



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, TOURISM AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, TOURISM AND NATURAL
RESOURCES ON THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LAKE
VICTORIA BASIN COMMISSION AND THE LAKE VICTORIA FISHERIES
ORGANISATION**

**DAR ES SALAAM, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
5TH -8TH MARCH, 2023**

**CLERK'S CHAMBERS
3RD FLOOR, EALA WING
EAC HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
ARUSHA**

APRIL, 2023

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ATNR	:	Agriculture Tourism and Natural Resources
BOD	:	Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand
CIFA	:	Committee for the Inland Fisheries of Africa
CDDs	:	Community Driven Development Initiatives
EAC	:	East African Community
EADB	:	East African Development Bank
EAFO	:	East African Fisheries Organisation
EAFRO	:	East African Fisheries Research Organization
EALA	:	East African Legislative Assembly
EA-SA-IO	:	Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean
FAO	:	Food and Agriculture Organization for United Nations
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	:	Global Environment Facility
IFAD	:	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IUCEA	:	Inter University Council of East Africa
KMFRI	:	Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute
LTA	:	Lake Tanganyika Authority
LVBC	:	Lake Victoria Basin Commission
LVFS	:	Lake Victoria Fisheries Service
LVFO	:	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization
LVEMP	:	Lake Victoria Environment Programme
LVWARSAN	:	Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Programme
LVB-IWRM	:	Lake Victoria Basin Integrated Water Resources Management
LVB-LWIS	:	Lake Victoria Basin -Lake wide Inclusive Sanitation

MDAs	:	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MNLVMCT	:	Maritime Safety, Communication and Transport
MLVMCT	:	Multinational Lake Victoria Maritime Communications and Transport
NaFIRRI	:	National Fisheries Resource Research Institute
PHE	:	Population, Health and Environment
PIK	:	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
RPSC	:	Regional Policy Steering Committee
RFMO	:	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
RCEE	:	Research Centre for Environmental Economics, Heidelberg University
SECOM	:	Sectoral Council of Ministers for Lake Victoria
SoBR	:	State of the Basin Report
TAFIRI	:	Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute
UNEP	:	United Nations Environment Program

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Rule 81 and Annex 5 (D) of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, some of the functions of the Committee on Agriculture Tourism and Natural Resources (ATNR) are to assess and evaluate activities of the Community, carryout relevant research and evaluate action programmes in their respective mandate.

The broad function of the Committee on ATNR hinge on Chapters eighteen, nineteen and twenty of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (EAC). Chapter nineteen provides for Co-operation in Environment and Natural Resources Management. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and provisions of the Treaty, the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) and the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) fall under the mandate of the Committee on ATNR.

Therefore, the Committee on ATNR conducted an oversight activity to assess the activities of the LVBC and LVFO. The activity took place in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania because the Management of the two institutions were in Dar es Salaam to engage with the Committee on Legal, Rules and Privileges which was undertaking an oversight activity that involved all institutions of the Community.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 THE LAKE VICTORIA BASIN COMMISSION

The establishment of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) is provided for under Article 114 (2) (b) (vi) of the Treaty. The operations of the Commission are governed by the Protocol for Sustainable Development of Lake Victoria Basin (LVB) 2003. The functions of the LVBC include:

- i. Co-ordinating the harmonisation of policies, laws, regulations and standards concerning the Lake Victoria Basin;
- ii. Promote stakeholder participation in sustainable development of the natural resources of the Lake Victoria Basin;
- iii. Provide guidance on the implementation of the sectoral projects and programs;
- iv. Providing capacity building and institutional development within the Lake Victoria Basin;
- v. Facilitate and co-ordinate security and safety of navigation on the Lake Victoria;

- vi. Promote research development and demonstration;
- vii. Monitor, evaluate and ensure compliance with policies and agreed actions, concerning the Lake Victoria Basin;
- viii. Preparation and harmonisation of negotiating positions for the Partner States against any other State on matters concerning the Lake Victoria Basin;
- ix. Receiving and considering reports from Partner States' institutions on their activities relating to the management of the Lake Victoria Basin; and
- x. Initiate and promote programmes that target poverty eradication.

