



LAKE VICTORIA BASIN DIGEST

A NEWSLETTER OF THE LAKE VICTORIA BASIN COMMISSION

Mara: Commitment to save ecosystem



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EAST AFRICA

Table of Contents

LAKE VICTORIA BASIN DIGEST

- Page 1:** Message from Executive Secretary
- Page 2:** First Mara Day celebrated colourfully
- Page 3:** Mara Day: New dawn for conservation
- Page 4:** Sectoral Council of Minister adopts LVBC Strategic Plan
- Page 5:** Minister Sirma calls for more investment projects
- Page 6-7:** MERECP: Managing animal and human conflict in sustainable manner
- Pages 8 - 9:** LVBC Pictorial
- Page 10:** LVEMP II harmonises water hyacinth, land management plans
- Page 11:** LVBC, SIWI conduct water integrity training
- Page 12:** Stakeholders urge compliance to laws and regulations
- Page 13:** Amb. Sezibera reaches out to Mount Elgon communities
- Pages 14-15:** LVBC initiative recharging River Mara ecosystem
- Page 16:** Teamwork emphasised at staff retreat
- Page 16:** New lawyer, procurement specialist bolster LVBC team
- Page 17:** Deputy Executive Secretaries complete tenure of service



LAKE VICTORIA BASIN DIGEST

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Message From The Executive Secretary

Photo Caption: Dr. Canisius Kanangire, Executive Secretary

Dear Reader,

Introduction

The quarter ending September 2012 and most of our activities in the past year point to the fact that the issues and challenges facing the Lake Victoria Basin remain largely the same.

Environmentally, the Basin faces challenges of degradation due to deforestation, poor watershed management and land use, uncontrolled water abstraction, pollution, and the water hyacinth and other invasive weeds, to mention a few. On the

economic front, the Basin is faced by extremely low investment in transport, poor farming and industrial production methods, as well as limitations caused by poor infrastructure. Importantly, the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) in particular and the East African Community as a whole are challenged by the need to transform the Basin into a truly regional Economic Growth Zone in the shortest time possible.

Strategic Interventions

I am glad to mention that despite the above-mentioned challenges, LVBC and its partner institutions are working tirelessly to address and reverse the

environmental challenges of the Basin through regional and national interventions.

Under the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II), for instance, a water hyacinth surveillance, monitoring and control strategy and a sustainable land management strategy for the Lake Victoria Basin have been completed. The two strategies shall support improvement in the environment, safeguard human health and ensure that land in the Basin is managed in a sustainable manner. In addition, LVEMP II has created opportunities for

industries to voluntarily adopt Cleaner Production Technologies and I am glad to note that more and more industries are joining the endeavour to reduce point-source pollution in the Basin. The Community Driven Development projects are also starting to take shape at the grassroots in selected sub-catchments.

The Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECP) has pioneered some important activities to protect the Mount Elgon water tower. These include tangible afforestation by the local communities as a means to combat Climate Change impact, the creation of community revolving funds for livelihood improvement as well as improvement of relations between the communities living adjacent to gazetted areas and the relevant protected area agencies.

Another example of LVBC's endeavours to reverse degradation is the Trans-boundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin Project (TWBHH). The TWBHH project has facilitated the development of strategies in the areas of Integrated Water Resource Management; Tourism and Wildlife Management; and Research. The strategies will help Kenya, Tanzania and all relevant stakeholders with a framework of ensuring a

harmonised approach to sustainable development in the Mara Basin.

Stakeholder Involvement

In order for LVBC to properly execute its mandate, there is need to involve all Partner States, civil society organisations and the private sector from inside and outside of the region in our activities. Efforts towards mobilising those stakeholders can be illustrated by organising Stakeholders Forums to bring us together to agree on action plans to support coordination and awareness creation.

A clear example of joint awareness creation by all stakeholders is the successful inaugural Mara Day celebrations held at Mulot, Kenya, on 15th September 2012. The celebrations brought together political leaders, civil servants, NGOs, national agencies and the private sector to share information and knowledge about sustainable development in the Mara River Basin.

The Commission intends to strengthen stakeholder involvement in the sustainable development of Lake Victoria Basin by organising the 3rd Scientific Conference in October 2012. Researchers, academicians and post-graduate students will share scientific information to enhance knowledge on various important aspects on the Lake

Victoria Basin. The Commission also shall use this occasion to launch its Knowledge Management platform.

Infrastructural Investment

Finally, I wish to reiterate the fact that transforming the Lake Victoria Basin into a regional Economic Growth Zone requires more than policies and strategies. There is need for increased investment in infrastructure development and this requires a shift from software to more hardware projects.

The LVBC Strategic Plan 2011-2016 as well as the Investment Plan that is under preparation are indicative of this strategic shift. Proposals have been developed and will be presented to Partner States and Development Partners for consideration and financial support in early 2013.

Let me thank all stakeholders supporting the sustainable development agenda in the Lake Victoria Basin. The Commission will continue to update you on latest developments through the Lake Victoria Basin Digest and similar information and knowledge sharing platforms.

I wish you good reading.

First Mara Day celebrated colourfully

Hundreds of participants took part awareness procession, exhibition, singing and dancing as part of the first Mara Day celebrations held at the Mara Water Users Association Office in Mulot town, Narok County, Kenya.

