

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)

February 2014

East Africa Celebrates World Wetlands Day in Busia County, Kenya



Guest of honor Dr. Agnes Kaudia with the Deputy Governor of Busia County Mr. Wangalwa; School children from Busende Primary School in Busia holding a banner during the procession; Staff at the EA Sus watch exhibition stall (Photos by UCSD)

St Matthew Busende Primary School in Busia County-Kenya was the venue of the World Wetlands Day, celebrated on 2nd February 2014 under the theme of “Wetlands and Agriculture Partners for Growth”. The ceremony started with a clean-up of Busia town by staff of LVBC and LVEMP II, a procession walk from Sio Siteko trans-boundary wetland to the venue at the Primary School. Other activities included bicycle race, dances and musical performances and exhibitions of wetlands products and information materials by various stakeholders. Hosted by the National Environment Management Authority of Kenya and the Lake Victoria Basin Commission’s Lake Victoria Environment Management Project II, Busia County administration and other partners organized the event with participants from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania.

Dr. Raymond Mngodo from Lake Victoria Basin Commission said that the Lake Victoria Basin is an economic growth zone through the Lake Vitoria Environment Management Project, which addresses watershed management including wetlands, stresses from farm land activities and pollution in wetlands. He noted that activities of agriculture may encroach on wetlands stating that “we have to use wetlands in a sustainable manner”. He said that LVEMP II is addressing degradation through the community demand sub-projects CDD, of which Busia County has more than 20 such sub-projects of conserving and using natural resources sustainably. He cautioned communities that receive CDD funds to use them well so that they can be up-scaled in the next phase. He said that LVBC is keen to see the environment taken care of and encouraged communities and the County government to lobby for more funds for the environment activities.

Also present at the event was the permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment in Burundi Mr. Murengerantwari Epimaque who thanked the government of Kenya for welcoming them to Kenya, noting that it is good to have teams from the five countries of the East African Community “Celebrating together reminds us that EAC has become one people”, he noted. He said that Burundi has taken steps in conserving the environment since 1979. In 2012 they enacted a water code which stipulates the distance of the buffer zones from the Lake Tanganyika at 150 meters, 50 meters for in-land lakes, and 25 meters for river tributaries. He notes that under LVEMP II they are sensitizing people about the demarcation of buffer zones of Lake Victoria and Lake Rweru in the Lake Victoria Basin in Burundi.

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In her keynote address delivered by Environment Secretary Dr. Alice Kaudia, Prof. Wakhungu noted that in many parts of Kenya, wetlands have often been seen as a barrier to agriculture, and they continue to be drained and reclaimed to make farming land available.

One of the succinct messages read by Dr. Kaudia was that the people needed to strike a balance between agriculture and wetland conservation in order to protect the wetlands from extinction. Among the dignitaries was the deputy Governor of Busia Mr. Wangalwa, Ms. Betty Nzioka the deputy director of environmental education in NEMA, the chairman NEMA board Mr. Maluthi, National Project coordinators and representatives of LVEMP II from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda .

Lake Wamala to be accorded Ramsar Site status

The Director of Environmental Affairs in the Ministry of Water and Environment in Uganda has proposed the gazetting of Lake Wamala to a Ramsar Site status. Speaking at the commemoration of the World Wetlands Day at Naama (Mityana District) in Uganda, Mr. Paul Mafabi, who represented the Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of Water and Environment, said that Lake Wamala should be accorded a Ramsar Site status because of its importance and endowment.

Lake Wamala is one of the most threatened Lake which has reduced in size by 77km² between the 1990 and 2000. It reduced from 164km² in 1990 to 87km² by the year 2000. Mr. Mafabi told participants that the World Wetlands Day should not be hyped by celebrations but to take stock of what has been done to improve livelihoods of Ugandans through wise use of wetlands.