2.2 THE LAKE VICTORIA FISHERIES ORGANISATION

The Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) was established by the Convention for the Establishment of Lake Victoria Fisheries Organizations which was signed on 30th June, 1994 by three Contracting Parties (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). Article 9 (3) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community recognizes LVFO as one of the institutions of EAC. The functions of LVFO are:

- i. Promote the proper management and optimum utilization of the fisheries and other resources of the East African Community water bodies;
- ii. Enhance capacity building of existing institutions and develop additional institutions dedication to, or likely to contribute to, the purpose of the Convention in cooperation with existing institutions established in or by the Contracting Parties and with such international, regional or non-governmental organisations as may be appropriate;
- iii. Provide a forum for discussion of the impacts of initiatives dealing with the environment and water quality in relation to fisheries and aquaculture resources of the EAC;
- iv. Provide for the conduct of research concerning the fisheries and aquaculture resources and related activities;
- v. Encourage, recommend, coordinate and, as appropriate, undertake training and extension activities in all aspects of aquaculture and fisheries;
- vi. Consider and advise on the effects of the direct or indirect introduction of any non-indigenous aquatic animals or plants into the East African Community water bodies and to adopt measures regarding the introduction, monitoring, control or elimination of any such animals or plants;

- vii. Serve as a clearing-house and data bank for information on fisheries and aquaculture products, and promote the dissemination of information, without prejudice to industrial property rights, by any appropriate form of publication.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY

The main objectives of the oversight activity were:

- i. To assess the activities, achievements and challenges of the LVBC and the LVFO;
- ii. To identify itself with the future development plans of each institution;
- iii. To learn about the cooperation areas between the two institutions i.e. LVBC and LVFO; and;
- iv. To gather relevant recommendations to the Partner States, Council and EALA.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

While conducting the oversight activity the Committee:

- i. Received presentations from the Management of the LVBC and LVFO;
- ii. Held an interactive meeting with the Management of LVBC and LVFO;
- iii. Prepared the report on the subject matter for consideration by the Assembly.

5.0 PRESENTATIONS FROM THE INSTITUTIONS

5.1 THE LAKE VICTORIA BASIN COMMISSION

5.1.1 Introduction on the LVBC

The Lake Victoria is Africa's largest lake with 68,870 km² Surface Area while its catchment area (basin) covers 184,000 KM². The lake is one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world and an important source of livelihoods for millions of people. Lake Victoria Basin (LVB) comprises 11 defined Sub-basins (watersheds) including the Kagera River Basin, the Mara River Basin, the Simiyu River Basin, and the Nzoia River Basin. Watersheds with largest flows to the Lake Victoria are the Kagera River Basin 32.7% and the Nzoia River Basin 14.6%.

The Lake Victoria is a major source of fish for domestic consumption and exportation contributing to 400 million USD annually. Mining activities have recently increased in the Lake Victoria Basin with more gold, diamond, base metals and hydrocarbons.

The functions of the LVBC are limited to the Lake Victoria Basin and, therefore, the current mandate of the LVBC is limited to the Partner States that are within the Lake Victoria Basin.

5.1.2 Programs and Projects Undertaken by the LVBC

The programmes and project development are informed by the aspirations and the development objectives of the EAC Partner States and research-evidence base. The Sectoral Council of Ministers for Lake Victoria (SECOM) and Regional Policy Steering Committee (RPSC) provide oversight and guidance to ensure effective coordination and implementation. The programmes and projects undertaken by the LVBC include the Lake Victoria Environment Programme (LVEMP I&II), Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Programme (LVWARSAN I&II) Population, Health and Environment (PHE) and Planning for Resilience in East Africa through Policy, Adaptation, Research and Economic Development (PREPARED).

The Ongoing Projects under the LVBC

PROJECT	FOCUS	ESTIMATED COST	DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	COVERAGE
LVB-IWRM	IWRM (Sanitation HPis)	EURO40 Million (USD 42.60)USD	KfW & EU	BI,KE,RW,TZ,UG
MNLVMCT	Maritime safety, Communication &Transport	USD 28 Million	AfDB	KE,TZ,UG
LVBC HQs	Institutional capacity	USD3.5 Million	Partner States	N/A
ACC-LVB	Climate Change adaptation	USD 5 Million	Adaptation Fund	BR,KEN, RW,TZ, UG
Scale WAYS	Research in resilience of land and water	Euro 0.443 of 1.6 Million	IIASA/ADC	BR,KEN,RW,TZ,UG
NCCR	Climate Resilience (water quality policy harmonization)	USD 0.75 of 30 Million	WB	NEL sub-basin countries (6 EAC PSs +DRC

Source: Presentation by LVBC before the Committee

5.1.3 Construction of the LVBC Headquarters

The EAC is financing the construction of the LVBC headquarters in Kisumu, Kenya. The LVBC received an initial funding of 1.35M USD in April 2019 and USD 950,000 in June 2022 towards the second phase. The balance of USD 1.24 Million will be disbursed during this Financial Year 2022/23. 75% of the works marked for the first Phase have been completed with remaining works carried over to the next phase of construction.

The Committee was informed that the construction of the subsequent phases required an estimated USD 2.19 million as per the initial estimates at the time (This amount is now prone to variation due several factors including the COVID 19 post effects and the war in

Ukraine). Consequently, the Commission had to downsize the project in order to work with available resources at the time.

