

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)

October 2017

Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Transboundary Mara River Basin Highlighted at the 5th Nile Basin Development Forum Held in Kigali



Forum Participants in plenary; and exhibition where UCSD, SusWatch Kenya took part (Photos: UCSD)

The Nile riparian states organized a regional forum which brought together key stakeholders and friends of the Nile attended this year's 5th Nile Basin Development Forum (NBDF) that took place October 23 - 25, 2017, at the Radisson Blu Hotel & Convention Center, Kigali. The event was organized by Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in partnership with the government of Rwanda and with support from development partners.

During the meeting there various sessions sharing different experiences in management of watershed / catchment areas where Birdlife International shared their experience from the project on: Promoting Sustainable Management of the Mara Wetlands – Tanzania

The Mara river basin is an important watershed of Lake Victoria Basin covering an estimated 13,834 km² from Kenya to Tanzania and contributes 5% of the volume of water that flowing into Lake Victoria. The Mara wetland is also recognized as an Important Bird Area in Tanzania. For example, the Mara Bay and Masirori swamp located on the lower part of the basin supports globally significant populations of migratory birds, mainly the White-winged Black Tern and the Shoebill (categorized as Vulnerable on the IUCN redlist).

A growing population in the Mara basin and with it an increasing demand of natural resources has led to expansive riverine cultivation, upstream deforestation and incompatible land use, resulting in increased water runoff, soil erosion and sediment loads that have altered the seasonal flow of water resulting in extreme incidences of droughts and floods within the lower basin. Despite the existence of an extensive framework of coordination by the Tanzania Water Resources Management Act, there is poor coordination and management of conservation activities at multiple levels in the Mara wetlands, resulting in the lack of focused and sustained conservation action.

Birdlife International has initiated a project to conserve and protect the Mara Wetlands in Tanzania by strengthening the governance of local, district, national and regional institutions for sustainable transboundary wetland management; and Increasing the awareness of Mara wetland values and promote sustainable alternative livelihood approaches for the benefit of nature and people.

The project seeks to restore and promote sustainable management of Mara wetland resources through enhancing: resilience to climate change, application of the wise use concepts by regulating land use and wetland resources utilization practices; and conservation awareness and capacity for the sustainable management of the Wetland. Also, the Project seeks to strengthen governance and sustainable management of the Mara wetland resources and to reduce the pressure on wetlands resources by promoting sustainable alternative livelihoods strategies; and participation of local communities in improving water sanitation and hygiene management.

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UCSD Calls for Immediate Steps to Counter Food Insecurity in Uganda



This year the theme for World Food Day, celebrated annually on 16 October – a date commemorating the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 1945 – will focus on **the link between migration, food security and sustainable rural development**. The drivers and impacts of migration are intimately linked to fighting hunger and achieving food security, reducing rural poverty and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. Large movements of people are one of the most complex challenges the world faces today.

According to Hilary Onek, Uganda's Minister of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees (April 2017), the country is a host to South Sudan refugees, who have fled their country ever since conflict broke up in December 2013. The influx reached 3,000 a day for several months, making Uganda the third-ranked refugee-hosting country in the world with close to one million refugees. That aside, livestock keepers have been reported to migrate from Karamoja to Lango, Acholi, Teso and Elgon competing for pasture and water (OPM, 2017). In addition, the number of people moving from rural to urban areas (cities) currently stands at 6 million, but is expected to reach more than 30 million within the next two decades (World Bank, 2015).

Nevertheless, agriculture remains the backbone of Uganda's economy. It employs about 72 percent of the total labour force (formal and informal), 77 percent of whom are women, and 63 percent are youth, mostly residing in the rural areas. Farming is still dominated by smallholder farmers engaged in food and cash crops, horticulture, fishing and livestock farming.

According to a statement released by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries ahead of the World Food Day 2017, Agriculture growth rate has risen from 0.8 in 2011/12 to 3.2% 2015/16. The sector contribution to GDP is currently 26.2 %, while the target is to raise it to 5.6% as stated in the Uganda National Development Plan 2 and Uganda's Vision 2040. Agriculture continues to play an important role in food security and nutrition, employment, wealth creation, the manufacturing industry and export trade

The socio-political dynamics within and across Uganda's borders is further complicated by the changing weather patterns continue to result in unpredictable movement of people within and across borders. Re-echoing the recommendations of the National Food Security Assessment Report (2017), UCSD therefore calls upon:

- ❖ The Office of the Prime Minister; and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries to mobilise other actors (Local Governments, CSOs, donors, business, researchers, media, cultural and religious institutions) to come up **with immediate responses to address the causes of food insecurity across the country**. These include measures to promote, among others: water conservation and irrigation, drought and disease tolerant high yielding crop varieties, water conservation and irrigation options, community level early disaster warning & risk management, alternative sources of income, and targeted tree growing to replenish the reduced stock.
- ❖ The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Water and Environment to **fast track adoption, publicity and urgently mobilise resources to implement Uganda's Climate-Smart Agriculture Programme (2015-2025)**. This is also one of Uganda's core interventions to implement its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

#ClimateAction

Join over 50 signatories petitioning the Uganda Prime Minister, the Speaker of Uganda Parliament and the Minister of Water and Environment to work towards enacting a Fair and Equitable Climate Change Law for Uganda:
<https://www.change.org/p/minister-of-water-and-environment-enact-a-fair-and-equitable-climate-law-in-uganda>

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Pictorial **UCSD Facilitates Lutembe Wetland Users Association to Mobilise Community Clean-up at the Lutembe Ramsar site and to Petition Kajjansi Town Council**

UCSD has been part of The Global South Civil Society Programme - an initiative that supports Civil Society organizations in Kenya, Uganda and Somalia. As part of this UCSD worked with Lutembe Wetland Users Association (LWUA) to organise a Community clean-up exercise, after which an open dialogue was held with a representative from Kajjansi Town Council on how to support sustainable use of this Ramsar site

