

Tanzania: Lake Victoria Threatened By Environmental Degradation, According to Marine Expert

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Photo: Daily News
Lake Victoria.

By Moses Mathew

Mwanza — The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Project Manager, Ms Stefanie Brinkel, has on Wednesday this week opened a two- day conference on Climate change, pollution and sustainable use of natural resources in the Lake Victoria region, Mwanza Region.

Speaking during the first day of the meeting that was done one day before the conference here, the project Manager, Ms Brinkel said that the conference was attended by over 97 participants from riparian countries who suffer the common bond on the climate change and pollution in the lake.

"While Lake Victoria offers a variety of ecological and socio-economic opportunities, we cannot and do not want to close our eyes pertaining to the fact that Lake Victoria has undergone severe changes over time and is threatened by environmental degradation," said Ms Brinkel.

She said that Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is one of the six Germany political foundations and is one which organised the conference and has been operating in Tanzania since 1962. It was, however, officially registered in 1964 where in July 1961 Mwalimu Julius Nyerere made an official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany. His request to the federal Chancellor was not money or short-term technical support, rather it was long a long- term solution.

The chancellor assigned Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung task to support Mwalimu find an appropriate solution. Ms Brinkel noted that in 1962 with the support of KAS the Kivukoni College was inaugurated. The Kivukoni College was ground for leadership and ethics in Tanganyika.

The key shove of KAS was and is to promote democracy, sustainable development, good governance, international relations and regional integration. Lake Victoria is an international

water body that offers the riparian communities a large number of extremely important environmental services.

Over the past three decades or so, the lake has come under increasing and considerable pressure from a variety of interlinked human activities such as overfishing, species introductions, industrial pollution, eutrophication and sedimentation.

In the conference participants will examine the root causes for over fishing and pollution in Lake Victoria and give possible policy options that can help remediate or mitigate the environmental degradation.

Ms Brinkel added that the Lake is the second largest freshwater body in the world and the largest lake by area in Africa. It is a joint resource of Kenya Uganda and Tanzania.

To have representatives from three states for this event, meant not to be just a meeting but meant to continue in future to form and strengthen a strong regional exchange of knowledge within and between the three riparian countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung regional program for climate change and energy security, Sub-sahara Africa, Prof Dr Oliver Ruppel said that the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation with its various country offices and regional programmes worldwide was already very active in sub-Saharan Africa, where the challenges related to energy security in times of a changing climate are particularly pressing.

He said that they had about 15 offices in Africa at the moment and in their European and international cooperation efforts they aimed at making a contribution.