

**AFRICAN GREAT LAKES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
FIRST CONFERENCE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEETING**



**HELD ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2015
AT SAVORA PANAFRIC HOTEL, NAIROBI – KENYA**

REPORT OF THE MEETING

ACRONYMS

ABAKIR	Lake Kivu and Rusizi River Basin Authority
ACCESS	ACCESS is a Pan African Research and Developing Organization
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGL	African Grate Lakes
AMCOW	African Ministers' Council on Water
ACCESS	Scientific Research Development Organization (Kenya)
ARCOS	Albertine Rift Conservation Society
ASAP	As Soon As Possible
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGIAR	Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security
COC	Conference Organizing Committee
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
COP 21	UN Climate Change Conference
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
CESM	Community Earth System Model
CRAGs	Climate Resilience Altitudinal Gradients
CI	Conservation International
CIP	CRAG Implementation Plan
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EAC	East African Community
EAT	East African Time
ES	Environmental Sustainability
FDB	French Development Bank
GEF	Global Environmental Facilities
ILEC	International Lake Environmental Committee
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LTA	Lake Tanganyika Authority
LVBC	Lake Tanganyika Basin Authority
LVFO	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NELSAP	Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UN	United Nation
UNEP	United Nation Environmental Programme
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

PART I: SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE AGREEMENTS

A summary of what was agreed at the meeting is presented below:

1. *Proposed Conference Title: “African Great Lakes International Conference: Sustainable Development in a Changing Climate”*
2. *Proposed Themes:*
 - Lake basin governance and public participation
 - Crosscutting issues, including health, poverty, and youth empowerment
 - Biodiversity conservation and its benefits to local communities
 - Sustainable energy and infrastructure development
 - Achieving long-term benefits from sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture
 - Climate change resilience and adaptation
 - Avoiding negative economic and ecological impacts from invasive species
 - Protecting water quality for human and ecological health
 - Land use planning and natural resource management
3. *Proposed Conference Dates:* April or May 2017, with official date and location to be announced at least a year in advance
4. *Proposed Conference Location:* Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda (<http://www.spekeresort.com/>)
5. *Proposed Overall Agenda Structure*
 - Current State of the African Great Lakes & their Basins
 - Benefits Provided – including ecosystem services and a basis for economic development
 - Pressures/Drivers - affecting lake systems and linked economies;
 - Response/Actions – including policy, implementation, and research
6. *Proposed Conference Process:*
 - Keynotes speakers to be invited by Technical and Conference Organizing Committees
 - Conference theme conveners to be determined by Technical Committee
 - Session speakers to be determined via call for papers and nomination
 - Committees will work to ensure Conference outputs, such as a declaration, beyond the presentations
 - Policy-relevant papers on Conference themes will be developed by a sub-set of speakers
7. *Proposed Committee Process:*
 - Conference Organizing Committee (CoC) will continue to act as core advisory committee, with its next meeting likely to be in mid-2016
 - Technical Committee (TC) members will be nominated by CoC, and the TC will be assembled in early 2016 to ensure that the Conference processes are successfully initiated

- CoC and TC will be responsible for designing the conference structure and modality, working with The Nature Conservancy to implement recommendations
- TNC to draft ToRs for Technical Committee on behalf of COC

8. *Potential Conference Outputs:* the conference should be a real ‘game changer’ for African Great Lakes, with focus on the fate of the lake ecosystems and the people that depend upon them. Potential output categories include:

- Case studies on conservation and poverty reduction as well as population, health and environment (PHE) solutions
- Future financial commitments to lake management authorities
- New multi-national management arrangements for lake basins
- Online information sharing platform to advance proven approaches and exchange of quality data
- New collaboration and partnerships among Lake Basin Management Authorities, NGOs, governments and rural user groups.

PART II: INTERACTIVE MEETING PROCEEDINGS

AGENDA

The main purpose of the meeting was to set in motion conversations towards implementation of African Great Lakes International Conference in relation to: promotion of effective regional coordination and cooperation, raising awareness of the value of the African Great Lakes ecosystems and promotion of tools for ecosystem-based approach to basin-scale management among others.

The meeting adopted specific agenda items as indicated in appendix 2.

Agenda no. 1: Introduction and Welcome Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 08.30 am by **Dr. Canisius Kanangire**, the Executive Secretary of Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), a specialized institution of East African Community (EAC). He opened the session and facilitated introductions by asking attendees to give self-introductions. He informed the meeting that he was the LVBC Executive Secretary, responsible for coordinating the sustainable development agenda of the Lake Victoria Basin.

He emphasized that the meeting focused on strengthening coordination among international agencies, Civil Society Organizations, Inter-governmental Organizations and Partner States in African Great Lakes Regions to ensure the planned conference provide fruitful results. He welcomed the initiative and asked members to participate actively and effectively. He then invited Mr. Colin Apse, Director of Africa Freshwater Conservation to explain the presence of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Africa and their roles in conservation of natural resources.

Mr. Colin Apse welcomed the group from around the African Great Lakes Region. He indicated that TNC is relatively new to the African continent with a focus in Tanzania, Kenya, Gabon, Zambia and Seychelles. As an organization, however, it has been around for more than 60 years working in the USA as well as other regions. He highlighted that conservation and sustainable development issues have never been more important than they are today and that TNC would like to play a small but constructive role in addressing those issues. TNC's support for the African Great Lakes International Conference initiative links with work across the region. He also stated that TNC activities follow science-based and non-confrontational approaches to management. He emphasized the importance of working from community to national government levels and the value of the public-private partnerships. TNC considers this conference one of its most important initiatives. He offered appreciation for the strong partnership with the Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA) Secretariat who was the first to sign on, and then he proceeded to help set the agenda to organize the first Conference Organizing Committee (COC) meeting. He called for more engagement by partners from the region and hoped the conference processes to be the beginning of a great partnership and knowledge exchange platform for the African Great Lakes Region. He concluded by saying he looked forward to people's inputs on how to make this effort a success.

Eng. Jean-Marie Nibirantije Executive Director of Lake Tanganyika Authority welcomed the participants and thanked TNC for making this meeting possible. He indicated it is a great pleasure for LTA Secretariat to be involved in the preparation of this international conference and reiterated LTA commitment to

work with Conference Organizing Committee members to promote sustainable management of resources in African Great Lakes Regions. He informed the meeting that the idea of the conference emanates from TNC/LTA collaboration over the past four years on management of Lake Tanganyika. He further pointed out that, the meeting will allow an exchange of ideas on how to organize and own the process together. He saluted the good will of every participant and emphasized that everyone should hold good will for the sustainability of the Great Lakes in order to reach good results that would help protect the environment of this region and its riparian States.

He said that many of those present in the meeting were recently at the Paris Conference (COP 21) on Climate Change, which led to conclusions and agreements on the way forward for addressing climate change in the world. He suggested that this should be the model for collaboration in the region and emphasized that the committee should prioritize climate change because the region is one of the most vulnerable in the world.

He further emphasized that since 2008, the LTA has taken a more proactive management role in Lake Tanganyika and the basin because the lake is facing so many environmental problems, including sedimentation, that threaten the Lake, and all these problems are related to climate change. He welcomed the participants, thanked TNC for financial support; he further thanked the people of Kenya for their hospitality and wished the participants good success. He declared the meeting officially open.

Agenda no. 2: Origin and Current Funding of African Great Lakes International Conference

Mr. Colin Apse presented information on the origin and current funding for African Great Lakes International Conference for members to understand funding sources as well as status.

His presentation provided background on why TNC is in Africa and in the African Great Lakes Region. He reiterated that TNC is new to the region and so relying on those present to make the present initiative [Africa Great Lakes International Conference] a success. The project has funding from MacArthur Foundation and Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. The conference will focus on seven lakes - Victoria, Tanganyika, Albert, Edward, Kivu, Malawi / Nyassa / Niassa, and Turkana; and 11 countries, namely; Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and South Sudan. He emphasized that the project will focus on sustainable development and conservation of not only the seven lakes, but their basins. Mr. Apse informed the meeting that South Sudan has only small area within the Turkana basin and so unlikely to be a major participant in this effort. He also mentioned that, TNC got to the point of organizing the conference through regional sustainable development planning efforts. He then gave example of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) who has done a lot of work around the region in areas such as the Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot and informed the meeting that, there is also relevant work from Birdlife International whose efforts focused on the African Great Lakes Region. He informed the meeting that a number of recommendations that come out of documents generated by these organizations and have been adopted by TNC in this effort to increase coordination and cooperation among state and non-state actors and encourage the use of best science practices.

He then explained another effort that has been important is the 'Great Lakes to Great Lakes Initiative', which is a US State Department initiative that kicked off early in 2015 with a meeting in Kigoma and is

linked to the LTA. This work has at its core the idea of increasing an exchange of technical information among the actors working in the two regions. *“We expect participation and support from US Government Agencies and academics in linking the North American and African Great Lakes regions”*, he added.