The design of the building considered the climate change factors including potential flooding risk given the water table and the findings from the topographic survey. Other factors considered include use of renewable energy and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to reduce the impact on the environment.

5.1.4 Efforts to clean the Lake Victoria and its Surroundings

The Committee was informed that LVBC have several projects aimed at cleaning Lake Victoria. The clean-up efforts are ongoing and inclusive as coordinated by LVBC. Some of the initiatives aimed at cleaning up Lake Victoria involves;

- i. Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (LVEMP I & II): This was a regional project implemented by the LVBC (1996-2018). The project aimed at improving the environmental management of the lake and its basin. It focused on addressing pollution from domestic and industrial sources as well as improving the management of solid waste and removal of water hyacinth (mechanical, biological, and manual). The Private Sector was engaged in a Green Growth programme that enhanced cleaner production and resource use efficiency in the region targeted industries in the basin;
- ii. Policies and strategies: With efforts from LVBC, Partner States developed National policies and regulations aimed at reducing pollution in the lake. LVBC has developed some policies and strategies such as wastewater discharge standards for EAC, the LVB Integrated Water Resources Management (LVB-IWRM), and Lake Wide Inclusive Sanitation (LVB-LWIS);
- iii. Community-based initiatives: LVBC partners with community-based initiatives aimed at reducing pollution in the lake. For example, the Kisumu County government launched a Clean Lake Victoria Campaign, which involves the removal of floating debris and litter from the lake and its shoreline.
- iv. Research and monitoring: Several research and monitoring initiatives are underway to understand the pollution sources and impacts on the lake and to include the LVBC plans in the development of a State of the Basin Report (SoBR).

5.1.5 Sources of Pollution in Lake Victoria

The pollution in Lake Victoria originates from point source pollution such as industrial discharge and non-point source pollution, which originates from diffuse sources such as runoff from agricultural fields or urban areas. Some examples of point source pollution in Lake Victoria include:

- i. Industrial discharge: Industrial activities around the lake, such as mining and manufacturing release pollutants into the Lake;
- ii. Sewage treatment plants: Sewage treatment plants can be a significant source of pollutants, including nutrients and organic matter;
- iii. Oil spills: Accidental spills of oil and other hazardous substances.

The LVBC through LVEMP phase I was able to map about 1,100 industries existed around the basin in 2010. During LVEMP phase II LVBC reached about 20% of those industries through capacity building and nearly half of those industries reached have adopted cleaner production technologies. This is only 10% of the total industries along the basin.

On the other hand, the non-point source pollution in Lake Victoria includes:

- i. Agricultural runoff such as fertilizers and pesticides contribute to nutrient pollution and sedimentation;
- ii. Runoff from urban areas contain pollutants such as oil, chemicals and litter;
- iii. Deforestation and land use changes contribute to soil erosion, sedimentation and nutrient pollution;
- iv. Overgrazing lead to soil erosion and nutrient runoff into the lake; and
- v. Anthropogenic activities.

5.1.6 Efforts to combat Pollution in the Lake Victoria Basin

The LVBC through its Projects and Programmes have been actively working to address the problem of plastic waste in the Basin. Some of the measures taken by the Commission to address the plastic waste include:

- i. Awareness creation and education through engaging the communities, youth and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the negative impacts of plastic waste on the environment and human health. The commission has also been providing

education on proper waste management and the importance of recycling and waste reduction;

- ii. Ban of plastic bag: LVBC through EAC HQs has supported the implementation of plastic bag bans in several countries in the LVB. Some Partner States have implemented ban of use of plastics such as Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania. The ban has helped to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags;
- iii. Waste management: LVBC is working with local governments and waste management companies to improve waste collection, transportation, and disposal. The commission is also promoting the development of waste-to-energy projects to reduce the amount of waste directed to landfills.

5.1.7 Sustainable Funding

The LVBC developed a resource mobilization strategy, which provides for various alternative funding mechanism proposals. Such proposals will be developed further through wide consultation among the key stakeholders, especially the Partner States. The proposals include:

- i. Promoting the use of Public-Private Partnerships for key infrastructure investments;
- ii. Establishing the Lake Victoria Basin Development Fund;
- iii. Exploring opportunities for generating internal revenue to fund a portion of recurrent expenditures. Such opportunities include the LVBC Headquarters that is under construction.

