

April 2023; Issue 4

EU-GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA FOREST PARTNERSHIP: WILL IT SAVE BUGOMA AND OTHER FORESTS?



Photos showing destruction of Bugoma forest

In this newsletter:

- EU-Uganda government forest partnership: How to make it more effective
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- Lobbying
- In the media
- Upcoming events

Dear reader, welcome to our April 2023 newsletter. This month, the European Union (EU) provided [support](#) of €152 million (Shs 624 billion) to the Government of Uganda (GoU).

The support follows the signing of a Forest Partnership between the EU and GoU in **November 2022**.

Available information indicates that the above support (funding) is aimed at promoting sustainable management of forests to among other things fight against climate change and improve livelihoods. It is also aimed at empowering women and the girl child.

We commend the EU and GoU for remaining committed to fighting deforestation and forest degradation in Uganda. While this is true, we remain concerned that despite support to Uganda's forest sector being provided by development partners such as the EU, Uganda continues to suffer from forest loss. The EU has been providing support to Uganda's forest sector prior to the November 2022 partnership.

Despite this, forest degradation and deforestation of especially natural forests such as Bugoma, Budongo, Wambabya, Zoka and others in the Albertine Graben continues due to sugarcane growing, oil roads, agriculture, charcoal burning and others.

No effort must be spared to

conserve and restore Uganda's natural forest cover.

To contribute to the effectiveness of the EU-GoU Forest Partnership therefore, AFIEGO and our partners have assessed the strengths and gaps of the partnership. We make recommendations to harness the strengths and address the gaps. Read about this in our **Word from CEO and Partners**.

In our **pictorial**, we bring you some of the activities we implemented this month. For instance, with our Inclusive Green Economy-East Africa (IGEN-EA) and other civil society partners, we presented a position paper on gaps in the ministerial policy statements for the sustainable energy, natural resources and other programmes to parliament's Natural Resources Committee in Kampala. This was aimed at influencing the national budget to increase funding for the above programmes.

In addition, with our IGEN-EA partners, we participated in influencing public debate on Earth Day through publications that highlighted the potential of green economic alternatives.

Further, with our partners, we participated in hearing of the court case that we filed against the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project at the East African Court of Justice (EACJ).

The hearing was held in Arusha. We

also influenced public debate on the same through media engagements.

In addition, in preparation for a tribunal hearing on the impacts of oil and gas activities in Uganda, we visited oil-affected communities in Bunyoro to gather evidence.

Furthermore, we organised a cross-border civil society meeting with our partners from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) during which we discussed ways in which to influence our respective governments to stop the expansion of fossil fuels.

In addition, with the support of our partners, we held online and physical meetings with German Members of Parliament, civil society, youth groups and others to discuss the impact of oil exploitation activities on people and nature in Uganda.

Our partners also supported us to hold a lecture at the University of Zurich to discuss our efforts aimed at protecting communities and the environment amidst oil and gas exploitation in Uganda. We did much more as you will see in our pictorial section.

In our **lobbying** section, we bring you some of the lobby and

advocacy materials that we disseminated this month.

For instance, we supported the Tilenga oil project host communities to write to TotalEnergies to address the flooding from the Tilenga Central Processing Facility (CPF) area in Buliisa district.

Furthermore, we mobilised over 40 East African civil society organisations (CSOs) and wrote a letter calling on Barclays Bank to retract a report that misrepresented the impact of the Tilenga and EACOP oil projects in Uganda.

With our IGEN-EA partners, we also published IEC materials to mark Earth Day and call for investments in sustainable green industries.

In **in the media** section, we bring you some of the articles that were published from our media interviews in addition to articles that staff and our partners published in newspapers.

We hope you will enjoy the newsletter.

Editorial team:

Diana Nabiruma

Patrick Edema

Balach Bakundane

EU-UGANDA GOVERNMENT FOREST PARTNERSHIP: HOW TO MAKE IT MORE EFFECTIVE

Dear reader, on November 8, 2022 during the 27th Conference of Parties (COP) on climate change, the European Union (EU) and Government of Uganda (GoU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) called the Forest Partnership.

The EU was represented by Ms. Ursula Von Der Leyen, the President of the European Commission while the GoU was represented by Right Hon. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga, the First Deputy Prime Minister of Uganda.

The main objective of the Forest Partnership that was signed at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt is to support strategic policy dialogue and cooperation to promote conservation of natural forests in Uganda.

