



Mtafiti Monthly

A PUBLICATION OF KENYA MARINE AND FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE (KMFRI)

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In brief:

ARBEC CONFERENCE KISUMU-2022

“Stakeholders converge globally to discuss the wise use of aquatic resources for human sustenance, prosperity, and the links to the blue economy”

By: Dr. Christopher Aura, Dr. Chrisphine Nyamweya, Dr. Cyprian Odoli, Fonda Jane Awuor, Patrick Otuo, Hezron Awandu, Tabitha Onyango and Kevin Onsongo

#ARBEC2022, #KmfriResearch, #Blue Economy #Kisumu

Editor: Hezekiel Gikambi

The Inaugural Aquatic Resources and Blue Economy Conference (ARBEC) 2022, hosted by Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) was the latest milestone of its kind in the realm of the blue economy space. The conference was hosted in the beautiful city of Kisumu, Kenya at the Acacia Premier Hotel. The theme of the conference was “*Aquatic resources for a sustainable future and blue economy prosperity.*” A total of 339 delegates from 20 countries globally participated in the Conference. The Conference was co-chaired and sponsored by:

- Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), Uganda – Co-host/sponsor
- African Center for Aquatic Research and Education (ACARE), USA – Co-host/sponsor
- Bowling Green State University (BGSU), USA – Co-host/sponsor
- Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research (GLIER), USA – Co-host/sponsor
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Canada– Co-host/sponsor
- Calestous Juma Legacy Foundation (CJLF), USA – Co-host/sponsor
- Kenya Fisheries Service (KeFS), Kenya – Co-host
- National Research Fund (NRF), Kenya – Sponsor
- Aquaculture Business Development Programme (ABDP), Kenya – Sponsor
- Kenya Marine Fisheries and Socio-Economic Development (KEMSFED), Kenya – Sponsor

The 4-day conference brought together scientists, fisheries professionals, biodiversity experts, limnologists, academia, government agencies, citizens, NGOs, the private sector, and the donor community to exchange ideas and experiences on managing aquatic resources for sustainable ecosystem services, as well as to strengthen collaboration in sustainable management for human sustenance, prosperity, and the blue economy connection.

Conference Format

The conference comprised oral in-person oral virtual, poster presentations, keynote speeches, special talks, panel discussions, side events led by LVFO, Gatsby Africa, ABDP, KMFRI, and ACARE special sessions and exhibitions on the first 3 days. Each day of the conference also allotted one hour for lunch, and 30 minutes for morning and evening tea to allow participants to continue their discussions after each session. Time was allocated on the last day for a group reflection on the overview of the conference. ARBEC was officiated by the Cabinet Secretary for Mining and Blue Economy, Hon. Salim Mvurya, along with the former Principal Secretary, State Department



Partners of the ARBEC Conference

- Gatsby Africa – Co-host/sponsor
- GRO-Fisheries Training Program, Iceland – Co-host/sponsor



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for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Blue Economy Dr. Francis Owino, the Chairman of the KMFRI Board of Management, Hon. John Safari Mumba, the Deputy Governor of Kisumu, H.E Dr. Mathews Ochieng Owili, and the Kisumu County Commissioner. The development of the National Blue Economy Strategy which will ensure effective management of the ocean and lake resources in an equitable and sustainable manner was one of the key messages of the opening speech.



CS, PS, KMFRI Chairman, and CEO

ARBEC examined the potential of fisheries and aquaculture in terms of developing policies in governance and management; Identified the causes of improved bio-monitoring and aquatic ecosystem contamination; along with identifying possible areas for partnerships for sustainable development, it also recognized the gaps and opportunities in Science, Technology, and Innovation for full realization of the blue economy. In order to further strengthen the ability to improve sustainability, social development, and well-being, it created a platform for sharing blue economy innovations, research findings, and how they can be translated into practice. To determine the best course of action, issues brought up during presentations were worked out in plenary sessions and round table talks. The panel discussion on cutting-edge concerns in aquatic resource management featured Prof. James Njiru, KMFRI

CEO, Dr. Mary Kishe, Research Director TAFIRI, Dr. Winnie Nkalubo, Director NaFFIRI, and Ms. Joyce Nyeko, Deputy Secretary. The congregation responded favorably to the delegates' presentations of their research findings organized around particular sub-themes.

