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Scientists from Two Continents to Work Together to Improve Health of African Great Lakes

The International Institute for Sustainable Development and the African Center for Aquatic Research and Education join forces to strengthen global large-lakes scientific community

ANN ARBOR, MI—World-class scientists and researchers from across North America and Africa will soon be putting their heads (and expertise) together to tackle some of the most pressing issues—algal blooms, climate change, invasive species, fragile fisheries, to name but a few—facing the African Great Lakes (AGL).

The AGL are highly valuable natural resources, having rich fisheries, and are renowned ‘biodiversity hotspots.’ Consequently, they, and the ecosystem services they provide, underpin the welfare and livelihoods of over 50 million people across ten countries.

This is all thanks to a new major partnership announced today between the [International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\)](#) and the [African Center for Aquatic Research and Education \(ACARE\)](#). The IISD-ACARE collaboration will provide an opportunity for the world’s freshwater laboratory and networks on the African Great Lakes to come together and strengthen science on large freshwater resources and the countries in which they reside.

Despite the recognized importance of the AGL, these vital ecosystems and their livelihood support systems are threatened by the impact of human activity, such as overfishing and pollution, at local, regional, and global scales.

To address some of the challenges on the African Great Lakes, IISD-ACARE, will combine the legal and policy expertise of IISD’s vast expert staff with ACARE’s African network of large-lakes experts in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

“We have recognized that no one organization, institution, or even country, can address the challenges that our global freshwater resources face. It is essential, therefore, to strengthen collaborations for leveraging the combined skills, assets, technologies and resources of public, private and non-profit entities to deliver sustainable instruction, guidance, and research to protect these resources,” said Dr. Kevin Obiero, Chair, ACARE’s Board of Directors. “Partnering with the International Institute for Sustainable Development will

African Center for Aquatic Research and Education

Collaborating with freshwater experts around the world to address the challenges on the African Great Lakes
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enhance our ability to strengthen science and positively affect policy and management on these critical resources and provide the experience of working with the global scientific community.”

Strengthening the IISD-ACARE approach is [IISD’s Experimental Lakes Area \(IISD-ELA\)](#)—the only place in the world where scientists can manipulate real lakes to understand what human activity does to fresh water. a series of 58 lakes and their watersheds in northwestern Ontario, Canada, IISD-ELA brings over 50 years of freshwater research like no other, and policy analysis to inform decision making.

“ACARE has created a world class, highly collaborative network of experts on each of the African Great Lakes,” said Dr. Matthew McCandless, Executive Director, IISD-ELA. “Resources from IISD and ACARE’s combined networks will allow us to accomplish three long-term goals: strengthening global and regional research partnerships; facilitating existing, and creating new, transboundary and inter-jurisdictional lake advisory groups; and, strengthening capacity of freshwater scientists through experiential education and public engagement.”

During its first year, the new partnership will boost the activities of six Advisory Groups that were created to address issues on each of the African Great Lakes (considered to be Lakes Albert, Edward, Kivu, Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa, Tanganyika, Turkana, and Victoria). Members of each group are harmonizing priorities on the lakes to advance scientific inquiry, monitoring, climate change, and education and training, among other issues.

To learn more about the partnership and programs, [click here](#).

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The African Center for Aquatic Research and Education (ACARE) was established to help strengthen and harmonize science and information exchange through a highly collaborative network of freshwater experts.

The international team of multi-disciplinary experts at the International Institute for Sustainable Development delivers the knowledge to act. We tackle some of the world’s most pressing problems by conducting innovative research, generating evidence and championing sustainable solutions.