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BATS of Pemba

Community commends alliance to manage Wami-Ruvu, Pangani basins

by Gratian Luhikula

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Community commends alliance to manage Wami-Ruvu, Pangani basins

By Gratian Luhikula

THERE was no mistaking of the Pangani's women's joy when they stormed the dancing ground to celebrate the inauguration of the Water and Development Alliance (WADA). led by the Pangani District Commissioner Ms. Ziphora Pangani and the USAID Director, Ms. Pamela White, the women magnificently danced to the tunes of the IKT group led by the taarab maestro Bi. Shalila.

The women's joy was triggered by the fact that WADA will work to develop and improve water supply and sanitation systems in villages surrounding the Wami-Ruvu and Pangani River Basins. Indeed, despite the fact that the basins' water surrounds the communities, they are still faced by critical problems of accessing to clean and safe water.

Water problems, according to most African cultures, is the woman's burden, as the USA ambassador demonstrated. Imitating an African woman burdened by a water bucket, she turned her hat upside down to make a 'mock bucket' full of water. As she walked, or rather wobbled - no doubt weighed down by the water burden, the crowd busied with laughter!

The community based WADA project is expected to work to support Tanzania's new water strategy by improving community access to sustainable safe water; providing sanitation services to the local communities in need; and promoting sustainable management of watershed and water resources in the basins.

It is on the basis of this that the WADA partnership will build on ongoing programs and projects under the USAID Mission in Tanzania and the IUCN, to address issues of the basins, with the prime focus to improve community livelihoods. According to Ms. Appa Mandari, the WADA Project Coordinator, the basins are crucial to the Tanzania community and the private sector. They are critical for maintaining biodiversity and managing of wildlife parks and marine ecosystem.

"But despite of the basins importance, they are unfortunately faced with appalling environmental degradation through human based activities", underscores Ms. Mandari while naming human based

pollutants. The human based pollutants, according to Ms. Mandari include agricultural runoff from intensive cultivation of sugar, rice and sisal; water withdrawals to supply to towns and villages; sewage outfalls; increasing use of land for livestock production accompanied by overgrazing; illegal and excessive logging and charcoal production.

"The mainstay of WADA is to .address these issues. We will effectively tread on the principal of community participation, as we will build this alliance to .achieve its ultimate goal," Ms. Mandari says, as she names planned implementing actions.

The actions are aimed at achieving the following results:

- Developing and improving water supply and sanitation systems in selected local communities in the Wami- Ruvu and Pangani River Basins;
- Promoting participatory decision-making processes and the local ownership and management of water supply and sanitation services of communities in the Wami-Ruvu and Pangani River Basins;
- Delineating the drainage basins and characterizing surface catchments in relation to lateral, longitudinal, and vertical dimensions of the Wami River;
- Determining credible measures of river basin flows, as well as water quantity and quality requirements of household and private sector water users, and the rates of flow required to maintain biodiversity and ecosystem processes;
- Mainstreaming the participation of both genders to optimize the use of water resources and improve sanitation and hygiene; and
- Identifying sources of pollution and fresh water use that have the potential to affect sanitation and health related to water contact and extraction, along with best advocate for cleaner production practices in agro-industrial water use and reduce business operating costs.



USAID Tanzania Director Pamela White (left), Tanga Regional Commissioner Mohamed Abdulaziz, Pangani District Commissioner Ziphora Pangani, and Coca-Cola Marketing Manager for East Africa Maina Muriuki at the launch of the programme at Pangani Township recently.

According to Ms. Mandari, it is the expectation of WADA to apply the principles of integrating water resource management to problem-solving efforts at water basin level. This is anticipated to catalyze efforts to strengthen management of water resources and to increase access to improved water supply and sanitation services.

Aiming to establish a consensus among stakeholders across various levels of government, civil society and the private sector, it will work to incorporate actions, which are essentially designed to eradicate important gaps in information and implementation.

The essence of WADA is that it works to guide communities through the experience of various institutions and helps them support the government efforts to achieve sustainable management of water and watershed resources in the Wami-Ruvu and Pangani river basins as articulated in the country's National Water sector Development Strategy and its Millennium Development goals. This is apart from improving community access to sustainable safe water and improving sanitation services and hygiene education to

local communities. WADA actions will be undertaken through USAID Tanzania's environmental and natural resources management strategic objective.

Generous financial contributions to the Wami River landscape to seascape initiative have been made by the United States Agency for International Development, USAID Tanzania, the Coca-Cola Africa Foundation and the Coca-Cola Atlanta Foundation as part of WADA.

The implementing partnership involves the Kwanza and Bonite Coca-Cola bottlers, World Vision, the Tanzania Health, Environment and Sanitation Association (THESA), the Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island through the Tanzania Coastal Management Partnership (TCMP), Florida International University through its GLOWS program site in the Mara River Basin. Other partners include the Division of Environment in the Vice President's Office, the Wami-Ruvu Basin Water Office, District Councils, Village Water Committees, Saadani National Park, Tanganyika Planting Company Ltd, Kigombe Sisal Estate and village water committees.