Social Programme

There was an African themed cocktail dinner on , 29th November 2022 at the Acacia



November 2022 at the Acacia

Premier Hotel following the first day of the conference

proceedings. The dinner was a great opportunity for a social interaction and networking among participants! In addition, formal recognition of various categories was given to the third day to institutions and individuals.



Figure 2: Awards of honor to KEMS FED and ABDP respectively for sponsoring the conference

The following were the award categories:

1. Award of honor to Key note speakers
2. The host hotel, Acacia Premier hotel in recognition of outstanding services rendered to ARBEC 2022
3. Award of honor to the host and co-hosts/sponsors
4. Poster presentation for the early career researchers
 - First place



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- First runners up
 - Second runners up
5. Oral presentation for the early career researchers
- First place
 - First runners up
 - Second runners up



Figure 3: Hon. John Safari Mumba (KMFRI BOM Chair) awarding Mr. Dennis Otieno as the best oral presenter for the category of Early Career Researcher (ECR) during the ARBEC Conference.

EXHIBITION & POST-CONFERENCE EXCURSION

A blue economy exhibition information center was set aside to serve as an information, education, and demonstration platform for government agencies, entrepreneurs, innovators, academia, and other stakeholders to showcase their activities in the blue economy. Delegates were able to connect with the exhibitors during the break.



Figure 4: Hon. Salim Mvurya- CS Mining, Blue Economy & Maritime affairs, Dr. Francis Owino, Former PS, State Department for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Blue economy and fisheries, Dr. Mathews Owili, Deputy Governor Kisumu County, Hon John Safari Mumba, KMFRI BOM Chair, Prof. James Njiru CEO KMFRI & Kisumu County Commissioner touring exhibition centre

A post Conference excursion event took place on the last day, 1st December 2022 at the Kenya Shipyard Limited in Kisumu County and at the Africa Blue-Poa Tilapia located next to Uyawi beach, in Siaya county in which more than 100 delegates participated. A guided tour at the Kenya Shipyard Limited (KSL) enabled the delegates see the 20M MV Uhuru II, the first ship built locally by the KSL in partnership with Dutch partner Damen shipyards. The shipyard aims to position Kenya as a regional ship-building hub and unlock Kenya’s immense blue economy potential.

The Managing Director, Mr. Albert Altena gave a guided tour of the aquafarm including the hatchery and grow-out facilities at the site, and explained the operationalization of the brand-new incubation unit. He also explained how a solar-driven raceway system can be installed in Lake Victoria and how it can save tilapia hatchery operators who have access to the lake or a big water reservoir. The delegates also toured around Lake Victoria on an artwork boat to see the grown-out cages in operation. How fish farming in Lake Victoria can be done in a commercial viable but also sustainable and environmentally friendly manner.



Figure 5: African Blue-Poa Tilapia MD Albert Altena showing KMFRI delegates some of the cages in operation.

Feedback from the post-conference survey



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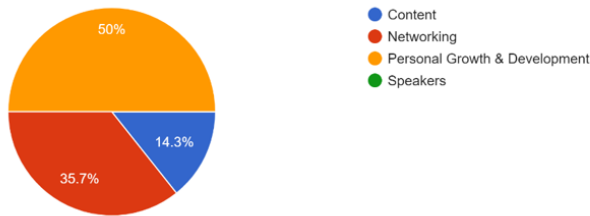
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Some of the participants' feedback are highlighted below:

Please specify the main reason for attending the ARBEC 2022 conference?



Did the conference fulfill your reason for attending?

