

THE KENYA LAKE SYSTEM IN THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY (KENYA)

UPDATED REPORT

29th January 2015

This brief report takes into consideration Decision 38 COM 7B.91. Kenya wishes to highlight the following as updates:

1. We congratulate UNESCO Africa Regional Office for providing some funding to undertake community consultative workshops that will enhance the conservation of Lake Elementaita. Further, it will facilitate ensuring the conservation of riparian areas. Enhancing local community involvement in the management will help in ensuring protection against encroachments by tourism facilities and manage any other development in the areas including in the catchment areas. Noting the compliance by tourism investors in Lake Elementaita and following several consultative meetings the idea of a one-year moratorium was postponed.
2. In the month of December 2014, the local communities of Lake Bogoria, in particular the Endorois were given royalties amounting USA Dollars 22,000 (2,000,000 Kenya Shillings). These were payment by Novozymes a Bio-prospecting Company that used resources from the lake to develop products. This was done under the Access and Benefit Sharing (Nagoya Protocol) and is the first case in Kenya. Prior to the payments there was a meeting with local leaders and the Endorois in the month of October to discuss the issues raised by ACHPR. These were resolved and the communities agreed to work closely with the County Government and the Kenya Wildlife Service to ensure conservation of Lake Bogoria and its environment. The County Government also provided funding to sponsor needy children progress in their education. This as an incentive enhances full and effective participation of the Endorois among other communities in the management of the Lake.
3. Discussions have been held regarding Geothermal Energy prospecting in the Rift Valley. The relevant government authorizes have emphasized the mandatory requirement under the Environment Management and Coordination Act to undertake Environmental Impact Assessment. Prospecting and development within the property is not allowed and any development outside irrespective of the distance will be assessed accordingly to ensure that no impact on the OUV of the property.
4. The 2014 World Migratory Bird Day was held in Lake Natron with participation of the Kenyan counterpart. Local communities, Tanzania relevant authorities, NGOs and local communities participated in the event. The local leadership expressed their desire to ensure the conservation of the lake as a habitat for the migratory birds especially the lesser flamingoes. The government agencies reinstated that the soda ash factory will not be constructed. We take note also the Tanzania Single Species Action Plan for Lesser Flamingoes under the Africa-Eurasia Waterbird Agreement. Kenya is also in the process of developing its Single Species Action Plan for Lesser Flamingoes. Through these action plans, Kenya and Tanzania will enhance cooperation in the management of Lake Natron and the Shampole wetlands on the Kenyan side.