

**Report on World Wetlands Day (WWD)
6 February 2007**

Sambo, Kratie Province, Cambodia

**Organised by the Provincial Department of Environment and KAFDOC with the
Technical and Financial Support from Wetlands Alliance
(WorldFish Center and WWF of the four core partners)**

World Wetlands Day Report

Introduction

Sambo district was selected as venue to celebrate the World Wetlands Day (WWD) 2007 because it holds unique habitats of the Mekong which are important for spawning and dry-season refuge for many aquatic animals of the Mekong, including the endangered Mekong Giant Catfish and Irrawaddy Dolphin. It is also the home to many people whose livelihoods depend on fishing and farming on the seasonally flooded islands in the middle of the Mekong mainstream. The district was selected also because it is one of the target areas for WAP support and this event provided an opportunity to get to know the local change agents (LCAs) and signalled the start of WAP action.

The event was supposed to celebrate the World Wetlands Day on February 02, which marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. But as it fell on a national holiday in Cambodia this year, it was suggested that the event be held on February 06 to ensure participation of all the key stakeholders. With the financial and technical support from WorldFish Center and WWF---two of the four core partners of Wetlands Alliance that received funding from SIDA---LCAs took the lead in organizing the event. They are the Provincial Department of Environment and a local NGO active in the province – KAFDOC (Khmer Association for Development of Cambodia's Countryside).

The purpose of the event was to increase awareness about the values and significance of wetlands in sustaining fisheries and biodiversity in general, as well as in supporting livelihood.

WWD 2007 in Sambo

The World Wetlands Day 2007 in Sambo was a half day event in the open space of a pagoda in the Sambo district, a place known for its richness of aquatic biodiversity and a cultural site of 100-pillar Buddhist temple and a folktale associated with spirit crocodile.

There were over 400 participants and many other on-lookers. The participants included a Deputy Governor of the province, representatives from the provincial Department of Environment, Tourism, Agriculture, Forestry Cantonment, the cabinet of the provincial government, the Sambo District Office of Education, Police, the Sambo military sub-division, the district military police, representatives from SEILA program, and from NGOs active in the province including CCD, CED, CRDT, CIC, Development Group, KAFDOC, Oxfam Australia, VPF, provincial Human Rights Office. Participants to the event also included commune heads, commune councillors, members of local communities from Koh Knger and Sambor communes, and residents from Sambo commune, and children from 4 secondary schools.

The materials produced for display and/or distribution at the event include:

- 10 banners bearing the themes of the WWD 2007 and messages calling for protection of Wetlands and Fisheries;
- 400 T-shirts bearing the logo designed by the Ramsar Secretariat, translated to Khmer, and the Wetlands Alliance logo;
- 100 posters bearing the logo designed by the Ramsar Secretariat, translated to Khmer and the Wetlands Alliance logo; and

- 200 stickers bearing the logo designed by the Ramsar Secretariat, translated to Khmer.

Other materials distributed to participating agencies include posters previously developed by Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute of Cambodia and WorldFish Center: *Endangered Freshwater Fish Species of Cambodia*, *Commercially Important Freshwater Fishes of Cambodia*, Posters on Freshwater Dolphin Protection, Writing Books containing awareness messages on dolphin protection and Wetlands Alliance Brochures in Khmer.

The event heard 5 speeches and remarks made by different organizations involving in managing wetlands and the local authority and an old fisherman telling story of fishing in the past and present. Over 30 materials prepared in advance by students from four secondary schools in the form of poem, drawing and essays under the theme 'fish for tomorrow' were submitted for competition for prizes. Children also participated in a knowledge test to name aquatic animals, aquatic reptiles, and suggested measures for conservation and wise use of wetlands and wetland resources. The event concluded with a show of video clips on the Wise Use of Wetlands by Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the excerpt from the WWD 2006, four clips produced by WorldFish highlighting the importance wetlands for fish production and for sustaining local livelihood, and comedy video on wetland resources management issues produced by MWBP and MoE. See the event programme in appendix 1 and appendix 2 for selected students' materials and photos.

