

THE REPORT OF MAKANAGA PROJECT ON BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ECOTOURISM PROMOTION

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I am extremely happy to report about the achievements so far made after the Eco tourism Training Course for Sustainable Natural and Cultural Resources that I attended from 20th August to 1st October, 2012 in Japan which was organized by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

This training inspired me so much that I promised to integrate what I learnt back home in the management of wetland ecosystems.

The first thing I did was to create awareness at my place of work about sustainable wetland management through the ecotourism approach. Having successes to convert my colleagues towards ecotourism “movement”, we joined hands as a team and stormed the communities with ecotourism messages by organizing various meetings and workshops.

With the support from the local people, local government, WWF and UNDP, we managed to train the local tour guides, supported the formation of management committee, identified and documented local treasurers. We then produced materials like the booklet and poster on the important animals and plants of Makanaga. We went head to establish the boat trails, observatory towers, erection of directional signposts and uplifted sanitation facilities of the project area.

During the inventory, the equator line which passes through the wetland ecosystem was discovered and will be marked accordingly. Because of the awareness created, the endangered Shoe bill bird which was captured and kept by a poacher was rescued by us and is being kept at my Centre.

We are now finalizing with the development of the phenological calendar and opening up of the website for Makanaga Wetland System.

The site has been listed for the first time on the itinerary for pre and post conference excursions during the Pan African Conference for Zoos and Aquaria (PAAZAB) and World Association of Zoos and Aquaria executive meeting to be held in Uganda from 20th to 23rd May, 2014.

We are now expecting the Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities for Uganda Government to open the project officially by the end of May, 2014.

I am highly indebted to the people of Japan, JICA and Kushiro International Wetland Centre for the support extended to me to attend the Ecotourism training Course.