With regard to projects, the LVBC ensures their sustainability after handing them to Partner States through several steps, including:

- i. Partner States participation in all stages of project planning, implementation, and monitoring;
- ii. Capacity building to Partner States by providing training and technical support to communities to enhance their skills and knowledge in project management, maintenance, and sustainability;
- iii. Institutional strengthening by working with local institutions such as water user associations, community-based organizations, and local government authorities to strengthen their capacity to manage and sustain the project;
- iv. Sustainability planning by working with the community to develop a sustainability plan for the projects. The plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders,

identifies potential sources of funding, and establishes a system for monitoring and evaluation;

- v. Monitoring and evaluation;
- vi. Networking and partnerships by working with other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations, development partner's agencies, and the private sector to support projects and programmes.

5.1.8 Safety and Security in the Lake Victoria Basin

The Committee was informed that Maritime Safety and Security remains a challenge in the Lake Victoria Basin. Development Partners have supported LVBC through various initiatives including projects and programmes on maritime safety and security. Currently, the African Development Bank is supporting LVBC in the implementation of the Multinational Lake Victoria Maritime Communications and Transport (MLVMCT) project. However, Partner States financial contributions towards addressing challenges of maritime safety and security in Lake Victoria need to be increased to attract support from Development Partners.

The LVBC is looking forward to improving maritime safety on Lake Victoria by enhancing Search and Rescue (SAR) services, installing Aids to Navigation equipment, updating navigational charts, amendment of Lake Victoria Transport Act 2007 and formulation of relevant Regulations under the Act. All these initiatives will reduce the number of marine accidents and incidents occurring on the Lake Victoria.

With regard to joint security, the Committee was informed that there are other forums within EAC where Security Authorities from Partner States are meeting on matters of joint security in Lake Victoria. However, the joint marine security exercises are not conducted due to limited financial resources. LVBC has already requested Partner States to formulate Regional Lake Victoria Maritime Security Policy and Action Plan.

5.1.9 Efforts to support afforestation

The LVBC supports afforestation and land degradation known as catchment management and wetland restoration where at least 20,217 hectares of land have been improved through Sustainable Land Management practices and established native tree nurseries in the Basin. Some of the specific afforestation and reforestation efforts undertaken by the LVBC are:

- i. Promotion of agroforestry practices that combine the planting of trees which grow crops to improve soil fertility, reduce soil erosion, and provide additional sources of income for local communities;
- ii. Establishment of tree nurseries to produce native trees seedlings for distribution to local communities, schools, and other organizations;
- iii. Community mobilization and education;
- iv. The LVBC support efforts for protection and conservation such as existing forests in the Lake Victoria Basin such as Mt. Elgon and Mara Basin.

5.1.10 The Lake Victoria Transport Act, 2007

The Lake Victoria Transport Act, 2007 was enacted to make provisions for the LVBC “to regulate maritime safety and security, to make provision for construction, survey, registration and licensing of all vessels used on the lake, for the safety of passengers and cargo for the competency of masters and crew and for other related matters.” The Committee was informed that the implementation of this legislation is under the Maritime Administrations of the Partner States. The law is not fully implemented because Partner States are favouring their national laws instead of this law. Moreover, key regulations required for the implementation of this law are not in place. The pending regulations are:

- i. The Registration and Licensing of Vessels Regulations;
- ii. The Ship and Port Facility Security Regulations;
- iii. The Prevention of Oil Pollution Regulations;
- iv. The Accident Reporting and Investigation Regulations;
- v. The Compulsory Insurance for third party Liabilities Regulations; and
- vi. The Survey Inspection and Certification Regulations.

The Committee noted that once a Community law is enacted it becomes binding to Partner States and takes precedence over similar National laws as per Article 8 (4) of the Treaty for the establishment of EAC.

5.1.11 The RV Jumuiya

The RV Jumuiya is a research vessel managed by the LVBC. It was made in UK in 1990. The Vessel began its maiden voyage in Lake Nyasa for Lake wide acoustic surveys and other research activities before it was transferred to the Lake Victoria in 2006. The LVBC used the vessel in research under projects and programmes. The Vessel is currently docked in Mwanza awaiting repairs after completion of comprehensive assessment. A

Consultant to repair the Vessel has been identified, awaiting to sign a contract to repair the Vessel. Currently, the vessel is not insured.

5.1.12 Achievements of LVBC

a) Achievements under LVEMP programme includes:

- i. Reduced Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) on pollution loads by about 600 tons/year;
- ii. Improved sanitation: about 330,000 people have access to sanitation;
- iii. 13 urban pollution hotspots supported; and
- iv. At least 20,217 hectares of land have been improved through Sustainable Land Management.

b) Management Practices

- i. Adoption of cleaner production by industries through trainings;
- ii. 704 Community Driven Development Initiatives (CDDs) supported to spur livelihoods through their own prioritized interventions;
- iii. Enhanced community resilient from climate change impacts through adaptation on innovation technology to improve their livelihood: provided alternative livelihoods such as beekeeping to produce honey, livestock fattening, tailoring, and marketing strategy improved. Promoted use of energy serving stoves, enhanced catchment management, installed rainwater harvesting technology, solar water pumps, drip irrigation etc;
- iv. Developed policies and strategies for IWRM, Sanitation and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Basin;
- v. Developed Resource Mobilization Strategy and mapped development partners to strategize in mobilization of resources for projects and programmes to address challenges face Lake Victoria Basin; and
- vi. Organized and convened committee meetings for technical and policy guidance such as Sectoral Council of Ministers Meeting (SECOM) on May 2022 and Joint Regional Policy Steering Committee held from 28th January to 3rd February 2023.