The proceeding started with religious blessings by five Buddhist monks. The Director of Department of Environment, Kratie, then addressed his welcome speech and an introduction to the history and objectives of the WWD with an emphasis on the significance and value of wetlands to supporting biodiversity and livelihood.

Mr. Sam Kim Lun, Director of Office of Fisheries, Kratie, then gave his speech on the extent, characteristics and significance of wetlands in the province, particularly in the district. He went on to emphasize the illegal fishing and called for participation from all relevant agencies and people to take part in protecting valuable aquatic resources in the area, particularly the endangered Irrawaddy dolphin.

Ms. Yumiko Kura, Regional Program Coordinator from WorldFish Center, Mekong Regional Office, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to raising awareness on wetlands and wetland resources in Cambodia. She mentioned the WorldFish Center's role in poverty reduction in the region through research and recommendations on policy formulation and biodiversity conservation. She also shared her concern over the need for protection of wetland resources and called for contribution by every one in the protection of wetland and fisheries resources.

Started by asking questions to the audience if they understood why they were there on that day and if they knew why we need to protect wetlands and wetland resources, Ms. Yumiko Yasuda, Livelihood Coordinator and Sustainable Resources Use for Living Mekong Programme, WWF Greater Mekong Programme, provided the definition of wetlands in the context of local participants on the event. She also expressed her heartfelt thanks to the participants and local agencies for organizing the event. She also characterized the wetlands and their benefits to the people and their livelihood.

Deputy Governor of Kratie, Mr. Venn Sokhoy, then made his remark about the event. He emphasised the role of the riverine forests along the section of the Mekong in Sambo in sustaining the catch in the Tonle Sap lake. He also recalled the abundant fish catch in

the past when fish could be easily caught. Concern about the current pressure on fish stock and the level of illegal fishing was also shared. He called for an appeal to the government to reconsider a reduction in fishing pressure in the Tonle Sap to allow for more fish to migrate and spawn in this area as a measure to sustain fish stock. He also called for compliance to the newly adopted Fishery Law.

Mr. Lav Sameth, an elderly fisherman from Koh Knger community was invited to tell a story about the healthier fishery ecosystem in the past when he was young and the difficulty they are facing now including the degraded aquatic environment and the prevalence of illegal fishing. He finally urged people and the authorities to put the ecosystem and national benefits at the forefront and to take serious action for their protection before the resources are gone.

While the organizers decided on winners among the contestants for poems, drawings, and essays, students participated in a knowledge test game. The game was facilitated by Mr. Mam Kosal, World Fish Center. In the game, each contestant was asked to take turn in naming an aquatic animal, then reptile, finally actions they may take to protect wetlands and wetland resources, and a girl named Hong Nisa from Sandan school won in the end.

After the challenge of comparing all the excellent submissions from 36 contestants from 4 secondary schools, 9 contestants were selected for their outstanding work. Each of the selected contestants was requested to read or describe their materials to the audience. Below are the winners:

Poem competition winners:

- 1st prize: Sararn Sal, female, from Sandann Secondary School;
- 2nd prize: Ratana Toch, male, from Samphak Borak Secondary School;
- 3rd prize: Sethear Pen, male, from Samphak Borak Secondary School;

Drawing competition winners:

- 1st prize: Phally Ban, male, from Sandann Secondary School,
- 2nd prize: Chhaya Yen, male, from Samphak Borak Secondary School;
- 3rd prize: Kimsong Seang, male, Samphak Borak Secondary School;

Essay competition winners:

- 1st prize: Tepi Sam, female, Koh Knger Secondary School;
- 2nd prize: Monychan Thanh, female, Sandann Secondary School,
- 3rd prize: Somsokhoma Mann, female, Koh Knger Secondary School;

Other contestants were also given award for their active participation in preparing for the event.

