



NEWSLETTER

– Save Water, Save Lakes –

International Lake Environment Committee Foundation

This newsletter is also available in Japanese.

— After 35 years, back on the shore of Lake Balaton —

19th World Lake Conference

Beyond Lakes: Linking Science, Culture and Governance for their Sustainable Use

- ◆ Opening
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From November 7th to 9th, 2023, the International Lake Environment Committee Foundation (ILEC) and the Lake Balaton Development Council (LBDC) co-organized the 19th World Lake Conference (WLC19) "Beyond Lakes: Linking Science, Culture, and Governance for their Sustainable Use" in Balatonfüred, Hungary. The Balaton lakeside location marked the second time in 35 years since the 3rd conference, (Keszthely) had been held in 1988.

The opening ceremony was attended by 176 participants from 30 countries worldwide, including 73 from Hungary and 103 from other nations. During the ceremony, the organizers and representatives from various governments and other institutions delivered the remarks.



◆ Remarkable Messages



Kazuhiko Takemoto, President, ILEC

Discussing common challenges toward achieving a sustainable society through Sustainable Lake Management (SLM) is of significant relevance in the current momentum of heightened enthusiasm for SLM. Bringing together a wide array of stakeholders, including government officials, international organizations, researchers, and civil society from around the world, provides an opportune moment to exchange rich knowledge and experiences related to SLM. This serves as an opportunity to deliberate on our challenges and seek potential solutions.



Michihiro Oi, Manager, Marine Environment Division, Water and Air Environment Bureau, Ministry of the Environment, Japan

To ensure the long-term inheritance of the benefits provided by rich lake ecosystems, it would be highly desirable to establish concrete future visions and goals. By directly appealing to future generations who are directly affected, expanding the understanding of the importance of lakes, and broadening the base of empathy, we aim to pass on these benefits to future generations.



Koji Ejima, Vice Governor of Shiga Prefecture, Japan

The establishment of "World Lake Day," similar to "Lake Biwa Day," unites the sentiments of nations and regions with lakes, transcending borders. It fosters increased momentum toward lake conservation by encouraging discussions that transcend boundaries among citizens, companies, scientists, and governments.

Creating such globally shared symbolic days is highly meaningful to raise awareness of the significance of lakes worldwide and to translate this into concrete actions for preserving their environments.

◆ Contribution of ILEC Scientific Committee at WLC19

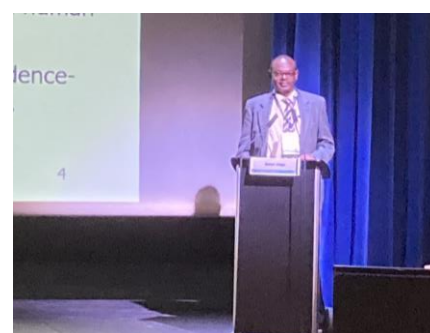
— Keynote Speech —

During the three-day event, keynote speeches were conducted over two days. On the first day, primarily Hungarian government officials presented, while on the second day, speakers from various European countries and the ILEC Scientific Committee members delivered presentations.

Prof. Sandra Azevedo presented on the importance of aquatic ecosystems for "One Health," emphasizing the interconnected health of humans, animals, and the environment. She highlighted, "The increasing global population escalates the water demand, leading to a decline in freshwater resources and resulting health hazards due to pollution. This not only triggers climate change but also invites further water source contamination and health risks, necessitating urgent measures."

Furthermore, Prof. Yoshihisa Shimizu presented on hydrology and water quality simulation for integrated watershed management, using the dynamics and distribution of dioxins and suspended solids (SS) in the Lake Biwa basin.

Additionally, Prof. Daniel Orago highlighted in his presentation titled "Lentic-Lotic Water System Response to Anthropogenic and Climatic Factors in Kenya and their Sustainable Management" the characteristics of African lakes and emphasized their sensitivity to human-induced and climatic factors, particularly changes in rainfall and temperature. He underscored the significance of Integrated Lake Basin Management (ILBM) as an approach for these water systems.



— Technical Sessions —

At the technical sessions, Ms. Adelina Santos-Borja, Prof. Sandra Azevedo, Dr. Ajit Patnaik, and Dr. Masatsugu Takamatsu served as session chairs. Ms. Adelina Santos-Borja presented on "Local Governments: Key Actors in Implementing Sustainable Management of Philippine Lakes," while Mr. Alejandro Juarez Aguilar delivered presentations on various topics, including "Conservation and Restoration of Lakes and Wetlands – the Latin America Perspective." The abstracts and proceedings from these sessions, along with other outcomes, will be progressively posted on the ILEC website (<https://www.ilec.or.jp/en/wlc/wlc-11286/#seika>).

*At this conference, Technical Sessions were held on the following 16 themes.