5.1.13 Challenges facing LVBC

- i. Delays in the disbursements of fund to implement regional activities affects implementation of projects.
- ii. Budgetary constraints and understaffing.
- iii. Price variation on the construction of the LVBC Headquarters (in relation to the initial estimates) due to several factors including COVID 19 post effects and the war in Ukraine.
- iv. COVID 19 and lockdown delayed implementation of projects.
- v. Country procedures delay implementation of projects and programs.
- vi. Stress within the Lake – overfishing, poor water quality, fluctuating water level.
- vii. Stress on Lake shores-construction and farming in shoreline, conversion of wetlands into unsustainable land use practices.
- viii. Stresses from the basin such as land degradation, deforestation, land cover change/vegetation change, biodiversity loss and catchment fragmentation.
- ix. Wetland degradation.
- x. Pollution (sedimentation, plastic waste and other solid waste and wastewater discharge).
- xi. Climate change impacts (floods and drought).
- xii. Industrial growth and unsustainable practices e.g. Sand mine in Bugolobi, Kampala and the Gold Mine in Nyamongo, Tanzania.

5.1.14 Recommendations from LVBC

- i. In a view to address the different prevailing and emerging environmental issues pertaining the Lake Victoria Basin, there is high need for Partner States in collaboration with Development Partners to support the initiatives and mechanisms in place or future, which are geared to pragmatically identify and quantify issues, provide information on trends, and support in providing & implementing innovative solutions. Such initiatives include but are not limited to, development of robust strategies & action plans, decision support /knowledge management systems (incl. Water/Environmental Information Systems, data and information sharing mechanism) and enhancing the mobilization of available financial resources for regional bodies.
- ii. The current budgetary constraints exacerbated by delays in remittance of contribution by Partner State affect the timely implementation of different activities

and interventions. Partner States should be urged to timely disburse their committed contributions.

- iii. Considering the increasing demand in personnel due to the expanding projects portfolio and vast mandate of LVBC that covers fourteen areas of cooperation, the Commission requires that vacant positions be filled timely, and the structure be expanded to include additional expertise necessary for the Commission to effectively fulfil its mandate.

5.2 LAKE VICTORIA FISHERIES ORGANIZATION (LVFO)

5.2.1 Establishment of the LVFO

1. In 1928, the Lake Victoria Fisheries Service (LVFS) was established in Kisumu (Kenya) under the East African High Commission, to regulate the fishery of Lake Victoria and collect fisheries statistics.
2. In 1947, the East African Fisheries Research Organization (EAFRO) was established in Jinja (Uganda), replacing the LVFS. EAFRO was responsible for research on fisheries and on hydrology of Lake Victoria.
3. In 1967, the East African Freshwater Fisheries Organization (EAFRO) was established as a specialized institution of the EAC, replacing the East African Fisheries Research Organization (EAFRO). 1967 was the year when the former EAC was established.
4. In 1977, the former EAC collapsed but the riparian countries continued to collaborate under the FAO Committee for the Inland Fisheries of Africa (CIFA).
5. In 1994, LVFO was established in Jinja through a Convention signed at Kisumu (Kenya). Consequently, the FAO CIFA Subcommittee support ended, and LVFO was then supported by the Partner States through Ministries responsible for fisheries, and later by EAC ministries after streamlining into the EAC. The LVFO Convention was used as one of the major references in drafting of the EAC Treaty.
6. In 1999, with the revival of the new EAC, LVFO (together with EADB and IUCEA) once again became a specialized institution of the community.
7. In 2016, the LVFO Convention was amended with expansion of scope and mandate, and gave aquaculture more prominence as a priority area of focus in addition to capture fisheries.
8. In 2018: Following the expansion of scope and mandate of LVFO in 2016, the EAC Council of Ministers directed LVFO to initiate the change of name from LVFO to East African Fisheries Organisation (EAFO), and conduct a study on institutional and functional analysis of the organization.
9. LVFO is registered under Article 102 of the United Nations Charter as a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO).
10. For new Partner States, membership to the LVFO is not automatic once a country joins the EAC. The Partner State is required to ratify to the LVFO Convention and deposit the ratification instruments with FAO. The current contracting Parties to the

LVFO Convention are the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

5.2.2 The Mandate and Objectives of the Organization

The Mandate of Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) is to coordinate the management and development of fisheries and aquaculture resources in the EAC region in order to contribute to food security and economic growth. The objectives of LVFO are:

- i. Fostering cooperation among the Contracting Parties;
- ii. Harmonizing national measures for the sustainable utilization of the fisheries and aquaculture resources of the East African Community water bodies; and
- iii. Developing and adopting conservation and management measures.