Conclusion and evaluation by participants

Participants to the World Wetlands Day event highly appreciated it and expressed their willingness to see such event held every year and at different locations in the province. Participants claimed they could learn from the content of the banners, the speeches and the art contest. They did capture and understood issues on conservation, management and wise use of wetlands, particularly the fishery resources. The distribution of materials

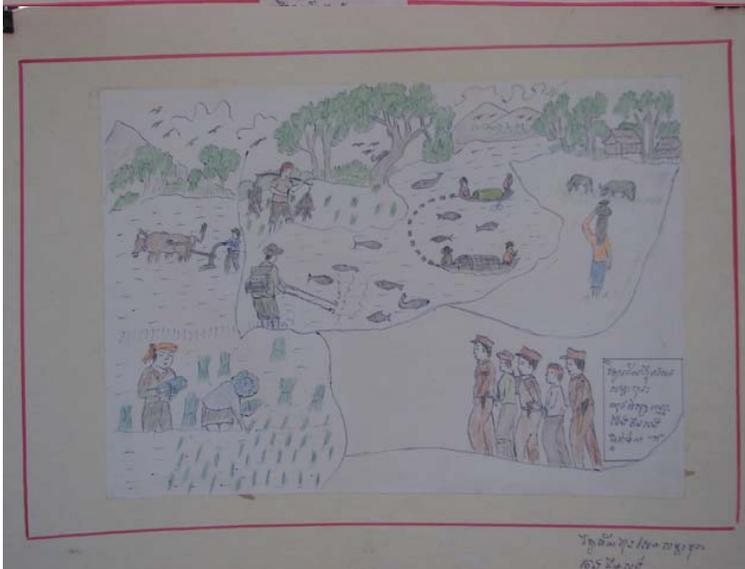
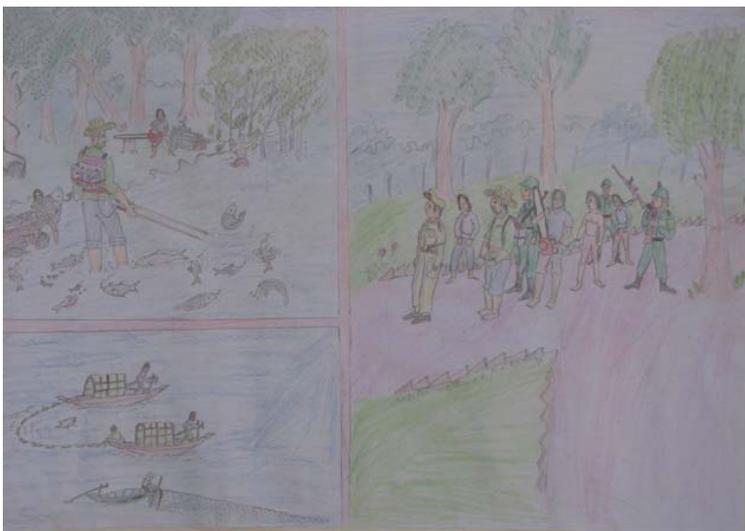
such as T-shirts, stickers, posters, and leaflets and the participation of the audience in activities such as answering to quizzes, story-telling, art competitions and educational videos were very attractive and could have positive impacts on behavioural changes (See evaluation questionnaire in appendix 3). As far as the issue of wetlands is concerned, this was the first time local villagers had the chance to hear about and to talk with their fellow participants about how the resources they depend on are at stake. Through media coverage, such event provide influence on broader audience who did not participate in the event and this may also influence decision at the higher level as the speech also contains calls for action by the government.

The LCAs who were organizing the event were requesting that this should not be only a one-shot event but should also link with other awareness activities and such future initiative should allocate sufficient time for preparation and resources to produce more materials for distribution and for display in villages. Advance information should be made available on the event so that people can prepare for and make time to participate in the activities. A more meaningful event should also include a parade rather than just a gathering at one place.