He pointed out that there are several strong lake basin strategic plans and authorities such as the Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA) and the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs), which are strong documents that can allow the states and non-state actors to find common links and synergies across the lake basins.

He recognized the work by NGOs such as the Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and BirdLife International who have been active in the region and informed the meeting that TNC will build upon and learn from these past efforts. He acknowledged that TNC is not the first organization or initiative to bring these groups together in a constructive way. He then gave the example of the excellent work done in Bujumbura on Climate Change and Fisheries in East African Great Lakes in 2010 as well as the GEF technical advisory panel in Malawi in 2000. These are all past efforts being reviewed and taken into account. Besides the above, he informed the meeting of the need for regional collaboration for rational development and management of the resources and its people. He emphasized that across lake basins there are common challenges and each lake basin has different but with some commonalities and past work has shown there is a potential for shared solutions. Some examples presented include:

- Climate Change: there aren't many systems in the world more impacted than the African Great Lakes and so this is an opportunity to address and raise the profile;
- Catchment degradation and sedimentation;
- Overfishing;
- Illegal fishing;
- Habitat destruction;
- Invasive plants and animals (many levels and extents across the basins);
- Large energy and infrastructure develop that can bring economic prosperity but also bring significant risks;
- Toxic algae blooms; and
- Basin governance and management structures.

In his presentation, he highlighted some initial activities planned for African Great Lakes initiative as follows:

- Establish and facilitate a Great Lakes Summit Advisory and technical committees.
- Organize, market, and host an African Great Lakes Conference on one of the countries - ideally along the lake shore areas - in early 2017.
- Create a web-based information platform - built upon the existing platforms - and incorporate the Lake Tanganyika Blueprint (spatial planning efforts similar to marine spatial planning, getting data analysis and maps into the hands of decision makers in a way that is spatially linked and easy to use).

In his presentation, Mr. Apse raised a question for the group to consider throughout: 'What can this effort contribute?' This depends on the partnerships we develop. He mentioned financial and human resource commitments, such as two years of time commitment from several TNC staff: Dr. Modesta Medard is full time on this effort with support from Ms. Lucy Magembe, Dr. Tracy Baker, Mr. Colin Apse, and Mr. Peter Limbu.

He informed the participants that, TNC has a budget for 2-days to cater for conference facilities, some travel costs and host 100+ people. However, a funding gap of - at a minimum - \$125,000 has been identified which would help to raise the profile of the effort, bring additional voices, expand conference with more varied participants, include field trip, and provide more functionality to the web platform. He further insisted that the initiative moves forward no matter what but the more partners who bring funding and support, the more we can do. He then mentioned the commitment from the North American Great Lakes to offer expertise and serve as a foundation of long-term trans-boundary support. He asserted that, some of money is for the development of the information sharing platform.

The Conference can have an impact by helping address and share challenges, draw more attention to the region from development partners, and help strengthen the already existing partnerships such as those with the North American Great Lakes.

He reiterated that TNC can't do it all and so the focus is on lakes and their basins. He urged the conference organizing committee to focus on a few key tangible outputs from the initiative and stressed the need to consider ecological and ecosystem services bend to this initiative, as well as sustainable economic development and linking to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a focus on themes that can be broadly shared.

He then asked very important questions: How does this meeting bring something different? How do we bring new funding to the region, achieve commitment to basin governance, raise regional global awareness of the region, and improve policy incentives?

He informed the meeting that the agenda aimed for something that is as participatory as possible and called for the participants to refer to the discussion document. He stressed that TNC's goal is not to decide everything but to have a strong momentum and facilitate the formation of a technical committee that is starting to work on details.

Discussions: Questions, answers and suggestions

Suggestion from Prof. Odada: How to conceptualize the lake, the basin, management and development issues?

When we are talking about lakes, we are not just talking about lakes but also the basin. The basin can be a whole country or region. When we talk of lake management, we must take into account land and water. Many lakes or basins are transboundary. We need to understand how national laws can be accommodated. We need to consider the sensitivity of the lakes to climate change. Currently, we are using them to reconstruct information about climate change. Even a lake like Victoria has dried up in the past and so we need to understand the dynamics of these lakes. As much as we look at the management, we also need to look at the environment in lieu of development. One of the issues is the

increased need to use the water. There are now more needs for energy and food. The Water - Energy - Food nexus needs to be addressed. We should consider basin-wide management experience from lake basins where governance has worked.

Mr. Apse agreed to all of these suggestions. He suggested waiting for Dr. Medard's presentation that will cover these topics. He insisted that riparian States will continue to have economic development aspirations; we may have to help ensure they happen in a sustainable manner.

Other questions related to the presentation were asked to understand TNC scope of work and whether it is also involved in research and advocacy. What is the experience of TNC after being in Africa for about 10 years? What kind of synergy will TNC use to ensure there aren't conflicts on the ground with other existing partners such as WWF who have been around the region for years? With regards to the scope, one participant also asked if TNC is involved in oil and gas exploration especially in Lake Albert.

The meeting was informed that TNC is not an advocacy organization. It is a science-based conservation organization that supports efforts in which TNC is engaged through science, products, and policy support. Tuungane project for example, is operating in Lake Tanganyika (Tanzanian side) on long-term sustainability. TNC is working in partnership with health partners, such as Pathfinder, to make sure health and economic development go hand-in-hand with development. Tuungane project that has been ongoing for about four years is an example of how TNC works at multiple scales - from village, districts, national governments and regional through various bodies such as Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA). For TNC, the idea is to have an influence at multiple scales in a collaborative way. Furthermore, it was mentioned that, TNC has strong tradition to work with multiple of stakeholder's such as local communities, national governments, regional bodies, inter-governmental organizations, and local and international organizations. That being the case, the conference was expected to be framed in the same fashion by drawing individuals from different institutions and with different knowledge, experience and capacities.

It was further emphasized that, WWF was invited to this meeting and they are in the loop. Other invited organizations were BirdLife, ARCOS, UNEP and IUCN. It was also reported that, TNC has a strong history of being collaborative. The advantage of being new to the region is that, TNC is not territorial and respects the value and experience of others. *"We come in looking primarily to facilitate and not displace others. We can have more specific conversations some of you later for more details"*, he added.

[Agenda no. 3: Overview of the MacArthur Foundation African Great Lakes Region Conservation Strategy](#)

Mr. Ian Gordon presented the African Great Lakes Region Conservation Strategy on behalf of Julius Arinaitwe, Head of the BirdLife Regional Office. Birdlife International led on the development of the Critical Ecosystem Profile for the Eastern Afromontane hotspot. They were funded by MacArthur Foundation Strategy for Great Lakes of East and Central Africa and Afromontane Hotspots. The areas represent two of the thirty-five worldwide biodiversity hotspots, having a high concentration of endemic and endangered species.

Birdlife is now working on the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) concept. KBAs are based on important bird areas but expanded to include different taxa, which has been more difficult than anticipated. For each

hotspot, an ecosystem profile is developed. For example, within the Eastern Afromontane, 311 KBAs have been identified. At least one red listed species in significant numbers is found in each. KBAs concept is under discussions to make it more global. It is a highly participatory process for developing Ecosystem and investment profiles.



Figure 1a: Sediments entering the Rusizi from the Muhira River in Burundi. The sedimentation is the result of mining along the Muhira. Note also the absence of protected riparian zones. Photo credit by Jean De Dieu Bucankura/ABN/BirdLife.



Figure 1b: Artisanal and uncontrolled gold mining in pits all along the Muhira River. Photo credit by Jean De Dieu Bucankura/ABN/BirdLife.

Three major strategic directions for the Eastern Afromontane were developed through the process:

1. Mainstreamed biodiversity into wider policies,
2. Improved protection of management and protection of KBAs
3. Supported sustainable financing and capacity building

BirdLife International was contracted by MacArthur Foundation to develop same type of strategy for African Great Lakes. The African Great Lakes represent extraordinary geophysical features and associated natural and resource and biodiversity as well as having critical importance to human welfare. There is increasingly intense pressure in the region from global change and rapidly increasing human population and accelerated growth from development.

There is considerable overlap between the Afromontane and African Great Lakes, though Afromontane focuses more on high elevations. The African Great Lakes (AGL) Strategy focuses more on ecosystem services. Like the Afromontane work, the process was participatory though more so in the Afromontane than Lakes due to funding constraints. It was also learnt that the AGL strategy was developed over several years.

It was further reported that, recognition of KBAs is important for both Afromontane and Great Lakes regions, and that “trigger species” in KBA sites are based on the Red List and Important Bird congregation areas are also important. He then presented the protection status and confirmed that there are many unprotected KBA sites in the Great Lakes region.

Proposed strategic Directions: there is a need to understand and respond to increased environmental pressures from development and climate change. There is also a need to create and expand incentives to conserve the environment and help rural poor in managing natural resources.