5.2.3 The Economic Contribution of Fisheries to the National GDP's

The Committee was informed that the contribution of fisheries to the economy of the EAC Partner States is grossly undervalued as its contribution to GDP is only restricted to values at production (harvest levels). All contributions along the value chain go into other sectors, for example: products from fish processing industries go to industry, proceeds from fish trade goes to trade etc. The LVFO is working with MDAs from Partner States to roll out a specific programme to establish the proceeds from fisheries related activities at all nodes of the value chain. This will give a more realistic picture than it is today. Statistics shows that the contribution of fisheries sector to the Partner State's GDP has continued to increase. Currently the sector contributes 3.6% in Uganda, 0.6% in Kenya and 1.75% in Tanzania.

5.2.4 Efforts taken by LVFO to enhance the production of fish

The LVFO undertakes various capacity building programs involving sensitization of fishers and other relevant stakeholders on the importance of protecting nursery and breeding grounds, use of proper fishing gears and methods, fish safety and quality assurance, trade – including cross-border fish trade, marketing, undertaking research programmes. The LVFO Secretariat also works very closely with Partner States on developing various fisheries and aquaculture management and development guidelines, standards and protocols that are harmonized at a regional level and implemented nationally.

5.2.5 Efforts taken to safeguard fish species

In ensuring the varieties of fish species are not brought from outside, the LVFO organised a regional level approach through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sectoral Council that urged Partner States to recruit and post Fisheries Inspectors at all border posts. All Partner States complied.

5.2.6 Measures to control Overfishing

The Committee was informed that LVFO is taking the following measures to control overfishing:

- i. Minimum gill net mesh size limit for Nile perch and tilapia of 7" and 5" respectively;
- ii. Minimum mesh size for gill nets targeting dagaa is 10 mm;
- iii. Slot size of Nile perch for capture, processing and trading is from 50 to 85 centimetres;
- iv. Minimum size of Nile tilapia for capture, processing and trading is 25 centimetres;
- v. Prohibition of use of the following gears and methods in Lake Victoria: trawling, beach seines, monofilament nets, cast nets, drift nets, "tycoonning", undersized gill nets, undersized hooks and use of chemicals and explosives;
- vi. Prohibition of vertical joining of nets; and
- vii. Prohibition of gill nets with more than 26 meshes deep.

5.2.7 Status of Fish Farming in the Region

The Committee was informed that the EAC region is gaining prominence in fish farming. The Republic of Uganda is the 3rd highest aquaculture producing country in Africa with 120,000 metric tonnes annually. Kenya is the second with 24,000 Metric tonnes followed by the United Republic of Tanzania with 14,800 Metric tonnes annually.

5.2.8 Relationship between LVFO and LVBC

The LVFO and LVBC are sister institutions of the Community working on the Lake Victoria. LVFO mandate is on fisheries only while the LVBC mandate is for the management of environmental issues in the basin, including both land and water. LVFO and LVBC collaborates in many projects, including the World Bank funded Lake Victoria

Environmental Management Projects (LVEMP Phase I&II). Currently, the two organizations are collaborating in developing a long-term programme for Lake Victoria in collaboration with UNEP and FAO, targeting GEF funding. In discharging their mandates, the two institutions conduct joint initiatives and exchange of data.

5.2.9 Law enforcement

The Committee was informed that whereas the LVFO coordinates sensitization and capacity building programmes through a number of projects such as ECOFISH and Operation Save Nile Perch, issues of enforcement are handled by Partner States using their judicial systems to handle all related offences and other legal issues according to their national laws.

5.2.10 Efforts to promote Eco-tourism in the region

The Committee was informed that development of harmonized guidelines on sport fishing and eco-tourism is considered in the LVFO Fisheries Management Plan III. However, this is yet to be implemented due to diminishing fish stocks in the inland fisheries of the region, as opposed to marine waters where it is more developed especially for deep sea and ornamental fisheries.

5.2.11 Monitoring the Lake Victoria

The LVFO monitors the amount and type of fish in the lake before giving Partner States levels/quantities they can harvest. LVFO also monitors the quantities and types that are landed after being caught (fish catch), fishing effort (type, size and number of fishing boats and gears), number of fishers, and other indicators of the fishery such as Social-economics, gender, etc.

