

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **HIGH LEVEL REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON LAKE VICTORIA SAFETY OF NAVIGATION PROJECT IS SET FOR ARUSHA**

**3<sup>RD</sup> TO 4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005**

*EAC Headquarters, Arusha, Tanzania, Saturday 1 October 2005:* A two-day East African Community High Level Workshop on the implementation of the Lake Victoria Safety of Navigation Project is scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2005, at the Tausi Hall, Serengeti Wing of the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC).

The workshop aims, among others, to have a regional consensus on the main elements of Lake Victoria Safety of Navigation Project and define the key actors and responsibilities during the implementation stage of the project. The workshop will also create awareness on environmental issues associated with navigation among decision makers and stakeholders.

The Workshop will be attended by, among others, Hon. John Koech, Minister of East African and Regional Co-operation of the Republic of Kenya, Hon. Awuzu Adraule, Minister of State for Transport of the Republic of Uganda, Mr. Salum Msoma, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communications and Transport of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mr. Marc Basseport, Representative of the French Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Representatives of the Development Partners: SIDA, DFID, International Association of Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), and International Hydrographic Office (IHO), and Representatives of the Uganda National Rescue Institute.

### **Background**

Following the capsizing of the Tanzanian passenger ferry, the M.V. "Bukoba", on Lake Victoria on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1996, the East African Community and the French government signed a Protocol in 2000, in which the French Government was to assist the EAC put in place an institutional framework for the improvement of navigational safety on the Lake. In November 2001, a contract between International Maritime Organization (IMO) and French Government was signed. Under this contract funding was provided for the short-term consultancy assignments in Maritime Legislation, Aids to Navigation, Hydrography, and Search and Rescue on Lake Victoria.

Between April and October 2002, IMO undertook the above missions in accordance with the planned project activities.

The completed studies on components of the Lake Victoria Safety of Navigation Project identified several social and economic reasons for making it easier, quicker and safer to travel on Lake Victoria. It was also clarified that the lack of a common legal and operational navigation framework for the Region is one of the most important barriers to be overcome.

On 21 April 2004, the Government of France and the EAC signed a Financing Agreement for the Safety of Navigation on Lake Victoria Project in which the Government of France was to provide assistance to the EAC in formulating a new legislative and regulatory framework for Lake Victoria, including establishing procedures and structures required for the implementation of the legal framework.

The Lake Victoria Transport Bill, which is still in a draft form, arose out of the Maritime Legislation Component and upon enactment by the East African Legislative Assembly, will be the legislative and regulatory framework for the Lake Victoria. This draft Bill was completed in November 2003 after being considered by the Partner States and is now awaiting to be considered by the Sectoral Council on Legal and Judicial Affairs of the East African Community.

This High Level workshop is a result of recommendations made during national seminars held in the Partner States (Kisumu, Mwanza and Kampala) during the months of February and March 2005, on the status of the safety of navigation on Lake Victoria and its implementation.

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