The forest partnership recognises several critical challenges facing Uganda's forest sector including:

- That between 1990 and 2020, the country's forest cover plummeted from 24% to 12%.
- That the main causes of forest loss in Uganda include weak forest governance, over cultivation and grazing, overharvesting for timber and fuel wood, industrialisation and urbanisation, insecure land tenure and others.
- That todate, the GoU has undertaken a number of policy initiatives and commitments to address the causes of forest loss including:

a) Reduce her greenhouse gas emissions by 22% and increase forest cover by 21% by 2030 as per the 2022 Nationally Determined Contributions;

b) Promote fair benefit sharing from biodiversity services as per the 2015-2025 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan;

c) Scale up forest restoration as per the 2021-2031 Action Plan for the Restoration of Environment and Natural Resources; and

d) Increase household incomes and national revenues through effective forest value chains as per the 2030 National Development Plan III and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The forest partnership also recognised the following:

- That on its part, the EU is committed to fighting deforestation under its European Green Deal; and
- That the EU is committed to implementation of global initiatives such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the UN Convention on Biodiversity and others.

APPRECIATION

AFIEGO and our partners recognise that the Forest Partnership is a great milestone that could reduce forest degradation and address other challenges facing the forest sector in Uganda.

We also appreciate EU efforts to

finance the forest sector, climate change and other associated efforts. This month for instance, the EU provided **support** of €152 million (Shs624 billion) for the above efforts.

Available information indicates that the above funding is aimed at promoting sustainable management of forests to among other things fight against climate change and improve livelihoods. It is also aimed at empowering women and the girl child.

GAPS

Despite the good intentions, it remains difficult to see how the Forest Partnership can achieve its objectives. First, it lacks the binding force necessary to support its effective implementation. Second, its text lacks real indicators and strategies for monitoring performance to measure success and therefore, help citizens to hold the partners especially the GoU accountable to the commitments.

Most importantly, the Forest Partnership shies away from explaining how it intends to deal with the harsh social, economic and political realities in our country which have continued to undermine any efforts to stop forest degradation and conserve forests in Uganda. These realities are discussed below.

POLITICAL & SOCIO-ECONOMIC REALITIES

Lack of political will to conserve forests: While the Forest Partnership outlines some key policy steps being undertaken by the government, it's not clear that there is political will to conserve forests. For instance,

on August 17, 2021, nine European Ambassadors headed by H.E Attilio Pacifici together with Uganda's State Minister for the Environment, Hon. Ms. Beatrice Anywar, and 21 members of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBFC) visited Bugoma Central Forest Reserve (CFR) in Kikuube district.

The objective of the visit was to discuss ways to stop the destruction of the forest by Hoima Sugar Ltd and other land grabbers. Despite commitments being made by government to stop destruction of the forest, the destruction continues to date.

Moreover, it is government agencies including the Ministry of Lands and National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) that enabled sugarcane growing in the forest.

Further, despite President Yoweri Museveni promising to take political action to stop the destruction of Bugoma, the promises, which were made in January 2023 in Kikuube district, are yet to be acted on. These delays clearly show that the government is not ready to conserve Bugoma and other forests.



Ambassadors from EU countries, Hon. Anywar (State Minister of Environment) and SBFC members at a 2021 meeting in Bugoma forest during which protection of the forest was discussed.

Oil discovery: Since 2006 when commercial oil was discovered in Uganda's Albertine Graben, the degradation of forests and other critical ecosystems such as wetlands, national parks and game reserves has continued to worsen.

For instance, forests such as Bugoma, Budongo and others are being destroyed because of oil and its associated risks of population influx, land grabbing and opening of roads across forests and other areas. As long as oil exploitation continues in the ecosensitive Albertine Graben, forests will continue to be destroyed.

Corruption and illegal land titles in protected areas: No efforts can save forests and other critical ecosystems in Uganda without first fighting corruption in government.

Its corruption that has continued to facilitate land grabbing in forests, helped land grabbers to get land titles covering forest land, failed forest conservation cases in court and has undermined financing of forest sector agencies such as the National Forestry Authority (NFA).

Poverty: Millions of Ugandans remain extremely poor due to many factors especially bad governance. Poverty makes over 90% of Ugandans to rely on fuel wood to meet their cooking energy needs and to engage in harmful agricultural practices, leading to massive destruction of forests.

Illegal displacement of communities by land grabbers: Land grabbing has continued to keep and push millions of Ugandans into desperation leading to many of them into forests as a last resort.