Synergies between the Eastern Afromontane African Great Lakes Region work

Funding Source	CEPF	MacArthur
Focus	Mountains + Watersheds	Lakes and Lake Basins
Approach	KBAs	KBAs and ESs
Participants	Mainly civil society	Civil and Wider sectors
Area	Terrestrial (+freshwater)	Freshwater (+terrestrial)

Other Commonalties between the two program are: shared constituency, joint approach, co-financing, linking water and land to climate change, looking at health of the water links to catchment health, poor catchment management damages fisheries and hydropower; erosion in catchments destroys soil fertility; adverse impacts will increase under climate change.

He then discussed the Climate Resilient Altitudinal Gradients (CRAGs) approach. A key component looks at how local topography determines local weather. Steep gradients regulate air flows over land, generate and regulate extreme climatic events, biotic thermometers for global warming (as temps rise, species move up mountains). Initial outputs from CRAG concept were spatially explicit recommendations (what to do where to enhance resilience) build on best available scientific projections on climate change (currently CESM – Community Earth System Model). He further stressed that, the work builds on best available understandings of biodiversity and provides a tool for turning science into policy.

He pointed out that CRAGs match the Lake Tanganyika Authority Strategic Action Plans and showed an image of sediment entering Lake Tanganyika from Rusizi River where it forms a delta and then descends which is a localized impact from sedimentation on spawning grounds. He further discussed sedimentation from Muhira River [Rusizi River tributary]. A sediment plume enters Lake Tanganyika from the Rusizi River and is caused by artisanal gold mining, resulting in increasing mercury levels in the lake. BirdLife and its partners are working to apply sediment finger printing [using isotope tracers allows you to identify the geological materials upstream and therefore locate the areas in a basin where sediment are coming from]. They are using climate change scenarios from CESM and Appalachian University.

There is a Kivu-Rusizi CIP workshop planned for 2016. At this workshop, areas where interventions are needed will be identified and they would like to launch the results of this work at the African Great Lakes Conference in 2017.

Discussions: Questions, answers and suggestions

Mr. Gayo Lemba, a representative from DRC, provided more insights on how sedimentation processes are taking place from the DRC and Lake Kivu areas. He said that, issues for sedimentation are caused by human issues and triggered problems, not climate change. There is a lot of deforestation along Lake Kivu on the DRC side. There is no forest cover. People are building houses and engaging in intensive agriculture around the lake. I think this is really the first cause of the reduction of Lake Kivu's waters by 10%. Lake Kivu supplies water to Lake Tanganyika, through the Rusizi River, which is also subjected to impacts from intensive agriculture and activities related to human population growth. With a lot of rains, increased sedimentation ends up in the Rusizi River. He cautioned that there is an accumulation of methane and carbon dioxide at the bottom lake (sources being the volcanic mountain as well as organic matter carried in sedimentation) – we must avoid the accident that happened in Lake Nyos in Western Africa where as the result of a landslide, the lake suddenly emitted a large cloud of CO₂, which suffocated people (killed over 1,500 people) and livestock in nearby towns and villages.



Figures 2a and 2b: Extreme sediment load in the Muhira River resulting from uncontrolled gold mining. Photo credit by Jean De Dieu Bucankura/ABN/BirdLife.

Prof. Odada proposed the need to think about reporting research to policy because there is a lot of research going on in the region. He raised two important questions: How do we report this to policy makers? Are there globally accepted ways of reporting ES values to policy makers so they can appreciate these resources—given governments react to crisis and money? *“When someone comes from Saudi Arabia and wants to buy a wetland, decision makers don’t care because they see it as a wasteland. So this [value of the wetland in this case] needs to be conveyed to policy makers and governments”* – he added.

UNEP representative Mr. Keith Alverson asked an important question: “How do we bring the information about mercury in water to policy makers?” He informed the meeting that UNEP has recognized the need for guidelines on water quality for freshwater and so they are in the process of identifying these guidelines for ecosystem health (not drinking water). They hope this will provide member states with a benchmark around which they can develop further guidelines based on their national and regional preferences. For example, if the mercury is 100 times higher than the recommended limit for ecosystems the countries can look at ways to take action.

There was then a brief discussion by several people [names withheld] on the issue of methane in Lake Kivu. This could be a disaster if the methane is released. Sedimentation issues may go much deeper than we imagined based on this concern.

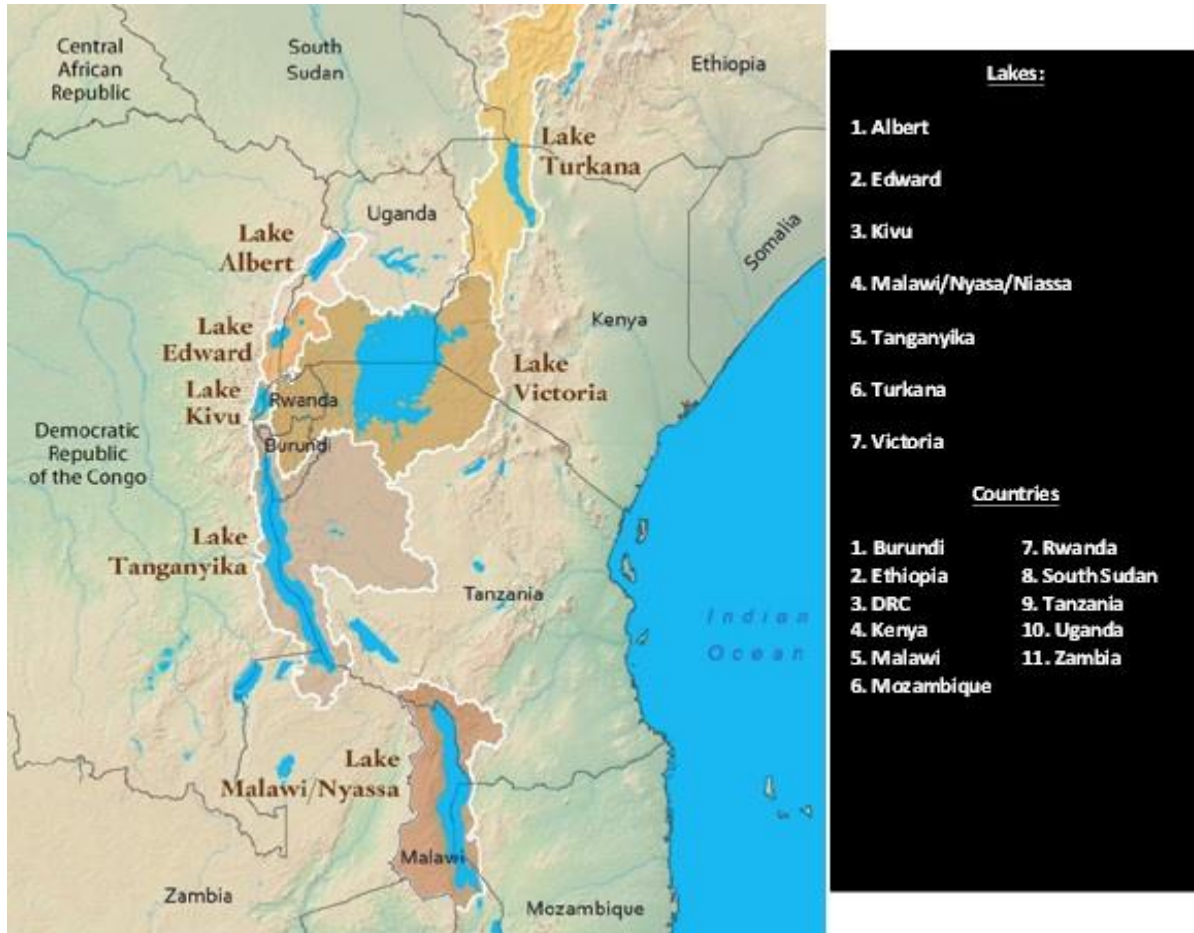
The LTA Director of Environment informed the meeting that they have been working with BirdLife International, but no report have been received by their office about the mercury coming into Lake Tanganyika. The LTA Strategic Action Programme was updated based on new information from research on climate change only. Now they are trying to harmonize across the riparian countries to have a specific protocol that deals with specific problems. He stressed the need to create a segment for policy makers to share the information from the debates and research.

Agenda no. 4: Conference Preparation Update

Dr. Ningu (the session chair) preceded Dr. Medard's presentation by calling for consideration of a session on science-policy interface at the conference given a clear need demonstrated in the previous discussions.

