



LVBC Monthly Review

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STAKEHOLDERS PLEDGE ACTION FOR THE MARA RIVER BASIN



Eng. Arsene Mukubwa, Programme Coordinator, LVBC-IWRM Programme, explains a point to the Cabinet Secretary for East African Community (EAC), ASALs and Regional Development, Republic of Kenya, Hon. Beatrice Askul, Bomet Governor H.E. Prof. Hillary Barchok, and other guests during their visit to the LVBC stand

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Stakeholders from the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania have renewed their commitment to the sustainable management and conservation of the Mara River Basin, calling for stronger collaboration, ecosystem restoration and coordinated action to address growing environmental and climate-related pressures facing the shared resource.

The commitment was made during the Mara River Basin Stakeholder Engagement Forum, convened by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) alongside the 15th Mara Day Celebrations in Bomet County, Republic of Kenya, under the theme *"Mara River, Diverse Lives: Keep It Thriving."*...Cond Pg2





LVBC Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire delivers his remarks during the Stakeholders' Forum convened as part of the 15th Mara Day celebrations at Bomet University.

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The forum brought together representatives from national and local governments, basin institutions, Water Resources Users Associations (WRUAs), community organizations, academia, development partners, the private sector, civil society and local communities from both Kenya and Tanzania. Stakeholders noted that the Mara River Basin continues to face significant environmental, socio-economic, governance and transboundary challenges.

The Basin plays a critical role in supporting livelihoods, biodiversity, agriculture, tourism, energy production and water supply across Kenya and Tanzania. Among the major concerns identified were deforestation, degradation of riparian areas, unsustainable land-use practices, pollution, increasing water abstractions and degradation of critical catchment areas, including the Mau Forest Complex. Participants also highlighted the impacts of climate change and variability, including prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall and floods, which are placing additional pressure on water resources, ecosystems, agricultural production and community livelihoods.

Increasing competition for land and water resources, human-wildlife conflicts, inadequate financing for conservation, weak enforcement of environmental regulations and limited institutional coordination were also identified as challenges requiring urgent attention. Stakeholders prioritized the restoration of degraded catchments and water towers through reforestation, agroforestry, bamboo planting, wetland restoration and other ecosystem rehabilitation measures. They also called for sustainable financing to support ecosystem restoration and community-based conservation initiatives.

Other priority actions include strengthening Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), promoting climate-resilient livelihoods, improving monitoring and enforcement of environmental regulations, and strengthening community participation in decision-making and conservation programmes.



Deputy Executive Secretary Eng. Coletha Ruhamy presents the resolutions of the Stakeholders' Forum at the climax of the event.

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They further proposed innovative financing mechanisms, including Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), enhanced environmental education and capacity building, stronger research and data-sharing systems, and improved coordination between Kenya and Tanzania. Given that the Mara River Basin is a shared resource, participants emphasized the importance of strengthening transboundary cooperation between Kenya and Tanzania through joint planning, information sharing, harmonized policies and regulations, coordinated monitoring and implementation of joint interventions.

The forum underscored that effective conservation of the Mara cannot be achieved by one institution or country acting alone. Sustaining the Basin requires collective responsibility and long-term partnerships among all stakeholders. At the climax of the celebrations held at Bomet Stadium, the Cabinet Secretary for East African Community (EAC), Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) and Regional Development of the Republic of Kenya, who served as the Chief Guest, reaffirmed the Government of Kenya's commitment to conserving the Mara ecosystem.

"I want to state and reaffirm the Republic of Kenya's commitment towards conserving the Mara ecosystem, which is a source of livelihoods for millions of people within the East African Community," the Cabinet Secretary said.



Cabinet Secretary for East African Community (EAC), Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) & Regional Development Hon. Beatrice Askul (left) confers with LVBC Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire.

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The Cabinet Secretary for Water and Irrigation, Republic of Kenya, who also attended the event, underscored the Mara River's importance to communities, agriculture, livestock, tourism and wildlife in both Kenya and Tanzania.

