



## Commemoration of World Environment Day in Kigoma, June 1998

by *Bartholomew Tarimo*

**W**orld Environment Day (WED) is an annual event which can be celebrated in many ways, including street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, essay competitions in schools, tree planting as well as recycling and clean up campaigns. WED is also a multi-media event which inspires thousands of journalists to write and report on the environment. It is a visual event with television documentaries, photo exhibits and poster displays. It is also an intellectual event for those who organize and participate in seminars, round-table meetings and symposia. All in all, WED serves to enhance public and political attention and action for the environment.

In this connection, Lake Tanganyika Biodiversity Project (LTBP), in collaboration with Kigoma Regional and District authorities, Government Institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) participated fully in commemorating this event.

The main aims and objectives were to:-

- promote environmental issues such as the benefits of nature and the great loss associated with environmental destruction, to the larger community.
- arouse public awareness of actions that promote and actions that harm the environment.
- carry out environmental management activities in collaboration with Regional and District authorities, NGOs and others.
- activate the role of informal education through such settings as role-playing during commemoration week.



The WED team and Scouts lead a village clean-up in Ujiji

The main activities in this event included: community clean-up of the Kigoma urban environment (market places), a parade culminating in speeches by regional authorities, displays of environmental posters, film presentations, environmental messages from school children, and traditional groups of musicians, dancers and drummers performing songs with environmental messages. LTBP took the lead role in aiding Kigoma authorities to coordinate these activities.

The activities were officially inaugurated on 30 May 1998 at Kibirizi by the former Kigoma District Commissioner (DC) Alhaj Ahmed Lugusha. The DC started by joining members of the Kibirizi community in their effort to clean Kibirizi market.

The importance of Lake Tanganyika in providing: water for domestic use, fish as a primary source of protein, employment, transport, and recreational uses like swimming and leisure were discussed. Threats to Lake Tanganyika, including: contamination by sewage and oil products, cultivation without any soil conservation measures leading to increased siltation and habitat destruction, and unsustainable fishing practices including the use of chemicals and small net sizes, were also the subject of many speeches and discussions.



Mr. Lugusha, former Kigoma DC, oversees the clean-up of Kibirizi Market.

Culminating a week of activities in different villages, on World Environment Day, 5 June 1998, a procession led by a brass band and followed by scouts, primary school children, Kigoma residents and other invited guests were received by the Guest of Honor, the Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) on behalf of the Regional Commissioner.

Kigoma Town Council and Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam in Kigoma were commended for being on the forefront in planting trees and spreading the message about the importance of conserving the environment.

It is hoped that WED will be commemorated every year along the lake shore and that Kigoma Town Council will ensure the sustainability of WED and WED activities. It was advocated that other stakeholders should prepare for the coming years by including WED costs in their annual budgets.

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