Dr. Modesta Medard presented the background and goals of the conference. She stressed that this is a joint initiative, not an LTA or TNC initiative. *"By being present, TNC assured that you are agreeing to be part of this overall effort and initiative"*. She went on to identify several goals set at this stage as follows:

- To increase coordination and cooperation to state and non-state actors;
- To strengthen capacities of Lake management institutions;
- Promote tools for ecosystem-based approach to basin-scale management;
- To use scientific findings to inform policies and management decisions;
- To empower people for change;
- Raising awareness of the value of the African Great Lakes ecosystems within the region and the global community;
- Increasing regional and global investment in sustainable development, including water resources and fisheries management, across the African Great Lakes basins; and
- Creating an action agenda for one or more trans-national challenges to the ecological and economic health of the African Great Lakes (*e.g.*, spread of invasive species, climate change impacts)



She reiterated that the initiative will cover seven lakes and 11 countries along the Rift Valley Lakes and Basin system. She outlined the process and history of the initiative's current development that is being undertaken, pointing out that this process really got under way in August, 2015 and the plan is to have the conference take place in early 2017 and to do this successfully, there is a need to fix specific month and dates. She then asked the conference organizing members to discuss and give feedback. The themes were:

- Biodiversity conservation
- Fisheries management and aquaculture development
- Economic and infrastructure development (incl. eco-tourism, livelihood, oil and gas, etc).
- Climate change resilience and adaptation
- Pollution management
- Catchment management and sedimentation
- Natural resource governance
- Invasive species, prevention, early detection and eradication
- Institutional governance and collaboration at Lake Basin scale

She then highlighted the need to pursue best practices as well as engage in information sharing and exchange. Thereafter she requested feedback from participants on identifying key actors. Among others were:

- Development partners
- Governments (Central and Local)
- International and Local NGOs
- Inter-governmental Organizations (LTA, LVFO, ABAKIR)
- Conservation practitioners
- Universities and Research Institutions
- Private sector

People were given a list of names and organizations and asked to review.

“We need input on who is relevant in this conference” – she added. As part of this, she discussed the consultative meetings held in East African countries and in the USA with different potential actors and stakeholders such as Conservation International (CI), GEF, US State Department and World Bank.

She further explained the plan to set the Technical Committee. She informed the meeting that there are some organizations TNC is trying to consult with and there is room for further discussions and feedback.



Figure 1a: A cross section of participants during the meeting.
Photo credit by Tracy Baker, TNC



Figure 1b: A cross section of participant during the meeting. Photo credit by Tracy Baker, TNC

She also pointed out some accomplished issues in preparing for the Great Lakes Conference: first organizing meeting [this meeting], drafted Terms of Reference for organizing and technical committees, full commitment from LTA for the overall process and UNEP financial commitment of USD 10,000 for 2016 financial year. She further mentioned several actions that need to get under way:

- Refine conference themes and expected outputs (by Technical Committee)
- Continue with outreach and awareness in the Great Lakes countries,
- Improve conference modality so that we connect to issues on the ground (e.g., how can we best structure this conference?),
- Conference marketing together with TNC staff and other partners
- Continue looking at other organizations to help with advertising the conference,

- Continue fostering joint ownership and leadership of the process, and
- Receive commitments in terms of resources and time (e.g., not just financial commitments)

Dr. Medard emphasized the need for cooperation and ownership over aspects such as logos, and asked the participants the best cutoff point for contributions. Are all contributions the same? For example, should big contributor's logos be considered parallel with those who will make small contributions? This needs to be determined by the committees.

Prof. Eric Odada emphasized that meetings of this size can turn into a talk about everything and asked the participants to be specific about priorities for the region. Talk priorities - how do we package these into conference materials? We need to know clearly what decisions policy makers want to make, what information they need, and how can we give this to them. For example, take the issue of poverty. When people cannot afford energy they cut down trees. Another emerging issue is that there are new polluters from mobile phones being dumped into lakes. We talk about scientists and NGOs but what about the people who deal with the lakes on a daily basis? The conference needs to be inclusive. The threats: we need to be clear here, such as the threats of land use change and invasive species, and the effect of conflicts on land degradation. How can all of this be factored into the discussion?

Dr. Kanangire confirmed that the conference comes at the right time because people need to share the knowledge they have on the Great Lakes and use the information to guide policy in priority areas. He stressed that, the lakes are managed in a different way across the region. Decision making processes can be done through existing governance structures, but this doesn't exist in all places and so this needs to be addressed. Also, many lakes are transboundary. This conference should be different from conferences where people come and share academic and scientific information. The conference should have an African or East African DNA and not just scientific information, but really look at working with decision makers to put in the means to implement policies. How can we balance national sovereignty and regional obligations? We need to look at priorities and relevance. We can't address all the aspects, so we need to focus. The time is too limited. We need to select areas and guide participants. I would have discussed the themes before conference ownership because people will own the themes they propose. In this conference, we need to look at the different ideas and the exchange of information among lake basins and organizations working across the region. We need to leverage the knowledge in different organizations. We need to brief decision makers on policy making and inform them more about the level of commitment they need to make.

Dr. Oliva Mkumbo the Deputy Executive Secretary of LVFO posed a number of questions and underscored the importance of working on policy issues. She said, as a region, members should agree where to go. What do we want to have? What do we want to achieve? We want to share with and influence decision makers. There is a lot of information already. We need policies to impact change on the ground. For this first Conference, share the success stories from initiatives that have been going on in the region to help guide policies. TNC is doing something more like higher level coordination in the region. Maybe from this we can have a clearer road map.

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa, the Executive Director of ARCOS, informed the participants that ARCOS and all other members are excited about the initiative and asked a number of questions. What do we want to

achieve? Who is our target – is this for practitioners? Researchers? What policy or policies do we want to influence? Are there specific people to influence? African Union? We just came from COP 21 -- is this an opportunity we want to use to influence the region? We need to think of the overall theme before we go for specific themes. For instance, the Gaborone Decision is looking at Natural Capital. Can we say Great Lakes and the development agenda so that we can use Great lakes as an asset for sustainable development? Once we identify this, we can then think about the overall theme. After we have the main theme and specific themes, we can market and brand the conference. Do we want to stress the threats or development? This changes the themes. We also must attract the media and change the narrative/perspective – to great lakes and development, as opposed to, great lakes in danger. It is difficult to think about the stakeholders to be involved when we haven't identified the theme. After we have a theme, then we can narrow the stakeholders. If we can get additional funds, then we can add sessions that focus on side themes that are important. We need to have a private sector dialogue, as well as dialogue with CBOs and civil society. How can we package this so that there is a clear focus on that?

Agenda no. 5: Proposed Overarching Goals and Links to Sustainable Development Goals

Ms. Lucy Magembe the TNC Senior Policy Officer, presented information on linking the African Great Lakes Conference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

She first indicated to the participants that her role is to link the proposed goals of the conference to the SDGs and recognized the need for additional funding to make the conference successful. She informed the meeting that nations have recently committed to achieving the SDGs and how the members can use the Conference as a step toward this end. She informed the meeting that, preserving the environment makes economic and livelihoods sense and urged the members to use the conference to bring in more collaboration and direct some of the sustainable development funding to help address some issues identified in the Great Lakes Region.

She asked participants to think about the themes and decide which ones to target. She stressed that, the goal should be to translate research into policy making and informed the meeting that, the Summit planning process itself will be holistic and cut across many areas or themes producing reliable information to integrate into investment. The aim of the meeting is to facilitate dialog on large-scale threats to biodiversity. How can we change the narrative? How can we change threats into opportunities? How do we support responsible economic development and sustainable resilient development?

She emphasized the need to consider Climate Change as an important issue together with SDGs and proposed the need to use the recent discussion and outcomes in Paris to call for additional support for the Conference.

Discussions: Questions, Answers and Suggestions

Mr. Alverson from UNEP asked the conference members to agree which direction to take as indicated previously. *“Great Lakes for development or Great lakes in danger – it matters”*. He suggested the need to bring in Ministries and to demonstrate that the Great Lakes systems are critical for regional

development. Those ecosystems support the social and economic systems in the regions. He proposed additional SDGs to consider are 5.3 (Land degradation target), and 15.2 and 15.4 (Deforestation and impact in localized climate). He also stressed that, without tackling governance, we can't tackle the other issues or manage the ecosystems and obtain multiple benefits so this issue of governance is important (SDG 16.7 transparent institutions). He suggested a theme about governance and the need to talk about how nature is contributing to sustainable development in the Great Lakes through the 'water - energy - food - land nexus'. He also reiterated importance of SDG 6.5 and 6.6 (provisioning services of water). He informed the meeting about UN program to assist countries to develop baseline of where they stand on 6.6 so they can measure progress on these specific SDGs. He proposed the conference organizers to take an opportunity to engage all the lakes in Africa to discuss their progress on the SDGs. He informed the meeting that Uganda is the initial proof of concept for the UN efforts discussed for SDG 6.6.

