. Stanley Matowo, listen to leaders of the Mount Elgon Farmers Association in Bududa district. They discussed the Community Revolving Fund under MERECP.



5th September 2010: The Mayor of Kisumu, Kenya, Mr. Sam Okello (centre), discusses issues pertinent to the Lake Victoria Basin at LVBC's exhibition area during the World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden.



5th September 2010: Dr. Johan Schaar, the Director, Department of Climate Change and Sustainable Services at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) opens LVBC's Seminar on "Management of Transboundary Water Resources – the case of Lake Victoria Basin"



HIV&AIDS Research takes root in Lake Victoria Basin



HIV/AIDS researchers at work on board RV Jumuiya

The EALP HIV Sero-behavioural studies have provided the "Maiden Assignment" for the LVBC owned research vessel RV Jumuiya. The vessel has provided the requisite facilities for conducting the HIV study including storage and drying rooms for the blood samples, cold rooms for the laboratory supplies and accommodation facilities for the research teams.

At a Glance

Lake Victoria Basin (LVB) is often referred to as the 'epicenter' of HIV. In the spirit of regional integration, the basin's several border posts and ports have a myriad of socio-economic activities that catalyze mobility and propagate the spread of HIV. Shared resources such as Lake Victoria have also enhanced population mobility

Who are the mobile populations?

Several categories of mobile populations have been identified based on their occupations and/or their interaction with the surrounding communities. These populations include but not limited to: Truck drivers, Migrant agricultural plantation workers, Fisher-folk, Students in institutions of higher learning, Mobile traders (inland and waterways), uniformed personnel and Sex workers.

In order to address the HIV&AIDS plight of mobile populations in the LVB actors need to pay attention to generation of information that will provide evidence for

policy formulation, planning, advocacy and targeted interventions.

Need for HIV&AIDS Research among mobile populations

HIV Sero-behavioural research is necessary for the different categories of mobile populations in order to determine the prevalence of HIV among the mobile populations. The studies should link population mobility patterns to behaviour and HIV prevalence. The studies are necessary in order to generate sub-population specific data necessitated by the lack of relevant and disaggregated HIV prevalence data on the mobile population in the East African region. What exist in each of the EAC Partner States is aggregated general population data that gives little indication of the specific risks and vulnerabilities of mobile populations. It is difficult to plan on the basis of such data, nor make informed policy choices based on it.

What LVBC is doing

LVBC through the EAC/AMREF Lake

Victoria Basin HIV&AIDS Partnership (EALP) Programme is currently conducting sub-population specific sero-behavioural studies to determine the prevalence of HIV among the mobile populations. The studies are being done in 20 universities, 9 agricultural plantations, 80 beach landing sites on the mainland and 60 Islands in Lake Victoria. These highly technical studies are linking population mobility patterns to behaviour and HIV prevalence. The studies are being done as a response to an information gap on specific HIV prevalence among specific categories of mobile populations. Findings of the studies will contribute to evidence based, population specific planning and execution of HIV&AIDS interventions. In addition, the findings will provide the basis for harmonized HIV responses for mobile populations by guiding the actors on priority interventions.

About the author: **Dr Othero is the HIV/AIDS Technical Specialist at LVBC**

Free Access to the Lake Victoria Basin Information Database

Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) is a specialized institution of the East African Community (EAC) that is responsible for coordinating the sustainable development agenda of the Lake Victoria Basin. The Lake and its basin were designated as an economic growth zone to be exploited in a coordinated manner (EAC Development Strategy 1997-2000). Access to relevant and timely information is one of the tools required for this development agenda.

The Commission is mandated by the Protocol for Sustainable Development of Lake Victoria Basin, Article 42(c), to establish a regional database and promote sharing of information and development of information systems and data exchange. Towards this end, LVBC established Lake Victoria Resource Centre Bibliographic database which provides a "one-stop shop" for easy access, retrieval and dissemination of information. For the Commission, the database provides a system for information sharing, communication and creating public

awareness in sustainable development of Lake Victoria Basin.

The database, which is envisioned to be a first port of call for information on the Lake Victoria Basin, contains Bibliographic records for publications held in various institutions in the five East African Countries. Participating institutions acts as sources of information for LVBC Information Resources database.

The database is highly used by Members of staff for LVBC and the entire East African Community; National Focal Points of Partner States, Partner States Ministries and Departments; Development Partners, Consultants, Researchers; Prospective investors and all stakeholders; Universities and tertiary learning institutions and International organisations with interest in the Lake Basin.

This database can be accessed online via <http://www.eac.int/lvdp/index.php> or through LVBC website; www.lvbcom.org



Ms Mary Mwangi

www.lvbcom.org for free. We would like to encourage interested stakeholders to make use of it.

About the author: Ms Mwangi is the Librarian/Management Information System Officer at LVBC.

Lake Victoria Basin Partnership Fund Still Growing Stronger Nine Years after!