The unfair, delayed and inadequate compensation given by oil companies and GoU to oil project affected persons (PAPs) also pushes impoverished PAPs to increase pressure on forests.

In relation to Bugoma forest, failure by the Ministry of Lands to publicise the Bugoma forest boundary re-opening report from the 2021-2022 boundary opening exercise, failure to enforce the Kikuube district physical plan of 2020-2040 and failure by NEMA to ensure that Hoima Sugar Ltd restores 4,854.7 hectares/18.73 sq. miles of the forest as ordered by the authority in September 2021 is undermining conservation of the forest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Forest Partnership is an important milestone that should strengthen forest conservation efforts. The partnership commits the EU and GoU to put in place a roadmap within six months from November 8, 2022 when the partnership was signed. The following are our recommendations for inclusion in the roadmap:

Recommendations to the EU and GoU

(i) Assess past failures: The roadmap should briefly detail why previous efforts failed to stop forest loss and ways for ensuring success this time round.

(ii) Include indicators: The planned roadmap should have clear indicators for monitoring performance.

(iii) Timeframe for review: The roadmap should also provide a timeframe within which evaluation will be done to assess implementation progress.

This will promote transparency and help Ugandans to hold the GoU accountable to its commitments.

(iv) Empower citizens: The roadmap should provide for empowering citizens to participate in implementation of the forest partnership.

Recommendations to the GoU

(v) Stop all oil activities in protected areas: The GoU should commit to stopping all oil activities currently taking place in protected areas in the country.

(vi) Open up civic space: The GoU should stop attacks on civil society and commit to respect the rights of citizens on land ownership, fair compensation and others.

(vii) The GoU should domesticate the forest partnership to make it binding and improve its implementation domestically.

(viii) The GoU should also enforce the Kikuube district physical plan of 2020-2040 which will see Bugoma

forest being conserved.

Recommendations to the EU

(ix) Financing and other conditions for engagement: While it may be strategic to keep the MoU non-binding to build mutual trust between the two partners, it's necessary that the EU sets specific conditions for any financing for the forest sector.

To begin with, the EU should ensure that the GoU commits to end corruption, make public the Bugoma forest boundary opening report, stops Hoima Sugar Ltd's activities until the Bugoma forest court cases are concluded and boundary report is made public.

The EU should also ensure that the GoU investigates and prosecutes government officials who issue land titles in protected areas including the freehold and leasehold titles of Bunyoro Kingdom and Hoima Sugar Ltd respectively covering Bugoma forest.

(x) Blacklist any company involved in forest degradation and ensure they do not sell their products in EU countries.

(xi) Provide funding to CSOs to mobilise citizens to participate in implementation of the forest partnership as well as support general conservation of forests and environment.

By AFIEGO's CEO and Partners

Pictorial of our activities

AFIEGO, IGEN-EA & OTHER PARTNERS ENGAGE PARLIAMENT ON 2023 NATIONAL BUDGET



On April 4, 2023, AFIEGO, IGEN-EA and our civil society partners participated in a meeting with parliament's Natural Resources Committee in Kampala.

During the meeting, we presented gaps and weaknesses in the 2023 ministerial policy statements covering the sustainable energy and natural resources programmes.

This was aimed at influencing the 2023/2024 national budget to increase allocations for Uganda's green economic sectors.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS PARTICIPATE IN EACOP CASE HEARING AT THE EAST AFRICAN COURT OF JUSTICE



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Between April 4 and 5, 2023, AFIEGO and our partners held meetings and participated in hearing of the court case that we filed against the EACOP project at the East African Court of Justice (EACJ).

The hearing took place in Arusha Tanzania. The hearing enabled our lawyers to present why the preliminary objections raised by the attorney generals of Uganda and Tanzania against our case should be rejected by court.



