

Regional workshop for the conservation strategy of the Great Lakes Region

Title A total of 39 people attended the workshop, representing 26 different government and non-government agencies, national and international organizations (NGOs and networks), Basin authorities and research institutes from ten African countries, the UK and the USA.

Introductory remarks ? BirdLife International Gary Allport from BirdLife International welcomed the representative of the Government of Uganda, the hosting organization (NatureUganda), the representative of the MacArthur Foundation, representatives of NatureServe, Conservation International, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the Wildlife Conservation Society, various Lake Basin Authorities, Government agencies, national NGOs and other participants, to this regional workshop. He explained that this workshop aims to develop a science-based and action-oriented conservation strategy for the Great Lakes Region, a huge area covering 11 countries (ten of which are represented at this workshop, with a separate workshop planned for Lake Turkana in January 2012 involving the remaining country). The strategy will look at sites that are of critical importance to biodiversity and at the threats to them, but it will also consider Ecosystem Services and human wellbeing. **Welcome address ? MacArthur Foundation** Elizabeth Chadri from the MacArthur Foundation also thanked the participants for coming to this regional consultation workshop. She explained that the MacArthur Foundation recently developed and approved a new global ten-year strategy, following an external evaluation of the previous strategy. See www.macfound.org for details of the new strategy. **Brief remark ? NatureServe** Alexandra Sanchez de Lozada from NatureServe thanked the MacArthur Foundation, BirdLife, and NatureUganda for inviting NatureServe to share the Dashboard Program for monitoring biodiversity indicators with all participants, and integrate the monitoring component into the workshop. **Brief remark ? NatureUganda** Achilles Byaruhanga welcomed everybody to Uganda. He explained that NatureUganda has been working for a long time on identifying, conserving and monitoring Important Bird Areas in Uganda, together with the Government of Uganda and other local, national and regional stakeholders. **Opening address** Mr Paul Mafabi, on behalf of the Minister for Water and Environment, Uganda Mr Mafabi started with passing on the apologies from the Minister, who unfortunately could not attend this meeting today. He welcomed everybody to Uganda for this Great Lakes Region Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Monitoring Indicators workshop. He agreed that both topics are very important. In his words, the Great Lakes Region is a biodiversity hotspot, an Important Bird Area and a Ramsar Site. But it is also a hotspot for other things, such as oil and gas, floods and droughts, etc. It faces a number of challenges but it also provides opportunities, for instance for tourism, conservation, management of migratory species etc. He therefore urged

the workshop participants to: ? Build and strengthen the knowledge base; ? Look at people?s attitudes, needs and expectations (and even beliefs) ? Assess people?s practices: are people doing the right things? ***For the full report please contact*** Programme Manager, Science and IBA Conservation Programme Ademola Ajagbe Ademola.Ajagbe@birdlife.org