LVBC Monthly Review

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MWANZA GEARS UP FOR LAKE VICTORIA DAY

Fishermen in Lake Victoria.

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The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC)) is set to commemorate a major milestone in regional environmental cooperation with the launch of Lake Victoria Day, an annual event designated to be celebrated every 21st May.

The decision was made during the 23rd Ordinary Meeting of the Sectoral Council on Lake Victoria Basin, which recognized the importance of establishing a dedicated regional platform to promote the sustainable management of Lake Victoria and its basin. The first inaugural Lake Victoria Day will be held on 21st May 2026, with the United Republic of Tanzania hosting the event in Mwanza Region.

Fisherman in Lake Victoria.

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Mwanza is strategically located on the southern shores of Lake Victoria and serves as a key hub for regional trade, fisheries, and the blue economy. The choice of Mwanza reflects the region's central role in advancing sustainable lake-based livelihoods and regional economic integration among EAC Partner States.

The proposed theme for the inaugural celebration, *"Shared Waters, Shared Future: Uniting for a Sustainable Lake Victoria Basin,"* emphasizes the shared responsibility of the region in safeguarding the lake while sustainably harnessing its resources for inclusive socio-economic development.

The theme further highlights the growing significance of the blue economy and climate resilience as strategic pathways for ensuring long-term prosperity within the Lake Victoria Basin. Subsequent events will be held annually in all EAC Partner States on a rotational basis. Lake Victoria Day is intended to raise public awareness about the socio-economic and ecological importance of Lake Victoria and its basin while strengthening regional cooperation among EAC Partner States in the governance of shared water resources.

The event will provide a platform to showcase innovations, technologies, and best practices in environmental conservation and the blue economy, while actively engaging youth, women, and local communities in environmental stewardship and sustainable livelihood initiatives. In addition, the celebrations aim to mobilize partnerships and resources to support ongoing and future basin-wide programs coordinated by the LVBC.

A series of activities will be undertaken in the lead-up to the main event between February and May 2026. These pre-event activities will include a regional awareness and outreach campaign conducted through radio, television, social media, and educational institutions to promote lake conservation.

LVBC's Executive Secretary Dr Masinde Bwire briefs Mwanza Regional Commissioner Hon Said Mtanda on the preparation of the upcoming Lake Victoria Day during a recent visit in his office.

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School essay and art competitions will be organized under the selected theme, alongside community clean-up exercises around Mwanza's lakeshore. Similar activities will be replicated across all riparian EAC Partner States. Symbolic lakeshore clean-ups and tree-planting exercises led by dignitaries will encourage communities and institutions to take collective responsibility for protecting specific zones of the lake.

From 17th to 21st May 2026, exhibitions and an innovation fair will be held in Mwanza, bringing together Partner States, private sector actors, research institutions, and civil society organizations. The exhibitions will showcase technologies and innovations in areas such as pollution control, fisheries management, renewable energy, and waste management, with special recognition given to youth- and women-led innovations.

Cultural entertainment will form an integral part of the celebrations, featuring performances by cultural troupes from all EAC Partner States to celebrate regional unity and diversity. Local artisans and small enterprises will also display eco-friendly crafts and products, promoting community livelihoods and sustainable tourism.

A two-day Stakeholders' Forum will take place from 18th to 19th May 2026, bringing together civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, utilities, youth and women's groups, and other key actors. The forum will provide a platform for different sectors to discuss their interests, engagements, and challenges related to Lake Victoria and to present their priorities.

This will be followed by a donor round table involving development partners, as well as presentations by the LVBC on its achievements, guiding strategies, ongoing frameworks, and progress in the development of

Storks perch on a rock in Lake Victoria

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Strategic Plan 5, including initiatives such as RV Jumuiya, the MRCC, headquarters development, and water sampling exercises. Recreational activities, including boat racing organized in collaboration with relevant ministries responsible for sports and tourism, will also form part of the broader program.

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The main celebration on 21st May 2026 will feature a High-Level Ministerial Segment, presided over by a Guest of Honour from the host country and attended by Ministers responsible for Water, Environment, Fisheries, Maritime Affairs, and EAC Affairs from all Partner States.

Recommendations emerging from the Stakeholders' Forum will be presented during this segment, culminating in the signing of a Joint Ministerial Communiqué reaffirming Partner States' commitment to the sustainable management of Lake Victoria and its basin. The inaugural Lake Victoria Day will also mark the launch of two significant milestones for regional water governance: the Lake Victoria Basin Water Information System (LVB-WIS) and the State of the Basin Report (SoBR) for the Lake Victoria Basin.