The celebrations, which took place on 15th September 2012, were organised under the theme Mara - *Uhai Wetu* by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) and the County Councils of Bomet, Trans-Mara and Narok in Kenya. The memorable celebrations commenced with a colourful awareness procession

from Mulot town to the main venue of the event. During the procession, the Minister for East African Community (Kenya), Hon. Musa Sirma, addressed crowds about the importance of the Mara ecosystem and the Mara Day celebrations.

The procession was followed by an exhibition by a spectrum of stakeholders implementing sustainable development interventions in the Lake Victoria Basin. At the main celebrations, the Chair of the East African Community Council of Ministers and Minister for East African Community in the Republic of Kenya,

Hon. Musa Sirma, told participants that the decision to commemorate the Mara Day was informed by the critical role played by the Mara ecosystem in supporting the survival and productivity of the Lake Victoria Basin and the surrounding regions.

"With a surface area of 13,504 square kilometres, 60 percent of which lies in Kenya and 40 percent in Tanzania, the Mara River Basin covers Kenya's forested highlands that provide the backbone of the region's agriculture," Hon. Sirma told participants.

The minister noted that the lower highlands and downstream of the Mara River hosted the protected world-famous Maasai-Mara National Reserve in Kenya, and the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, “which together provide the backbone of the region’s tourism industry.”

The LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, noted that the Lake Victoria Basin Commission – through the Governments of Kenya and Tanzania, the private sector, civil society and communities living in the Mara River Basin – had initiated actions to help maintain the health of the Mara ecosystem.

“Through support from USAID-East Africa, the Trans-boundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin Project has played a key role in coordinating actors in the basin in the two Partner States to efficiently and effectively undertake their activities,” said Dr. Kanangire.

Participants included representatives of ministries, parastatals and institutions of the Governments of Kenya and Tanzania, as well as partners like the Mara River Basin Associations; UNEP; USAID-East Africa; WWF - East and Southern Africa; Vi-Agroforestry; Heifer International; Ecotourism - Kenya; and the Nile Basin Discourse.

The inaugural celebrations were organised with support from USAID-East Africa, through the Trans-boundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin Project.

Recognising the importance of the Mara ecosystem, the 10th Sectoral Council of Minister for Lake Victoria Basin, held in Kigali, Rwanda, in May 2012 declared every 15th September the “Mara Day” to coincide with the great migration of wildlife from Serengeti National Park in Tanzania to Maasai-Mara National Game Reserve in Kenya. The celebrations shall be held on an annual rotational basis between Kenya and Tanzania.



Maasai traditional dancers entertain guests



The Minister for EAC (Kenya), Hon. Musa Sirma (centre), signs visitors book during tour of exhibition area

New dawn for conservation

The cloud was thick and pregnant threatening to burst anytime, but the crowd kept on swelling with every minute, waiting with bated breath and optimism at Mulot town centre, Narok County, Kenya.

The journey had been long and painful but, finally, the fruits of awareness creation on the challenges of the Mara were about to become a reality as Kenyans, Tanzanians, and other East Africans gathered to mark the birth of Mara Day.

From battle over scarce natural resources, human and wildlife conflict, degradation and depletion of water sources and threat to the life of wildlife and the spectacular migration of wild beasts from Kenya to Tanzania, the clock of degradation was fast ticking. Environmentalists were alarmed.

At the Mara Day celebrations, the Governments of Kenya and Tanzania, the Lake Victoria Basin Commission, residents, environmentalists and private sector players were in unison that something had to be done to save the Mara River, a trans-boundary natural resource that serves over one million people who live in the basin.

The Executive Secretary of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, rightly noted that the celebration of the inaugural Mara Day marked “a new dawn” in the ecosystem. He said the gesture underlined the importance of Mara ecosystem to the social and economic development of Kenya, Tanzania and the entire Lake Victoria Basin.

Dr. Kanangire said LVBC through the governments of Kenya and Tanzania, private sector and civil society organizations and the communities living in Mara River Basin had initiated actions to address threats such as deforestation, poor farming, uncontrolled water abstraction, pollution and unchecked developments to ensure Mara ecosystem was maintained.

He noted that through the support of USAID East Africa, the Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin Project has played a key role in coordinating actors to



The Minister for East African Community (Kenya), Hon. Musa Sirma, in the company of LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire (right), addresses crowds during Mara Day awareness procession

efficiently and effectively undertake their activities in the basin.

“The transboundary project has facilitated the development of several strategies and management plans that include integrated water resource management strategy, tourism and wildlife management strategy, communication strategy and research strategy,” he said.

Dr Kanangire said the strategies will provide the two countries with a framework for ensuring a harmonized approach towards sustainable development of the Mara River Basin. Minister for East Africa community Mr. Musa Sirma said the day was a sign of commitment as a region to nurture and promote environmental protection in the great Mara region.

He said the choice of the date was influenced by its coincidence with the great migration of the wild beasts from Serengeti National Park to the Maasai Mara National Reserve, a spectacular tourist attraction that has already been included among the eight wonders of the world.

“The choice of Mulot town for the inaugural fete was based on its proximity to the Mara River and its contribution to the pollution of the river, being a center with no waste water treatment system, its

raw liquid and solid waste ending up in the river,” Dr. Kanangire said.

