



KENYA NILE DISCOURSE FORUM

SUCCESS STORIES

DECEMBER, 2007

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Kenya Nile Discourse Forum (KNDF) is the Kenyan Chapter of Nile Basin Discourse. It is a multi stakeholder, membership organization of civil society organizations dealing with issues on environment, agriculture, water & sanitation and energy, and which are determined to play a leading role in the socio-economic development of the basin.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of KNDF is to increase numbers and make up of civil society organizations engaged in discourse activities to enhance interest and active participation of all stakeholders and assist in capturing the perception of participation in discourse activities

Its **specific objectives** are:

- To create an effective platform for communities to raise their voices
- Facilitate effective civil society engagement in development processes and projects at community level
- Promote open sharing and exchange of information on Nile Basin development especially under NBI among stakeholders

This year, KNDF successfully accomplished several activities. A few of these success stories are described below

1. Establishment of a Resource Centre

Kenya Nile Discourse Forum established a resource centre at its offices located in the 5th Floor of Kenya Re-insurance Plaza, Kisumu. The resource centre is an independent room within the office covering an area of approximately 40 m².

It is equipped with one desk top computer connected to the internet, a telephone connection, three book shelves, three round reading tables and a large wallside reading table. It is stocked with different reading materials in the form of books, booklets, newsletters, pamphlets, brochures posters, calendars, reports and research papers. The materials contain information on environment, natural resources, agriculture, energy and several major socio-economic development activities within the Nile basin. Government District Development Plans for all the districts in the basin, East African Community documentations and those of the proposed LVEMP II project are also in stock. The centre has additional materials in soft copies that also include audio and video documentation. It is also supplied on a daily basis with copies of local daily newspapers.



Readers at KNDF Resource Centre

The centre is managed by a full time librarian who has developed a bibliography for all documentations at the centre and he is currently in the process of cataloguing and computerizing all documentation for ease of tracing

Already the centre has attracted some readers who visit it daily to get information on the Nile. Efforts have been directed towards popularizing the centre to improve its usage. Similarly, KNDF is in touch with similar centers in Kisumu town and elsewhere with the view of linking the centre through a data base connectivity. The idea is to improve its ability to satisfy interest of a wide range of readers.

The centre, at its full operation, will be a one stop centre for all information on environment and development in the Nile basin, Kenya

2. Political Party debates

KNDF organized six political party debates in six different towns in the basin. The purpose of the debates was to:

- 1). engage politicians in debating issues affecting the communities from their focal areas
- 2). develop a common political front in addressing these issues and
- 3). establish a network between the politicians and the CSOs for future collaboration.

The debates brought together councillors and party leaders of different political parties from districts within a focal area on one hand and CSOs on the other for the discussion.

The debates were organised such that the councillors/party leaders formed the discussion panel moderated by a KNDF official whereas KNDF member CSOs formed the audience and played an additional role of engaging the debaters in an interactive question and answer session. Members of the print media were in attendance and covered the proceedings.



A section of the audience following proceeding of the debate

During the debates pre-prepared discussion topics on issues of major community concerns, earlier submitted by KNDF CSOs, were tabled to the panellist for discussion. All the six debates were lively and at times acrimonious when differing views were aired. The politicians got the opportunity to articulate their party policies on the issues under discussion and where such policies were unclear or non-existent, the audience posed a challenge to the individual politicians to commit to influence policy change or introduce by-laws in their councils to address them.

The debates were very successful in highlighting the concerns of the communities and in influencing politicians to advocate for more sustainable environmental management. Of particular significance was the resolve across many debates that councils need to strengthen their environmental departments by allocating to it more funds to undertake environmental awareness and management programmes. These departments should also be given prominence as planning and other key departments within the councils.

Across many of the debates, water hyacinth resurgence in Lake Victoria, a resource or a menace was a key subject of discussion. Other issues such as catchment degradation, soil erosion, pollution and cultivation along river banks and lake shores formed the bigger part of the debates.

3. Membership Mobilisation

One of the three specific objectives of KNDF is to facilitate effective civil society engagement in development processes and projects at community level. This objective is partially contributed to by undertaking activities under M2 that seek to realize its objective of promoting a pro-active civil society engagement in development processes under the NBI. In an effort to address the M2 objective, KNDF undertook to identify, mobilize and prepare member CSOs for an active engagement in the development processes, as a foundation to pro-active engagement.

Membership mobilization was carried out in all the 28 districts in the Nile basin, Kenya. The activity sought to map out member CSOs in the entire basin, cluster them into thematic areas, sensitize and prepare them for active engagement in development processes in their regions.

In total, 510 CSOs i.e. NGOs, CBOs and church groups were reached and mobilized. Mobilization was done through workshops and group visits. A total of 24 workshops were held, one in every district, and in each workshop representatives of different CSOs participated. The workshops were facilitated by KNDF national and Focal Point officials, and in many of the meetings government representatives, especially, from the ministry of environments, water and district social development officers also participated.