Appendix 1: The WWD programme

- 15:30 Welcome Speech and Background of the WWD by Mr. Nop Chanthy, Director of Department of Environment, Kratie;
- 15:45 Remarks on the Extent and Status of Critical Fishery Habitats in Kratie by Mr. Sam Kim Lun, Head of Fishery Cantonment, Kratie;
- 16:05 Speech by Ms. Yumiko Kura, Regional Program Coordinator, WorldFish Center Mekong Regional Office;
- 16:15 Speech by Ms. Yumiko Yasuda, Livelihood Coordinator and Sustainable Resources Use, LMP, WWF-GMP;
- 16:30 Remarks by Mr. Venn Sokhoy, Deputy Governor, Kratie province;
- 16:50 Story tale on the Past and Current Fisheries and Habitats in Sambo by Grand Father Lav Sameth, an old fisherman and representative from Koh Knger Community;
- 17:15 Knowledge test Game;
- 18:00 Announcement of Winners, Reading of the Winning Materials and award of prizes;
- 19:00 Show of Video Clips;
- 20:30 End of the Event and Continue with Dancing;

Appendix 2: Photos of selected students' results and of the event





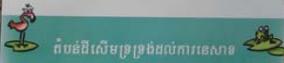




ថ្ងៃនេះ

ថ្ងៃស្អែក

ថ្ងៃអនាគត


 ក៏បន្តដើមទ្រូងដល់ការសោយ
 សូមថែរក្សាការពារក៏បន្តដើមទ្រូងតែងវង្ស

ថ្ងៃទី ២ ខែ កុម្ភៈ
 ទិវាតំបន់ដីសើមពិភពលោក

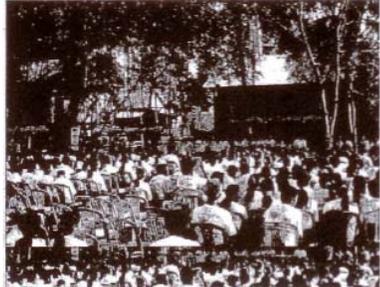




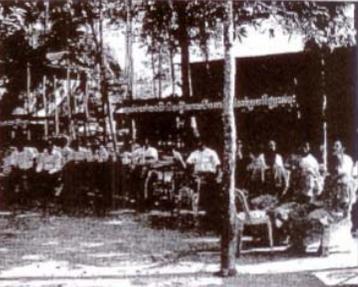
ទិវាតំបន់ដីសើមពិភពលោកប្រារព្ធធ្វើឡើងនៅស្រុកសម្បូណ៍ ក្រោមប្រធានបទ«តើទៅថ្ងៃអនាគតមានត្រីសម្រាប់ហូបដែរឬទេ»

ប្រធានបទ : ទិវាតំបន់ដីសើមពិភពលោកប្រារព្ធធ្វើនៅស្រុកសម្បូណ៍ និងរៀបចំឡើងនៅក្នុងស្រុកសម្បូណ៍ ខេត្តក្រចេះកាលពីថ្ងៃទី០៦ ខែកុម្ភៈ ឆ្នាំ ២០០៧ ក្រោមប្រធានបទ «តើទៅថ្ងៃអនាគតមានត្រីសម្រាប់ហូបដែរឬទេ?»។

ពិធីមិធិ្ឋិ ៥ ដែលរៀបចំឡើងនៅក្នុងបរិវេណក្រុះវិហារវត្តសសរ១០០ ស្ថិតនៅក្នុងស្រុកសម្បូណ៍ ខេត្តក្រចេះ ដែលមានមហាជនចូលរួមប្រមាណជាង ៤០០នាក់នោះ គឺរៀបចំឡើងដោយមន្ទីរពិសោធន៍ សហការជាមួយអង្គការភាពជាដុក KAFDOC និងមានការឧបត្ថម្ភពីសម្ព័ន្ធភាពតំបន់ដីសើម ដែលមានអង្គការចំនួន៤គឺ AIT CORIN World Fish Center WWF ។