The LVB-WIS will provide an integrated and reliable regional platform for sharing hydro logical, environmental, and socio-economic data, thereby strengthening evidence-based planning, real-time monitoring, and coordinated decision-making among Partner States. Complementing this, the State of the Basin Report offers the first comprehensive assessment of the basin's ecological health, climate risks, water resources, and development trends, serving as a critical reference for policy formulation, investment prioritization, and long-term sustainability planning.

LVBC AND LTA SIGN MOC TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

A joint team from LVBC , LTA and GIZ looks on as Dr. Masinde Bwire, Executive Secretary and Mr. Sylvain Tusanga Mukanga, Executive Director of LTA sign MOC in Kigoma, Tanzania.

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) and the Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA) have signed a landmark Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) aimed at enhancing collaboration in the sustainable management of transboundary water resources and environmental protection across the Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria basins.

The signing of the MoC facilitated through the EAC4Nature project supported by German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ) through GIZ establishes a formal framework for cooperation between the two regional institutions, reinforcing their shared commitment to safeguarding vital freshwater ecosystems while promoting socio-economic development for communities dependent on the lakes.

LVBC, a specialized institution of the East African Community established under the Protocol for Sustainable Development of Lake Victoria Basin (2003) and anchored under Article 114 of the EAC Treaty (1999) and the Lake Victoria Basin Commission Act 2022, coordinates sustainable development and management of the Lake Victoria Basin.

LTA, established in 2008 by the Governments of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Zambia under the Convention on the Sustainable Management of Lake Tanganyika, is mandated to ensure the sustainable management of Lake Tanganyika and its natural resources.

(From left) Dr. Masinde Bwire, Executive Secretary of LVBC, exchanges the signed Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with Mr. Sylvain Tusanga Mukanga, Executive Director of LTA, in Kigoma, Tanzania.

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Key Areas of Cooperation

- Under the five-year agreement, the Parties will collaborate in the following priority areas:
- **Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)**: Joint initiatives on water assessment, monitoring, and sustainable water use policies.
- **Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation:** Development and implementation of joint projects to protect ecosystems, manage invasive species, control pollution, and restore habitats.
- **Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation:** Joint research and implementation of climate resilience strategies, renewable energy promotion, and sustainable land management practices.
- **Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:** Organization of joint training programs, workshops, and technical exchange initiatives.
- **Community Engagement and Socio-economic Development:** Promotion of community-led livelihood initiatives and cross-border development cooperation.
- **Disaster Risk Reduction and Management:** Strengthening early warning systems, preparedness, and coordinated response to floods, droughts, and climate-related hazards.
- **Maritime Safety and Security:** Prevention of maritime pollution from shipping activities, benchmarking best practices, and joint resource mobilization to enhance safety and security.

Implementation and Governance

To ensure effective implementation, the Moc provides for the establishment of a Joint Implementation Committee composed of two representatives from each institution. The Committee will oversee coordinated work plans, budgets, annual progress reporting, and biennial evaluations to guide future collaboration.

GIZ Technical Advisor Eng Cosmus Muli makes his remarks during the meeting

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The Memorandum will remain in force for five years from the date of entry into force and may be renewed by mutual consent. It reflects the Parties' recognition of the critical importance of cooperative approaches in addressing shared environmental challenges and advancing regional integration.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Dr. Masinde K. Bwire, Executive Secretary of LVBC, and Mr. Sylvain Tusanga Mukanga, Executive Director of LTA, reaffirmed their institutions' commitment to strengthening partnerships that promote sustainable water resource management, climate resilience, and improved livelihoods across the region.

The signing of this MoC marks a significant milestone in regional cooperation, reinforcing a shared vision for healthy lake ecosystems and sustainable development in Eastern and Southern Africa.

LVBC SHINES AT GLOBAL TOURISM FETE

LVBC's Accountant Ms Dorcas Shiloya receives an award on behalf of Executive Secretary Dr Masinde Bwire from Dr Patrick Omondi, Director Training and Research Institute

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) has been honored with the Ecosystem Restoration & Environmental Governance Excellence Award during the 4th Global Tourism Resilience Day 2026 celebrations, recognizing its outstanding contribution to environmental governance and ecosystem restoration.

The award highlights LVBC's role in coordinating transboundary efforts to safeguard the health of Lake Victoria, the world's second-largest freshwater lake. Over the years, LVBC has led initiatives to restore wetlands, monitor water quality, combat pollution, and support sustainable livelihoods for millions of people across the basin.