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AFIEGO SUPPORTS COMMUNITIES TO SHARE THEIR OIL EXPERIENCES WITH OUR PARTNERS

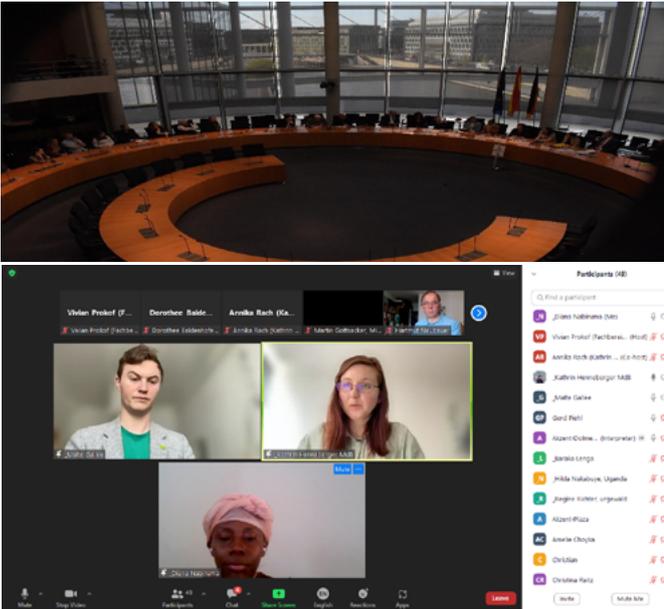


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Between March 30 and April 4, 2023, AFIEGO organised meetings between some of our global north partners and the communities that we work with in the Albertine Graben in Uganda.

The meetings enabled communities to share the impacts of oil and gas activities on their livelihoods and the environment.

AFIEGO ENGAGES GERMAN MPS ON THE NEED TO PROMOTE CLEAN ENERGY



On April 21 and 25, 2023, AFIEGO held online and physical meetings respectively with German Members of Parliament, civil society and other stakeholders.

During the meetings, AFIEGO called on the German MPs to work with their government to stop financial flows to fossil fuel projects in Africa, promote investment in clean energy and strengthen civic space in Uganda.

The physical meeting (top photo) was held with MPs belonging to the German parliamentary Right Livelihood Group. It took place in Berlin.

The online meeting was organised by EU and German MPs.

AFIEGO DELIVERS SUSTAINABILITY LECTURE AT UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH



On April 27, 2023, with support from the Right Livelihood Foundation, AFIEGO delivered a lecture on promoting climate action as well as protecting community livelihoods and the environment in Uganda. The lecture was delivered to students, academics and civil society members at the University of Zurich.

The lecture, which was participated in by over 30 people, raised the above participants' awareness of oil impacts in Uganda.

The participants also discussed ways in which the Swiss public could support efforts to end fossil fuel expansion in Africa while promoting clean energy.

AFIEGO AND GREEN LIVELIHOODS PARTNERS HOLD REFLECTION AND PLANNING MEETING



On April 14, 2023, AFIEGO and our Green Livelihoods Alliance partners held a meeting in Kampala.

The meeting enabled the partners to reflect and document the most significant milestones and achievements of 2022.

We also agreed on the joint activities for the year 2023.

In April 2023, AFIEGO supported the Tilenga oil project host communities to write to TotalEnergies to address the flooding from the Tilenga Central Processing Facility (CPF) area in Buliisa district.

Furthermore, we mobilised over 40 East African civil society organisations (CSOs) and wrote a letter calling on Barclays Bank to retract a report that misrepresented the impact of the EACOP oil project in Uganda.



April 21, 2023

Mr. C.S. Venkatakrishnan,
Chief Executive Officer (CEO),
Barclays Bank,
1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP,
United Kingdom

