

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)

January 2016



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1. Pictures showing vandalised fish cages on Lake Victoria at Sango Bay .This CDD subproject belongs to Gobay Cage Fish Farmers' group in Gwanda Parish Magango, Kyebe, Magango,- Rakai District (Courtesy photos)

LVEMP II CDD fisheries subproject loses millions in a Cage Farm raid in Rakai-Uganda

Members of Gobay Cage Fish Farmers' group in Kyebe, Rakai district are devastated after their fish cages were vandalized and their fish stolen. The cage frames and bags were destroyed and fish stock worth twelve million five hundred and sixty nine thousand (12,569,000) of table size fish with an average weight of 450g/fish (5,656kgs) was stolen. The project had seven cages four of them are of size (2 X 3 X 1.5) metres one of size (2 X 2 X 2) and two of size (5 X 5 X 2.5) metres. The total carrying capacity of the 7 cages on the site was 33,800 fingerlings; which upon rearing for six months would harvest 16,900kgs of fish worth one hundred and thirty five million two hundred thousand shillings (135,200,000/=)sold at the farm gate price.

A statement written to the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Rakai District, the Lake Victoria Environment Management Project (LVEMP II) Community-Driven Development (CDD) Project Coordinator - Mr. Mawerere Paul noted that, the fish expected to have been sold on 20th December 2015 is suspected to have been stolen by fishermen from Malembo, Namirembe and Lukunyu landing sites who had earlier on come to the see the fish cages on the 11th of December 2015. They are suspected to have come with two engine boats with each boat pooling three small boats and carrying seven men each who vandalized the cage farm. The 41 men demolished the fish frames and stole the fish. Increased insecurity on the Lake could be attributed to halting of services of the Beach Management nits (BMU), fisheries officers and Marine police who have hitherto been patrolling the Lake despite shortfalls in their operations.

The case was reported to Kasensero Police station under case number is SD REF: 21/12/12/2015. The CDD group had invested 10,185kgs of fish feeds bought from Ugachick feed suppliers, worth the cost of 25,971,750/= . Repair of these cages to the original standard is estimated to cost them 2,960,000/=.

The group prepared a report and embarked on repairs of the cages with expectation of a Police post near the project site this time. This was the advice given when the team from NAFIRRI- Jinja visited the site when the incident had occurred.

According to Mr. Jamil Kiyangi the Focal Point Person for LVEMP II in Rakai District, there is need for the central government to respond to security issues around the Lake. "In the spirit of reducing pressure on Lake Victoria, frustrating these efforts may limit achievement of the intended objective for LVEMP II Project.

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As the district focal point person for LVEMP II, I request for support in this urgent matter that requires central government to respond very soon.”

However, in an earlier statement by the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Mr. Tress N. Bucyanayandi released on 11th December 2015, activities and operation of Beach Management Units (BMUs), BMU Committees and Fisheries Enforcement Officers were suspended. The statement notes that “As an interim measure, for at least 3 months beginning December 2015, Fisheries enforcement activities at the fish landing sites (Beach level) will be assigned to Fish Landing Site Committees constituted and vetted by the District Local Governments and authorised by the Chief Fisheries Officer”.

The Rakai District security committee headed by the Resident District Commissioner - RDC discussed the issue. It was further noted that a police post be established at the landing site as police is quite a distance from Sango bay landing site. The Rakai District Council in its second last sitting called for the rapid alignment of fisheries enforcement process by MAAIF such that the Presidential ban on enforcement on the Lake is lifted soon. Councillors were fearful of more loses if this vacuum remains for a longer period of time.

LVEMP II is supporting community-driven investments in rehabilitating the degraded sub-catchments of Lake Victoria. Component 3 is sub-divided into 2 other sub-components; of Natural resource conservation and livelihood improvement and Community capacity building and participation. Under sub-component 1, Community-Driven Development (CDD) sub-projects are funded this is helping in contribute to control or mitigation of pollution in the Lake Victoria basin and rehabilitation of degraded hot spots in the sub-catchment. Sango Bay fish farmers’ group is one of the groups that received funding from LVEMP II to carry out cage fish culture, tree planting and control of the water hyacinth as a way of contributing to the mitigation of environmental stress on the lake, while at the same time supporting socio-economic development of the riparian community.

