

June 2020; Issue 6

WHO CAN SAVE BUGOMA FOREST FROM DESTRUCTION?



AFIEGO staff with the Save Bugoma Forest civil society team following a meeting with the National Forestry Authority (NFA) this month in Kampala.

While the NFA and civil society groups are defending Bugoma forest from land grabbing, sugarcane and oil threats, some government institutions are failing the fight. This needs to stop.

In this newsletter:

- Open letter to President Museveni: Bugoma forest needs to be saved from impunity, corruption, oil and other threats
- Pictorial of our activities
- Lobbying
- In the media
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Editorial

Dear readers, welcome to our June 2020 newsletter. This month, Bugoma forest communities, environmentalists, tourism operators, civil society organisations (CSOs), members of the media and others have been engaged in efforts to save Bugoma forest from land grabbers.

Various stakeholders have land titles for 10,000 hectares of Bugoma forest. This is a travesty. No one should be issued with land titles for natural resources such as forests, lakes, wetlands and others which government holds in trust for citizens and must be conserved for the common good. However, various government institutions supported the issuance of land titles for Bugoma forest.

After the above gross failures, government institutions continue to engage in processes to ensure that the companies and individuals with land titles for Bugoma forest land retain the titles. The forest land is being grabbed to destroy it for sugarcane growing. This is unfortunate and must be stopped.

In our **Word from CEO and Partners**, we discuss how the Bugoma forest land was given away and highlight the government institutions that reports indicate were involved in the giveaway. We call on the president, who has power to stop the forest giveaway, to act to save the forest from destruction.

Away from the above, this month, we engaged in a number of activities that are captured in our **pictorial** section. For instance, we joined our partners working under the Save Bugoma Forest coalition to organise a meeting with the National Forestry Authority (NFA). During the meeting, we drew strategies to address the land grabbing threats faced by Bugoma forest. Furthermore, with our partners, we organised a press conference through which we engaged the media to support efforts to save Bugoma forest from degradation. The initiative or campaign on FOREST LIFE MATTERS was launched at this press conference.

In addition, to mobilise more stakeholders to support efforts to save Bugoma forest, we, with our partners, supported a Zoom online meeting through which over 50 stakeholders including Bunyoro Kingdom,

Bugoma forest local communities, tourism associations, members of the academia, CSOs, the media and development partners among others drew strategies to save Bugoma forest.

Furthermore, on World Environment Day, we undertook media engagements through which we highlighted the threats that oil exploitation, oil roads, oil pipelines and other activities have on the environment. We called for action to end these threats.

We also disseminated digital and physical security tips to the women and youth clean energy champions that we work with in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Further, we supported a review process on how secure our field offices are to safeguard the security of our staff. We also implemented other activities which are captured in our **pictorial** section.

In our **lobbying** section, we share some of the lobby and advocacy products that we produced this month. These include a CSO statement on Uganda's 2020/2021 budget and a press statement calling for the protection of Bugoma forest. With our partners, we also wrote letters to NFA and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) requesting for meetings to discuss how to save Bugoma forest from the threats it is faced with. We have captured these products in our lobbying section.

Finally, in our **in the media** section, we bring you some of the over 11 newspaper articles that were written by our staff and partners this month. We also bring you articles that were published from some of our lobby and advocacy products such as press statements. The articles, which were published by major national and online newspapers in Uganda and South Africa, are part of our public education and lobby efforts.

We hope that you will enjoy the newsletter.

Editorial team:

Diana Nabiruma

Balach Bakundane

Sandra Atusinguza

Word from CEO & Partners

Open letter to President Museveni: Bugoma forest needs to be saved from impunity, corruption, oil and other threats

Dear Mr. President, on June 24, 2020, a group of civil society organisations (CSOs) and tourism operators headed by AFIEGO participated in a meeting at the National Forestry Authority (NFA) offices in Kampala. We met with over seven NFA officials headed by the Executive Director.

The main objective of our meeting was to acquire full and accurate facts about ongoing efforts to destroy Bugoma forest in Kikuube district.

As you must be aware Mr. President, the over 41,000-hectare Bugoma forest was gazetted between 1932 and 1968. The forest plays critical ecological, climatological, social and economic roles. Among others, the forest is home to the endangered chimpanzees, the endemic mangabeys and other critical biodiversity. The forest is also a migratory corridor for wildlife and is important for the drainage of River Wambabya, Lake Albert and River Nile.