In addition to its water management efforts, LVBC hosts the annual Mara Day celebration on September 15th, a flagship event that promotes the conservation of the Mara ecosystem. The celebration brings together communities, tourism stakeholders, and conservationists to raise awareness about wildlife protection, sustainable tourism, and the preservation of this iconic savannah ecosystem.

Through close collaboration with EAC partner statethe Commission has strengthened regional policies that protect biodiversity and build climate resilience. LVBC's accountant Ms Dorcas Shiloya received the award on behalf of the Executive Secretary Dr Masinde Bwire.

'This recognition, therefore, belongs not only to LVBC, but to our partner states, development partners, technical experts, and the communities who are the true custodians of our natural heritage" Dr Bwire said.

The 4th Global Tourism Resilience Day brought together global leaders and environmental experts to honour institutions advancing sustainability worldwide. LVBC's recognition underscores the critical role of integrated ecosystem governance in securing the future of East Africa's natural resources and tourism potential.

FAREWELL TO A DEDICATED SECURITY ASSISTANT

The late George Ondu

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) is mourning the loss of Mr. George Ondu, a dedicated security assistant who served the Commission since 2018. Mr. Ondu passed away following a short illness. Colleagues described him as a committed and reliable member of the LVBC family, known for his professionalism and warm spirit.

Staff gathered to honour his memory, sharing heartfelt tributes for his years of service and his contributions to the safety of the Commission's staff and premises.

LVBC leadership, led by Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire, expressed condolences to Mr. Ondu's family, noting, "His dedication and service will be deeply missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with his loved ones during this difficult time."

Eng. Coletha Ruhamya, Deputy Executive Secretary, recalled, "I remember him during our last retreat in Mwanza,he was so active and full of life. It is a great loss to the Commission."

Ms. Milcent Opiyo, Principal Administrative Officer, added, "George has been part of us for the longest time, and we shall dearly miss him."

Mr Calistus Quincy, Systems Administrator said, "George's warmth touched everyone in the commission and beyond most profoundly. He demonstrated exceptional skill and humility alongside remarkable personal kindness. Most memorable was his habit of saying "Thank you " at the close of a conversation and his great skill in singing . That low bass I shall miss most of all.

The Commission has pledged support to his family as they grieve the loss of a valued team member who played a vital role in ensuring the safety and security of the LVBC community.

The late Mr. Ondu will be laid to rest on 7th March in his hometown of Kisumu.

PROJECT PROFILE

LAKE VICTORIA BASIN-INTERGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Ms Anna Kretz, Kfw Portfolio Manager, Governance, Stabilization & Water Eastern Africa& EAC and LVBC's Executive Secretary Dr Masinde Bwire sign two separate agreements

The Lake Victoria Basin Integrated Water Resources Management Programme (LVB-IWRMP) is a regional initiative coordinated by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) under the framework of the East African Community (EAC).

The Programme is implemented across the five EAC Partner States: the Republic of Burundi, Republic of Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Uganda, and Republic of Rwanda. It seeks to address growing water quality management challenges affecting the Lake Victoria Basin through a coordinated and sustainable transboundary approach.

Lake Victoria is one of Africa's most significant freshwater bodies and serves as a vital resource for over 45 million people living within its basin. The lake supports multiple sectors, including fisheries, agriculture, industry, transport, tourism, and domestic water supply. However, rapid population growth, urbanization, industrial expansion, and agricultural intensification have placed immense pressure on its water resources.

Large volumes of untreated or inadequately treated wastewater from urban centers, industrial effluents, and agricultural runoff are discharged into the lake and its tributaries.

This has led to declining water quality, loss of biodiversity, and rising public health risks, including waterborne diseases. Additionally, climate change impacts—such as irregular rainfall patterns, flooding, and prolonged droughts—further threaten water availability and ecosystem stability. These challenges require a coordinated, integrated, and legally anchored regional response.

The overall objective of the LVB-IWRMP is to strengthen transboundary Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) within he Lake Victoria Basin while improving water quality and sanitation services in key urban areas. The Programme aims to establish a mutually agreed and legally anchored IWRM Strategy for the Basin, ensuring that Partner States manage shared water resources in a harmonized and sustainable manner.

A central component of the initiative is the development and operationalization of a Basin-wide Water Information System (WIS), designed to enhance data collection, monitoring, analysis, and information sharing to support evidence-based decision-making.

In addition to institutional strengthening, the Programme prioritizes rapid water quality improvements through High Priority Investments (HPIs). These investments target major urban centers that significantly contribute to pollution loads entering the lake.