For the last nine years, since the Partnership Agreement for the Lake Victoria Basin was eventually signed in April, 2001 between the East African Community and five development Partners namely: the governments of Sweden, France, Norway; the World Bank and the East African Development Bank, significant progress has been made towards achieving the goal upon which the Partnership was founded – promoting sustainable development in the Lake Victoria Basin.

Some of the key milestones include the eventual establishment of a legal and institutional framework for the Lake Victoria Basin; capacity building of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), Enactment of the Lake Victoria Transport

Act (2007, Hydrographic survey for the ports of Mwanza, Kisumu and Port bell, Establishing the LVB Resources, installation of ICT infrastructure at the LVBC Secretariat, support to National Focal Points in all the Partners States, Promotion of investment in the Basin and a myriad of studies that have been used to inform policy decisions in the Basin.

During the 14th Meeting of the Partnership Consultative Committee – which is the policy organ for the management of the Partnership Agreement and the Fund – held in Kampala, Uganda on 4th May 2010, the application of the Government of Finland to join the Partnership was accepted hence bring the total Partners to six. Upon its accession to the Partnership,

the Government of Finland, made a commitment to support the Partnership Fund to a tune of Euro 2 million for the next three years (2011-2014).

According to the Coordinator of the Fund at the Commission Mr. Saidi Matano, the focus of the funding will be to support initiatives geared towards promoting sustainable development of the Basin, including support to the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance process that the Commission is spearheading on behalf of the EAC.

About the author: Mr. Ali Said Matano is Programmes Development Officer at LVBC

LVBC moves closer to implementation of LVWATSAN Project as Donors' Conference is held



EAC Secretary General, Ambassador Juma Mwapachu (extreme right) listens to donors

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) on 25th June 2010 held a donors' conference at the Laico Regency Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya, for the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation (LVWATSAN) Phase II Project to bridge a funding gap in the project budget.

The Conference was attended by the Secretary General of the East African Community (EAC), a representative of the Executive Director of the UN-HABITAT, a representative of the President of African Development Bank, as well as representatives of the Development Partners: African Development Bank, French Development Agency, East African Development Bank, KfW, European Investment Bank, Embassy of Japan, JICA, USAID-EA, UNEP, Egyptian Embassy, and the Sustainable Water and Sanitation for Africa (SUWASA). Representatives of EAC

Partner States (United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Burundi, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, and Republic of Uganda) and participants from Lake Victoria Regional Local Authorities Cooperation (LAVRLAC), Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), Civil Societies and Urban Water Authorities were present.

LVWATSAN is meant to help selected towns to meet the UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets related to water and sanitation and to ensure the long-term



Donors and representatives of Partner States listen to presentations

sustainability of the interventions.

The project budget is US\$150 million and the African Development Bank has already committed US\$82 million whereas the EAC Partner States will contribute US\$18 million as counterpart funding. The Conference was meant to address the funding gap and commendable strides have been made in bridging the same.

Climate change in the Lake Victoria basin: Can local communities adapt?

By Donald Anthony Mwiturubani



The LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Tom Okurut, participates in a recent tree planting exercise in the Mount Elgon region in Kenya

Climate change is no longer abstract; communities in the Lake Victoria Basin (LVB) have already begun to bear the brunt of the associated impacts. This is due to the fact that the majority of the population in the region is engaged in climate sensitive economic activities including smallholder farming which is mainly rain-fed, pastoralism, agro-pastoralism and artisanal fishing. For example, rain-fed agriculture (largely subsistence) supports over 80 per cent of the population in the region. Similarly, dynamics of fisheries are driven primarily by climate change. Both the ecosystems and the livelihoods of fisher folks living near water bodies in the region are seriously affected by the extensive fluctuations in lake size and depth, extent

of flood plains and changes in aquatic productivity. This condition has negative impacts on the livelihood security of the fishermen.

Climate change and variability is common throughout LVB and Africa in general with extremes of rainfall and droughts as the most damaging aspects of this and has existed for centuries. LVB frequently suffers the devastating impacts of floods and droughts or what the literature refers to as perpetual "drought-flood seesaw" where, while rains help to break a multiple year drought they have also seriously damaged crops. Lives, crops, livestock and infrastructures are lost during these events, with serious financial costs which most countries in the region are

neither prepared for nor able to afford to repair the damage caused. In the LVB region extremes such as droughts and floods are common exemplified by the disastrous flooding linked to 1997/98 El Nino episode, which was followed by the massive La Nina droughts of 1999/2001. LVB has experienced at least one major drought in each decade over the past 30 years, for instance, in 1973/74, 1984/85, 1987, 1992–1994, and in 1999/2000 and there is evidence of increasing climatic instability and increasing frequency and intensity of droughts.