Other actors

The Regional Coordinator, Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Programme, Mr. Antoine Mulashi Sendama, said Mara Day was an indication of recognition of the potential that the Mara River in addressing poverty, stimulating economic growth and improving the quality of life of the riparian populations in a way that is consistent with their development visions.

“We are contributing to the process of addressing challenges of watershed degradation and water insecurity. The Mara River Basin management project is developing an integrated watershed management project and multi-purpose water storage reservoirs,” he said.

The Vi Agroforestry official in Tanzania, Mr. Creaty Mnyduod, told exhibitors that the NGO had educated and sensitised farmers in the region and elsewhere on climate change, adopting to it and conserving the environment. USAID East Africa representative Dr Kenneth Kambona expressed committed to supporting and conserving the ecosystem and challenged Kenya and Tanzania to maintain in ensuring the sustainability of the Mara ecosystem.

Sectoral Council of Ministers adopts LVBC Strategic Plan

The 10th Meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers for Lake Victoria Basin has considered and adopted the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) Strategic Plan 2011-2016. The meeting held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 30th April to 5th May 2012, also directed the LVBC Secretariat to prepare a resource mobilisation strategy to guide its implementation.

The LVBC Strategic Plan 2011-2016 shall contribute to the realisation of the aspirations set out in the 4th East African Community Development Strategy 2011-2016.

The LVBC Strategic Plan has got six development objectives, including: (1) strengthening the coordination and management capacity of the LVBC Secretariat; (2) enhancing cooperation between LVBC and EAC organs, institutions and partners; (3) harmonising approaches for sustainable management and development natural resources of the Lake Victoria Basin; (4) harmonisation of HIV&AIDS policy frameworks and practice for mobile population across the East African region; (5) improvement of safety of navigation and security on Lake Victoria; (6) promoting conservation and management of natural resources and biodiversity in and outside protected areas.

Other reports considered and adopted included progress reports for LVBC projects and programmes as well as finance, administrative and institutional matters.

In his statement, the Chairperson of the East African Community Council of Ministers and Minister for East African Community in the Republic of Kenya, Hon. Musa Sirma, hailed the Sectoral Council for Lake Victoria Basin for making policy decisions that were yielding desired results. Hon. Sirma expressed appreciation for the support provided by EAC's development partners including, the International Development Association, the European Community, the Global Environment Facility and the Swedish International Development Agency.

During the meeting, the LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, highlighted the problems faced by the Lake Victoria Basin. "The Basin continues



Hon. Musa Sirma (second left) addresses 10th Meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers for Lake Victoria Basin

to be faced by poverty, environmental degradation, avoidable deaths from droughts, floods, landslides and accidents, as well as climate change challenges," Dr. Kanangire noted.

He recommended an adjustment in LVBC's focus to allow a balance between the software and hardware interventions so that LVBC can support investment in infrastructure to address the above-mentioned challenges," Dr. Kanangire.

Study tour

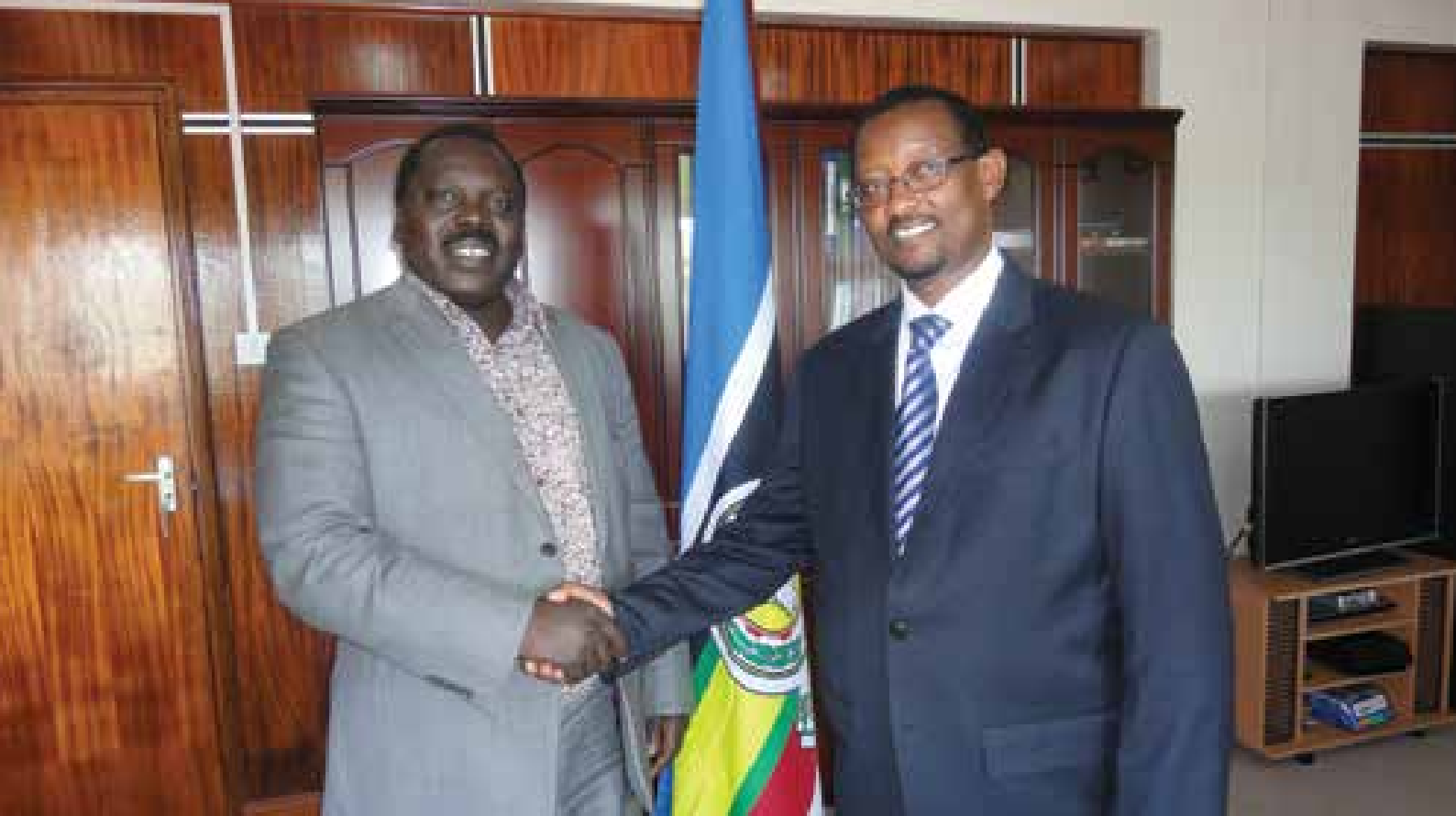
The meeting was concluded on 5th May 2012 with a Ministerial Study tour to selected project sites of the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II) in Kigali and the Lake Victoria Waters Supply and Sanitation Programme Phase II (LVWATSAN II) in Rwamagana.

