

# Yala swamp conflict

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## Yala Swamp Conflict

Wetlands are among the various natural resources that contain a high value to people. Human beings depend on natural resources for their survival, and most of their daily activities are tied to these resources. However, due to population growth, there has been an increase in demand for natural resources, especially wetlands, which has consequently led to threatening their functions. Yala Swamp, a wetland located in Lake Victoria, in Kenya, has experienced over exploitation since the year 1960 due to commercial fish production and crop production activities. The Kenyan government together with the international development agencies proposed a development project meant to improve Yala swamp. The aim of the project was to prevent degradation of the wetland and improve the lives of local people (Davenport 4). However, despite the project's endeavor, it raised conflicts between the local communities on one side and county councils and the Dominion, founders of the project, on the other side. This, therefore, led to the emergence of Yala swamp conflict from the year 2003 to present. It has caused a great attention and concerns that many African countries experience conflicts especially as a result of resource depletion and environmental degradation. As the U. S. United Nations delegate, I have been assigned a jury to arbitrate an aspect of dispute in the Yala swamp conflict that exists between two sides, the one on the local community and the one on the Dominion and county council. After conducting my research on the disputing issue, I realized that the development project meant to improve the condition of Yala swamp was the main source of conflict (Davenport 11). I have been able to analyze and gain an understanding of the nature of the moral dimensions of conflict in the region. The conflicting

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parties are actually the stakeholders of the project where one party, the local community, is affected by the development project while the other party of both dominion and county council is the exploiters.

I also understand that conflict has emerged as a result of incompatible goals, which depend on contested natural resources. I realized that the local community feels deprived of the right to use the land for the farm by the development project hence contesting for the natural resources.

Furthermore, this community lives in extreme poverty and therefore desire to acquire more land. Land conflict result in environmental degradation when a community is squeezed into a limited area and cause pressure on it. The local community also feels that they have not yet gained the benefit of livelihood through employment as promised by the project resulting in disagreement (Davenport 14).

As a fair judge, I seek to encourage the two parties involved in the conflict, to understand that it is their incompatible goals that lead to the emergence of conflict. The local community has two main goals, employment and access to the wetland. These goals appear not to be compatible with management goals of county councils and dominion. They deny the access to land because they are afraid that the community would cause environmental degradation. They are also not capable of providing the local community with enough employment opportunities. However, in order to settle the conflict, both county council and the dominion should offer access to land but place laws and regulations on the utilization of the land. It should also enhance employment opportunity to improve livelihood even more as compared to the one obtained from the use of land.

Work cited

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Davenport, Thomas. The Water Management Project Guide. Florida: CRC Press LLC, 2003. Print.