The cities of Kampala, Kisumu, Mwanza, and Kigali are key beneficiaries of these infrastructure interventions. The investments include the expansion and upgrading of sewerage networks in Kisumu, Kampala, and Mwanza, as well as the construction of a faecal sludge treatment plant in Kigali. These efforts are intended to significantly reduce pollution entering the lake and expand access to improved sanitation services.

The Programme is co-financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union through KfW Development Bank, with a total budget of EUR 68.9 million (EUR 60 million from BMZ and EUR 8.9 million from the European Union)...***Contd Pg11***

PROJECT PROFILE

LAKE VICTORIA BASIN- INTERGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

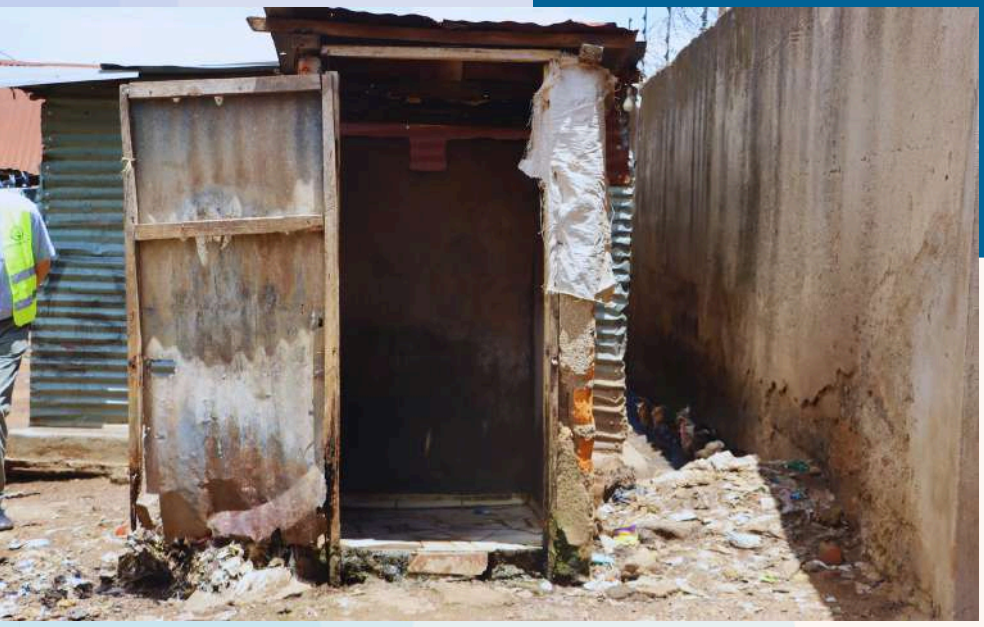


PHOTO: *A dilapidated pit latrine in Kisumu's Manyatta Slums. The programme is set to facilitate the construction of modern toilets in the area.*

The Programme commenced on 15th January 2020 and is scheduled to conclude on 31st December 2029. For regional implementation, the LVBC has established the LVB-IWRMP Programme Coordination Unit (PCU), staffed by a full-time IWRM Programme Coordinator and an IWRM Modeller.

National HPIs are implemented by designated National Project Executing Agencies (NPEAs) within each Partner State, including the Lake Victoria South Water Works Development Agency (LVSWWDA) in Kisumu, the Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC) in Kigali, the Mwanza Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (MWAUWASA) in Mwanza, and the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) in Kampala. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework tracks progress through measurable indicators related to water quality, sanitation coverage, and institutional performance.

Sustainability is a core pillar of the Programme. By strengthening legal frameworks, building institutional capacity, promoting cost-recovery mechanisms for wastewater services, and operationalizing long-term water monitoring systems, the initiative aims to ensure lasting impact beyond the funding period. Ultimately, the Lake Victoria Basin Integrated Water Resources Management Programme contributes to environmental protection, improved public health, climate resilience, and strengthened regional integration within the East African Community.

Eng. Arsène A.H. MUKUBWA

About the Project Coordinator

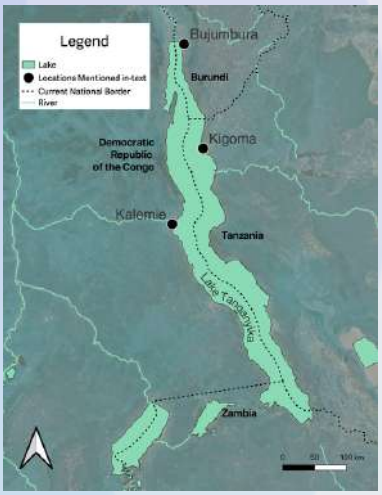
Eng. Arsène A.H. MUKUBWA is a Professional Water Resources Engineer with more than 20 years' experience in the Water Resources Management and Development within transboundary contexts.