- Integrated Management of Lakes and their Basins, Case Report Session
- Monitoring instrumentation, innovation, assessment issues and challenges
- Lake-related sustainable development issues
- Limnology, aquatic and microbial sciences
- Aquatic and Littoral Ecosystems
- Living Lakes
- Climate-change related issues, assessment, adaptations, and challenges
- Lake-related water management, ground water, irrigation water
- Catchment land, resource values, impacts and mitigation
- Lakes as functional development regions
- Lake and catchment technologies, traditions, innovations, and beyond
- Culture, heritage, society and education
- National and local strategic plans, assessment, conceptual basis
- Participatory planning, social engagement and mutual learning
- Social and economic usages and valuing lake (ecosystem) services
- Legal and Institutional Measures for Lake Basin Management including Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)



◆ "Youth Power" in Action


As stated in the Balaton Declaration, the participation of the younger generation (youth) is important for SLM. At WLC19, six students who achieved outstanding results in the "Lake Ecotourism Contest," held during the International Symposium 2022 last autumn, shared initiatives and activities for environmental conservation in various lakes worldwide, discussed challenges, and shared plans for future actions, with the support of Prof. Yoshika Yamamoto, ILEC Director, who served as the chief judge in the contest.

— Technical Session (Participatory planning, social engagement and mutual learning) —

 Rao Sasaki  Akari Taira (Seian University of Art and Design)

They presented a case study of eco-tourism that allows visitors to experience the interconnectedness of mountains, villages, and lakes in the Moriama area. Alongside the content shared during last year's contest, they incorporated feedback from an actual monitor tour conducted in the area. They highlighted the creation of frameworks to revitalize the local economy through eco-tourism, strengthen the connection between the lake's ecosystem and the community, and contribute to environmental conservation.

— Technical Session (Culture, heritage, society and education) —

 Saeko Ito  Arika Tanabe (Kyoto University of Foreign Studies)

Two members affiliated with the International Volunteer University Student Association (IVUSA) presented on the "Become a Lake Biwa Researcher Tour," organized and implemented for elementary school students, as part of their efforts toward achieving the "Mother Lake Goals (MLGs)," which are the SDGs specific to Lake Biwa. This initiative aligns with one of the goals, "Transforming the local and basin area into places of learning." They also acted as leaders in the youth session.



— Youth Session - Youth Power in Action: Youth-driven Innovations for Sustainable Lake Management —

 Mana Kubozono  Marina Hata (Ritsumeikan University)  Saeko Ito  Arika Tanabe

In this special session organized by ILEC, with over 80 young participants, including online attendees, from various countries. Youth shared their environmental activities in lakes. They discussed "how youth activities can be sustainable" and "what is needed to broaden the circle of youth engaged in lake environmental conservation".

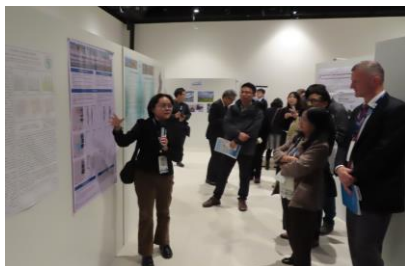
A question about "how youth can involve in ecotourism" prompted a suggestion from the audience to combine youth's interests and fields of activity with ecotourism. Furthermore, in preparation for the 20th World Lake Conference (WLC20), they committed to expanding networks, conducting lake clean-up on specific days, and engaging in mutual reporting.

This session was entirely organized and operated by university students involved in Lake Biwa conservation activities. It served as an excellent opportunity for youth, the future generations of lake and wetland environmental conservation, to connect globally and accelerate environmental preservation efforts and community involvement.



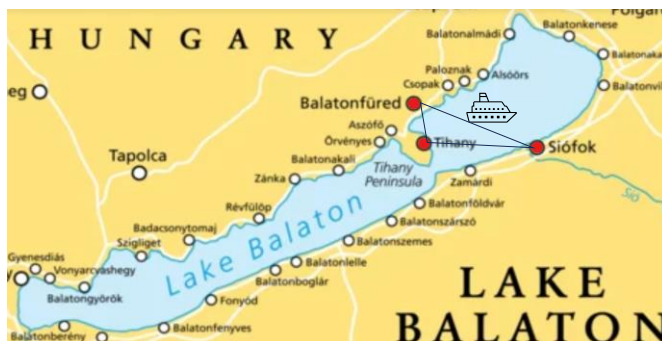
◆ Poster Session

The exhibition took place throughout the event. Before the gala dinner started, there was an opportunity for poster presenters to explain their exhibits. ILEC exhibited "Introductions to ILEC" and "Activities toward SLM." Additionally, an awareness poster titled "Hummingbird Challenge" transformed a picture of droughts into lake scenes by having participants write on blue paper what they could do for the future.



