

UCSD News Bulletin October 2008

Monthly News Bulletin from the Secretariat of Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD)

Rio and beyond.....

'Fish for the Future is everyone's responsibility': A Call for Prioritization of Actions, along a Clear Road Map

A regional Conference on Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation Stakeholders' Conference on the theme: *Fish for the future is everyone's responsibility*, took place in Kampala, October 27 - 29, 2008. The overall objective was to draw attention to the declining Nile Perch stocks in Lake Victoria and to call for collaborative efforts to ensure responsible utilization of the fisheries resources at all levels.

Without doubt, the more than 30 presentations made at this conference and the experiences from researchers, Government, Intergovernmental institutions, private sector and development partners was substantive and quite commendable. And like the previous one held in Entebbe in 2005 (More: <http://www.lvfo.org/downloads/Entebbe%20Declaration.pdf>), a Joint Communiqué comprising 14 recommendations has been agreed upon by the 3 partner states (Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania) as a basis to guide the stakeholders on the next steps.

From our view, some prioritised issues that need to be taken on with clear responsibilities, timeframe and *sharp* targets (also as a clear starting point for a next such Conference in order to be able to set up a score card against which progress can be measured with time) include: **A more coherent and region-wide drive towards eliminating illegal fishing gear and practices** from Lake Victoria rather than disparate efforts by partner states; **Capacity building for Beach Management Units** in each of the three LVFO Partner states to enable them working towards a more responsible stewardship as part of a more efficient and effective Monitoring Control and Surveillance of the fisheries; **Effort towards sustainable funding for fisheries sector starting with each of the partner states' national budgets as a measure of political commitment to resuscitate the worrying Lake Victoria fishery (beyond Nile Perch)** in addition to external funding; **Deliberate alternative undertakings and processes to reduce the pressure on Lake Victoria** (ranging from *rolling out* aquaculture development, Efforts to jointly work with other related institutions to address the threats to Lake Victoria fisheries (land degradation, pollution, deforestation, and the lack of strong and coordinated resource management institutions from local to regional level).

In addition, as the **CSO statement to the LVFO Conference** has noted, **small scale and indigenous fisher people should not at all be losers in this fast growing sector**. Rather, alongside this, there is a need to recognise that there is a strong link between social situation of Lake dependant communities, human rights and the management of natural resources. This in turn can either thwart / back small scale fisher people from fulfilling their potential role in contributing more significantly to responsible fisheries. Read the full CSO statement to the LVFO Conference, October 27 - 29, 2008: <http://www.ugandacoalition.or.ug/publications/statement.pdf>

UCSD holds its Annual General Meeting (2008)

UCSD held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2008 at Grand Imperial Hotel Kampala October 18, 2008. It was attended by 30 members and partners who received progress and performance of UCSD in 2007 / 8 as well as discussing the planned activities for 2009. One outstanding recommendation from the Meeting is to scale up engagement of members through UCSD's 5 thematic areas, by identifying possible collective actions (research, advocacy and capacity building) for sustainable development. This can then link up with like-minded regional and global CSO initiatives including the East African SusWatch Network. Steps to sustain UCSD's future work were proposed.

Reflecting on 'The Sunken Billions': *The economic Justification for Fisheries Reform*

This report released by the FAO - World Bank this October notes that economic losses in marine fisheries resulting from poor management, inefficiencies and overfishing add up to a staggering USD 50 billion per year. According to the report, the bulk of these losses occur where there are depleted fish stocks – cost of finding and catching fish is greater than it might be and there is redundant investment and operating costs. This situation is already visible in the Lake Victoria region where a Nile Perch crisis has been proclaimed that has prompted up to 10 industries to close shop, and 25 to persist while operating under low capacity.

Interestingly, the report calls for comprehensive reforms that have far wide political, social and economic costs and implications. One such proposed *austerity* measure that needs to be treated with caution, is the call for a 40 % reduction in fishing effort. It raises many social and ethical questions of what is expected of the artisanal and lake dependent communities who are potential primary targets of this proposed reform.

It also begs the fundamental question of the purpose of the intention if not addressing the food and other requirements of the fishing communities. One also wonders whether it is another level of sector specific reforms that may also reach out to mining, forestry and water resources (since their state is not any better). How will these mainly poor fishing communities absorb this shock and when? Is it not time for planners and decision makers to turn to the drawing board to ascertain whether existing extractive industries are worthy investing in view of the existing stocks?

The report suggests strengthened fishing rights for fishers and fishing communities that provide incentives for sustainability and good stewardship; consideration of social safety nets and creation of alternative livelihoods as important elements. But this intention will need to be appreciated and understood in the context of the performance of the existing Beach Management Units (BMUs) and Forest User groups. In all, it is *power and politics* that secure or deter success, and this will only happen when the stronger ones are willing / persuaded to let some of their 'traditional power' go to the weaker members of society under a commonly shared vision.

Read about the Report: *The Sunken Billions: The Economic Justification for Fisheries Reform* supported by PROFISH, a World Bank partnership focused on policy initiatives for sustainable fisheries: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTARD/Resources/336681-1215724937571/SunkenBillionsAdvanceWebEd.pdf>

Resources

[Access to environmental information in Uganda \(2008\) by Field, IIED and Irish Aid](#)

The value of transparent and accessible information systems is generally recognized as a basis for sustainable development. Access to environmental information is becoming increasingly important, especially in countries like Uganda, where people rely heavily on natural resources. **This report draws on the diverse experiences and analyses from the Ugandan law and its implementation in the wider international context taking into account lessons learnt in other jurisdictions, and uses a set of universally applicable indicators.** More: http://www.field.org.uk/files/FIELD_Access_Uganda.pdf

[Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women? Gender & Accountability by the United Nations Development Fund for Women \(UNIFEM\)](#)

This UNIFEM flagship report (2008/2009) argues that one of the most powerful constraints on realizing women's rights and achieving the Millennium Development Goals is a deficit of accountability to women. This report assesses the Millennium Development Goals from a gender perspective and focuses on five key areas where urgent action is required. More: <http://www.unifem.org/progress/2008/>