

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)

September 2014

Uganda's Lake Victoria Community Projects under LVEMP II take off amidst procurement challenges



A community resource centre under construction in Kyebe-Rakai by BACECOP CDD group, July 2014, while members of the CDD Subproject inspecting fish farming ponds on the right (Photos by UCSD)

Beneficiaries of LVEMP II CDD sub-projects in Uganda received the first tranche of grants for LVEMP II project in June 2014. This came two years after the project inception in 2011, making communities in Uganda trail far from their counterparts in Kenya and Tanzania who are implementing similar projects under the Adjustable Programme Lending 1 (APL1) – the first sub-phase of this region-wide intervention.

The Ministry of Water and Environment disbursed up to 2.8 billion Uganda Shillings under the conditional grant to nine districts to implement Community Driven Development (CDD) Sub Projects and Strategic Interventions (SI) under the second phase of Lake Victoria Management Project (LVEMP II). A total of 44 CDD Sub-Projects and 25 Strategic Intervention sub-projects were approved in the nine districts of Namayingo, Kalangala, Mityana, Masaka, Mubende, Mpigi, Gomba, Kalungu and Rakai.

Although there were delays in the release of funds, beneficiaries still remained optimistic and committed to their projects, an indication of a positive move to the anticipated achievement of the project success. These communities have been mobilized and trained to implement the sub projects in accordance with the project guidelines. The District leaders and the Technical staff have also been involved in capacity building programs to enhance skills and knowledge of the beneficiary communities in implementing their sub-projects.

From September 10 to 12, 2014, Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD) held Community meetings with the CDD sub-project beneficiaries in the districts of Mubende, Gomba, Mityana, Masaka, Mpigi, Kalungu and Rakai. Some of the CDD sub-projects in these districts include forest restoration, fish farming, bee keeping and sustainable agriculture among others; and the Strategic Interventions (that include tree planting, energy saving technologies and water hyacinth management projects among others). The community meetings were attended by the CDD sub-project beneficiaries, the District focal persons and media to track progress with regards to CDD sub -project implementation since the release of the first tranche of 50% funds in June 2014. The meetings provided a platform for discussing and sharing emerging issues, challenges and opportunities in relation to the CDD sub projects implementation.

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Upon the release of funds to the communities, the World Bank and LVEMP II officials carried out monitoring field visits to projects project sites; during which more guidance and clarifications were provided to the CDD sub-project beneficiaries. So far beneficiaries have been trained in various aspects of project implementation.

“Much as these groups were trained in procurement, the concept was not well understood”, says Ms. Rose Nakyejwe, the Natural resources officer for Masaka District. This was evidenced by the way members conducted their procurement process with errors that created a back and forth process as well as affecting the implementation schedules. Nonetheless, with support from the technical staff at the district and the LVEMP II focal persons, these issues were finally addressed. However, the technical team raised a concern that LVEMP II Secretariat should consider increasing the 5% administrative costs to facilitate technical officers in the different sectors such that they can ably offer support to the CDD sub-project beneficiary groups.

Narok County hosts Mara day celebrations laced with Political promises



Joint Mara day 2014
Exhibition stall: EA SusWatch
Network, LVEMP II Kenya &
LVEMP II Tanzania.

On 15th September 2014, EA SusWatch Network participated in the third Mara Day, that was celebrated In Narok County hosted by both the Narok County and Bomet County governments. It was organized and convened by the Republic of Kenya and coordinated by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission Secretariat under the theme Mara forever, *Mara Milele*. Upon recognizing the importance of the Mara ecosystem, the 10th Sectoral Council of Ministers for the Lake Victoria Basin, in Kigali, Rwanda on 4th May 2012, declared every 15th September “*Mara Day*”, to coincide with the great migration of wildlife from Serengeti National Park in the United Republic of Tanzania to Masai-Mara National Game Reserve in the Republic of Kenya. The inaugural Mara Day celebration, under the theme of *Mara –Uhai Wetu (Mara –Our Life)* was held in Mulot town in the Republic of Kenya on 15th September 2012, the second held in Mugumu town in Serengeti Tanzania in 15th 2013.

The Deputy President of Kenya Mr. William Ruto who was the guest of honor at the celebrations noted that the conservation of Mau forest and the Mau River was not a matter of choice. He emphasized that never again will the politicians use the issue of Mau conservation for political mileage. He ordered immediate stop on fresh settlement in the forest. He expressed the commitment of the Government of Kenya in conservation of Mau forest and the Mara River; and noted that the government will work closely with the communities. He emphasized that the Mara River basin was home to one of the largest herbivore density in the world.

The High commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania Dr. Batilda Salha Buriani thanked all members of the organizing committee for the well-organized event. She further noted that Tanzania benefits from the Mara River and thus its conservation is essential. She reiterated that it is good to involve communities to ensure that the East Africa Community projects are sustainable. On his part, Dr. Canisius Kanangire Executive Secretary of LVBC noted that the timing of Mara Day celebrations coincided with the wild beast migration in Maasai Mara and Serengeti which has been considered as the 7th wonder of the world. He noted that Mara was critical for local development.

The Principal Secretary, State Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Dr. Richard Lesiyampe noted that the Mau forest will be surveyed fenced to avoid encroachment and title deeds issued. The senator for Narok County Mr. Stephen Olentutu urged the politicians not to politicize Mara/Mau forest conservation.

