

THE LANDING SITE WAS RE-OPENED ON TUESDAY, FOLLOWING AN OUTCRY FROM FISHERMEN

By Julius Luwemba

Fishermen and several stakeholders involved in fishing in Kalangala district breathed a sigh of relief after the Uganda People's Defence Forces Fisheries Protection Unit (UPPF) agreed to re-open the Kitobo Landing Site. The site had been indefinitely closed and all fishing activities stopped following rampant on the site.

The landing site was re-opened on Tuesday, following an outcry from fishermen and other stakeholders involved in the fishing business. The site had been closed for three weeks. Many had become jobless due to the closure.

Before declaring the site open, the commander of UPPF, Maj. James Nuwagaba, presented a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which was signed by the fish dealers as a commitment never to engage in illegal and prohibited fishing methods again.

The MOU, which tasks the fish dealers with disclosing any information in regard to illegal fishing material and methods, also spelt out prosecution in the special fisheries court in Kampala, to whoever will be arrested.

A report in regard to the operations by the Fisheries Protection Unit, was read to the people who attended the meeting at Kigungu, Entebbe

Kalangala landing site re-opens with new guidelines



Birungi at a meeting in Kalangala on Monday

municipality, by Captain Nathan Abaho who noted that illegal fishing activities had dropped drastically from 99% when the unit started its work on March 15, to 15% this month.

According to the report, the closure of some landing sites, such as Kabase, Kabalagala and Mtonda, among others has led to a reduction in transporters of immature fish while leading to the increase of

the tilapia fish.

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BETWEEN THE LINES:

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work. "Importation of new illegal mono-filament and hooks, which have kept the operational exercise recycling as well as transporting immature fish in mattresses, jerrycans and coffins are still a challenge," the report read.

Entebbe resident district commissioner Rose Kirabira, Kalangala Woman Member of Parliament Aidah Nabayiga, Kyamuswa Member of Parliament Carol Birungi and Kalangala district chairperson Willy Lugolobi, witnessed the signing of the agreement between the Fisheries Protection Unit and the fish

dealers.

Kirabira commended the efforts of the Uganda People's Defence Forces fisheries unit in the fight against illegal fishing, noting that only six factories out of the 21 that were licensed, had remained operational due to scarcity of fish as a result of illegal fishing of immature fish.

She tasked political leaders in Kalangala district with holding regular sensitisation meetings with fishermen about the dangers of illegal fishing.

Kalangala chairperson Lugolobi thanked Maj. Nuwagaba and the team for re-opening the Kitobo landing site, revealing that over 3,000 people at the landing site benefit directly and indirectly from fishing.

He promised that any fisherman and dealer caught engaging in illegal fishing again, will be banished from the landing site for good.

Nabayiga noted that fishermen and fish dealers who have been jobless for the last three weeks when Kitobo Landing Site was closed, had learnt their lesson and abandoned the vice.

Kyamuswa Member of Parliament Birungi revealed that while the agriculture fisheries unit and the Police failed to fight illegal fishing, the army has registered positive gains, thus bringing sanity to the lake.