

The Indian Ocean Commission and the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization launches the first Coordination Unit for joint fisheries surveillance in Lake Victoria

Jinja - Friday, 31st May 2013 – For the first time, a joint coordination unit for fisheries surveillance, which involves Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, was officially launched today for Lake Victoria. It is an initiative of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), through IOC SmartFish Programme, which is funded by the European Union.

“We believe that acting as a regional unit on the same initiatives, same procedures and same methodologies, will increase the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) **effectiveness**” said Jude Talma, SmartFish – IOC MCS expert. “**Successful joint MCS patrols** have already been conducted by SmartFish last year as part of some joint operational training”



Lake Victoria holds the most important source of fresh water fish for the African continent, contributing significant income **towards the three riparian states'** economies, as well as other countries in the region through the trade in fish from the Lake. Despite efforts from the countries and LVFO, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing remains a major concern in Lake Victoria.

Additionally, Kenya and Tanzania have also received a grant of Euro 257,262 and Euro 162,263 respectively from the IOC. Uganda will be provided with a separate grant to coordinate efforts with Kenya and Tanzania. The SmartFish Programme has also completed senior management fisheries trainings and fisheries officer trainings in 2012 as further support for these undertakings.

“**The Coordination Unit** will have the responsibility to coordinate the planning, implementation and reporting of all the joint fisheries operation on Lake **Victoria**” said **Dick Nyeko, the LVFO Executive Secretary**

There will be a total of more than one hundred joint patrol-days for both Tanzania and Kenya, **including 6 hours of aerial patrol within one year of the project's life.**

The LVFO is an East African Community institution, comprised of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The organization's aim is to harmonise, develop and adopt conservation and management measures for the sustainable utilization of the living resources of Lake Victoria to optimize socio-economic benefits from the basin for the three partner states.

The SmartFish Programme is one of the largest development programmes for fisheries in Africa with a key component being the enhancement of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) for the fisheries in the Eastern, Southern African and Indian Ocean region. SmartFish is implemented by the Indian Ocean Commission and the Food and Agricultural Organization.

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