

The Lake Victoria Challenge is transforming mobility

The World Bank, the World Food Programme, UNICEF and the World Economic Forum Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution have come together to support the Government of Tanzania in the organisation of the Lake Victoria Challenge, an initiative that aims to explore drones as a new mobility model for the hard-to-reach, rural communities of the Lake Victoria region.

East Africa's Lake Victoria basin is the most densely populated rural area in the world, home to 35 million people. Life-saving cargo such as blood packs, critical medication, anti-venom, or spare parts for hospital machines often cannot reach those who need them in sufficient time.

The high cost of transportation also means that local producers have difficulty in getting their products and produce to market, particularly perishable goods.



The Lake Victoria Challenge has identified an opportunity in these challenges.

Comprised of a symposium, expo and flying competition, the three-day event planned for 2019 in Tanzania's Mwanza Region invites global technologists, health and transport experts, local African government and policymakers to together

effect change.

The Lake Victoria Challenge has reached its first major milestone: the completion of a celebrated trial and symposium in October 2018 in Mwanza, Tanzania. The three-day event, hosted by the Government of Tanzania and supported by the World Bank, brought together 280+ policymakers, innovators, government and local stakeholders to test the feasibility of a large-scale drone competition in Mwanza Region, while an accompanying symposium opened up lively discussion spanning three tracks pertinent to the Lake Victoria Challenge's aims and context.

"The rural island communities in and around Mwanza are often only accessible by boat, which can be slow and expensive. A drone network will support this existing infrastructure, improving access to healthcare and opportunity," said Hon. John Mongella, the Regional Commissioner of the Mwanza Region.

Opportunities for growth and development

The Lake Victoria Challenge aims to provide long-term opportunities for growth and development in East Africa. Young Africans are three times more likely to be unemployed than older adults, and in an effort to address this, a new and future-oriented mobility economy in Mwanza will improve access to technology and boost entrepreneurship.

As a technology hub, Mwanza aims to offer ambitious young Africans the opportunity to build their future and envisages a drone network serviced by droneports, fabrication labs, e-commerce facilities and public plazas.

Partnerships reached between the World Bank and the World Food Programme, UNICEF, and the World Economic Forum Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, respectively will help the Lake Victoria Challenge reach its ambitious goals.

“This collaboration will support the development of the Lake Victoria Challenge. The partnership can support reimagining Lake Victoria's mobility, public health systems and daily life; opening up innovative possibilities for real-world impact. This goes further than just drones, and will benefit industries like agriculture, e-commerce, entertainment, construction, and telecommunications. We're excited to see what the future will hold for the Lake region, and we commend the Regional Commissioner of Mwanza for taking a lead on making it happen,” said Bella Bird, country director for Tanzania, Burundi, Malawi and Somalia at the World Bank Group. ”

"It is exciting and timely to see UNICEF and the World Bank collaborating around new and frontier technology. The Lake Victoria Challenge is a concrete example of how technological, regulatory, and social innovations can help solve problems for and with the world's most vulnerable populations. This type of work is also central to the Secretary-General's Strategy on

New Technology which explicitly calls for a United Nations that supports new cooperation frameworks and enhances our ability to provide government capacity development,” said Chris Fabian, UNICEF Ventures Lead, New York.

Drones don't have to cost the earth. This simple bamboo 'Mwanza Mwanzi' drone produced during our recent trial cost only a few hundred dollars to produce and it flies like a dream! @uhurulab @ivangayton @HOTTanzania <https://t.co/An2KspF6gY> #innovation #mobility pic.twitter.com/RUGHGMHCDt ”

— Lake Victoria Challenge (@LVC_rising) [November 27, 2018](#)

“At the World Food Programme, we believe that drones have a viable and potentially critical role to play in supporting our work. The Lake Victoria Challenge offers an opportunity to better understand the potential of this emerging technology in terms of our mission and to demonstrate how government, regulators, international aid, innovators and industries can unite for the benefit of East Africa - and beyond,” said Michael Dunford, World Food Programme Tanzania Country Representative.



“The Lake Victoria Challenge is unlike any other drone competition, in that it is initiated and supported by the Government of Tanzania. As a technology, drones have the power to transform African mobility — but robust regulatory frameworks are required to make the dream into a reality. That’s why the World Economic Forum has partnered with the World Bank to support the development of real use cases in Mwanza,” said Harrison Wolf, Project Lead, Drones and Tomorrow’s Airspace, World Economic Forum.

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