The Ministers also visited Lake Ihema to see the successful water hyacinth control interventions by the Government of Rwanda.

At a media briefing held on the same day, Hon. Peter Munya, hailed the adoption of the LVBC Strategic Plan by the Sectoral Council as well as the LVEMP II and LVWATSAN interventions visited by the Ministers in the Republic of Rwanda for their potential to contribute to the sustainable development agenda of the Lake Victoria Basin.



Assistant Minister for East African Community (Kenya), Hon. Peter Munya (centre), addresses press conference at Akagera Hotel near Lake Ihema, after the Ministerial study tour



The LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire welcomes the Minister for East African Community (Kenya), Hon. Musa Sirma, to Commission's Secretariat

Minister Sirma calls for more investment projects

The Chairperson of the East African Community Council of Ministers is encouraging the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) to bolster the preparation and implementation of more investment projects in the Lake Victoria Basin. Hon. Musa Sirma, who is the Minister for East African Community in the Republic of Kenya, said this during a one-day visit to the Lake Victoria Basin Commission Secretariat in Kisumu, Kenya, in April 2012.

Hon. Sirma was responding to the information provided by the LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, indicating that the Commission was planning to implement more tangible investments, in addition to its current role of promoting, facilitating and coordinating the sustainable development agenda of the Lake Victoria Basin.

“We are now working on how to move steadily from only preparing policies and strategies, to having projects and investments that are tangible in areas

like infrastructure; projects that shall have more results which can be seen and touched,” Dr. Kanangire told Hon. Sirma.

Dr. Kanangire expressed hope that one of the tangible results of LVBC during the next five years would be the building of its headquarters.

During his submission, the Deputy Executive Secretary (Project and Programmes), Mr. Samuel Gichere, indicated that out of the US\$44.5 million budget for the Financial Year 2011-2012, the EAC Partner States contributions totalled US\$2.3 million.

Mr. Gichere summarised the successes and challenges of LVBC's projects and programmes, namely: the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II); the Lake Victoria Water Supply and Sanitation Programme Phase II (LVWATSAN II); the Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECP); the East African Community/AMREF Lake Victoria Partnership (EALP)

Programme on HIV&AIDS; the Maritime Communication and Safety on Lake Victoria (MCSLV) Project; and the Trans-boundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin (TWBHH-MRB) Project.

Dr. Kanangire requested Hon. Sirma to provide support to LVBC's search for funding to implement the next phases of three important projects: the MCSLV, MERECP and EALP. He also emphasised the need to support the preparation of feasibility projects that would lead to tangible investment in relevant infrastructure projects in the basin.

On his part, Hon. Sirma promised to support LVBC's search for funding to ensure that the next phases of the MCSLV, MERECP and EALP projects are implemented.

Hon. Sirma also visited the plot of land that the Government of Republic of Kenya offered to LVBC to build its headquarters. He encouraged the Commission to ensure that the headquarters is built as soon as possible.

MERECP: Managing animal and human conflict in a sustainable manner



Group on study tour visit Mount Elgon National Park in Kenya

Interventions supported by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission in Mount Elgon are progressively strengthening the working relationships between the local communities living near the boundaries of protected areas and the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS).

Through the Mount Elgon Region Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECP), communities have been engaged in conservation in partnership with KWS.