"The Mara supports livestock, agriculture, tourism and wildlife in Kenya before flowing into Tanzania, where it supports the Serengeti ecosystem and communities along the river. What happens upstream affects those who live downstream. We cannot manage the Mara River as Kenya alone, and Tanzania cannot manage it alone," the Cabinet Secretary said.

The LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr Masinde Bwire, called for decisive action to safeguard the ecosystem, stressing that the time for action is now.

"The time for action is now. If we protect its catchment, restore degraded ecosystems, safeguard wetlands, manage water sustainably, reduce pollution, promote climate-smart livelihoods and empower communities, the Mara can continue to support life, biodiversity and livelihoods for generations to come," Dr Bwire said.



RWANDA, LVBC REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO STRONGER REGIONAL COOPERATION



H.E. Ernest Rwamucyo, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Kenya (left) with LVBC Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire during his recent visit to the LVBC Headquarters in Kisumu.

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening cooperation with the Republic of Rwanda.

The resolve was made when the High Commissioner of the Republic of Rwanda to Kenya, H.E. Ernest Rwamucyo, paid a courtesy visit to LVBC Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire on September 5.

The visit provided an opportunity for LVBC and the Government of Rwanda to review their longstanding partnership and explore areas for deeper collaboration in environmental management, climate resilience, water resources management and regional integration.

Dr. Bwire highlighted Rwanda's longstanding role as an important partner of LVBC since the Commission's establishment, noting that several programmes and projects have been implemented in the country to promote sustainable development and protect the Lake Victoria Basin.

Among these is the **Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II)**, supported by the World Bank, through which Rwanda and other EAC Partner States worked together to address environmental challenges and improve natural resource management within the basin.

The Commission also highlighted the **Adapting to Climate Change in the Lake Victoria Basin** Project, funded by the Adaptation Fund through UNEP. The project, which concluded in August 2023, supported climate adaptation initiatives, including interventions in Kirehe District.

Dr. Bwire noted that the initiatives demonstrate the importance of collective regional action in strengthening communities' resilience to climate change and promoting sustainable development across the basin...**Contd Pg6**