Prof. Odada informed the meeting that having been involved with SDGs from beginning and being at the General Assembly when they were approved; he confirmed that only the first SDG (on poverty) was agreed by all. He went on to state that it took almost five years to convince agriculture and energy people that water should have its own goal. He urged the participants not just go across the SDGs but look to see where there is relevance to our situation and political clout. *"For example, if we can say that 90% of water from lakes is for people's livelihoods, then serious degradation of lakes in the region is important. The lakes are critical for sustaining biodiversity"*. He further suggested not to consider the SDGs the way they are and insisted that the interpretation is still in its infancy. Some are really well thought through, however. In time, sit down and craft this aspect such that key policy makers can understand. Some people will turn it down because you bring in water and agriculture or nature and water use. What we say here is what we genuinely think will add value. Professor Odada and Keith Alverson volunteered to direct this process on linking the most relevant, politically (most liked, supported/tangible) SDGs to the Conference Themes (which will themselves have to be fine-tuned).

Mr. Apse appreciated the commitment by Mr. Keith Alverson and Professor Odada to help on streamlining SDGs issues for the conference. He suggested the SDGs to be narrowed to the conference specifics.

Agenda no. 6: Discussion of Proposed Conference Themes

Mr. Hakizimana informed the meeting that the Themes presented in the meeting were chosen by TNC and LTA at this point, but they are just drafts. *"We are seeking input from the Conference Organizing Committee to expand or modify"*. He pointed that different lakes don't have same legal frameworks but people have similar and different objectives. LTA and TNC tried to take into account the situation of the Great Lakes to reflect how rich the area is in biodiversity and with a high number of endemic species.

He stressed that, all what we do, we must do while protecting the environment and conservation. He supported the idea of taking the issue of economic development in the region and how this will have impacts on the ground and in terms of policy. He stressed the need to consider oil and natural gas exploration in the Great Lakes Region and the need to ensure safety. He informed the meeting that, in the USA and Mexico there have been disasters involving oil exploration and spills. He urged members to

think about this and how things can be handled and if the countries would be able to respond to clean up.

He further explained how pollution is affecting the Great Lakes catchment areas and causes a lot of damage to the aquatic ecosystems. He encouraged members to give an upper hand to invasive species and governance issues in African Great lakes and the need to agree to some of the themes because of its relevance.

Questions, response and Discussions

Dr. Kanangire informed the meeting that the problems in Great Lakes region are diverse and suggested the members to rank and prioritize the themes. He reported that the health of the lakes depends on the health of the land and rivers in all the lakes. Issue of Hydropower isn't coming out. Can this be added? He further informed the meeting that there are many plans for adding cascades of dams and we need to think about how this will impact the Lakes and Rivers in the Great Lakes region.

Dr. Musonda Mumba from UNEP provided inputs on the need to cluster the themes into the main themes. She also pointed out about participation and people preference on parallel themes. She proposed the need to invest time in designing about the conference modality and a background paper on the lakes to provide a clear picture about the African Great Lakes Region. The picture that will emerge is varied across the region and therefore a background or scoping paper is important.

Mr. Colin Apse asserted that, clustering is a good idea, but can lead to more of a mess. Clustering isn't always prioritizing. He suggested the members to come up with a list of priority themes and insisted that the aim should be to influence policy makers to make a real change.

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa made a proposition on how to group the themes as follows:

1. Looking at Great Lakes as important assets for biodiversity and ecosystem services,
2. Drivers and threats affecting these ecosystems (infrastructure, climate change, population growth, oil exploration, etc.), and
3. Actions (investments, role of private sectors, government and governance, and investment in long-term research, monitoring and policy).

He further emphasized the need to take into account economic priorities of the regions. Lakes aren't just reservoirs of water. We look at quantity and quality of the water to determine how we use it. Water quality needs good pieces of regulation and so that needs to fit in somewhere. He cautioned the need to be straight forward particularly for heads of states in Africa so that they can be attracted by the linkages the lakes provide through transport and other economic activities. We want to have commitment or elements of commitment from heads of states for them to bring change to their nations. Can we think of a cycle of conferences? Perhaps something that would allow follow-up, allow for longer road maps and continuing to share and strengthen our synergies? On the cycle of conferences proposition, Mr. Apse agreed it was a good idea but within TNC current funding, it was not possible. However, he proposed the members to aim for that and plan for it even if TNC can't promise the resources at this stage.

Mr. Ian Gordon noted that MacArthur strategy and CRAG CIP is structured along the lines as above.

Agenda no. 7: Discussion of Potential Conference Resolutions and Outputs

Mr. Kaitira Katonda, the LTA Director of Fisheries explained about the conference expected outputs, tangible outcome at the seven basin scales and how may be difficult to come by. Nevertheless, the need to come up with tentative conference outputs was still an important step. The following outputs were given for discussion:

1. Creation of online information exchange platform
2. New commitment by governments/basin authorities
3. New funding sources committed by donors

He then asked for participants to consider something such as a '*new international agreement*' like the Gaborone Declaration for the African Great Lakes Region.

Discussions: Questions, Answers and Suggestions

Prof Odada, expressed his hope that if management of Great Lakes is an idea whose time has come, then everything will work. Through 40 years of research, there will always be funding. You simply must write your proposal to hit on the themes of the day. We need to come up with ideas and innovations that address real issues for real people. Example: if you go to fish landing site of a lake, you see big fish piled up, and you see a whole group of refrigerated lorries lining up in Lake Victoria. They wait and wait all day until the end of the day and buy fish from fishermen and middlemen at throw away prices. Once people have money in their pocket then you don't have to do much to get them to conserve the lake. Let's come down to the ground and address the real problems.

Ambassador Eugene Munyakayanza from Rwanda expressed his concerns with regards to output number one. He suggested that, if the conference organizing committee is intending to invite heads of states then the outputs should be on a solutions implementation framework in order to gain commitment and political buy-in from heads of state. He also recommended that, an online information exchange platform can be an output of the conference but not for the ministerial level especially if the conference aim is to convince the government for continued finance and commitments. Getting different actors on board with messages about what people want to invest on now and in future in the Great Lakes basin is important.

Dr. Oliva Mkumbo expressed one major concern about outputs number two and three and asked if we can really achieve if we stick to such outputs. She suggested the Technical Committee to come up with policy briefs that can go out to regional bodies and national governments. She went on and responded to Prof Odada's viewpoint on fish sells in and around Lake Victoria and the benefits accrued by middlemen and fish buyers and not real people, the fishers. She informed the meeting that, there are policies in place and that the export of products is not necessarily impoverishing people. She stressed that the immediate outputs from this conference should be a set of recommendations that can open doors to the support we need. Open the door to governance; open the door to development partners. We also need to involve the private sector in areas that can take advantage of the resources offered by

the Great Lakes. We need to have something that can help our partners put into place the knowledge we impart through the conference.

Agenda no. 8: Objectives and Options for Information Exchange Platform

Dr. Tracy Baker discussed the wealth of data, information, and knowledge that can be found and then supported on the Internet. This information can be accessed and used to inform many people's work in the Great Lakes Region as well as the general public. She argued against the common idea that there are no data available in Africa, but instead she said that the issue is there are many data but they are not managed in an efficient way. Part of the African Great Lakes International Conference work will be to build a web platform for sharing such information and making it more widely accessible. She highlighted the numerous benefits to the region that will result from this undertaking, such as:

- Faster decision making;
- Access to relevant information;
- Opportunities to take advantage of many different types of experts;
- Avoid redundancies in efforts;
- Communicate information about projects quickly and widely; and
- Promote procedures and guidelines

She refuted the notion that access to the web in Africa is challenging, referring to Ory Okolloh Mwangi (@kenyapundit) on twitter and was recently named the most influential person in the world using this social media platform. She directed participants to consider sites such as the Global Freshwater Biodiversity Atlas, the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa (JRS Biodiversity Project), and TNC's Great Lakes Inform platforms all as examples of sites that seek to put science into policy. *"From these sites, we are learning how to generate a similar portal for the African Great Lakes Region"* – she added.

Agenda no. 9: Conference Approach and Modality to Meet Goals

The session was chaired by Mr. Keith Alverson and Prof Eric Odada facilitated the discussion on potential conference modalities. He said at a meeting like the one in progress, we can expect about 100+ people and therefore there must be a plenary. Head of state or representative can open the meeting and other important donors. Others can also make statements.

He pointed that, once the committee agrees on thematic areas, it must make sure that we also have special sessions. People can go into a room designated for a theme and listen to that discussion and can report back to plenary. There will be plenaries and special sessions for the thematic areas. In the plenary there will be functionaries and those giving special presentations. The technical committee will formulate this and identify the relevant people to make those key note addresses.

Discussions: Questions, Answers and Suggestion

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa proposed that one role for technical committee could be to have members work as conveners of the different themes. For plenaries and special sessions, we need to agree to keynote speakers. We will require people with good professional credibility, and who are known to donors and governments. These people will inspire when they are speaking. How many? May be one or two?

Prof Odada: If the conference will be structured on four specific themes, then we can find one keynote speaker for each theme and that can be elaborated on in the sessions. The plenary can have 4 - 5 speakers, including the country host and chairman of technical committee.

Mr. Colin Apse: Good idea to have conveners to be part of the technical committees, people who can bring in the keynote speakers or champions.

