

## **CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNSUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN YALA SWAMP IN THE LAKE VICTORIA REGION-KENYA**

Over the past few months SusWatch Kenya, Friends of Yala Swamp/Friends of the Earth consortium, Action Aid together with other CSO's Kenya have been advocating for the stoppage of unsustainable development activities of DOMINION; An American company that is currently reclaiming a wetland (Yala Swamp-located in the lake Victoria region of Kenya) for commercial purposes.

Of major concern among the activities the company has already started implementing and some proposed now is the GMO issue. Its is in public knowledge that Dominion company may introduce GMO's and other unsustainable agricultural activities in pursuit of its economic interests with complete disregard to social, environmental and health impacts this is likely to cause. **Below are the likely impacts of Dominion Farms Limited in Yala Swamp. (Wetland)**

- 1) That the management of Dominion Farms Limited has deliberately chosen not to engage or consult the community on its project implementation and development yet they are seriously being affected directly.
- 2) That Dominion Farms Limited being a multi national company is hell-bent on forcefully taking away from us their ancestral land without consent nor following legal procedures, which is a serious basic human rights violation.
- 3) That the company (Dominion Farms Limited) has adopted unorthodox means of using threats through proxies, intimidation, and police arrests (on trumped up charges ranging from incitement to robbery with violence) and bribery as a means of silencing and coercing the community to give away land at throw away prices.
- 4) That leaders (politicians, church leaders and government officers) have failed us totally in the course of this struggle and are instead working in cahoots with the multinational to disposes the communities of their land and only source of livelihood.
- 5) That the local press have been compromised and have adopted partisan approach in reporting the Yala Swamp issues to the favour of Dominion Farms Limited to the disadvantage of the aggressed (community).
- 6) That the project is being carried out without an independent approved environmental Impact Assessment report done by National Environmental Authority (NEMA). And more after NEMA has issued a stoppage order to Dominion Farms Limited.
- 7) That aerial spraying done by the company on the farms using DDT has severe health and environmental impacts with some of us already affected.
- 8) That blockage of river Yala and Lake Kanyaboli and Yala swamp will deny us access to water (for domestic use and for our animals) and grazing land which will have a

very serious economic impact on our livelihood. This will make most of the community go deep into poverty ,hence the achievement of MDGs will be a dream

- 9) That clearing of the Yala Swamp papyrus which is the home to many wild life species including endangered ones like statunga and papyrus *gonolek* and breeding grounds for many birds is of great concern.
- 10) Clearing of the papyrus will also have negative side economic effects on us since we have always used these plants to make mats for sale and use locally.
- 11) The farm want to start hydroelectric power to sell to KPLC and this will force them to increase the length of the weir; hence many people will be displaced. due to increased in radius (this power generation was not part of the main proposal)
- 12) The investor is forcing people to vacate there ancestral land, and they are being compensated at Kshs 45,000 per acre
- 13) Residents now lack land to graze their cattle's after investor fenced and ploughed their land
- 14) The investor also plan to start fish farming in lake Kanyaboli,this will deny the locals fishing rights, yet the lake is a shared resource
- 15) Dominion farms limited are also engaging in both wholesale and retail marketing of vegetables locking the locals out of the business.
- 16) Now the communities around Yala swamp are complaining of chest pain and several other ailment
- 17) There are several cases in court and now the communities want to get court to stop dominion from continuing with its act ivies until the matter is hard and determined
- 18) The same lake have claimed two life's to date..