ប្រជាជនរដ្ឋ និងសិស្សានុសិស្ស ចូលរួមទិវាតំបន់ដីសើមពិភពលោក ប្រារព្ធធ្វើនៅស្រុកសម្បូណ៍



ទិវាតំបន់ដីសើមពិភពលោក ២កុម្ភៈ (ប្រថុតសុជាតិ)

លោកម៉ម កុសល អ្នកវិភាគខាងការគ្រោងជ្រាវអង្គការ World Fish Center បានឱ្យដឹងថា នេះគឺជាលើកទី១ហើយដែលខេត្តក្រចេះពិសេសស្រុកសម្បូណ៍ដែលមានសត្វផ្សេងៗក្រុមរស់នៅ ត្រូវបានសម្ព័ន្ធភាពតំបន់ដីសើមរៀបចំឡើងជាអាណត្តិក្នុងការប្រារព្ធធ្វើទិវាតំបន់ដីសើមពិភពលោក ២កុម្ភៈ ។ លោកបានឱ្យដឹងទៀតថា យើងចាប់ផ្តើមប្រារព្ធទិវានេះដំបូងនៅក្នុងខេត្តស្ទឹងត្រែងកាលពីឆ្នាំ២០០៤-២០០៥ ធ្វើនៅសកលវិទ្យាល័យភូមិន្ទភ្នំពេញ និងខេត្តស្ទឹងត្រែង ។ ឆ្នាំ២០០៦ ធ្វើនៅប្រាយចង្វារក្រុងភ្នំពេញ និងខេត្តស្ទឹងត្រែង ។ នៅឆ្នាំ២០០៧នេះគឺបាន

ពិភពលោកគោរពដោយសម្រាប់ពិធីមិធិ្ឋិនៅក្នុងស្រុកសម្បូណ៍ខេត្តក្រចេះ ។ អ្នកវិទ្យាសាស្ត្ររូបនោះបានបញ្ជាក់ថា គោលបំណងសំខាន់សម្រាប់ទិវាតំបន់ដីសើមពិភពលោក ២កុម្ភៈ គឺធ្វើឱ្យបង្កើតការយល់ដឹងអំពីអនុសញ្ញារ៉ាមសារ (Ramsar) ដែលប្រទេសកម្ពុជាបានចូលជាសមាជិកក្នុងឆ្នាំ១៩៩៧ដោយមានភារកិច្ចតាមតាមការគ្រប់គ្រង និងប្រើប្រាស់តំបន់ដីសើមប្រកបដោយនិរន្តរភាព ធ្វើឱ្យរួមចំណែកក្នុងការទ្រទ្រង់ជីវភាពរស់នៅរបស់ប្រជាជន ។ ចំណុចសំខាន់ៗទៀតគឺធ្វើឱ្យប្រជាជនកម្ពុជា ពិសេសប្រជាជនដែលរស់នៅក្នុងតំបន់ដីសើមយល់ដឹងថា តំបន់ដីសើមមានអ្វីខុស? មានសារៈសំខាន់អ្វីខុស? ធ្វើយ៉ាងណាដើម្បីរឹងរ៉ឹងក្បាលការពារនិងប្រើប្រាស់ឱ្យមាននិរន្តរភាព ។ លោកបានឱ្យដឹងផងដែរថា តំបន់ដីសើមក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជាមានទំហំប្រមាណ៣០ភាគរយនៃផ្ទៃដីទាំងមូលរបស់ប្រទេសកម្ពុជា ។