Dr. Musonda Mumba: We need to account for the normal structure. Parallel structures are often taking place. We will need people who can succinctly summarize the sessions at the end. The summary must be so well done such that if a people aren't able to attend the specific session, they will still get what they need in the end.

Prof. Eric Odada: Rapporteurs will report back to the secretariat which will be constituted by technical committee.

Mr. Colin Apse: To maximize the impact, we need to plan ahead of time about what is the impact. Like having a policy paper on hand and then from the sessions, things are added onto the policy paper to be signed off by lake basin authorities and member states on in the end.

Prof Eric Odada: You cannot bring everybody (all the different ministers). They don't all see eye to eye for example. If you have a high profile person from something like AMCOW then they can report back to heads of states. Have in mind someone who is really important, such as a minister of Ministry related to water.

Mr. Kaitira Katonda: the suggestions are good. We need to involve secretariats who can assist in preparing briefs for ministers meetings.

Prof Eric Odada: These should be people who are neutral and not necessarily involved in any specific organization so they can speak more freely.

Mr. Colin Apse: Thinking big: who would inspire and bring people together in the region? If it is a high profile people, we need to have some lead time to bring them in.

Prof Eric Odada : There are champions who have really done a lot. The King of Holland for example has a lot of interest in the region. And, he is highly respected in Africa. He was honored by AMCOW for his contribution to water in Africa. Also, we need outcomes for securing more financing. So, consider bringing some heads of finance institutions, such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), because they may bring in more funding sources.

[Agenda no. 10: Topics and Conference Technical Committee\(s\) Process](#)

Dr. Friday Njaya facilitated the discussion on picking an overarching conference theme so that we can move forward.

Dr. Musonda Mumba: What about health sector? Hasn't been brought in so far but this is a critical issue.

Prof. Eric Odada: Need to have the governance aspect in this. Health problems are part of governance issues. It is part of the service which the government should be accountable.

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa: I suggest the topic for the main theme to be ***“African Great Lakes and Sustainable Development in a Changing Environment”***. It is not a problem to have additional themes. One role of the technical committee can be to group them.

Mr. Keith Alverson: Maybe need to think about how many parallel sessions we need. For example conference clusters might include:

- Current state of African Great Lakes and their basins
- Benefits provided
- Pressure / Drivers
- Response (resilience building, adaptation, governance)
- Best practice exchange
- Recommendations for policy makers

By the time we hold this conference, the SDGs will be known (the indices and what they are measured against).

Ms. Lucy Magembe: The cost of inaction should be presented. The conference should demonstrate the value of the lakes through the lack of response

Prof Eric Odada: What do we know and not know about these lakes? We should set the scene. These lakes are the lifeline for people in the region. For politicians spending public money, they need to know that it is impacting people. What actions need to be taken now and recommendations for policy makers.

Dr. Kelly West: What is the relationship between clusters and parallel sessions?

Mr. Keith Alverson: We were trying to cluster because we have too many thematic sessions. If you want to develop policy briefs ahead of time, then you need to have more defined sessions.

Mr. Colin Apse: There is a lot of value going through these steps. But, the lack of action should be a major focus of the conference. We should invest in policy briefs ahead of time as well as set the stage.

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa: For the clusters, when we have keynote speakers, they can be based on these areas. They can give background speeches.

Dr. Julius Ningu: We don't have time to come up with these policy briefs. I would suggest - for the clusters or themes - is to discuss: what are the policy issues that we need to bring up to the policy makers?

[Agenda no. 11: Fundraising Strategies and Options; Criteria for Recognition](#)

Dr. Musonda Mumba facilitated the discussion about fund raising and she said for the conference, the organizing team need to take a number of things into account. We need to have a core objective. What is the limit? What are we trying to influence? We need to be clear about this in particular.

She also presented an example of how has UNEP managed to organize their conference on food security and ecosystem based adaptation. UNEP had some experience and expertise in house but due to interest from different stakeholders across the continent, they realized they needed to find some strategic partners.

What source of funding do we have at present? Who do we want to partner with? CGIAR group for the UNEP meeting brought some resources. They can often bring sponsorship. UNEP engaged with some private sector. The private sector has more innovation than we do. In the food security case, there were different interests from different donors. We need to also put a cap in terms of the number of individuals who will be sponsored and discuss those that must be self-supported. The food security meeting (above example) cost about US\$500k and about half was brought by UNEP and the rest from partners.

Discussions: Questions, Answers and Suggestions

Prof. Eric Odada: Many organizations will fund initiatives. Coca Cola is a dedicated partner. For example, we organized World Water conference; they paid for almost half of it. Because this is a regional thing and not a country level program, this is even better because they have money for this. The African Development Bank can give money from their water fund because a lot of actionable items will come from the meeting. We need to identify organizations and think about how to approach them. We should have an interactive briefing note that we can pass on to people such as Bill Gates, Soros, others. All these people are out there waiting to listen, especially if things are going to address governance issues.

Mr. Keith Alverson: In this document, think about sponsorship. These groups want visibility and not to be part of the program. A document can then give them levels of sponsorship and let them know in the private sector what they get for different levels of contribution. USAID would need a different type of sell. They may want a whole session to showcase their work for example.

Dr. Kelly West: GEF has invested at least US\$70 million in the African Great Lakes over the last 20 years. They are already planning future investments in Lake Malawi / Nyassa / Niassa. They now have a streamlined one-step process for proposals that are low cost (<US\$10million) and these can get approval in 10 weeks or so. It is worth making an inquiry about funding for something like this. They won't fund a once off meeting, but if it were linked to something like the knowledge management platform that stays to service the region, this would be a potential. It would mean someone having to compile some sort of brochure that showcases GEF investments in the region. Target the GEF CEO as a speaker. She likes to participate in these types of things. She tends to attract a lot of other investors and sectors.

Mr. Keith Alverson: How can this meeting leverage future actions for response?

Mr. Colin Apse: Talk to other programs such as World Bank and try to make the conference a place they can highlight their work. This is a way to obtain additional funding as well.

Mr. Keith Alverson: China hasn't stepped up in the big climate fund, but they have announced US\$3billion for South-South cooperation. They are trying to think of how they can contribute to South-South cooperation. UNEP can help link to this group.

Dr. Canisius Kanangire: In Lake Victoria region there are some big initiatives taking place, such as one on transport being financed by the World Bank. Lake Victoria is to promote transport and trade. A lot of work is going on with infrastructure and development in the region. We come up with a number of ideas in this area that can be supported. Where do we want to take people to? We have an idea of what we

want to see coming out of each theme. Among people contributing to these big initiatives, we have Trademark East Africa and JICA. These could all come in. China is interested in infrastructure development. Others are interested in soft technologies such as knowledge packaging. If you want to harness the economic potential of the lake then you have to take into account the water quality of the lake. There can be a stock taking document that shows issues and challenges we have. Link with ideas we have to address those challenges. I'd suggest we come up with this before document then we can steer the participants toward the discussion. Let's call for a road map from now until the meeting involving all of the people present to generate a document that will go to all of the working chairs.

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa: In terms of fundraising opportunities, what about the current donors? CEPF: coalition of many donors: GEF, JICA, World Bank, MacArthur, French Development Bank (FDB). The window to fund the initiative may be different than the one used for other aspects. Talk to some of these people and explore additional funding.

Dr. Musonda Mumba: Is there a theme for this conference? This has a funding connotation. When you look at the region, at least 60 % of the people in the region are youth and they will have a big impact on how this area will look in the future.

Mr. Colin Apse: If we can find funds, he would like to have a side meeting / shadow meeting that represents the youth and civil society. How do we really create this?

Mr. Keith Alverson: Did this recently at COP 21 with youth. They had an opportunity to develop youth statements and presented this to the conference. We did same thing in Nairobi for community based adaptation.

Prof. Eric Odada: Let's identify ongoing projects that can be side events so people can see what types of activities are going on. We really need to think about a title and it needs to be something that will bring in the sustainable development ideas while not losing sight of conservation, economics, and management. These are important ideas that donors want to see.

[Agenda no. 12: Key Institutions/Stakeholders; Conference Date and Venue](#)

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa facilitated a discussion on the conference Date and Venue, Key Institutions and Stakeholders

First he referred attendees to the list of stakeholders (in folders) but reiterated that like other items presented today, this is just a starting point. He proposed we try to agree on the types of stakeholders. Who? How do you want to design this meeting? Do we want to make sure we have 1 - 2 heads of state? If yes, then you need to start designing and engaging relevant countries to be involved. Technical Ministers? On the list are some specific ministries, such as Ministry of Finance and Planning because if you want to mainstream water into national development then the minister of planning must be present. We should include ministers from at least the host country and one or two other countries. Local governments are also important. If you want to make change on the ground, local governments are important. After the ministries, you have the parliamentarians. May be one or two of these from different countries? These are the high level delegates. Then we have general practitioners and civil society. We want the meeting to reflect the multi stakeholder aspects. Research institutions are also

important as well as the private sector. The private sector is often forgotten. They need to see that there is something in it for them. Water companies should be considered. We may need a special exhibition for the private sector so they can display and be visible. They will be good contributors financially as well. Other categories to think about are youth, women, and indigenous groups. Also, minority groups can be highlighted. It is important to have a good representation. Intergovernmental and international organizations should also be present. All of this will depend on the funding available of course. It will be a challenge if we do not have additional resources. ARCOS has organized these types of regional meetings and it is important to have good quality of input or presentations.

