

Uganda National Workshop on the Water Convention

15th- 16th February 2022

Entebbe, Uganda

- Hon. Minister of Environment and Water, Republic of Uganda/ Member of Sectoral Council of Ministers for Lake Victoria Basin,
- Your Excellency Ambassador of the European Union to Uganda.
- Hon. United Nations Resident Coordinator in Uganda
- Hon. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water and Environment/ Member of the Coordination Committee for Lake Victoria Basin.
- Chair of the Bureau of the Water Convention.
- Secretary of the Water Convention at the UN Economic Commission for Europe.
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.
- All Protocols observed

My name is Isaac Nyarwaya, the Acting Executive Secretary for Lake Victoria Basin Commission.

Let me sincerely thank Secretariat of the Water Convention for inviting LVBC to participate in this workshop and honoring us with an opportunity to facilitate a session. I thank you so much Sonja and Remy.

My role this morning is to facilitate an important session that will focus on **“UGANDA’S WATER CONTEXT** (Both National and Transboundary)”. The private sector talks of “Captains of Industry” to describe key players in private sector development. This morning we are honored to have three gentlemen, I am calling *the Generals of the Water Sector* who have made tremendous impact to the water sector in the East African Region and beyond. They will help us break down the topic of discussion and help answer the questions that will come from the floor.

I will come back to them in a minute.

Let me first note that Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) is a technical institution of the EAC that is responsible for promoting, facilitating and coordinating different actors towards sustainable development and poverty eradication of the Lake Victoria Basin. This is done through:

- Harmonization of policies, laws, regulations and standards.
- Promotion of stakeholders' participation in sustainable development of natural resources.
- Monitoring, evaluation and compliance with agreed actions.
- Prepare and harmonize negotiating positions for the Partner States on matters concerning the Lake Victoria Basin.
- Etc.

The 1st EAC Council of Ministers declared the basin as a 'Regional Economic Growth Zone' and 'an Area of Common Economic Interest' for the people of East Africa that should be exploited in a coordinated manner so as to maximize its economic and social benefits as well as take care of any environmental and social concerns.

Thereafter, several milestones were achieved which include:

- ✓ Partnership Agreement signed between EAC and Development Partners interested in promoting sustainable development of Lake Victoria Basin on 24th April 2001.
- ✓ Protocol for Sustainable Development of Lake Victoria Basin signed on 29th November 2003.
- ✓ Ratification of the Protocol in December 2004.
- ✓ Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) declared effective by the EAC Council of Ministers in July 2005.

The Governance/ Coordination of the Commission includes:

- ✓ Focal Points in the Ministry in Charge of EAC Affairs in each of the Five Partner States (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda).
- ✓ Sectoral Committees.
- ✓ Coordination Committee composed of Permanent/ Principal Secretaries from Ministries of Environment and/or Water.

- ✓ Sectoral Council of Ministers composed of Ministers from Ministries of Environment and/or Water.
- ✓ EAC Council of Ministers.
- ✓ Summit (Heads of States) from all the Six Partner States.

Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen:

In the context of our topic of discussion in this session, I would like to note the following:

- The Protocol for Sustainable Development of Lake Victoria Basin has made significant contribution in terms of ensuring protection and sustainable use of transboundary natural resources through cooperation. This protocol is in line with the provisions of the Water Convention.
- We recognize other regional cooperation frameworks in place and the spirit is to promote synergies and cooperation among different institutions.
- The regional legal and policy instruments will always be required to operationalize the regional cooperation frameworks. Such include the Water Resources Management Bill, Water Abstraction Policy, applicable to countries in EAC where Uganda belongs.
- The bilateral cooperation of sub-basins are proving to be significant building blocks to realizing the benefits of regional cooperation in the bigger basins. The example of Sio- Malaba-Malakisi between Kenya and Uganda, Mara River Basin between Kenya and Tanzania are such examples.
- The national frameworks (policies, strategies, etc) play a key role in operationalizing the regional frameworks. Thus, when countries do well, the regional will do well as well.
- When we talk of transboundary as between countries, let us also remember that transboundary also applies to the national levels. We are increasingly seeing devolved structures of Governance for example in Kenya and other countries as well are decentralized. You have many water bodies that are shared by more than one County/District. So, there will be a lot to learn from the Water Convention in terms of its application at national levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As we discuss the national and regional context of Uganda, let us be cognizant that Uganda is an active member of the East African Community (EAC) and the rest of the Partner States in the Community will be looking to Uganda to share their lessons in the journey towards Accession to the Water Convention.

At LVBC, it is our belief and desire that all the Countries in the region move together in pursuit of a good cause such as this that Uganda is pursuing.

In line with the mandate of LVBC, the Commission will be available to partner with relevant institutions to ensure that the rest of countries in EAC follow the path of Uganda and we think this is urgent.

It will be a huge honor for the EAC region to see Uganda become Party to the Water Convention before the 10th Meeting of the Parties (MOP 10) in 2024.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I do not want to eat into the time of our distinguished discussants. I will request each one of them to come forward and each will have maximum 15 minutes of presentation and thereafter, have 20- 30 minutes of discussion including questions and answers.

1. **Transboundary water cooperation between Uganda and neighboring countries** (Mr. Sowed Sewagudde, Ag. Commissioner for International and Transboundary Water Resources Management- Uganda).
2. **National Water Policy and the Convention** (Mr. Edward Martin Rwarinda, Ag. Assistant Commissioner for Water Resources Planning and Regulation- Uganda).
3. **Uganda's transboundary cooperation agreements, institutions and activities and their alignment with the Water Convention** (Dr. Callist Tindimugaya, Commissioner for Water Resources Planning and Regulation- Uganda).