Participants at one of KNDF membership mobilization meetings

The workshops raised awareness on the activities of KNDF, NBD and NBI, and other development initiatives in the respective districts. Participants were encouraged to form networks among themselves for future collaboration. They were sensitized to use the networks to engage in NBI project identification, implementation and monitoring as well as in other government projects in their districts. KNDF offered its leadership at the district level to coordinate the CSOs for future collaborative engagement. Government officers in most of the workshops committed government support and cooperation with the district leadership while undertaking development processes in the districts.

The mobilization activities were successful and KNDF current has a strong membership of 510 CSOs. The membership forms a structure, which KNDF will effectively use to engage NBI and other organizations in the development processes in the basin. The profiles of all the member organizations are stored in KNDF's database.

4. Engagement of NBI

Engagement of NBI has been one of KNDF's major objectives at the following levels:

- i. Cooperation and joint implementation of activities
- ii. Joint work planning
- iii. Monitoring of progress in implementation of projects supported by NBI-NTEAP-Micro grants.

The following activities have been jointly and successfully undertaken:

a) Nile Day

The day was organised by NBI projects and programmes in collaboration with KNDF. The event, held at St. Mathius secondary school, Busia, took two days and the following activities were undertaken: tree planting along the Kisumu–Busia road and at the compound where the event was held, collection of solid waste along the road, a stretch of 1.5 km; a football march; exhibitions and arena activities that included entertainment by choirs, poets, traditional dancers and finally speeches from guests.

KNDF participated actively in the planning committee, in exhibitions, clean up exercises and in the arena activities. KNDF also distributed KNDF T-shirts and refreshment to participants of the two day event

The celebration delivered the key KNDF output of involving CSOs to effectively engage government departments and NBI in activities.

b) Confidence Building Forum

In the month of April and October, KNDF in collaboration with CBSI, held two joint Confidence Building Forums in Kisumu, Kenya. Confidence Building Forum are fora that bring together participants from the academia, research institutions, intergovernmental organizations, line government ministries, the media and CSOs to discuss major issues of concern to the communities of the Nile basin. The purpose is to create awareness on issues and draw up a consultative way forward.

The first stakeholder forum was held to discuss the resurgence of Water Hyacinth in Lake Victoria, whether the weed was invasive and completely needed eradicated or a resource that require controlled utilization.

The second forum was held to create awareness and update key stakeholders from the Lake Victoria basin on the progress of negotiation of Nile Cooperative Framework, underscoring its difference with the controversial Nile treaty

In both cases senior researchers and consultants led the discussions through their paper presentations followed by plenary discussions.

Both forums created awareness on their thematic focus, offered opportunity for the stakeholder to debate and give views and delivered consultative way forwards. Further, the forums achieved the output of solidify cooperation between KNDF and CBSI.

II) Work Planning

Planning Meetings

The KNDF Coordinator participates in joint quarterly KNDF-NBI Coordinators/Project managers planning meetings.

The meetings provide an opportunity to the coordinators and managers to present their work plans and budget for the coming quarter as well as update members on the progress of implementation of various projects of NBI and KNDF undertaken in the previous quarter.

It is through these meetings that coordinators have harmonized work plans to identify synergies and reduce duplication.

In this year, three meetings have been held and a fourth one is scheduled for December, 2007.

The meetings are effective venues for active engagement of NBI in terms of approach to programme implementation and collaboration.

The joint meetings are a great success for KNDF in NBI engagement.

III). Monitoring

KNDF organised a two-day joint KNDF/NTEAP-Micro grants engagement workshop in October, 2007 in Kisumu. The workshop sought to monitor progress and challenges facing the NTEAP-Micro grants supported projects, develop a joint KNDF-NTEAP facilitative monitoring framework for the projects in the future and deliberate on the possibilities of sustaining and scaling up the projects beyond micro grants financing period.



Participants at KNDF/Micro grants workshop

Representatives of all the NTEAP-Micro grants supported projects and KNDF national and district representatives participated in the workshop.

Micro grants supported projects made presentations of their programmes highlighting the following:

- A brief description of the supported programme and funding level
- Activities under implementation
- Challenges to implementation
- Lessons learnt
- Recommendation for way forward

The presentation were deliberated on a plenary where various way forwards on future individual programme implementation processes were made

The meeting further recommended that:

- KNDF and Micro grants should develop a monitoring plan and framework for future joint monitoring of NTEAP supported projects
- KNDF register Micro grants supported projects amongst its membership for the purpose of working with them to replicate their activities
- KNDF district representatives should in future facilitate monitoring of NTEAP sponsored projects through visitation

The workshop was a major step towards KNDF's future role in monitoring Micro grants supported projects and their impacts to the communities.

Following the workshop, KNDF is abreast with the progress of implementation and will soon jointly develop a KNDF-NTEAP micro grant framework for future monitoring of the projects.