5.2.12 Key Achievements of LVFO

- i. Increase in Aquaculture engagements with the Stimulus package plus IFAD project;
- ii. Industrial Processing Power- More than 17 Industrial processing Plants in the Republic of Uganda, Republic of Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania processing fish from Lake Victoria;

- iii. Diversification of fish products and marketing e g live fish marketing, production of fish sausages and other products;
- iv. Promoting Value addition of Dagaa through improved handling & processing methods;
- v. Developed guidelines for traders in fish, fishery and aquaculture products and inputs in the EAC;
- vi. Developed guidelines for the extraction, processing and trading of the lucrative Nile perch fish maw business;
- vii. Developed guidelines for establishment and management of fish breeding and nursery areas for Lake Victoria;
- viii. Developed Regional Guidelines for Fisheries Co-management on Lake Victoria;
- ix. Developed Guideline for Establishment and Operation of Cage Fish Farming in the East African Community;
- x. Developed guidelines for certification of fish seed and fish feed in the East African Community (EAC);
- xi. Developed EAC Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy 2018;
- xii. Developed EAC Cage Fish Farming Policy 2021;
- xiii. Developed LVFO Data, Information and Knowledge Sharing Policy 2022;
- xiv. Harmonized Action Plans;
- xv. Developed LVFO Strategic Plan: 2015-2020 and 2021/2-2025/6;
- xvi. Developed Fisheries Management Plan III and IV: 2015-2020 and 2021-2025;
- xvii. Developed Nile Perch Fisheries Management Plan II and III: 2015-2020 and 2021-2025;
- xviii. Signed the following Memorandum of Understanding and Agreements:
 - a. MoU between LVFO and Research Center for Environmental Economics, Heidelberg University, (RCEE) for implementation of the Multi tip Project;
 - b. Implementation Agreement between LVFO and Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK);
 - c. Agreement between LVFO and World Fish for Hosting World Fish at LVFO Secretariat in Jinja for implementation of the True Fish Project;
 - d. Data Processing Agreement between LVFO and RCEE for implementation of the MECCA Project;
 - e. MoU with NaFIRRI on funding a PhD student (Mr. Richard Mangeni);

- f. Agreement between LVFO and FAO under TRUE-FISH Project for provision of “Project Coordination Services associated with staffing and operation of the PCU;
- g. MoUs with NaFIRRI TAFIRI and KMFRI on Implementation of Lake Victoria Frame Survey 2020;
- h. Memorandum of Cooperation between LVFO and Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA);
- i. Research collaboration Agreement between LVFO and the University Court of the University of St. Andrews;
- j. MoU for Cooperation and Coordination between LVFO and the African Centre for Aquatic Research and Education. (ACARE).

5.2.13 Ongoing Projects

- i. Responsible Fisheries Business Chains on Lake Victoria (RFBC) project supported through GIZ (€ 1.794M) has financed undertaking of Lake –wide hydro-acoustic surveys to provide updated status of fish stocks in the Lake Victoria for the sustainable management and development.
- ii. European Union (EU) EAC True- Fish project in the Lake Victoria basin (TRUE-FISH) under EDF 11 (€ 10.15M) to support the promotion of aquaculture in the EAC Region.
- iii. ECOFISH project, (€ 2 million), Contribution of Sustainable Fisheries to the Blue Economy of the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) aimed at enhancing equitable economic growth by promoting sustainable fisheries in the (EA-SA-IO)Region.
- iv. LVFO in collaboration with University of St. Andrews secured (£726,000) from the UK Royal Society to implement two projects: Schistosomiasis, shallow-water fisheries and human resilience around Lake Victoria-towards a multidisciplinary solution for interlinked human-health and food-security challenges. The second project is called “Cutting –edge fisheries research for sustainable management of Lake Victoria’s Silver Cyprinid”-aimed at improving understanding of Dagaa variability in its temporal and spatial distribution and improve long-term sustainable management.
- v. Under development: Community Fisheries Management & Sustainable Fisheries (LVFO, FAO, University of Iceland & EAC Partner States) IFAD Project 2 million

USD. LVFO in partnership with KMFRI, Kenya, TAFIRI, Tanzania and NaFIRRI, Uganda secured a grant (USD 1.5M) from IFAD to implement a project called “Lake Victoria Small Fish Project” which aimed at Promoting Sustainable Technologies and Marketing Strategies to increase Income and Reduce Food Losses in Small Fish Systems.