Despite these dynamics of climate change, communities in the LVB have over centuries lived and practiced their activities in the region, which indicate

that they develop, put in use and enhance indigenous coping strategies to the impacts of climate change. Thus, livelihoods of the peasant communities, which are largely dependent on surrounding natural resources, such as water, soils, forests and pastures may have been well sustained through indigenous adaptation strategies. The adaptation strategies to climate change are developed based on experiences gained through constant interactions with the surrounding environment over time and space, which enable them to develop tools and indicators to predict the occurrence of climate related extreme events, such as droughts and floods.

The main tools, which have been developed and employed for weather predictions in the LVB include elements of weather such as patterns of wind systems, temperature and dew changes; insects behaviours such as movements of red ants; astronomy science such as stars, crescent moon and lightning; water bodies characteristics; birds behaviours and fishing. One tool and its indicator(s) is not enough to forecast weather patterns, instead local people use a combination of tools and their indicators to reach a decision about the expected hydrological condition in their area.

There is a wide range of literature on the importance of indigenous knowledge and systems in understanding and hence preparedness for the extreme hydrological conditions. Indigenous knowledge and systems encompass knowledge developed by local people on their environment and local practices employed to manage the forces that frequently impact them. Their basis is the experiences and practices accumulated over time during their interaction with the environment. Grossman indicates that such skills and knowledge have existed for at least 100 years passed from one generation to the next and include the perceptions, explanations, and utilization of natural resources to deal with hydrological hazards. Much of the literatures acknowledge that indigenous

coping systems are dynamic, they change both over space and time, they are socio-culturally and geographically specific and are transmitted through experiences and practices.

However, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), communities in LVB are among the most vulnerable communities to the impacts of climate variability and change (IPCC 2007). The community's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change arises from a combination of many factors, including extreme poverty, frequent natural disasters such as droughts and floods, and dependence on economic activities, which are highly sensitive to climate change. The high vulnerability of communities in the LVB to the impacts of climate change is also attributed to their low adaptive capacity (UNFCCC 2006).

Despite low adaptive capacity, some communities have over centuries developed localized indigenous adaptation strategies to cope with climate variability and extreme events. Examples include adjustments to planting dates, landscape where different types of crops are grown, planting drought resistant crops, mixed farming and multiple cropping, and periodic long distance movements by nomadic pastoralists to areas less affected by drought in response to climates.

Thus in the LVB what, where, when and how to cultivate crops and graze livestock depend on among other factors the knowledge of the amount of rainfall in a specific time period (season) and the capacity of different landscapes to hold water. For instance, when there is insufficiency rainfall over long period of time, local people cultivate in the lowlands with relatively high moisture and grow crops on ridges in order to tap surface run-off hence increase moisture sufficiency for plant growth. Similarly, during heavy rainfall, ridges reduce surface run-off and therefore minimize its impacts on the land, such as soil erosion.

Furthermore, when there is relatively low rainfall over long period of time - over ten years, food crops, which are commonly grown in the uplands, can be grown in the lowlands and when there is relatively high rainfall food crops, which are commonly grown on lowlands can be grown on uplands. This strategy ensures sustainability of food sufficiency at the household levels throughout the year.

Drought-tolerant crops such as cassava and sweet potatoes have also been grown when local people expect to have less rainfall in the year. Research reveals for instance that cassava was not a food crop in the LVB prior to the 1970s. In the 1970s there was a persistent dry seasons which reduced soil moisture hence caused food insecurity in the region. As a strategy to minimise the impacts of droughts and hence food shortage, cassava, which is a drought-tolerant crop, was introduced.

The unanswered question however is how sustainable are these indigenous knowledge systems and how effective will they continue to be in this era of highly and unpredictable global climate change?

The main challenge however is that governments in the region have not given the indigenous knowledge systems due recognition in climate prediction. Policy makers and planners hardly consider these knowledge during decision making processes. To this end it is recommended that policy makers and planners would need to take time to learn, understand and take into account knowledge systems and adaptive management practices of the local people which are deeply embedded in their values, beliefs and assumptions.

About the author: Mr. Mwiturubani is a Senior Researcher at the Environmental Security Programme, ISS, Nairobi, Kenya

RV Jumuiya makes its maiden research trip on Lake Victoria



HIV/AIDS researchers on board and young tourists at the Kisumu port

RV Jumuiya the LVBC research vessel made its maiden research trip by facilitating the HIV Sero-behavioural study of the EAC/AMREF Lake Victoria HIV&AIDS Partnership on the Islands of Lake Victoria. The study aimed at establishing the prevalence of HIV among the fisher communities and linking HIV status to mobility patterns and sexual behaviour of the fishers. The study was conducted on more than 70 Islands on Lake Victoria.



Meanwhile, the regional NTT meeting of the EALP programme was held in Entebbe, Uganda on the 19th to 23rd April 2010. The meeting identified national HIV&AIDS issues and concerns of mobile populations and opportunities for regional policy harmonization as well as the approaches for mainstreaming EALP activities into the National HIV&AIDS Strategic Plans. The Partner States developed country specific work plans for the respective NTTs and roadmaps for mainstreaming.

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