



# LAKE VICTORIA

WATER AND SANITATION INITIATIVE

UNHABITAT



Overview of the Pro-poor Approaches for Improved Access to Affordable Water and Sanitation Initiative of UN-HABITAT.

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## FOREWORD



With only 5 years to go to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa continue to lag behind the rest of the world. At a time when water and sanitation services are taken for granted in many developed and middle income developing countries, there are over 300 million Africans who lack access to safe drinking water and over 560 million who do not use an improved sanitation facility.

To the millions who lack these basic services, it is not the numbers that count, but the daily toll of disease, lost time and low productivity and the harsh reality of having to spend hours every day, trying to find a few litres of water, which is often unsafe and typically located several kilometers away from their homes. In this situation, the challenge of escaping from poverty is formidable, and, for most, insurmountable.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation in sub-Saharan Africa requires action on many fronts. There is a need to allocate more resources to the sector, which continues to be underfunded. Of equal importance, however, is the need to use resources more efficiently and this requires a more effective legal and institutional framework to plan and implement investments and to manage the delivery of services, especially for the poor. There is also a need to adopt more integrated approaches which reflect the different dimensions of the water and sanitation sector, including gender, community participation, environmental sustainability, institutional development, and water resources management.

To expedite progress in meeting the MDGs in sub-Saharan Africa, there is a need for good models which can be replicated and scaled up. The Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Initiative (LVWATSAN), which was launched in 2004, has now been established as an important regional initiative. The programme was conceptualized by UN-HABITAT as a response to the rapid growth of many small towns bordering Lake Victoria, the increasing pressure on water and sanitation services and the unprecedented deterioration in the ecosystem of Africa's greatest Lake.

The first phase of the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative is now nearing completion and plans are now being made to scale up the programme to another 15 towns in the 5 East African Countries. The programme has already demonstrated its potential to



achieve the MDGs for water and sanitation in secondary towns and contribute to the environmental sustainability of Lake Victoria.

This publication is meant to document the essential features of the Lake Victoria programme Model, including the short term results, the impact, the lessons learnt and some of the best practices which have resulted from the implementation of this first phase of the Programme.

At UN-HABITAT, we are working closely with the East African Community and the African Development Bank and others to bring the initiative to other towns in neighbouring Rwanda and Burundi. It is our duty to help improve the quality of life of people living in poverty in the towns within the Lake Victoria basin and to ensure the best possible conservation of this greatest of lakes.



Anna Tibaijuka  
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## BACKGROUND

The rapidly growing urban centres in the Lake Victoria basin are playing an increasingly important role in the economic development of the region. But most of these towns are experiencing unplanned, spontaneous growth. The run-down and often non-existent basic infrastructure and services in most of them poses a major threat to their sustainability.

The poor people of these urban and peri-urban areas, most of whom remain outside the reach of municipal services, are the most affected. Official statistics are often misleading and do not reveal the true extent of the problem. Socio-economic surveys carried out by UN-HABITAT in over 20 secondary towns around the Lake reveal an alarming situation, with access to water and sanitation typically less than 30%. The situation is compounded by unplanned urban development and intense pressure on basic infrastructure which have had a significant negative impact on living conditions, the natural environment, and the fragile ecosystem of the Lake.

These secondary towns are yet to reap the full benefits of upstream reforms taking place in the water and sanitation sector in the three East African countries. The local authorities and the service providers, overwhelmed by the rapid and unplanned development of these towns, lack the capacity or resources to address the widening demand-supply gap. The Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative, spearheaded by UN-HABITAT, represents a coordinated effort on the part of the international community, regional organizations, as well as national and local authorities, to address the deteriorating living conditions in the Lake Basin and to improve the prospects of these towns in achieving the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation.

## A MODEL FOR ACHIEVING MDG TARGETS AND FOSTERING REGIONAL COOPERATION

The rapidly growing smaller urban centres in the Lake region are contributing increasingly to the economic development of the region and to regional cooperation. Their sustainability is critical to development of the region. Demonstrating an integrated approach to the provision of basic services in these towns and enhancing capacity at local levels for the towns to manage themselves will provide a model for national authorities and donors (including international financing institutions) to replicate in other towns in the region. The initiative will also foster regional cooperation by sharing of experiences and exchange of expertise among the three East African countries.

## LINKAGES WITH OTHER ON-GOING INITIATIVES

As the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Initiative moves into a second phase, the linkages with other programmes will assume even greater importance. Lake Victoria is regarded as the most important trans-boundary natural resource in Africa and the efforts to enhance its environmental sustainability in a region of widespread poverty, must, of necessity, be regional in scope. The Initiative is working closely with two ongoing programmes coordinated by the East African Community Secretariat, the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Programme and the Nile Basin Initiative. It has also established collaborative linkages with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Water Agenda for the region facilitated by the African Development Bank, and other regional initiatives.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE LAKE VICTORIA WATER AND SANITATION INITIATIVE

The objective of the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Initiative is to make a substantial and rapid contribution to the achievement of internationally-agreed water and sanitation goals in secondary towns in the Lake Victoria region in East Africa. The programme has so far targeted 10 towns and is now being scaled up to another 15 towns. The expanded programme in 25 urban settlements will benefit an estimated 1.2 million people in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. This Model-setting initiative seeks to demonstrate the balance between innovative approaches to investment in physical infrastructure and investments in capacity-building for sustainability. The Initiative has set clear quantitative targets for the number of persons to be provided with improved access to water and sanitation services within an agreed timeframe.

With a clear pro-poor focus, the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Initiative is designed to generate desirable outcomes that will have a lasting effect on the poor. These include improved access to water and sanitation services in the project areas, functional and gender-focused approaches for sustainable management and performance monitoring of the rehabilitated systems, institutionalized capacity

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Promote pro-poor water and sanitation investments in the secondary urban centres in the Lake Victoria Region
- Support development of institutional and human resource capacities at local and regional levels for the sustainable delivery of improved water and sanitation services
- Facilitate realization of upstream water sector reforms at the local level in the participating urban centres
- Reduce the environmental impact of urbanization in the Lake Victoria Basin

building programmes to regularly upgrade the capacity of stakeholders, and a contribution to the reduction in pollutant loads entering Lake Victoria. Implemented in tandem with ongoing sector reforms in the region, these interventions will lead to improved health and productivity for populations in the secondary towns participating in the programme.



Unprotected water source, Bukoba Tanzania. Photo © UN-HABITAT



Protected water source, Nyamwala spring Muleba Tanzania. Photo © UN-HABITAT

## THE FIRST 10 TOWNS

The first phase of the Programme is targeting 10 towns in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, as follows:

### KENYA

- Kisii
- Homa Bay
- Bondo



Artisan training women, Kyotera Uganda. Photo © UN-HABITAT

### UGANDA

- Kyotera
- Nyendo/Masaka
- Mutukula
- Bugembe

### TANZANIA

- Bukoba
- Muleba
- Bunda
- Mutukula

Based on socio-economic surveys carried out in 2007, the Baseline Conditions were established as follows:

- Total population – 525,170
- 399,129 persons (76% of the population) lacking access to sustainable supplies of safe drinking water
- 380,150 persons (72%) lacking access to improved sanitation
- Less than 5% of the garbage is being collected by the local authorities
- Limited institutional and human resources capacity to manage water and sanitation programmes. Service providers are covering less than 60% of their costs
- Income levels are less than 50% of national averages
- Large numbers of orphan-headed and child headed households because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic
- Limited engagement of the communities in water and sanitation programmes

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