A group of farmers who visited the Mount Elgon region on a study tour recently learnt that the park had suffered from human and wildlife conflict in the past. The local community also used to herd their livestock in the park and fires

were also common.

Ms. Zipporah Adagi, a Senior Warden, says they have mapped 266 hectares of land within the park for tree growing through the use of the local community groups. The group receive modest payment as an incentive for their partnership with KWS.

She says a revolving fund is helping farmers to grow tomatoes, onions and raise poultry to enhance their income.

The LVBC Forest Management Specialist, Mr. Mathias Chemonges, says because of frequent fires affecting the forests, an enrichment programme has been initiated that will involve forestation and reforestation of affected areas. The local communities are supplied with seedlings and paid for the service rendered.

The Chairman of Mount Elgon Community Livelihood, Mr. Joseph Ndiwa, says his group has been given seedlings that they expect to plant in 96 hectares. For the next five years, the group is expected to grow indigenous trees in areas that have been affected to help in the regeneration of nature.

“We have certain challenges such as the termites and rats, but we will not be deterred because our core objective is to protect and conserve the nature. We will plant trees in designated areas,” he says.



LVBC officials visit tree nursery of farmers who are now working in partnership with Kenya Wildlife Service in Mount Elgon

LVBC PICTORIAL

Cover photograph, 15th September 2012, Mulot town, Kenya: Hundreds take part in the Mara Day awareness procession



11th May 2012, Bubyangu, Mbale district, Uganda: The LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire (extreme left) and the EAC Secretary General, Dr. Richard Sezibera (second left), listen to the success stories and concerns Tayaka Group, beneficiaries of MERECP interventions

27th June 2012, Entebbe, Uganda: Exhibition stall of Vi Agroforestry at the 3rd Lake Victoria Basin Stakeholders Forum



5th May 2012, Kigali, Rwanda: 10th Meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers for Lake Victoria Basin



LVBC PICTORIAL

23rd July 2012, Kampala, Uganda: Participants of the Water Integrity Training organised by Lake Victoria Basin Commission and the Stockholm International Water Institute



19th September 2012, Nyando, Kenya: Official launch of CDD activities under LVEMP II for the Nyando Water Resources Users Association Institute



HIV/AIDS sensitization workshop at Nyabarongo in Burundi



HIV/AIDS sensitization at Ngozi University in Burundi





International journalists (in boat) appreciate the challenges posed by the water hyacinth during visit to Kisumu, Kenya, on 11th September 2012

LVEMP II harmonises water hyacinth, land management plans

The Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II) has concluded the harmonisation of plans for the water hyacinth surveillance and control as well as sustainable land management. The harmonisation process took place at a recent workshops held in Jinja, Uganda.

The process followed earlier concerted efforts by the LVEMP II National Project Coordination Teams (NPCTs) that led to the conclusion of plans at national level. In May 2012, the Sectoral Council of Ministers for Lake Victoria Basin approved the Lake Victoria Water Hyacinth Surveillance, Monitoring and Control Strategy as well as a Basin-Wide Strategy for Sustainable Land Management in the Lake Victoria Basin.

The Water Hyacinth Surveillance, Monitoring and Control Strategy is meant to assist Partner States to monitor, assess and control the water hyacinth in the Lake Victoria Basin in order to improve the environment and safeguard human health. It is also meant to ensure the effective use of water resources and facilitate the

development of the populations living within the basin for the benefit of the Partner States.

The Basin-Wide Strategy for Sustainable Land Management in the Lake Victoria Basin is meant to improve ecosystem management, natural vegetation and forest, land tenure and land use. It is also meant to improve energy, fisheries

and farming systems in the context of Climate Change and Variability.

At the closure of the harmonisation workshop, the LVEMP II Regional Project Coordinator, Dr. Raymond Mngodo, thanked the NPCTs for supporting the process and urged them to ensure that the plans are successfully implemented.



LVBC's Environment and Natural Resources Management Officer, Mr. Mhina Mngube, presents harmonised water hyacinth surveillance and control plan for Lake Victoria Basin

LVBC, SIWI conduct water integrity training



Transparency International's Christine Were (extreme right) makes contribution at the workshop

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) and the Stockholm International Water Institute recently held the first Water Integrity Training workshop for stakeholders in the water sector in East Africa.

The one-week training held in late July 2012 targeted 40 mid-level managers and media practitioners from the EAC Partner States.

Several modules were delivered to the participants, including water governance; corruption in the water sector; identifying corruption risks; anti-corruption laws, institutions and instruments; transparency and access to information; accountability; and integrity in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

Participants agreed that corruption in water resources management had the potential to adversely impact water

allocation and sharing; water pollution and management; as well as public works and management. They also noted that corruption compromised economic efficiency, social equity, cohesion and poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability and health.

During the training, the LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, urged participants to utilise the knowledge gained during the training to improve integrity in the water sector.

“The training is going to make you ambassadors of Integrity in the water sector in the East African region because it will allow you to apply and popularise the practical application of measures to fight corruption amongst more stakeholders,” Dr. Kanangire noted.

At the closing session of the training, the Commissioner for Water Resources Regulation (Uganda), Dr. Callist Tindimugaya, indicated that the

Government of Uganda was aware of the challenges posed by corruption in the water sector. Speaking on behalf of the Director of Water Resources in the Ministry of Water and Environment, Republic of Uganda, Dr. Tindimugaya said the ministry was continuing to close any loopholes that could perpetrate corrupt tendencies, especially in the procurement of goods and services.

