

## Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa (GWPEEnA)

# “To secure water whatever happens”



The member of the global water partnership Eastern Africa opens the workshop

### Representatives of eight East African nations gathered to discuss water management goals at a regional steering committee meeting held 22-23 October in Bujumbura.

The Global Water Partnership is a worldwide network established in 1996 to support sustainable development and management of water resources at all levels. The partner states of Eastern Africa are Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Egypt, Eritrea, Sudan, and Ethiopia.

According to Patrick Safari, the regional coordinator Eastern Africa, this meeting will help the different countries which took part in the steering committee highlight the major achievements of 2012 and discuss the work plan for next year.

“It is very important to enhance the coordination of the partnership and the high-level consultation between the public and private organization in order to achieve the goals,” says Safari.

“It is necessary to improve the communication and information in sharing system, to improve the reporting system, documenting and sharing knowledge and enhancing collaboration,” says Safari.

The same thought is shared by Marie Ange Kigeme, Burundian representative in the Global Water Partnership. “For instance, in Burundi, we are (one of) the partner states of the GWP of eastern Africa (GWPEEnA), but we have no office in which people could find us, and the consequences fall on the beneficiaries who have no access to any information about what are doing by the GWPEEnA,” regrets Kigeme. For

her, this kind of meeting will help to meet some challenges.

Safari says water security and climate resilience integrated in Africa’s growth and development. “We are crossing a period of environment degradation,” he says. “We must combine our efforts in order to secure our water. To this end, mobilization is necessary and together nothing is impossible. We will succeed in it and we could meet all the challenges.

### “No water, no life”

According to Evariste Sinarinzi, engineer and Burundian President of GWP in integrated water resources management and water policy climate change, the country has a lot of water, but if Burundian people don’t take care, they will fail to take advantage of it. “As we are facing to environment degradation, this steering



Patrick Safari: “As we are facing to environment degradation, this steering meeting will help us to combine our strengths and meet challenges”

meeting will help us to combine our strengths and meet challenges,” adds Sinarinzi.

Since the GWPEEnA commenced their activities, African Bank Development (BAD) has financed it with 480,000 Euros. “The work plan of water resources management has been created but with the lack of funds remains our big issue to execute it. After this steering meeting, we are going to implement the Bugesera project because if there is no water, there is also no life,” says Sinarinzi.

The regional coordinator further indicated that the GWP in Eastern Africa is now better positioned to deliver on the expectations of GWP objectives, cooperation with partners and stakeholders across the region. He urged members of the Country Water Partnerships to be more proactive and supportive in delivering the mandate of GWP by influencing, advocating, facilitating, promoting and sharing knowledge in the areas of integrated water resilience and management, resilience to climate change, water and food security nexus.

### “Objectives of the Bugesera project”

Regarding what the Bugesera area is facing, GWPEEnA mentions some objectives which may help to achieve to GWP goals. “There is food insecurity due to poor agricultural production, environmental degradation (deforestation, erosion siltation in lakes, population pressure, unplanned settlements, inappropriate land and agricultural practices), climate change (droughts and floods), limited capacity (policies, finance and institutions knowledge) and poor coordination and partnership which are some challenges on Bugesera projects,” enumerates Safari.

To meet these challenges, the GWPEEnA has fixed some objectives to support for water and climate resilience in development plans and decision-making processes.

“Not only must we develop adaptation investment strategies and projects for funding, but we must also demonstrate innovative measures, approaches for climate adaptation and water security –support communities in Bugesera for climate resilience,” says the regional coordinator.

He says capacity building, knowledge and experience sharing and stronger partnerships at different levels are necessary to overcome challenges.

The regional coordinator suggests that to achieve the GWPEEnA goals, it is important to work in synergy. “We must combine our strengths and cooperation is indispensable to make sure for water security,” says Safari.

**Diane Uwimana**



Participants

### Some challenges faced by GWPEEnA in 2012:

- High expectations by the communities and local government for big investments on the ground
- Differences in national water security and climate adaptation framework of Burundi and Rwanda and differences in their enforcement
- Undermining linking local actions with national policies
- Unilateral thinking versus transboundary nature of the system,
- Conventional approaches to project implementation (government irrigation schemes)
- Serious budget constraints partly due to underestimation of the budget for 2012
- Poor office equipment and communication facilities