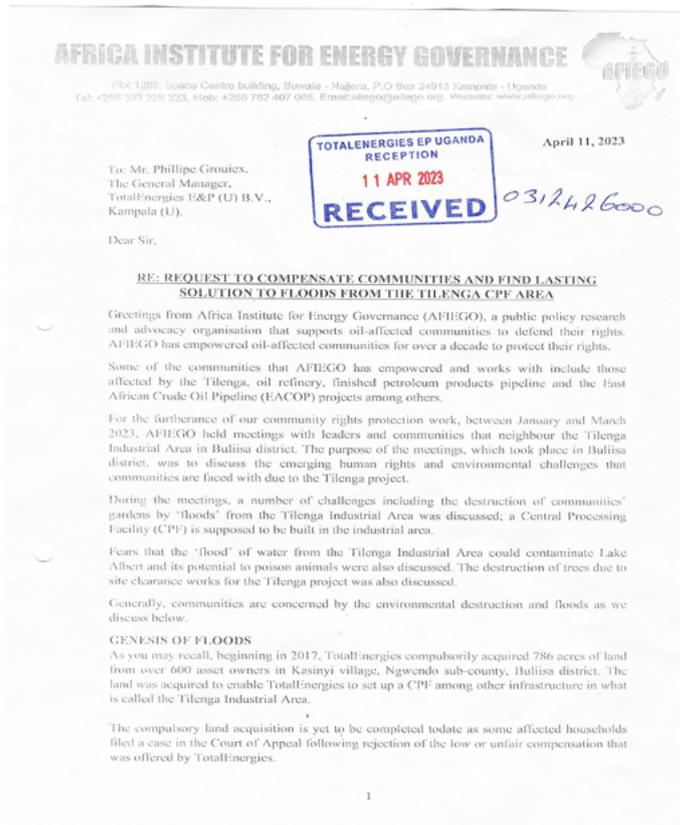
Dear Mr. Venkatakrishnan,

We would like to draw your attention to the attempt of Barclays' research department to whitewash one of the world's most controversial oil projects: the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). If built, the 1,443 km long pipeline will rip through critical wildlife habitats and protected areas in Uganda and Tanzania, open up Uganda's oldest national park for oil exploitation and alongside its related Tilenga oil project, expropriate up to 100,000 people.

Up until today, 24 large international banks (of which Barclays is one) and 23 insurance companies have publicly ruled out support for the EACOP project, which is operated by TotalEnergies, China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and the Ugandan as well as Tanzanian governments.

Further, in an emergency resolution passed in September 2022, the European Parliament called "for an end to the extractive activities in protected and sensitive ecosystems, including the shores of Lake Albert", and voiced "serious concern about the human rights violations in Uganda and Tanzania linked to investments in fossil fuel projects."¹ Across Uganda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), civil society organisations (CSOs) have opposed this project from the start and have filed a case against EACOP in the East African Court of Justice as well as in French courts.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2022-0409_EN.html



EACOP: East African Court of Justice will hear arguments on court's jurisdiction

4 April 2023, Arusha: Tomorrow, 5 April 2023, the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) will hear arguments for and against the objection to the court's jurisdiction filed by Secretary General of the East African Community, the Republic of Tanzania and Republic of Uganda in response to the case challenging the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) until the questions of environmental, social justice, and climate justice concerns raised in the case are heard and determined.

On 6 November, 2020, Natural Justice, Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), Centre for Strategic Litigation and the Centre for Food and Adequate Living Rights (CEFROHT) Limited filed a case against the governments of Uganda and Tanzania and the Secretary General of the East African Community (EAC), challenging the construction of the EACOP at the EACJ. The applicants also applied for a temporary injunction to stop the construction of the EACOP until the questions of environmental, social justice, and climate justice concerns raised in the case are heard and determined. This application is yet to be determined by the Court.

The Applicants' case is premised on grounds that the EACOP project contravenes various provisions of the treaty of the East African Community; the Protocol for the Sustainable Management of the Lake Victoria Basin; the African Charter on Human and People's Rights; the African Convention on Conservation of Natural Resources; the post-2020 Convention on Biological Diversity and the Paris Climate Accords. Moreover, the applicants contend that the project proponents, including French oil giant Total Energies, China's National Offshore Oil Corporation, and the states of Uganda and Tanzania did not conduct effective and meaningful public participation and consultation, and neither did they conduct both human rights and climate impact assessments before the commencement of the EACOP project.

If the preliminary objection on the court's jurisdiction is successful, the case shall be dismissed, and if the court determines that it has jurisdiction, then the matter shall proceed, and will be heard on merits.

"Given continuing community concerns and the emerging science from the IPCC on worsening climate impacts on vulnerable countries, we hope the court will make a swift determination and consider this important case on its merits." - **Mark Odaga, Attorney, Natural Justice.**

"EACOP- and Tilenga-affected communities in Uganda were disappointed in February 2023 when the French courts dismissed the duty of vigilance case against TotalEnergies without hearing the case on its merits. Today, their hope lies with the judges at the EACJ and we

This month, AFIEGO staff, research associates and youth champions wrote newspaper articles that were published in the leading newspapers. The media also published articles from the media interviews we held this month. Some of the published articles are captured below.

INCLUDE RENEWABLE ENERGY STUDIES IN A'LEVEL CURRICULUM

EDITOR: Recently, the media reported about the director of National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) informing the public that in two years' time, Uganda will have revised the A'level curriculum. The new curriculum is expected to be rolled out in February 2025.

It is noted that the new subjects, according to proposals, will capture emerging issues such as climate change and technology. This is a very good idea for mitigating the drastic climate change the country is grappling with today.

Therefore, my humble request to the NCDC director is that they include renewable energy studies on the A'level curriculum and, if possible, the O'level and the tertiary institutions.