The Water Integrity Training is part of the Regional Capacity Building Programme on Water Integrity that shall be implemented until June 2014 to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

At least 175 stakeholders in the water sector from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda who have roles and responsibilities in regulation, controlling, planning, policy development and decision-making will be targeted for the training.

Stakeholders urge compliance to laws and regulations



The 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for EAC in Uganda, Rt. Hon. Eriya Kategaya (centre) is welcomed to the 3rd Lake Victoria Basin Stakeholders Forum by the LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire. Hon. Kategaya opened the Forum.

Entebbe, UGANDA, 28th June 2012:

Participants of the 3rd Lake Victoria Basin Stakeholders Forum resolved to promote compliance to existing laws and regulations in order to realise the sustainable development in the Lake Victoria Basin. The resolution was reached at the two-day Forum which took place at the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel in Entebbe, Uganda, 27th to 28th June 2012.

Participants also commended the improvements in the coordination of sustainable development issues in the Basin, in line with the Kisumu Declaration of October 2009.

The stakeholders who participated in the Forum included the 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for East African Community Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Eriya Kategaya, who officially opened the Forum; the Assistant Minister for East African Community in the Republic

of Kenya, Hon. Peter Munya; senior government officials; representatives of the East African Community institutions; knowledge leaders from various Universities; environmental management agencies; investment promotion agencies; members of civil society networks; development partners and the key players from the private sector.

The 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for East African Community Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Eriya Kategaya, told stakeholders that sustainability ought to remain the basis of mutual cooperation amongst institutions and agencies working in the Lake Victoria Basin.

“Let me make this clear: there is enough room for all of us to strive to work together in the Lake and its Basin. What we really need to do is to strive to work together on the basis of mutual trust and respect for the various institutional expertise, values and mandates,” Hon.

Kategaya said.

The Executive Secretary, Lake Victoria Basin Commission, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, noted that the Commission had contributed to the harmonisation of coordinated actions in various ways. Under the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II), he said, LVBC had completed the strategy on proposed options for establishing the Lake Victoria Environmental Trust Fund; the Lake Victoria Basin Water Hyacinth Surveillance, Monitoring and Control strategy; and a Basin-Wide Strategy for Sustainable Land Management in the Lake Victoria Basin.

“I have no doubt that these strategies, when shared, understood and utilised, shall contribute to the environmental conservation and poverty eradication in the Lake Victoria Basin,” Dr. Kanangire said. Dr. Kanangire thanked the Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation (LVRLAC); the Nile Basin

Discourse (NBD) and East African SusWatch Network for co-organising the Forum and encouraged all stakeholders to actively contribute to the realisation of the gathering's resolutions.

The Lake Victoria Basin Stakeholders Forum is a bi-annual event organised

by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission to share experiences on sustainable development issues in the Basin. The 3rd Lake Victoria Basin Stakeholders Forum was held under the theme: **"Enhancing Partnership for Sustainable Development"**.

Participants had the opportunity to explore a diverse range of issues in four thematic areas, including: natural resources, environment and production systems; trade and investment; quality of life; and, knowledge management and information sharing in Lake Victoria Basin.

Amb. Sezibera reaches out to Mount Elgon communities

The Secretary General of the East African Community, Amb. Dr. Richard Sezibera, recently visited some interventions of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission in Mount Elgon and recommended a scale-up of its activities in that ecosystem. Dr. Sezibera said in mid-May 2012, during outreach sessions with groups of various beneficiaries of the Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECP) in Uganda.

MERECP is a pioneer transboundary natural resources management programme implemented by the Governments of the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Uganda, with the Government of Norway and Sweden. The first phase of the Programme has is now under completion.

During his visit to Bunabigubo parish, Bubyangu sub-county in Mbale district, Amb. Sezibera had an interactive session with the leadership of the Tayaka Group, whose individual members had planted between 1,000 and 13,000 trees under the livelihood improvement component of MERECP.

He thanked all groups implementing MERECP activities for embracing environmental conservation. "I have come here to thank you because the work you are doing is not only for your benefit; it is for the benefit of the East African Community and the entire world," Amb. Sezibera told the Tayaka Group members.

In the company of the LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, the MERECP Regional Programme

Coordinator, George Sikoyo as well as relevant EAC staff, Amb. Sezibera promised to work with LVBC to mobilise funds for the scaling up of the Programme during the second phase.

Amb. Sezibera also visited the Bunyafwa Community Based Organisation in Bunyafwa sub-county, Sironko district, which hailed the MERECP interventions for improving the socio-economic conditions of its members.

The LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Kanangire informed the beneficiary communities that the Commission was in discussion with the Governments of the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Uganda to ensure that the flow of funds for Programme is improved during the second phase.

Amb. Sezibera later visited Mayuge town in Mayuge district, Uganda, to assess the Lake Victoria Water Supply and Sanitation Programme Phase II (LVWATSAN II).