The above and other factors make Bugoma important for Uganda's tourism industry, which earns the country \$1.6 billion per year, and the fisheries industry, which contributes 12% of Uganda's agricultural GDP. The forest is also important for the provision of food in the form of fish from the lakes and rivers it supports, maintenance of water security and others.

Despite its importance, the forest is faced with destruction due to the following threats:

- In 2016, the Ministry of Lands issued a Freehold land title for land covering Bugoma forest to Bunyoro Kingdom.
- A few days later, in the same month, a Leasehold land title for 8,000 hectares of Bugoma forest was issued to Hoima Sugar Ltd.
- In addition, a Freehold land title for 2,000 hectares of Bugoma forest land was issued to MZ Agencies.

These titles were issued without clear cadastral maps for Bugoma forest and independent survey reports.

Moreover, many government officials worked hard to ensure that Bunyoro Kingdom and Hoima Sugar Ltd get land titles within a short time.

One wonders: In whose interest were the officials working? Was it in the interest of conservation of Bugoma forest, and therefore in Ugandans' interests, or sugarcane growing?

GOVERNMENT DUTY TO PROMOTE CONSERVATION

Mr. President, as the head of government, we want to believe that you are aware that the Albertine Graben, where Bugoma forest is found, hosts 70% of Uganda's national parks, eight out of 15 forests, 12 wildlife reserves, 13 wildlife sanctuaries and 5 wildlife community areas. The Graben is also home to critical biodiversity resources including lakes, rivers, wetlands and others.

Under Article 237(2)(b) of the 1995 Uganda Constitution, government holds the above resources in trust for Ugandans.

More so, Article 39 of the Constitution provides that every citizen has a right to a clean and healthy environment. This imposes an obligation on government and citizens to conserve the aforementioned environmental resources.

To conserve the resources, parliament has over time put in place a number of laws including:

- The National Environment Act which established the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA);
- The National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, which established NFA and;
- The Uganda Wildlife Act, which established Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA).

Institutions such as the Ministry of Lands, Uganda Land Commission (ULC) and others are supposed to work with the above authorities to protect and conserve the environment to promote the wellbeing of Ugandans.

Despite the many environmental institutions, a huge cabinet, parliament and others all funded by the taxpayers, the country continues to witness terrible environmental degradation, including degradation of Bugoma forest.

ROLES PLAYED BY GOV'T INSTITUTIONS IN BUGOMA GIVEAWAY

The Bugoma forest troubles started when government restituted some properties to Bunyoro Kingdom in 2011. The restitution was done in line with Statutory Instrument No. 8 of 1993. The kingdom claims that it regained ownership of Block 2, Plot 216 in Kyangwali, Kikuube district. The kingdom claims that this land is outside Bugoma forest. NFA contends that the above block and plot are part of Bugoma forest.

Reports that the Save Bugoma Forest team has indicate that a number of government institutions played various roles in the giveaway of Bugoma. The following government institutions played the following roles:

(a) Attorney General's office: During the meeting that we had with the NFA this month, the authority noted that on March 14, 2013, the former Attorney General (AG), Mr. Peter Nyombi, wrote to the Omukama (King) of Bunyoro Kingdom and informed him that the kingdom would be restituted with the aforementioned land in Kyangwali that Bunyoro Kingdom and the NFA are disputing over. It was indicated that the compensation was in line with your directive of November 2011, Mr. President. The directive required government to hand over certain properties to the Omukama.

(b) Solicitor General's office: Thereafter, in July 2015, the Solicitor General wrote to the Omukama and advised him that under Article 26 of the Constitution, the Omukama was the rightful owner of the land in Kyangwali. The Solicitor General told the Omukama that he had a right to proceed to use the said land as he pleases including surveying and applying for a land title. This was in a letter of ref. ADM/11/158/01.

(c) The ULC: In July 2016, a survey company, Survey Consult, communicated to the ULC that they were the official surveyors commissioned by Bunyoro Kingdom to survey and secure land titles for all the properties that government had returned to the kingdom. The surveyors also informed the ULC that the title for the land in Kyangwali was urgently needed and requested for ULC's help in processing the title.

That same month, the ULC wrote a letter referenced ULC/154/2969 asking the Commissioner of Land Registration to prepare a Freehold title for the Omukama. The land for which a title was to be prepared was Block 2, Plot 216 at Kyangwali as per the ULC Min. 16(a) (2016) (12) of 27th -28th July, the letter said.