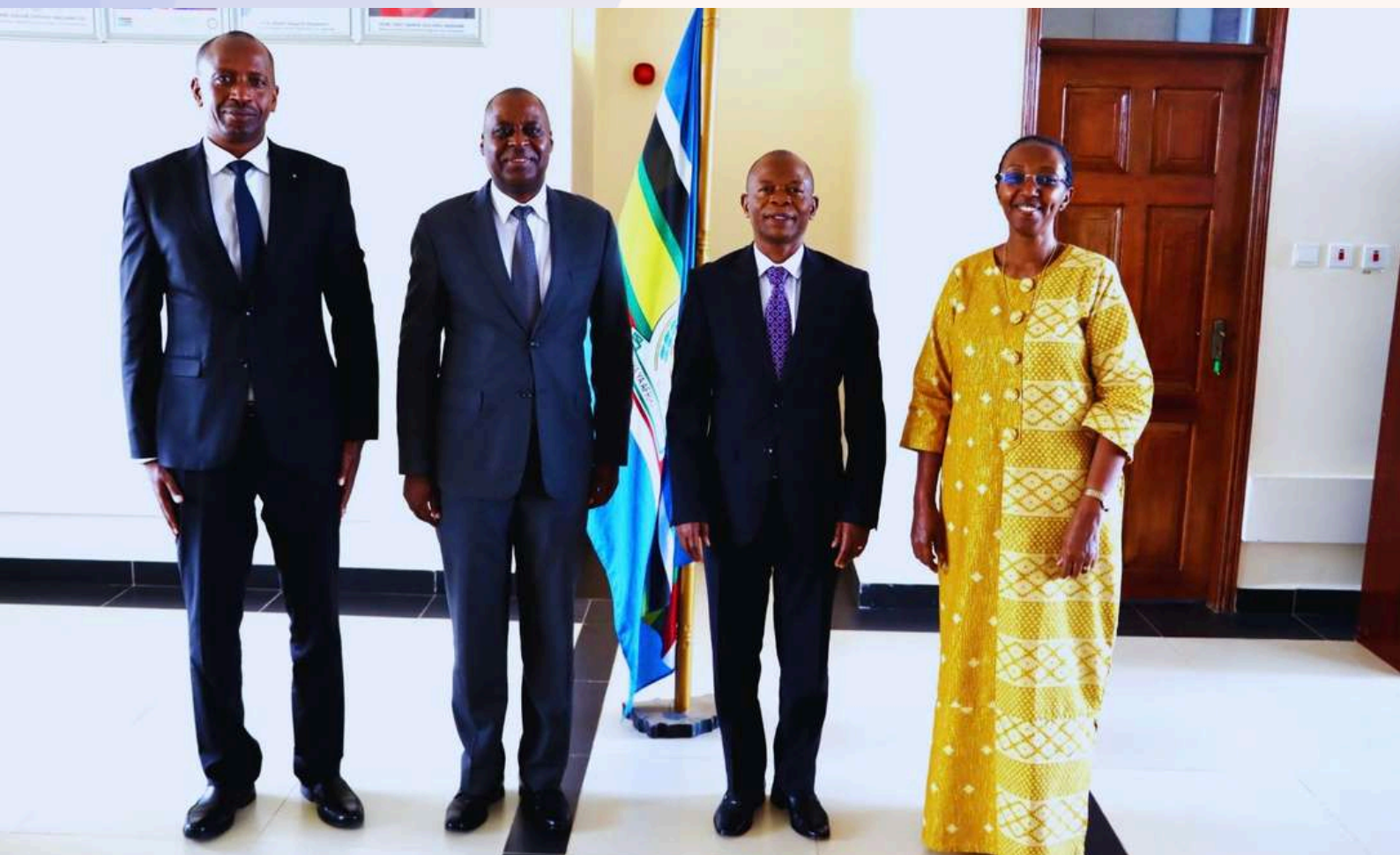
H.E. Ernest Rwamucyo, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Kenya, poses for a photo with LVBC staff.

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The discussions also focused on the ongoing Lake Victoria Basin Integrated Water Resources Management Programme (LVB-IWRMP), which is co-funded by the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union. The programme supports EAC Partner States, including Rwanda, in strengthening integrated water resources management and identifying and advancing priority investments across the basin.

A key investment under the programme is the planned Kigali Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant, which will be implemented by Rwanda's Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC). The facility is expected to contribute to improved sanitation and water quality by reducing the flow of wastewater into regional river systems that ultimately connect to the Lake Victoria Basin.

During the visit, LVBC also recognised the contribution of the Government of Rwanda and H.E. President Paul Kagame to the EAC integration process, including support for EAC Heads of State Summits and the broader regional integration agenda.



H.E. Ernest Rwamucyo, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Kenya, with LVBC Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire and Deputy Executive Secretary Eng. Coletha Ruhamya.

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The Commission further commended Rwanda's ministries responsible for environment and water, together with their technical teams, for their continued collaboration and engagement in advancing shared regional priorities. The visit comes at a time when countries in the Lake Victoria Basin are facing interconnected challenges related to climate change, water resources, environmental degradation and sustainable development, underscoring the importance of strengthened regional cooperation.

On his part, H.E. Ernest Rwamucyo, High Commissioner of the Republic of Rwanda to Kenya, reaffirmed his Government's commitment to supporting LVBC in fulfilling its mandate.

"I want to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Rwanda to ensuring that LVBC performs and achieves its role for the betterment of the people of the larger EAC," said H.E. Rwamucyo.

The High Commissioner's visit reaffirmed the shared commitment between Rwanda and LVBC to strengthening partnerships and advancing regional initiatives that contribute to sustainable development, environmental protection and the wellbeing of communities across the East African Community.