In a meeting attended by Dr. Kanangire and the LVWATSAN Programme Coordinator, Eng. Dan Oduor Owore, the Town Clerk for Mayuge, Daniel Kasala, indicated that the estimated 30,000 dwellers of Mayuge were eager to see that the programme succeeds. Amb. Sezibera urged the Mayuge leaders to use the opportunity availed by LVWATSAN II to sensitise the community to make Mayuge greener and improve sanitation in the homesteads and public spaces.

Amb. Sezibera will conclude his tour with a visit to the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisations in Jinja, Uganda.

Visit to LVWATSAN



Amb. Dr. Sezibera (at forefront in dark coat) holds conversations with MERECP beneficiaries

LVBC initiative recharging River Mara



Stakeholders use exhibition to share information during the 1st Mara Day celebrations at Mulot town, Kenya

For sometime now, the Mara River Basin has been subjected to a lot of environmental degradation due to human exerted pressures. Encroachment to the water towers has generated pressure that eventually destroys the ecosystem that left both wildlife and human being competing for the meagre resources.

Even the conservation efforts by government, private sectors and some communities living in the basin to safeguard and protect the natural resources have not made any better impact.

Despite several players in the basin, conservation in the area that links two East African States, Kenya and Tanzania, have been plagued with a lot of environmental challenges that caused a lot of hue and cry from the communities living along the basin from both side of the border.

The situation has resulted into conflicts between the communities living on the upper stream and those in the lower stream of River Mara across the borders. A community leader, Mercilius Ole Ontutu observed: “competition for meager resources especially water leads

to communal conflicts that results into people loosing their lives and loss of livestock”

The communities living in Narok, Transmara and Bomet in Kenya and those from Serengeti, Musoma, and Tarime districts in Tanzania always treads blame games as to who is the cause of water and pasture shortages in the basin.

Environmentalists working with various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from both sides of the border have been in recovery path to rehabilitate some of the resources. So far, very little success has been achieved due to uncoordinated efforts.

It was against this background that the specialized institutions of the East African Community, Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) charged with coordination and facilitation of development activities in the lake basin came up with an initiative to restore order. The initiative was readily supported by USAID (East Africa) to the tune of USD 3 million. LVBC is to take the lead to coordinate the actors and players working in Mara River Basin.

According to the Project Coordinator, Mr. Quereshi Noordin, USAID would disbursed USD 3 million (Ksh 270 million) in three tranches in three years to harmonize Mara River Basin Tran boundary activities and initiatives by different players in the basin. It aims to promote harmonized Mara River Basin management practices for sustainability, he adds.

He says the project will focus on three main habitats that include Mau forest and riverine forests; Masaaai Mara and Serengeti Ecosystem and Aquatic resources.

Talking to Science Africa, Noordin said: “Our strategy to achieve this task is to train the Local Authorities officers including some civic leaders on integration on national resources. We have realized that some officers have scanty knowledge and the initiative is now targeting Town Clerks, Chairmen and Mayors of eight councils from both sides”

The councils representatives who attended a training programme were from Serengeti, Rorya, Musoma and Tarime in Tanzania while Trans-Mara, Bomet County Council, Bomet



Spectacular wild beast migration that makes the Mara a unique tourist destination

Municipal Council and Narok County Council were from Kenya.

Councilor Richard Leitich head of Kenyan delegation says that water and other natural resources in the basin should not create conflicts among the stakeholders from both side of the border. He says Mara River originates from Mau Complex escarpment in Kenya and emptying its water in Musoma in Tanzania and the communities from both sides should build an understanding to avoid conflicts.

Leitich who is the Vice Chairman of Bomet County Council says issues of biodiversity are important to the community and how to safeguard and restore water in the basin is paramount. He says:” The communities from both sides must be ready to protect the ecosystem and take care of pollution challenges to ensure that water is sustainable to meet the demands of both human beings and wildlife”

“There must be a plan to rehabilitate the Mau Water Towers, the riverine which has been destroyed by the communities due to land pressures”, he adds.

Mr. John Chacha Kingoina of Serengeti council in Tanzania says the water sources would dry up if not protected

and that would obviously make life unbearable to both human beings and wildlife. He says the people are ready to protect the natural resources and the initiatives being made by the project would save the community from destruction.

“The major challenge is how to utilize natural resources equitably without denying other stakeholders their shares. People will say so many things but they will never act and that is the cause of competitions”, he said.

Kingoina points out: “It was the wish of the members of the local councils to link with all players in relevant government ministries from both partner states to come up with strategy of integration of natural resources management and conservation of Mara River Basin”.

Leitich concedes that the allocation for environment conservation from Government ministries and local authorities has been meagre and this had hindered the conservation work. Besides this, law enforcement on the natural resources has been weak in most of local authorities.

He cited a case where the Bomet County council allocated Kshs 125million for conservation purposes from LATF which is like a drop in the ocean. He,

however, says the council received another funding of Ksh 600,000 for natural resources through partnering with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) but that was still not sufficient.

Leitich suggests that all the players and actors in the basin should develop a joint agreement to put the resources into one basket for the impact to be felt from both sides of the border.

However, Noordin says, implementation arrangement put in place includes various committees, working and water resource users’ forums. These groups have contributed positively in the rehabilitation efforts of the natural resources management within the past two years and already indicators for recovery have started showing up.