◆ Study Tour

The participants visited Siofok and Tihany by sightseeing boat from the harbor near the conference venue. In Siofok, they saw the under-construction water lock, and in Tihany, they visited the Balaton Hydrobiological Institute. Additionally, they had the chance to view an observation point on the lake from the boat and listened to presentations by local high school students on environmental topics held onboard.



◆ Highschool Student Session

The special session by high school students from Japan's Shiga Prefecture and Hungary was held in a hybrid format. Shiga Prefecture's high school students participated online, while Hungarian students attended on site. They presented their respective research activities and shared recommendations for future lake and environmental conservation efforts in a Youth Declaration.



◆ International Colloquium

“Promoting Sustainable Lake Management (SLM): Challenges, Achievements, and Lessons Learned”

ILEC and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) co-organized an international colloquium titled “Promoting Sustainable Lake Management (SLM): Challenges, Achievements, and Lessons Learned” as a side event of WLC19 on November 6. This event took place both in-person and online, attracting 134 participants from over 16 countries.

The Colloquium focused on the significance of Sustainable Lake Management (SLM) in achieving water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Discussions centered on the role of Integrated Lake Basin Management (ILBM) as a tool to promote and emphasize the importance of SLM, building upon the resolution adopted at the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA5.2) and the UN Water Conference in March, 2023.

The event began with remarks from the organizers and the Japanese Ministry of the Environment, followed by messages from various national governments and reports on initiatives from different regions worldwide.

Representatives from the Indonesian government highlighted the international situation surrounding lakes post-SLM resolution, emphasizing the urgency of addressing ecological degradation and the importance of conservation. They advocated for the establishment of “World Lake Day” to engage governments globally in recognizing the significance of lakes. Contributions from Shiga Prefecture and its sister state, Michigan in the United States, showcased initiatives such as “Lake Biwa Day” and “Michigan Freshwater Week,” emphasizing community involvement in conservation efforts.

Furthermore, UNEP experts outlined collaborative efforts with member countries to advance SLM initiatives. International organizations also presented their experiences and insights regarding SLM promotion. ILEC introduced a video report from the Lake Biwa-Yodo River Basin Workshop titled “SLM in Lake Biwa-Yodo River Basin Management.”

Following these presentations, a panel discussion facilitated exchanges among participants, including members of the ILEC Scientific Committee and other stakeholders from international organizations, national governments, and NGOs. The discussion aimed to align multifaceted perspectives and approaches towards SLM. Ultimately, Dr. Yasuo Takahashi, ILEC Director, and Executive Director of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), summarized that the event provided an opportunity to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders towards the establishment of “World Lake Day.”

You can find the video and program of this colloquium on the ILEC website: <https://www.ilec.or.jp/en/un-cooperation/mainstreaminglakes/#eic2023>



◆ Closing Ceremony

Dr. Gabor Molnar from LBDC reflected on WLC19, discussing the journey leading up to the event and extending gratitude to the people involved. Following this, Prof. Walter Rast, the Chair of the ILEC Scientific Committee, and Prof. Masahisa Nakamura, the ILEC Vice president outlined key points that should be included in the Balaton Declaration. Lastly, it was announced that the next WLC20 in 2025 will be held in Brisbane, Australia, the host city of the 2032 Olympics. A video introducing the venue and inviting participation was screened to conclude the event.



◆ Balaton Declaration

Taking into account the discussions and participants' input during WLC19, the Balaton Declaration was summarized as follows:

- Accelerate and enhance support for the forerunner national governments and concerned national and international non-governmental organizations to realize the designation of a “World Lake Day” at the United Nations General Assembly. Designation of a “World Lake Day” will enormously contribute to bringing global attention to the crucial role of lakes in addressing human freshwater needs, and ecosystem integrity and biodiversity, at all levels;
- Create and ensure implementation of tools to strengthen science-policy linkages in developing sustainable lake management efforts, including the involvement of policymakers, scientists, and communities, a noteworthy example being the Mother Lake Goals, inspired by the SDGs, for the conservation and sustainable management of the Lake Biwa basin, Japan;
- Enhance proactive lake management by policymakers, the public, and all relevant lake stakeholders to address lake basin management challenges through the preparation of regular assessment reports on the status and needed actions of in understandable language used to address activities such as the implementation of the SLM Resolution at the regional, national and local levels;
- Mobilize the enthusiasm, energy, and visions of the Youth in facilitating sustainable lake management at all levels, including planning, decision-making, implementation, evaluation and celebration.

For the declaration, you can view and download the full version in PDF format from WLC19 page on the ILEC website: <https://www.ilec.or.jp/en/wlc/wlc-11286/#seika>



We will be publishing Newsletter No. 71 in March 2024. In the next issue, we will feature another story from WLC19, so please stay tuned and look forward to it!



INTERNATIONAL LAKE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE FOUNDATION (ILEC)

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*The latest issue and back issues of this newsletter are also available on our website above.