Discussions: Questions, Answers and Suggestions

Prof Eric Odada: When we speak of 2017, it seems so far, but this is ambitious and so we need to think seriously about budgeting for people's time. We may not really have time unless you have really committed people. We need a road map. Who is going to what, when, and where? What about the venue and host country? All of this needs to be identified well in advance.

Mr. Kaitira Katonda: Technical team can help come up with final list. Financing will be a factor. Higher up people will be expensive. This should happen soon because we have an idea of the type of people we want to have at the conference. The time is not too short. People need to be dedicated just to the conference so that we can make the best use of time.

Mr. Keith Alverson: One year ahead is a good idea. We need to be able to announce via a web site and documents soon.

Mr. Colin Apse: Given funding, we want to have the conference no later than May or June, 2017. We've been pricing out locations that have facilities for over 100 people. Kisumu, Entebbe, and Lilongwe are examples. We need to know about other events ongoing at the same time because we don't want to conflict with those. What are ideas for locations and dates?

Dr. Modesta Medard: Do we need to budget for some small consultancies to come up with key issues in the Lake region? For instance, background paper?

Prof. Eric Odada: Suggested we should not stick too much to the idea of having the conference near one of the lakes. Most participants won't come because it can be a logistical nightmare. Also, we need to think of costs to get there. We can always organize a side trip to one of the lakes. It is much more important to have an accessible venue. The issue of assessing should be done by a consultant who is familiar with tourism and conferences.

Mr. Kaitira Katonda: Also, we need to consider issues such as Visas. If it is difficult to get a visa, then don't use that location. Entebbe has good facilities. You don't have to go far and it is easy to access. Regarding dates, I think May or June will be difficult because of national budgets and parliamentary sessions in East Africa. Many government officials are involved.

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa: June may not be a good month because budgets close in June – July in many countries. May be March, April, or May is the best time for planning. Also Entebbe is easy because people can fly directly there and there are good facilities. Kisumu is difficult because people have to wait to transfer in Nairobi. It is good to have some consultants to help convene this, **especially locally**. For

Lake Victoria, Entebbe would be my first choice. If not on the lake then Nairobi would be best place. We need a consultant to develop the documents. This needs to be done ASAP because we cannot announce the conference and yet we need to do so.

Dr. Oliva Mkumbo: Indicated LVFO can assist even though they are based in Jinja.

Dr. Kelly West: Suggested Munyonyo, Uganda. RAMSAR convened 800 delegates there. Easy to get access and arrange transport. It is also on the lake.

If in Munyonyo, we can invite President of Uganda. He would come in person most likely – one member commented.

Agenda no. 13: Terms of Reference for Technical Committee members

Dr. Modesta Medard led a discussion on the Terms of Reference for the Technical Committee. This committee has not yet been composed. It is the responsibility of this committee [Conference Organizing Committee] to compose this with a deadline. We need to discuss roles and responsibilities for this and part of them have been discussed already (e.g. the ability to be conveners for a specific theme is an added advantage). If that capacity is lacking the technical committee should help identify the conveners.

Prof Eric Odada: Suggested people to provide a list of names and CVs so the Conference Organizing Committee can see who among them will be most suitable for being a technical committee, convener, or keynote speaker. He stressed that these are people who must be committed. Some of the suggested people may turn out to be already committed and so this can't be decided today.

Dr. Oliva Mkumbo: For technical committee, we also need people who are easily available. These people won't be the conveners and keynote speakers. They aren't at the same high level.

Dr. Canisius Kanangire: Suggested that there is a need to define the owners of the conference outputs. One of the owners will be the lake basin authorities. So, the technical committee should have people from the different lake basin authorities. Also, people from ministries should be included. We may need an outsider to come and support the team. He went on to suggest having a consultant who will work with the technical committee to frame the documents and bring them to a higher level and support the team.

Dr. Modesta Medard: Proposed there is a need for a deadline to get names for the Technical Committee. End of January should be the limit.

Prof Eric Odada: Suggested Professor Daniel Olago for Technical Committee. Prof Olago is a member of ILEC, Associate Director of ACCESS, and a committed researcher with many books and papers.

Dr. Oliva Mkumbo: Proposed that names not be given out now but instead sent to Dr. Modesta Medard over coming weeks.

Mr. Kaitira Katonda: The head of the basin commissions can appoint people to serve in this role because they know their people. It may be useful to have about seven technical committee members who don't need to meet physically. For Lake Malawi / Nyassa / Niassa we should get someone from the Fisheries Department because there is no lake authority.

Dr. Modesta Medard: Suggests that 12 - 15 people are reasonable for the technical committee.

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa: Suggest that we need about 4 - 5 people for each sub-theme. Where did a number of 12 - 15 come from?

Mr. Colin Apse: Suggested the need to spend time on this and get back to people. There will be conveners by sub-theme and may be initially we have a group of 16 or so to sort out the technical committee issues, but it is going to take more thought. There also needs to be representation among the countries and not basin authority only.

Prof Odada: Have an advisory committee and a technical committee. People won't necessarily have skills to do both.

Mr. Colin Apse: This is the advisory committee. He then proposed expanding this committee to include missing representatives.

Dr. Oliva Mkumbo: The advisory committee could come up with names for the technical committee. Smaller groups can decide if all the proposed names will be included.

Dr. Canisius Kanangire: We need to work quickly in this early preparation time. We need to get the technical team together and facilitate their work getting started.

Dr. Modesta Medard: Should we bring some people from advisory committee to technical committee?

Dr. Oliva Mkumbo: Also, we need to impose some deadlines.

Mr. Kaitira Katonda: Let's have basin authorities submit names by next Wednesday [23 December, 2015].

Mr. Colin Apse: The way forward:

- Conference organizing committee / advisory committee to submit names by next Wednesday (or no later than first week of January).
- We [TNC] will work on framework for going forward. Technical committee groups can start meeting in January or February. It should be agile plan to meet virtually through skype; consist of less than 25 people.
- Announce the conference date in early 2016.

Next organizing committee meeting will take place in mid- 2016, aiming for an April – May meeting.

He reiterated that we [TNC] will lay out road map by early January and have recommendations from people by early January and get Technical Committee working by early February, 2016

Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa: How are the papers going to be selected? Is it a call for papers? Nominations for presenting papers?

Mr. Colin Apse: He proposed nominations.

Mr. Kaitira Katonda: Usually for the keynote speakers are selected. For the other presenters, we can announce the conference with a call for abstracts. We can then review the abstracts and then select the ones that will be accepted and ask people to submit their papers.

Prof Eric Odada: We should have invited papers from distinguished keynote speakers. Then, call for papers. Sort through and select the ones we want. [*He was seconding Katonda*]. He has names to recommend in some specific themes.

Dr. Modesta Medard: Stated that she will share the terms of reference electronically. She asked the group if there is a need to set a sitting fee or honorarium especially for Keynote speakers and Conveners.

Prof Eric Odada: It is unethical if you are a scientist and you are given the honor to present your knowledge. We can cover transportation and lodging. Some may pay their own. There shouldn't be an honorarium for this sort of thing.

Agenda no. 14: Closing Ceremony

Basin Authority Chairs say final words:

- Lake Victoria Basin Commission (Dr. Kanangire):

In his closing remarks, Dr. Kanangire started that in the past there was an interest for Lake Basin Organizations to meet in order to share experience and challenges. He thanked TNC and LTA for providing the opportunity to ensure such desire was becoming a reality. He assured the members that LVBC was committed to participate and mobilize partner states to provide key ideas for the meeting. He concluded by saying that a message will be sent to the focal point ministries in the member states to start thinking about the conference.

- ABAKIR – Rusizi River Basin (Lake Kivu)

Amb. Eugen Munyaiyanza, thanked TNC and LTA for inviting Lake Kivu commission to participate in the meeting. He informed the meeting that, Lake Kivu and LTA Authorities were in the process of establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance institutional cooperation and collaboration given that Lake Kivu is like a sub-basin of Lake Tanganyika. He also informed the members that, Lake Kivu Authority is conducting the study on the state of water in the basin which will be shared during the conference. He further stated that, inter-governmental regional organizations (the basin authorities) at times they act almost as States since States are directly involved. He also suggest to TNC and other organizations to think about how to integrate river basin authorities because rivers and lakes are connected.