The project has the its core objectives of enabling sustainable utilization of the Lake water by diversifying the livelihoods of communities through cage fish production in order to reduce pressure on the natural fish stocks. This objective would be done through transferring cage fish culture knowledge and technology to the fishing community of Sango bay and the district of Rakai, increasing household and community income through intensive culture and sale of cage fish to the existing huge fish market locally and beyond and by reducing pressure on capture fishing on the natural stocks of Lake Victoria through diversification with cage culture and by attaining sufficient fish stock and environmental conservation through sustainable fish culture approaches.

Fisheries sector in Uganda contribute greatly to the economy in terms of income, employment and export revenue. Fish exports are the second largest export earner for Uganda. More than 1,200,000 people depend on fish directly as source of food. Agriculture is one of the primary growth sector and sub-sectors that directly produces goods and services and fisheries is one of the sub-sectors that constitute the agricultural sector.

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EA SusWatch Network Calls for Greening of Uganda's Feb.13 Presidential Debate

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) and the Elders Forum convened Uganda's premier presidential debate at the Kampala Serena Hotel on Friday January 15, 2016. This focused on Uganda's debt burden, social services, youth and governance where seven out of the eight Presidential candidates turned up. According to the IRCU Secretary General - Joshua Kitakule, the second Presidential Debate that is planned on Saturday February 13, 2016 will specifically focus on peace and security, regional integration, international trade and investment.

However, a quick reflection of the first presidential debate shows that discussion of *green/ environmental* issues affecting millions of Ugandans were not given due attention, as focus was swayed strongly on Uganda's economic performance and preoccupation with social development models.

For example, ideas like expanding cage farming on Lake Victoria to boost fish production and reduce poverty were not critically analysed against their environmental implications, given the current stress on the Lake and its entire catchment (in Uganda alone!). But all is not lost as we believe that *greening* the Presidential Debate can still be achieved in the forthcoming Part II. In the context of regional cooperation, the East African Community integration process is expected to feature prominently. From a *green* perspective, EA SusWatch would like to bring to the attention of the eight Presidential Candidates the following issues and questions to make the forthcoming debate more meaningful to millions of Ugandans (and by extension East Africans):

- ❖ The East African Community region is frequently affected by persistent **food shortages and pockets of hunger**. Furthermore, the rampant unsustainable fishery practices on Uganda's Lakes coupled with food shortages and pockets of hunger in East Africa (inevitably sucking Uganda in) is a perennial problem. **What options does Your Government have in place to offset this, in light of region's rapidly growing population that is increasingly encroaching on fragile ecosystems to survive these trends?**
- ❖ **Handling natural resources related transboundary conflicts** across Uganda's borders is far from over for instance conflicts over grazing land, Migingo island conflict that is yet to be solved, while fishers on Lake Albert are crying foul due to 'invaders' from DR Congo. The trans-boundary nature of major water resources, fisheries, forests and wetlands seems to be more like a source of suffering as communities are always on the 'wrong side' of our neighbour's laws. **When you assume power after February 18, 2016, what are Your plans to safeguard Ugandans that are frequently caught up in such situations involving our neighbours?**
- ❖ There is growing recognition that **environmental degradation and climate change hold the potential to result in significant population migration and displacement of people**, which the East African region is presently ill-equipped to respond to in an effective manner. Climate change will aggravate this problem complex. East Africa is, and will continue to be, at the forefront of many of these concerns. **However, the prevailing policy responses tend to focus on how to deal with the impacts of sudden natural disasters rather than with the consequences of longer term environmental degradation. What is Your Government bringing on board to change this approach in order to effectively address this complex set of challenges?**
- ❖ Uganda and other EAC Partners have signed and ratified all the main regional environmental conventions **Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)**. However, it is currently insufficiently equipped to adequately address its key environmental challenges due to varied reasons. **What do you have in plan to solve this challenge in order for Uganda to be in tandem with other members of the UN?**