5.2.14 Challenges facing LVFO

- i. Climate Change and variability associated Global Warming, lake level raising and flooding.
- ii. Overfishing, capture of immature fish and trade disagreements and conflicts.
- iii. Poor post-harvest handling.
- iv. Fish feed in the region are related to quality and quantity. Locally produced fish feed are regarded by commercial farmers as being of low quality with very low feed conversion ratios. The LVFO through collaborative projects with Partner States are encouraging potential feed producers from abroad to establish factories in the region.
- v. The LVFO is critically understaffed. More than 70% of the budget contributed by Partner States is used to pay personal emoluments of staff and utilities.
- vi. Delay in amending the legal instruments governing the LVFO in order to extend its mandate to be an East African Fisheries Organisation as it was decided by the Council of Ministers in 2018.

5.2.15 Recommendations from LVFO

- i. Fast track operationalization of expanded scope and mandate of LVFO.
- ii. Increase budget for the LVFO and fill Staff gaps in fish quality directory and prioritize on fish quality activities.
- iii. Strengthen collaborations and partnerships to attract more resources to the organization.
- iv. Work together to mitigate Climate Change particularly global warming.
- v. Support the organization in constructing another building to accommodate projects and two additional directorates (Aquaculture and Fish quality assurance).
- vi. EAC level adopt a framework of handling VAT recoveries from non-host Partner states.

- vii. Urge Partner States to remit statutory contributions early in the FY for proper planning and execution of the mandate.

6.0 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee made the following observations:

- i. Delay in remitting statutory contributions affects execution of the mandate of Organs and Institutions of the Community;
- ii. Cleaning the Lake Victoria is a complex and ongoing process that requires a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach;
- iii. Over fishing and illegal fishing is one of the serious challenges facing the Lake Victoria;
- iv. The number of marine accidents and deaths in the Lake Victoria is alarming;
- v. The Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania have implemented ban of use of plastics bags which has helped to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags;
- vi. Underfunding and understaffing are a serious challenge in the LVBC and the LVFO;
- vii. Treatment of wastewater is one of the key strategies to combat pollution in the Lake Victoria Basin;
- viii. The Lake Victoria Transport Act, 2007 is not fully implemented because Partner States are favouring their national laws instead of this law and key regulations are not in place;
- ix. Introduction of new technology is critical for reduction of industrial pollution;
- x. Fish farming and aquaculture is still underdeveloped in EAC, consequently its contribution to fish production is minimal;
- xi. There are few East African Companies involved in value addition chain in Lake Victoria;
- xii. Most projects and programs of LVBC are financed by Development Partners;
- xiii. Joint maritime security exercises in Lake Victoria have not been conducted due to budgetary constraints;

- xiv. The Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania have implemented ban of use of plastics bags which has helped to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags;
- xv. There is delay in amending the legal instruments governing the LVFO to extend its mandate to be an East African Fisheries Organisation as it was decided by the Council of Ministers in 2018.

7.0 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council to:

- i. Urge Partner States to remit statutory contributions early in the FY for proper planning and execution of the mandate;
- ii. Prepare initiatives of cleaning the Lake Victoria and restore the health of the lake and its ecosystem;
- iii. Urge Partner States to carryout regular sensitization programs to eradicate pollution in Lake Victoria;
- iv. Direct Partner States to enforce their laws for sustainable and safe fishing activities in the Lake Victoria;
- v. Direct the LVBC to urgently ensure the full implementation of the Lake Victoria Transport Act, 2007;
- vi. Allocate adequate resources to finance some of the key projects and programs under the LVBC and LVFO;
- vii. Direct the LVFO Sectoral Council to finalize the process of expanding the mandate of LVFO and the change of name in order facilitate the institutions to operate throughout the region;
- viii. To direct the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republics of South Sudan and Uganda to implement ban of use of plastics bags in their Countries;
- ix. To address the problem of underfunding and understaffing in all Organs and Institutions of the EAC;
- x. Fast-track preparations of all regulations required for implementation of the Lake Victoria Transport Act, 2007;
- xi. Direct the relevant Partner States to enforce the Lake Victoria Transport Act, 2007.
- xii. Direct Partner State to emphasize introduction of new technology for reduction of industrial pollution;

- xiii. Direct Partner States to promote fish farming and aquaculture investment to reduce overdependence on Lake Victoria;
- xiv. Direct Partner State to promote and facilitate East African Companies to participate in value addition chain in the Lake Victoria;
- xv. Direct Partner State to put more efforts to address point source and non-point source pollution in Lake Victoria Basin; and
- xvi. Direct the relevant Partner States to address marine accidents in the Lake Victoria.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee expresses gratitude to the Office of the Speaker and the Office of the Clerk for the facilitation offered to the Committee while undertaking this activity. The Committee also appreciate the management of LVBC and LVFO for the input and dedication offered to the Committee. The report provides useful recommendations which if implemented will address the objectives of the activity.