This will help students acquire the knowledge of using

LETTER OF THE DAY
HAVE YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?
email us at letters@newvision.co.ug



renewable energy sources such as solar, which is clean, affordable, cheap and reliable.

The introduction of renewable energy concepts in the education spectrum is highly needed so that many future holistic citizens are informed of the grave necessity of renewable energy technologies. This would motivate them to devise new creative and technological innovations in this field and combat climate change.

It is also needed at higher education levels because it will influence many different

factors, including family background, family income, and socioeconomic factors of the country's economy.

Furthermore, the schools will help students to be in position to make decisions regarding environmental policies, create critical thinking and discourse analysis on the ongoing climate change issues.

Students will learn about real world energy issues, including the need to reduce on our use of fossil fuels. It will help students and parents understand energy use and how to save energy easily and

cost-effectively.

Encourage students, schools and families to take an active role in conserving electricity consumption.

This will help the country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals because many small businesses will be started with the use of renewable energy, hence jobs created for the youth. Also President Yoweri Museveni's message of transiting from dirty fossil fuels to clean energy will be realised.

Therefore, I call on the NCDC, which is responsible for revising the curriculum, to ensure that renewable energy studies is among the subjects included on the A'level curriculum and at other levels of education.

Paul Kato,
research associate and
environmental activist
Katop.adyeeri@gmail.com

Use EU funds to restore forests facing massive destruction

EDITOR: Last week, the media reported about the European Union (EU) giving sh620b to the Government of Uganda to empower women and the girl child, as well as promoting sustainable management of forests in the country.

Of this, euro 12m (about sh461m) will go towards Gender for Development Uganda, a programme aimed at supporting education for adolescent girls, reducing gender-based violence and promoting sexual and reproductive health. It is also noted that the funding of euro 40m (about sh152b) was given to Uganda to contribute to the fight against climate change and protection of biodiversity.

The initiative by the EU is very good because it came at the time when the Government of Uganda is grappling with the increased climate change and deforestation cases across the country. Therefore, we are humbly requesting the Government to prioritise the restoration of forests across the country as a move to implement forest partnership between Uganda and the EU.

More so, an adequate portion of this money should be allocated to the restoration of the forests being destroyed by encroachers such as Bugoma Central Forest Reserve in Bunyoro and Zoka Central Forest Reserve in northern Uganda, also under pressure from encroachers.

The restoration of central forest reserves will help to regulate climate change the country is grappling with, improve flooding and erosion control, increase variety and availability of food and non-food products, support the tourism sector, reduce the human-animal conflicts, create jobs and protect the human health.

I call upon the Ministry of Water and Environment and other sister agencies to use the EU money to fight climate change challenges and protection of biodiversity to restore the forests where they have been destroyed by encroachers carrying out human activities.

Kato Paul, research associate and environmental activist



Earth Day



#Let's promote sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices that prioritize the health of the planet and its inhabitants. #EarthDay2023



CLEAN ENERGY



TOURISM & CONSERVATION



NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & FORESTRY



AGRICULTURE & FISHING



REGIONAL

Upcoming events

May 4, 2023; Kampala: Engage parliament on the need to fasttrack completion of the consumer protection and management bill

May 10, 2023; Kampala: Engage the Chief Justice to fasttrack hearing of the Bugoma forest court case

May 15-17, 2023; Bunyoro: Tribunal retreat on climate change

May 18, 2023; Bunyoro and Greater Masaka: Land rights awareness trainings for oil project affected-communities

May 22-24, 2023; Hoima: Training of community-based organisations (CBOs) on compliance to relevant NGO sector laws

May 30-31, 2023; Uganda and DRC: Cross-border meetings on stopping fossil fuel expansion

About Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)

AFIEGO is a non-profit company limited by guarantee that was incorporated under Uganda's Companies Act. AFIEGO undertakes public policy research and advocacy to influence energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable. Based in Kampala-Uganda, the non-profit company was born out of the need to contribute to efforts to turn Africa's clean energy potential into reality and to ensure that the common man and woman benefits from this energy boom. Through lobbying, research and community education, AFIEGO works with communities and leaders to ensure that clean energy resources are utilised in a way that promotes equitable development, environmental conservation and respect for human rights.

Our Vision

A society that equitably uses clean energy resources for socio-economic development

Our Mission

To promote energy policies that benefit poor and vulnerable communities