

The LVEMP II Civil Society Watch E-bulletin

A Monthly from the **East African Sustainability Watch Network** comprising: Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and Sustainable Environmental Development Watch Network (SusWatch Kenya)

March 2013

Why Lake Victoria fish catch is dwindling



Women fish mongers at Dunga Beach
Kisumu Photo: UCSD



Part of Winam Gulf in Kisumu covered by the
water hyacinth Photo: UCSD

More than 30 million people derive livelihoods from Lake Victoria and have started feeling the impact of irregular fishing that involves removal of immature fish using illegal fishing gear.

At Dunga beach in Kisumu Kenya, for the women fish mongers selling immature fish and keeping some for domestic consumption, the worry is heightened by the resurgence of the water hyacinth whose presence on the Lake deters fishermen from plying some parts of the Lake. They worry that they may not have any fish to sell if the fish catch keeps on reducing more over with smaller fish harvested. Their fear is justified but there is no way to turn other than maintaining better fishing methods says Ramadan Karongai, the chairman of Dunga landing site under Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project I. "If you keep harvesting the small fish there comes a time when there is nothing left in the Lake, The male and female fish are caught before laying eggs, using nets as small as mosquito nets". "It is like killing a grandfather, a father, a mother and the children", he adds.

Martha Adhiambo a fish monger says they continue vending the small fish because there is demand for fish in spite of the fish size. It is from the proceeds of selling the small fish that they purchase other domestic essentials. For women like Martha, they have no options for obtaining fish other than the Lake. "We have not got any education on making fish ponds, not even from the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project II (LVEMP II), which is little known to the women fish mongers.

Besides using irregular fishing gear, woes relating to reduction of fish stock in Lake Victoria are far fetched. Overfishing, exotic species introduction like the Nile Perch that feeds on other fish species, poor farming and land use practices from up-stream catchments that all wash in the lake causing sedimentation and eventual pollution from various sources including industrial waste, raw sewerage that are responsible for the resurgence of the water hyacinth all contribute to the oxygen depletion and reduced fish catches.

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In Uganda there is panic within the Fisheries sector with reports of fish death resulting from intoxication from Algae blooms that have carpeted the Lake side of Ssese Gateway Beach landing site and Guda landing site in Entebbe. Uganda supplied 32,300 tonnes of Nile fish to Europe in 2011 earning revenue worth 212 billion shillings in 2011.

The Lake has an annual total fish catch of 1,000,000 metric tonnes from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, with Nile Perch as the main catch estimated at 51%, Tilapia at 24% and silver fish and other fish species at 25%.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the global supply of fish and fish products reached 142.3 million tonnes of fish and fish products in 2008, including a record of 10 million tonnes from inland waters and 52.5 million tonnes from the steadily increasing aquaculture sector.

Fish contributes to food security in many regions of the world. Numerous developing countries rely on fish as a major source of protein; in 28 of them, fish accounts for over 40 percent of animal protein intake. In 1995, FAO member countries adopted the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, which sets out principles and methods applicable to all aspects of fisheries and aquaculture. The code outlines ways to achieve the sustainable development and management of fisheries and aquaculture. FAO has developed four international plans of action dealing with seabirds, sharks, fishing capacity and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing to support the code.

Water quality in Lake Victoria has declined greatly in the past few decades, owing chiefly to eutrophication arising from increased inflow of nutrients into the lake.

EA Suswatch joins global Civil Society on Post 2015 Sustainable Development agenda



UCSD signed up

In collaboration with the Berlin Civil Society Center, CIVICUS, DAWN, IBON and Social Watch, GCAP helped organize [a civil society forum in Bonn](#), March 22 – 23, 2013 that was attended by 260 representatives from over 200 CSOs including EA SusWatch represented by UCSD, to advance the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda (a successor to the Millennium Development Goals framework to end in 2015).

In a video message at the start of the Conference, Dirk Niebel - Germany's Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development underscored the importance of civil society in the Post 2015 development process with a task to point out challenges and how to address them. 'An inclusive process through the UN will give the necessary legitimacy to the process,' the Germany Minister emphasized. In addition, he called for the Post 2015 outcome to apply to all countries (not only developing countries), and the need to link the Post 2015 development process to the intergovernmental Open Working Group process on sustainable development goals (SDGs) called for in the Rio+20 Outcome Document, June 2012 that is also underway.

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In his keynote address, former German President and a member of the UN High Level Panel on the Post 2015 development - Horst Koehler noted that, "we cannot "talk about food security without regulation of financial markets . . . poverty without (addressing) unfair trade, peace and security without small arms control, land degradation without talking of climate."

The Conference structured its work around ten thematic areas: Securing Human Rights for All, Respecting Planetary Boundaries, Structural Transformation for Women's Rights & Gender Justice, New Economic Paradigm, Securing Social Justice, New Global Partnership on Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Securing a Decent Future for all, Children, Youth and Adolescents, Peace & Security, Ending Poverty. The results of these discussions led in some cases to statements that participants signed on to and in others they kicked off processes that are being followed up. For example the 'red flag' letter to the UN High Level Panel on Post 2015 in Bali consisted of eight issues that civil society believed must be addressed to frame a new global sustainable development.

Global Civil society's 'Red flag'

EA suswatch joined other members of global civil society to express deep concern about the direction that the High Level Panel on Post 2015 Development may take, particularly as regards the roles of government, business and multilateral institutions in any sustainable development agenda.

The 8-point statement cautions against developing a set of reductive goals, targets and indicators that ignore the transformative changes required to address the failure of the current development model, which is rooted in unsustainable production and consumption patterns and exacerbates inequality as well as gender, race and class inequities. The sign on statement also notes the "poison threads" in society -- like corporate land grabs that impoverish communities, an unjust global trade and financial architecture, corruption and privatization of social services like education, health, water and sanitation – that must also be addressed. They argue for creation of some rules and remove others to ensure that the global frameworks do not constrain human rights and development goals. Individuals and organizations are invited to express their support to the statements from the Bonn meeting. **Please go to www.worldwewant2015.org/Bonn2015 to read and endorse the statements.**

Resources and upcoming events

The New Vision launches 'Save Lake Victoria Campaign'

Uganda's News Vision has started a campaign to save Lake Victoria that starts April 2 climaxing on June 5, 2013 (World Environment Day). *The New Vision* and its sister newspaper – *Bukedde* as well as electronic media – *Bukedde* FM, *Bukedde* TV and Urban TV will put out investigative stories and commentaries highlighting irresponsible human activities on Lake Victoria and their impact on the socio-economic well-being of Uganda and East Africa at large.

Earth Day on 22 April 2013

On April 22, 2013, more than one billion people around the world will take part in the 43rd anniversary of Earth Day to show the world *The Face of Climate Change*. **More information:** <http://www.earthday.org/2013/index.php>