SCORE CARD

HOW STRICT SUPERVISION ENSURED THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF MRCC

BEFORE



Soon after taking the helm of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) on May 1, 2022, Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire, together with her Deputy Executive Secretary, Eng. Coletha Ruhanya, embarked on a rigorous programme to oversee the construction of a state-of-the-art Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Ilimela, Mwanza, United Republic of Tanzania.

Through constant supervision and regular monitoring of the project, the LVBC leadership ensured that construction progressed as planned, culminating in the successful completion of the facility. Construction of the centre, at a cost of USD 1.87 million, officially commenced on December 13, 2023. The Government of Uganda (GoU) and the United Republic of Tanzania (URT), through the Lake Victoria Basin Commission and with support from the African Development Bank (AfDB), procured a contractor to design and construct the facility.

Now officially completed and awaiting inauguration, the MRCC in Mwanza stands as a significant investment in strengthening maritime safety, emergency response and coordination on Lake Victoria.

MRCC





SCORE CARD

HOW STRICT SUPERVISION ENSURED THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF MRCC

AFTER



The construction of the state-of-the-art facility marks a major milestone in enhancing maritime safety and emergency response capacity across the Lake Victoria region. The centre has been specifically designed to address critical maritime safety challenges facing water users on the lake.

The facility features a fully equipped control and call centre for receiving emergency calls through the 110-emergency code, a first-aid clinic and advanced communication systems. These include the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) and Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS), which will significantly enhance safety communications, navigation and distress-response capabilities for water users.

The main MRCC building incorporates a wide range of modern amenities and features designed to support round-the-clock operations. These include external stone cladding, accessible toilets, a self-contained gatekeeper's residence and CCTV surveillance systems. The Regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre is a key component of the Multinational Lake Victoria Maritime Communications and Transport (MLVMCT) project, coordinated by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission.

Speaking about the completion of the project, LVBC Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire said:

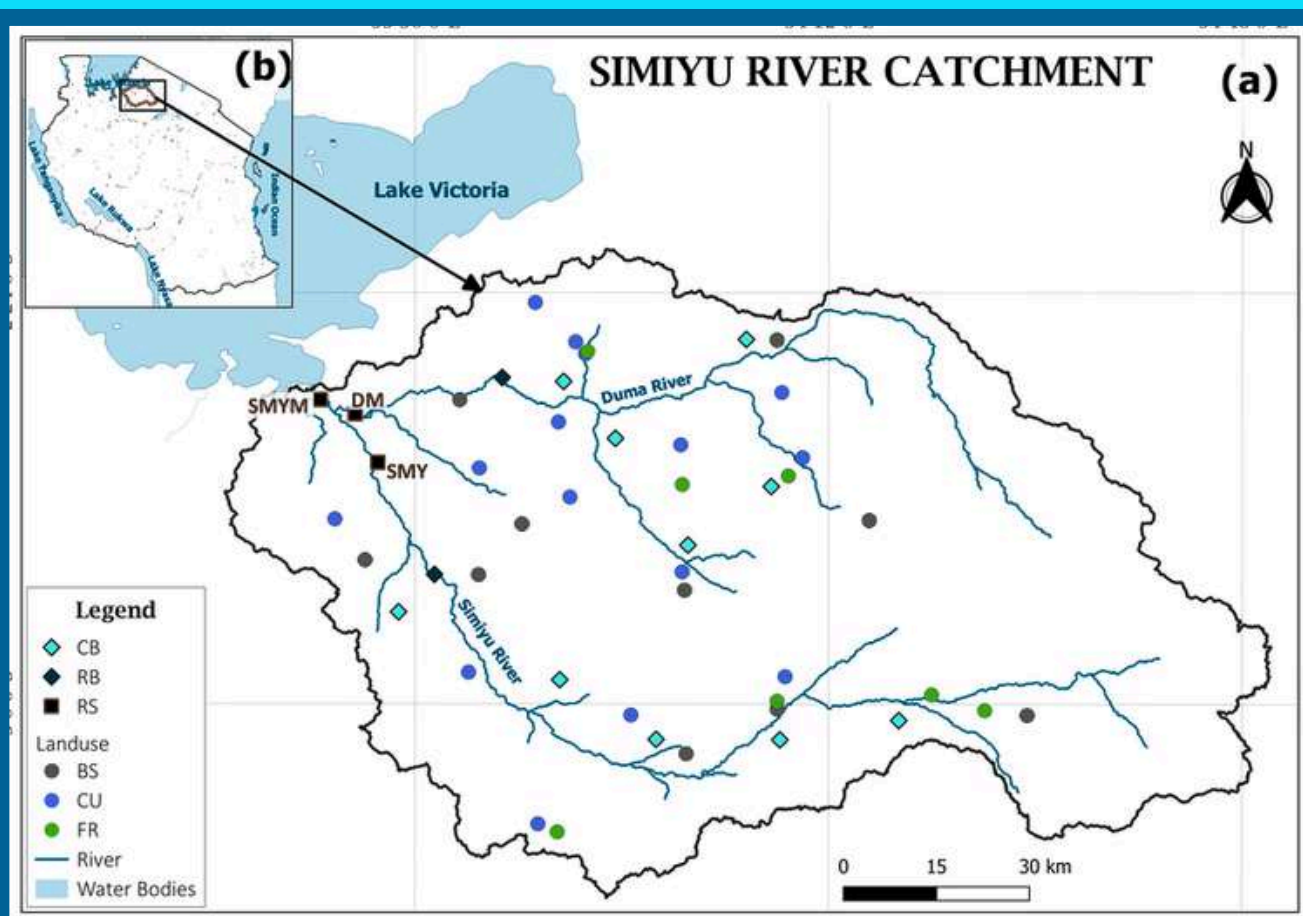
"As a Commission, we were committed to delivering this project on time so that the maritime challenges in the region can be addressed. I am happy that we have achieved this milestone."

