Lake Victoria maritime project well on course, report reveals

BY TOM BRIAN ANGURINI

KAMPALA. A report by the African Development Bank (AfDB) has shown that the Uganda component of the Multinational Lake Victoria Maritime Communications and Transport (MLVMCT) Project continues to demonstrate strong progress toward its development objective of enhancing maritime safety, strengthening regulatory oversight, and promoting safer, more efficient lake transport operations.

The report reveals that outcome data from the previous supervision mission showed a dramatic reduction in lives lost on Lake Victoria from a baseline of 5,000 to 226 deaths per year. This exceeds the 2024 target of 330, indicating over 102 percent progress. Experts attribute the improvement to improved emergency response systems, enhanced communication networks, and awareness raising among lake users.

"Licensed cargo and passenger vessels increased from 4,000 to 4,450 against a target of 4,800 (56.25 percent progress), reflecting greater regulatory compliance and confidence in inland water transport, while the more qualitative indicator on indicative pipeline transport projects remained at zero, with foundational institutional and planning work expected to bear fruit beyond the current project's lifetime," the report states.

Findings from the December 2025 desk supervision mission confirm that the project remains fully aligned with its development objectives and is well positioned to consolidate these gains before closing on March 31, 2026. The report also indicates that most Bank-financed infrastructure critical to outcome achievement are either completed or in the final stages. This includes the fully commissioned SAR centres at Zengebe, Kaiso, and Panyimur. The Kaazi SAR centre is now, the report further discloses, 100 percent complete and handed over. The Masese SAR centre is at 94 percent completion, and the Entebbe MRCC at 84 percent completion. It adds that disbur[se]ment has risen to 85.42 percent.

Dr Ally Said Matano, the executive secr[etary] Lake Victoria Basin Commission, says the [im]plementation progress of the Uganda comp[onent] of the MLVMCT Project remains satisfactory [as] most Bank-financed activities now in their [fi]phase and key milestones either complet[ed] nearing completion.

He adds that the mission highlighted the need shift emphasis from construction to operat[ional] readiness ensuring that staffing, standard op[erat]ing procedures, and interagency coordination [are] fully in place before project closure on March [31].

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