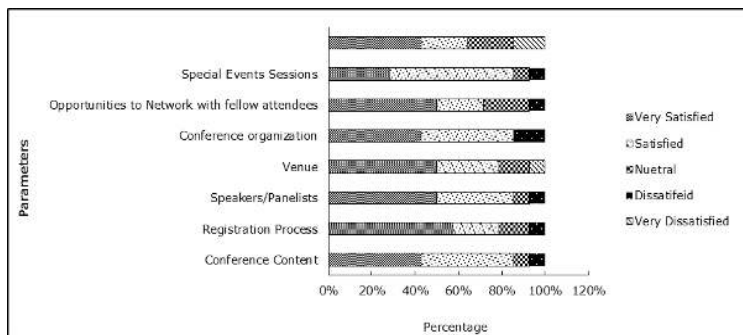
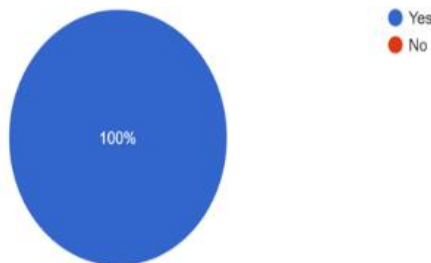


Figure 6: Feedback from the post conference survey

Way forward

At the conclusion of the ARBEC, several initiatives to support the full realization of the blue economy were developed including but not limited to:

- The necessity to accurately analyze and oversee the extraction and consumption of blue economy resources. Strong data collection is necessary for this, as is a deliberate attempt to use the data to inform decision-making.
- It is necessary to implement a stock rebuilding strategy (for Lake Victoria) that is economically effective, socially responsible, and environmentally advantageous. For greater effectiveness, such fisheries laws should be based on facts and non-conflicting goals.
- Adoption of the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA) to enable cage culture's sustainable use of water resources;
- Due to its effects on fisheries, ecosystem biodiversity, and livelihoods, climate change poses severe issues, however the future of these resources is still unknown;
- Stopping illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing is necessary;
- Leveraging on the demographic dividend as a necessity;
- Creating a Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) for artisanal fishermen;
- Prioritizing trade, post-harvest interventions, fish quality and safety;
- The necessity of accelerating research in uses for deep ocean water and renewable energy;
- The necessity of intentional, broad-based conservation initiatives to reduce marine litter and plastic pollution as well as to transform plastic waste into useful items for socioeconomic development;
- The need to exploit the potential of employing carbon sequestration as a strategy for conservation and restoration;
- The need to boost ocean research through stronger integration of science, and higher investment in Technology and Innovations (STI) to alter lives. Blue carbon has the potential to fund and aid in conservation and restoration.



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Compiled by Nancy Mwiti.



A photo session of the ARBEC secretariat with the Guests of the day; Hon. Salim Mvurya- CS Mining, Blue Economy & Maritime affairs, Dr. Francis Owino, Former PS, State Department for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Blue economy and fisheries, Dr. Mathews Owili, Deputy Governor Kisumu County, Hon John Safari Mumba, KMFRI BOM Chair, amongst others



Dr. Domitila Kyule –KMFRI research scientist and Sagana Centre director, presented during a parallel session of the ARBEC day 1. Delivering keynotes on Black soldier fly larvae meal as a fish meal replacement in diets for African catfish reared in earthen ponds.



KMFRI AD Mariculture, Dr. David Mirera leading the team in prayer during a session of the ARBEC conference.



KMFRI CEO, Prof. James Njiru delivering keynotes on the ARBEC 2022 opening ceremony.



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Dr. Christoph Aura, presenting on Sustainable community-based cage aquaculture in Lake Victoria, Kenya for blue growth during a parallel session



The ARBEC 2022 team during an excursion at The African Blue where the MD, Mr. Albert Altena (on the platform) is taking them on a tour.



Ms. Rael Obara doing sign language interpretations during the ARBEC conference's presentations.



Dr. James Kairo KMFRI's Chief Scientist and Mangrove Research expert delivering his key note address on Blue Carbon trading during a single session of the ARBEC conference 2022.

Feedback:

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