មិនមែនត្រឹមតែឱ្យសម្រេចគោលដៅនៃការអភិរក្សឱ្យមានប្រសិទ្ធភាពប៉ុណ្ណោះទេ គឺធ្វើឱ្យមានភាពរីកចម្រើនក្នុងជីវភាពរស់នៅរបស់ប្រជាជនទូទាំងខេត្ត ។ លោកអភិបាលរងខេត្តបញ្ជាក់ទៀតថា តំបន់ដីសើមផ្តល់ប្រយោជន៍ច្រើនណាស់ដល់យើងដូចជាផ្នែកកសិកម្ម ការនេសាទ និងមានប្រតិទិនដ៏ទម្រុញចម្រើននៅក្នុងការទ្រទ្រង់ និងបង្កើនជីវភាពរស់នៅរបស់ប្រជាជន ។ ដូច្នេះក្នុងស្ថានភាពដែលយើងធ្វេសប្រហែសទៅថ្ងៃអនាគត យើងពុំអាចទ

ត្រឹមរីករាយដូចបច្ចុប្បន្ននេះបានទេ ។ នៅក្នុងពិធីមិធិ្ឋិ ៥ ទិវាតំបន់ដីសើមពិភពលោក ២កុម្ភៈ នៅស្រុកសម្បូណ៍នេះដែរ ក៏មានការប្រឡងប្រណាំងតែងទឹកខ្ញុំកំណាត់រូបភាពដែលចូលរួមដោយក្រុមសិស្សានុសិស្សមកពីអនុវិទ្យាល័យចំនួន៤នៅក្នុងស្រុកសម្បូណ៍ ដែលរៀបចំដោយអង្គការ KAFDOC ក្រោមប្រធានបទ «តើទៅថ្ងៃអនាគតមានត្រីសម្រាប់ហូបដែរឬទេ?» ក្រុមទាំងមានចូលរួមរៀបចំលើកទឹកចិត្តទូទាំងខេត្ត ។ ៤៤ សុជាតិ

ឆ្នាំខ្មែរជំនួញ ។ រៀនអំពីប្រវត្តិខេត្តកំពតសព្វថ្ងៃមានចំនួន១.៣០០ហិកតា ។ នៅឯក្រុងកែបក៏មានរៀនអំពីប្រវត្តិ វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រ និងវប្បធម៌ជាច្រើនដូចជាខេត្តកំពតទេ ។ ទោះបីជាគេលនេះតែម្តងឡើយយ៉ាងណាក៏ដោយ វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រអំពីប្រវត្តិការពារបង្កើន គ្រោះរដ្ឋមិនអនុញ្ញាតឱ្យមានការយកដីសម្រាប់ផលិតសំបុកទៅធ្វើអ្វីផ្សេងពីការផលិតសំបុកឡើយ ។ ១.៧៧៧

លោកវ៉ែន សុខុម អភិបាលរងខេត្តក្រចេះដែលត្រូវបានគេអញ្ជើញជាអធិបតីក្នុងពិធីមិធិ្ឋិ ៥ ទិវាតំបន់ដីសើមពិភពលោក ២កុម្ភៈ នៅស្រុកសម្បូណ៍ គាត់លនោះមានប្រសាសន៍ថា កិច្ចការគ្រប់គ្រងតំបន់ដីសើមជាភារកិច្ចសំខាន់ និងចាំបាច់សម្រាប់យើងទាំង

News coverage on the World Wetlands Day 2007 on local newspaper (Rasmey Kampuchea Daily)

Appendix 3: Questions for evaluation and collective feedback

(20 Respondents included teachers, community representatives, commune authority, NGO representatives and students)

1. Do you think it is important to mark the WWD? Why?
 - Yes, it is for wetlands are habitats for plants, fish and other wildlife and ultimately source of food for people;
 - Yes, it is important as it help raise awareness among local people about the value of wetland resources, particularly in sustaining their livelihood;
 - Yes, it raised concern about the current challenges facing wetlands, the need for protecting wetlands and resources and it called for public participation in their protection;
 - Yes, as it give teachers, students and communities an opportunity to learn and think about including help spread further the message on the need for sustainable use and conservation of wetland biodiversity;
 - It is very important as it help all participants understand and learn the benefits provided by wetlands and it also encourage them to participate in preserving the wetland resources;
 - Yes, it is important as now we are at the time when resources are under threats to their degradation;
 - It is important as it draws attention to the benefits arising from wetlands and made motivate for participation in resource conservation;
 - It should be important as it respond to the need for protection of our resources being degraded and we hope that such event would motivate participation by local people;
 - Such event is important as protection of wetlands would have strong link with protection of our livelihood;
 - The WWD is important to bring up awareness about wetlands as we depend on wetlands for food and various essential services to support our livelihood;
 - Yes, organizing such event is essential as it motivate people participation in resource protection.