- Nile Basin Initiative - NBI/NELSAP

Eng. Elicad Elly Nyabeeya thanked TNC and LTA for inviting him and appreciated the inclusion of Lake Edward and Albert in the Great Lakes initiative. He stressed that the platform is so relevant and useful for NBI and NELSAP involvement and informed the meeting that they have a commission which focuses on the lakes and rivers that feed into the Nile River. He also explained that questions have been asked about collaboration with other basins and this forum has come at the right time. The Commission has a number of project activities and a number of lessons can be shared during the conference.

- Lake Malawi representative

The Deputy Director of Fisheries from Malawi, thanked TNC for coming up with African Great Lakes conference agenda because the challenges being faced are common, drivers are common and issues of aquaculture around the lake basin is still a problem. He confirmed that Fisheries Department in Malawi is supporting the idea and they will work together to ensure the conference is going to be successful.

- Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization -LVFO

Dr. Oliva Mkumbo (LVFO) thanked the organizers and used the closing remarks to inform the meeting that her organization is actively involved in various regional fisheries issues within EAC Partner States. She emphasized the need to consider fisheries matters in African Great Lakes region because of its importance in providing food security and employment. She also informed the participants that LVFO is now EAC technical arm on fisheries matters and plans are underway to transform LVFO in terms of scope, mandate and geographical coverage. The new entity will be known as the East African Fisheries Organization, giving high priority to small scale fisheries that represents the highest population in African Great Lakes region.

- TNC, Africa Freshwater Conservation Director

Mr. Colin Apse, thanked everyone for their participation and promised the participants to ensure feedback and communications on time. He wished everyone safe journey back to their destinations and requested them for continued engagement in order to strengthen the cooperation and collaboration with the view of promoting ecosystems management in African Great Lakes Region.

- Executive Director, Lake Tanganyika Authority

Eng. Jean-Marie Nibirantije (LTA) thanked the participants for sparing their time and coming for the meeting. He congratulated the participants for working so hard to harmonize various issues for the coming conference. He appreciated the expertise which made each of the participants to learn from one another and thanks TNC for financing and other individuals for facilitating the meeting.

=There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5.45pm EAT=

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND CONTACT DETAILS

	Name	Institution	Position	Email Address	Tel number
1	Dr. Canisius Kanangire	Lake Victoria Basin Commission	Executive Secretary	ckanangire@lvbc.org	+254705026795
2	Prof. Eric Odada	University of Nairobi	Professor	eodada@uonbi.ac.ke	+254204447740
3	Ms. Maaike Manten	BirdLife	CEPF Regional Program Implementation Leader, Nairobi-Kenya	Maaike.Manten@birdlife.org	-
4	Mr. Ian Gordon	BirdLife	Nairobi, Kenya	igordonicipe@gmail.com	-
5	Eng. Jean-Marie Nibirantije	LTA	Executive Director, Bujumbura - Burundi	nibijamaru@yahoo.fr; jeanmarie.nibirantije@lta-alt.org	+25779327527
6	Mr. Gabriel Hakizimana	LTA	Director of Environment, Bujumbura, Burundi	gabriel.hakizimana@lta-alt.org	+25779932099
7	Mr. Kaitira Katonda	LTA	Director of Fisheries, Bujumbura, Burundi	kaitira.katonda@lta-alt.org ; kaitira.katonda1@gmail.com	+255759175295
8	Mr. Michael Annel Phiri	LTA	Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Bujumbura, Burundi	michaelannel@gmail.com	+25771266165
9	Dr. Julius Ningu	VPO/Environment	Director of Environment, UR Tanzania. Dar Es Salaam	jkningu@yahoo.com	+255786733904
10	Mr. Gayo Lemba	Fisheries Department	Director of Fisheries DRC	gayowadur@yahoo.fr	+243999912450
11	Mr. Jeremie Nkinahatemba	Burundi(Planning and Development)	Bujumbura, Burundi	irnkina@yahoo.fr	+25779215335
12	Mr. Keith Alverson	UNEP	Coordinator, Freshwater, Land and Climate Branch, Nairobi	Keith.Alverson@unep.org	+254714636317
13	Dr. Kelly West	UNEP	GEF Portfolio Manager, Office for Operations, Nairobi	Kelly.West@unep.org	+254207624147
14	Dr. Musonda Mumba	UNEP	Programme Officer, Ecosystem Based Adaptation (EBA). Climate Change Adaptation Unit, Nairobi	Musonda.Mumba@unep.org	+254207625720
15	Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa	ARCOS	Executive Director, UK/Uganda/Rwanda	skanyamibwa@arcosnetwork.org ; skanyamibwa@yahoo.com	+250785751900
16	Ms. Lucy Magembe	TNC	Sr. Policy Officer, Dar Es Salaam	lucy.magembe@TNC.ORG	+255683109996
17	Mr. Hosea Gonza	Fisheries Division,	Director of Fisheries UR, Tanzania.	hoseagonza86@gmail.com;	+255763743453

	Name	Institution	Position	Email Address	Tel number
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18	Dr. Modesta Medard	TNC	AGLR Manager, Africa Region-Arusha	modesta.medard@TNC.ORG	+255767656836
19	Dr. Tracy Baker	TNC	Spatial Scientist, Africa Region	Tracy.Baker@TNC.ORG	+18458423589
20	Dr. Oliva Mkumbo	LVFO	Deputy Executive Secretary, Jinja-Uganda	ocmkumbo@lvfo.org	+256782519779
21	Mr. Colin Apse	TNC	Director, Africa Freshwater Conservation	colin.apse@TNC.ORG	+12072539663
22	Eng. Elicad Elly Nyabeeya	NBI/NELSAP	NELSAP Regional Coordinator. NBI/Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Programme	enyabeeya@nilebasin.org	+25078838418
23	Mr. Robert Wild	IUCN		Robert.WILD@iucn.org	+254717730035
24	Amb. Eugene Munyaianza	ABAKIR	Executive Director	ekayanza@gmail.com	+250785071622
25	Dr. Friday Njaya	Fisheries Department	Deputy Director of Fisheries, Malawi	fnjaya@gmail.com	+265888516208
26	Mr. Peter Limbu	TNC	Fisheries Lead	peter.limbu@TNC.ORG	+255787988810
27	Ms. Catherine Lwangu	TNC	Administration	Catherine.Lwangu@TNC.ORG	+254728606657

APPENDIX 2: MEETING PROGRAM

AFRICAN GREAT LAKES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FIRST CONFERENCE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEETING

SAROVA PANAFRIC HOTEL, NAIROBI – KENYA; 17TH DECEMBER, 2015

TIME	ACTIVITY AND LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
	Chair : Dr. Canisius Kanangire, LVBC
08.30 – 09.30hrs	OPENING <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-introductions by Participants 2. Adoption of Agenda and Programme 3. Official Opening by The Nature Conservancy and LTA
09.30 - 09.45hrs	Origin and Current Funding of African Great Lakes International Conference – Mr. Colin Apse, TNC
09.45 – 10.15hrs	Overview of the African Great Lakes Region Conservation Strategy: MacArthur Foundation – Dr. Julius Arinaitwe, BirdLife
10.15 – 10.45hrs	Health Break and Group Photo
	Chair Dr. Julius Ningu, (VP Environment), Tanzania
10:45 – 11.15hrs	Conference Preparation Update – Dr. Modesta Medard, TNC
11.15 – 11.30hrs	Proposed Overarching Goals and Links to Sustainable Development Goals – Ms Lucy Magembe, TNC
11.30 – 12.15hrs	Discussion of Proposed Conference Themes – Mr. Gabriel Hazikimana, LTA
12.15 - 12.30hrs	Discussion of Potential Conference Resolutions and Outputs – Mr. Kaitira Katonda, LTA
12.30 – 13.00hrs	Objectives and Options for Information Exchange Platform – Dr. Tracy Baker, TNC
13.00 - 14.00hrs	Lunch Break
	Chair: Mr. Keith Alverson, UNEP
14.00 – 14.45hrs	Conference Approach and Modality to Meet Goals (conveners, champions, key note speakers): Prof Eric Odada, Nairobi University
14.45 – 15.15hrs	Topics and Conference Technical Committee(s) Process – Dr. Friday Njaya, FD-Malawi
15.15 – 15.45hrs	Fundraising Strategies and Options; Criteria for Recognition Dr. Musonda Mumba, UNEP
15.45 – 16.15hrs	Key Institutions/Stakeholders; Conference Date and Venue – Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa, ARCOS
	Chair: Dr. Oliva Mkumbo
16.15 – 16.30hrs	Discussion of Process Going Forward – Dr. Modesta Medard, TNC
16.30 - 17.00hrs	Closing Ceremony <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Closing remarks by UNEP Representative 2. Closing remarks by Lake Basin Representatives

	3. Closing remarks by TNC Representative 4. Closing remarks by Eng. Jean-Marie Nibirantije, LTA Executive Director
17.00hrs	Meeting adjournment