So far, Noordin says five studies have been undertaken that includes Mara River Natural Resources management institutional capacity needs assessment, strengthening community base natural resources management in Serengeti-Maasai Mara Ecosystem; Mara River Basin policy, Legal institutional cooperative framework; Total economic valuation of the Masaai Mau, Transmara and Eastern Mau forest blocks and LVBC institutional capacity needs assessment.

Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) has availed support fund for three Universities in the two partner states for research as part of the implementation arrangements to achieve sustainable results. The Universities are Ardhi (Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania), Maseno (Kenya) and Egerton (Kenya).

Noordin says that 40 community members have been trained on Integrated Natural Resources Management while 35 officers have also benefited from the same training among other beneficiaries of the funding from USAID.

About the author: Mr. Joseph Ngome is the Coordinator, Health and Environment Media Network

Teamwork emphasised at LVBC staff retreat

The Executive Secretary, Lake Victoria Basin Commission, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, is emphasising teamwork as the foundation of improvement in staff performance.

Addressing members of staff at the 4th LVBC staff retreat held at the Golf Hotel in Kakamega, Kenya, said teamwork and team spirit remained vital to ensuring that the Commission's implements all its planned activities during any financial year.

The retreat was meant to enhance the coordination and facilitation roles of the LVBC Secretariat through team-building and respect for the Commission's values. It also considered individual staff performance and assessed implementation of the last retreat's recommendations.

Dr. Canisius Kanangire, urged staff to embrace professionalism as a means complement each other's strengths. "East Africans dealing with the Lake Victoria Basin expect something from you. We will never deliver if we cannot work as a team. We need to be strategic

and focused in order to deliver results," Dr. Kanangire noted.

The Executive Secretary called for result-orientation, responsiveness, accountability, as well as timely and quality delivery of results. He urged the Communication and Knowledge Management team to support the strengthening of LVBC's corporate identity. Dr. Kanangire urged staff to support the new initiatives of the Commission and be adaptable to change.



July 2012 staff retreat participants



Members of staff enjoy team-building exercises

The retreat was concluded by a staff trek through the Kakamega Forest. LVBC has got 50 staff members in various categories.

New lawyer, procurement specialist bolster LVBC team

Alex Mukunzi Ruharo, a national of the Republic of Rwanda, has joined the Lake Victoria Basin Commission as Legal Officer. His role will involve providing legal and technical advice to the Commission as well as rendering other relevant legal services.

Mr. Ruharo brings to the Commission 10 years of continuous experience in Government legal services. Prior to joining LVBC, Alex was the Principal State Attorney, Department of Legal Advisory Services in the Ministry of Justice, Rwanda.

Besides his wealth of experience, Mr. Ruharo holds a Masters of Laws degree (International Business Law) from the University of Liverpool (United Kingdom), with specialised concentration in Common Market Law; World Trade Organisation Law; as well as Corporate Law.



Alex Mukunzi Ruharo

Mr. Richard Goldman Ebong, a national of the Republic of Uganda, has joined the Lake Victoria Basin Commission as Senior Procurement Officer. His role will involve strengthening the Commission's procurement processes.

Mr. Ebong comes with a wealth of experience from his former position as a Lecturer and Head of Department, Procurement and Logistics Management, at the Uganda Christian University (UCU). Prior to joining the academia, he was a National Procurement Training Expert with UNDP Capacity Building Project. Mr. Ebong has also worked with the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) and the Health Education Network, a UNICEF and World Bank supported project.

Mr. Ebong holds a Masters in Business Administration; Corporate Membership (MCIPS) of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (MCIPS) in the United Kingdom; as well as a Post Graduate Diploma Management Studies Shipping and Transport Management.



Richard Goldman Ebong (left) at his swearing-in ceremony

Deputy Executive Secretaries complete tenures of service

Two Deputy Executive Secretaries of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission have successfully completed their tenures of service.

Mr. Samuel Kerunyu Gichere, successfully completed his tour of duty as the Deputy Executive Secretary (Projects and Programmes) at the Lake Victoria Basin Commission on 31st July 2012. During his time at the Commission, Mr. Gichere contributed to the realisation of several important transboundary projects and programmes that are contributing to the implementation of the sustainable development agenda in the Lake Victoria Basin.

Mr. Stanley Matowo successfully completed his tour of duty as the Deputy Executive Secretary (Finance and Administration) at the Lake Victoria Basin Commission on 31st August 2012. During his time at the Commission, Mr. Matowo contributed to the general management of the Commission, especially in the area finance and administration.

The Commission takes this opportunity to join the Sectoral Council of Ministers for Lake Victoria Basin in congratulating Mr. Gichere and Mr. Matowo for their exemplary service to the East African Community and wish them well in their future endeavours.



Mr. Gichere (left) receives gift from Dr. Kanangire in honour of his exemplary service. In background, Mrs. Gichere (left) and Mrs. Kanangire embrace at Mr. Gichere's farewell party



Mr. Stanley Matowo, former Deputy Executive Secretary (Finance and Administration)

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

LAKE VICTORIA BASIN COMMISSION
SECRETARIAT



Vision

A prosperous population living in a healthy and sustainably managed environment providing equitable opportunities and benefits

Mission

To promote, facilitate and coordinate activities of different actors towards sustainable development and poverty eradication of the Lake Victoria Basin