2. What did you learn from the WWD event?
 - Appropriate use of wetland resources for household support and for the benefit of society;
 - The extent and critical wetlands in the province, particularly deep pool in Sambo;
 - The benefits provided by wetlands in supporting local livelihood and economy, measures to prevent destructive and illegal uses, and actions to enhance and protect the resources within the wetlands;
 - The values and associated goods and services provided by wetlands such as source for food, aesthetic values, stabilizing the natural environment;
 - I have head and considered about the need for protection of inland aquatic biodiversity and severity of threats on the resources;

- From the WWD, I learned that wetlands consist habitats for various plants and animals, it is a source of food and thus contribute to sustaining livelihood, it also provides natural beauty;
- We learnt of the significance of resources in our area and it made us pay more attention to protecting them;
- How to make best use of wetlands resources to support livelihood;
- Understood the causes of destruction to resources that ultimately affect my life;
- I learnt about how we can contribute to protecting resources, particularly endangered species like dolphin;
- We learnt of the adverse impacts from fishing, actions for protection of brood fish and other aquatic resources;
- What I learnt from the Day is fishing that does not harm the brood fish and not to fish in the spawning season;
- I learnt that fishing in the breeding season is illegal and using gillnet is harm to the dwindling dolphin population;
- Wetlands are highly productive in terms of natural products and for farming.

3. What are the strengths of the WWD?

- Quite good number of banner containing clear and easily understood messages;
- The organizer appears to have understood the local situation clearly;
- It helps raise awareness of the participants about the value of wetlands;
- Approaches to deter illegal and destructive practices in resource utilization;
- Stimulate for a responsible wetlands management;
- It contribute to share information and a reflection about the resources, the need for their protection through students' poem, drawing and essay competition;
- Well organized with fair amount of banners and posters including materials produced by children;
- It highlighted the need for preserving natural wealth and the need to fight against illegal and destructive fishing;
- It provides opportunity for reflection through game and competition;
- Participation by all relevant stakeholders including NGOs;
- Advise people on responsible and environmentally friendly fishing;
- It is a wake up call about the risk to extinction of some wetland resources and to take immediate actions for their protection before it is too late;
- Promote collaboration between relevant agencies, particularly between DoE and NGOs.

4. What are the weaknesses of the WWD?

- The process did not start as scheduled;
- The Knowledge Test game should have been well planned in advance so that better judgment on the leading in competition could be made;

- The venue is not very well suited;
- The session had started a bit too late;
- Not all the invitees showed up;
- The venue is not very well suited and the event took quite long time that make it difficult for residents living far away to travel back at night;
- The session appears informal and location is not very well sited;
- The time available was too short, should have larger audience;
- To be effective awareness raising need to go along with law enforcement;
- Not all of the participants may learnt at the same depth about the need for contribution to aquatic resource protection;
- Should have more materials for display and distribution;
- Should design more and different types of quizzes that all audience can participate in answering.

5. Additional comments for improvement of such event in the future

- All items in the program should be clearly illustrated so that participants can be well prepared for;
- Should have such event organized every year;
- Should facilitate for more students from more schools to participate;
- Should include conundrum contest in the agenda;
- The event should start in the morning and should mobilize participation by all residents and children from all schools in Sambo;
- A more decorated venue should be organized;
- Should in the future organize larger event containing parade across residential areas;
- Additional banners should be hanged at selected locations within village;
- More awareness raising effort should be made in conjunction with strengthen law enforcement by appropriate authority;
- There should be more participants if the event is celebrated at Kampi.