MRCC



Facts About East African Waters

River Simiyu



River Simiyu is one of the important rivers found in **Northern Tanzania within the Lake Victoria Basin**. It rises in the highlands of Tanzania and flows generally northwards before emptying into Lake Victoria. The river is approximately **180–200 kilometres** long, although estimates vary depending on how its headwaters are defined. Its depth is not uniform because it changes with rainfall, season, and location; it is generally relatively shallow in many sections, with deeper areas occurring along some channels and pools.

River Simiyu is important to the communities living within its catchment because it provides water for **domestic activities, livestock, irrigation and agriculture**. It also supports wetlands and other ecosystems and contributes freshwater and sediments to Lake Victoria. During the rainy season, water levels and flow increase significantly, while during dry periods some sections may experience reduced flow. The river faces challenges such as **soil erosion, pollution from agricultural activities, land degradation and changes in rainfall patterns**. Overall, River Simiyu is an important water resource for the people and environment of the Lake Victoria Basin.



PICTORIAL



LVBC Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire addresses delegates during the Stakeholders' Forum.



A packed audience follows proceedings during the Stakeholders' Forum at Bomet University.



A multisectoral team comprising LVBC's FPLV Project Team and SDPW officials at RCMRD in Nairobi for benchmarking of PV solar power systems.



LVBC's FPLV Project Team and SDPW officials pose for a photo at RCMRD in Nairobi during the benchmarking of PV solar power systems.

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PICTORIAL



Cabinet Secretary for East African Community (EAC), Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) & Regional Development Hon. Beatrice Askul receives a gift from LVBC Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire during the Mara Day celebrations.



Cabinet Secretary for Water, Sanitation and Irrigation Eng. Eric Mugaa (right) receives a gift from LVBC Executive Secretary Dr. Masinde Bwire during the Mara Day celebrations.



Dignitaries follow proceedings during the 15th Mara Day celebrations at Bomet Stadium.



Traditional dancers entertain guests during the 15th Mara Day celebrations at Bomet Stadium.

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