Currently, he serves the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), an Institution of the East African Community (EAC), as a Regional Programme Coordinator for the Lake Victoria Basin – Integrated Water Resources Management Programme (LVB-IWRMP).

Prior to joining LVBC in January 2020, Eng. Mukubwa worked for a period of 9 years as a Water Resources Engineer at Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program – Coordination Unit (NELSAP-CU), an investment arm of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI).

Facts About East African Waters

Lake Tanganyika



Lake Tanganyika is one of the African Great Lakes and one of the most important freshwater bodies in the world. It is located in East Africa and is bordered by four countries: Tanzania, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, and Zambia. The lake lies within the western branch of the East African Rift Valley, formed by tectonic activity millions of years ago. Lake Tanganyika is estimated to be between 9 and 12 million years old, making it one of the oldest lakes on Earth. Because of its age, size, and ecological importance, it is considered a natural treasure of Africa and a vital resource for millions of people who depend on it for food, water, and transportation.

Hydrology & Geography.

Lake Tanganyika is the second-deepest freshwater lake in the world, after Lake Baikal. It reaches a maximum depth of about 1,470 meters (4,820 feet) and stretches approximately 673 kilometers (418 miles) from north to south, making it one of the longest freshwater lakes globally.

In terms of volume, it is the second-largest freshwater lake in the world and contains about 16–18% of the world's available freshwater.

The lake is meromictic, meaning that its deep waters do not mix with the upper layers. As a result, oxygen does not reach the deepest parts of the lake, limiting life in those depths.

Several rivers flow into Lake Tanganyika, but its main outlet is the Lukuga River, which drains into the Congo River system and eventually into the Atlantic Ocean.

Biodiversity & Ecology

Lake Tanganyika is one of the most biologically rich freshwater ecosystems on Earth. It is home to more than 350 species of fish, many of which are endemic, meaning they are found nowhere else in the world. The lake is especially famous for its wide variety of colorful cichlid fish species.

In addition to fish, the lake supports crustaceans, mollusks, and other aquatic organisms. Its long isolation and great age have allowed unique species to evolve over millions of years. The upper, oxygen-rich layers of the lake support most of its aquatic life and sustain important fisheries that provide food and income for surrounding communities.

Environmental Challenges

Despite its importance, Lake Tanganyika faces several environmental challenges. Climate change has affected water temperatures and reduced the mixing of nutrients, which impacts fish populations. Overfishing is also a serious concern, as many communities depend heavily on the lake for survival.

Deforestation and poor land-use practices around the lake have increased soil erosion, leading to sedimentation and water pollution. Population growth along the shoreline adds pressure on natural resources and increases waste entering the lake.

Protecting Lake Tanganyika is essential to ensure that it continues to provide food, water, and economic support for future generations. Conservation efforts and sustainable management practices are necessary to preserve this unique and valuable ecosystem.

PICTORIAL

LVBC's Executive Secretary, Dr. Masinde Bwire, presents a gift to ECO Bank Kisumu Branch Manager, Mr. Thadeus Okwaro, during his visit to the Headquarters on 15th February 2026.

LVBC's Deputy Executive Secretary Eng Coletha Ruhamya presents a gift to Ms Nuru Mohammed, Principal Marine Environment Officer, Kenya Maritime Authority during her visit at the LVBC Headquarters.

Participants during task team training on the AUDA-NEPAD African Infrastructure Database (AUDA-NEPAD AID) with related working session on the Nile River Basin Investment Program (NRBIP) in Addis Ababa Ethiopia on 24th February 2026.

Participants at the Joint Regional Workshop on WIS held at the LVBC Headquarters on 18th February 2026.

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PICTORIAL

LVBC's Water Resource Modeller Eng Benjamin SSekamuli makes his submission during the Regional Worshop held on 18th February at the LVBC's Headquarters in Kisumu

LVBC's Information Techonology Officer Mr Patrick Sabuni (left) with LVB IWRMP Project Coordinator Eng Arsene Mukubwa during the meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

A section of LVBC staff at the home of their fallen colleague ,the late George Ondu in Kisumu

Winners of the 4th Global Tourism Resilience Day 2026 celebrations held in Nairobi, Kenya

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