In line with the plea, the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) has trained 8 selected groups in alternative livelihood support in Mityana district as a measure to improve livelihoods by providing funds for alternative projects to reduce on over dependence on wetlands and Lake Wamala. Communities in Mityana district have not yet benefited from the Community Demand sub-projects under the Lake Victoria Environment Management Project (LVEMP II). The FAO Resident Representative highlighted that Uganda was the second country in the world to come up with guidelines and a strategy on the use of wetlands whose activities do not compromise values of wetlands.

EA Suswatch Network launches study findings on Livelihoods in the Lake Vic region

A case study highlighting changes in community livelihood of people in East Africa “**Annual LVEMP II Civil Society Watch Livelihood Case study No.1**”, was launched on the 4th of March 2014 in Kisumu Kenya. The study carried out within the selected areas in Rivers Nyando (Kenya), Simiyu (Tanzania) and Katonga (Uganda) with specific focus on Water and Sanitation, Renewable Energy and Aquaculture, was launched during the EA Sus watch Regional Civil Society Organization meeting.

Another report “ **LVEMP II Community - Driven Development Sub-projects Watch No.1**”, which reviews Progress in Implementation of the Community- Driven Development (CDD) type Sub-projects under the Lake Victoria Environment Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II) within the River Catchments of Nyando (Kenya), Simiyu (Tanzania) and Katonga (Uganda) was also launched at the same meeting.

Read these documents via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/pdam57a>

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Sign this Petition to save lives on Lake Victoria waters!



Unsafe: Lake Victoria water transport

A petition code named [Kampeni ya usalama kwa usafiri Ziwa Viktoria](#) was launched by East African Sustainability Watch Network on Feb 06, 2014. The petition is aimed at convincing the heads of states of the EAC to improve safety standards in Lake Victoria and implement the Lake Victoria transport Act (2007), that was enacted by the East African Community Parliament to which all EAC Partner States through their respective Heads of State. This comes as a concern as major accidents and disasters continue to occur on Lake Victoria, since the passenger vessel M/V Bukoba capsized in 1996 with the loss of over 500 lives; the wagon ferry M/V Kabalega collided with a sister vessel MV/Kaawa and sank in 2005 and Cargo vessel MV Nyamageni sank in 2006.

At the community levels loss of lives continues: 18 Tanzanian School children drowned when their vessel flipped in strong winds on August 05, 2010; 28 people were feared dead after their ferry capsized in bad weather near Entebbe on July 21, 2011; about 21 people are thought to have perished when the passenger boats capsized in Buikwe and Buvuma districts in Uganda in March 2012; 9 people died in a boat accident while traveling from Kabenyanje to Kigungu Landing Site in Uganda in 2013; four people are feared to have drowned when a canoe in which they were traveling capsized after it was hit by strong winds in Kagera region in Tanzania, February 24, 2014. **To make Lake Victoria waters safer, join the campaign by signing the petition: [Kampeni ya usalama kwa usafiri Ziwa Viktoria](http://tinyurl.com/krfz4l3) from here: <http://tinyurl.com/krfz4l3>**

EA Suswatch gets new national level Staff

As part of further strengthening of the EA SusWatch Network's LVEMP II Civil Society Watch Project work at the National level, 3 new staff have been recruited to support the National Coordinators as follows:



From Left to Right: Immaculate Wanjiku joins SusWatch Kenya as Finance and Accounts Assistant; Caritas Wendelin Mlengi joins TCSD as the Information assistant; while Everest Mugambwa Kizito joins UCSD as Information Assistant

Upcoming Events

World Water 2014, March 22 focuses on *Water and Energy*

This year's World Water Day bringing the world attention to the water-energy nexus, particularly addressing inequities, especially for the 'bottom billion' who live in slums and impoverished rural areas and survive without access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, sufficient food and energy services. It also aims to facilitate the development of policies and crosscutting frameworks that bridge ministries and sectors, leading the way to energy security and sustainable water use in a green economy. **Read more from here: <http://tinyurl.com/lct46vl>**