(d) Ministry of Lands: On August 1, 2016, the Commissioner for Land Registration in the Ministry of Lands issued to the Omukama a Freehold land title for Block 2, Plot 216 at Kyangwali measuring 8,000 hectares. Just three days after the kingdom had secured a Freehold title, on August 5, 2016, the Ministry of Lands issued a Leasehold title of 8,000 hectares to Hoima Sugar Ltd. For the first time in the history of Uganda, the Ministry of Lands and specifically the department of registration of titles executed their work efficiently and diligently. But, which Ugandan can believe that all these were just normal processes? The truth is that the commissioner for land registration was later interdicted for issuing illegal titles. Amidst corruption, we may never know whether the Bunyoro Kingdom and Hoima Sugar Ltd land titles are illegal or not. What we want is to ensure that Bugoma forest remains intact.

QUESTIONS AND TELLING REACTIONS

The actions by the above-mentioned government offices raise many questions. These questions, which need to be answered to determine whether NFA or Bunoro Kingdom is the owner of the contested land, include:

- Before the AG wrote to the Omukama, did he have survey reports and maps of the land that was to be returned to the Omukama to determine that this land was rightfully his?

• If the maps were unavailable and the boundaries were not opened up, what exactly did the AG hand over?

• In addition, how did the Solicitor General conclude that the Omukama was the rightful owner of the land that later came to be contested?

• Did the Solicitor General consult people and institutions neighbouring the land including NFA to determine who the owner of the land was?

• Moreover, does the Solicitor General advise government or private individuals?

• What was the interest of the Solicitor General in advising Bunyoro Kingdom?

While the above questions remain, it must be noted that following the issuance of the land title to the Omukama, the following telling events took place:

• Seven days after the land title had been issued, on August 8, 2016, the Permanent Secretary (PS) for the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) wrote to several Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) informing them about the encroachment on forest reserves contrary to relevant laws including Article 237(2) (b) of the Constitution, Sections 43 and 44(4) of the Land Act and Sections 13 and 14 of the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act. The PS ordered for cancellation of the titles.

• It is also alleged that on September 1, 2016, the then Commissioner of Land Registration, Ms. Sarah Kulata Basangwa -she was later interdicted for misuse of office among others- wrote a letter notifying Bunyoro Kingdom that her office was in the process of cancelling the freehold and leasehold titles issued to the Omukama and Hoima Sugar Ltd respectively. Ms. Kulata informed the Omukama that she had received complaints from the public indicating that the said land was part of Bugoma forest and that the titles were issued in error.

COURT CASES

Following the issuance of the aforementioned

land titles and plans to convert the said leased land for sugarcane growing, in August 2016, NFA filed a suit No. LD-0031 of 2016 at a court in Masindi. The case was filed against the Omukama, Hoima Sugar Ltd and the ULC on the grounds that the freehold and leasehold land titles were issued and acquired in error. NFA asked court to cancel the titles.

Unfortunately, on September 6, 2016, the court at Masindi dismissed the above case. It ordered government not to cancel the Omukama's Freehold title and Hoima Sugar Ltd's Leasehold title. Court also ruled that the police be withdrawn from the contested land to allow Hoima Sugar Ltd use its land.

To date, efforts by Hon. Persis Namuganza, the State Minister for Lands, to cancel the land titles and various court cases including those in the Court of Appeal have not resulted in cancellation of the land titles.

Instead, NEMA, a government institution that is responsible for environmental regulation, is engaged in efforts that will lead to the procession of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) certificate for Hoima Sugar Ltd. This will enable the company to convert the contested forest land into a sugarcane plantation.

These efforts are ongoing at a time when a court case for cancellation of the Omukama and Hoima Sugar Ltd's land titles are ongoing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What should be done to save Bugoma forest?

• The President should immediately order for an investigation of all the government officials who by commission or omission are undermining efforts to protect Bugoma forest. This will show his commitment to fight corruption and serve as evidence that he is not collectively responsible for the mess by his ministers and other government officials to destroy Bugoma forest.

• The Commissioner for Surveys and Mapping who testified in court against NFA in favour of ULC, the Omukama and Hoima Sugar should be

investigated and prosecuted.

- NEMA should immediately halt the ongoing ESIA process until all the ongoing court cases are determined. NEMA should instead join NFA in court to fight against all the grabbers of Bugoma forest land.

- Bunyoro is a cultural institution and all the people in Bunyoro should call upon the Omukama not to change the land use of the contested land from a forest to sugarcane growing. This is irrespective of whether Bunyoro Kingdom is the rightful owner or not of the contested land.

- NFA should pursue all the cases to protect Bugoma up to the Supreme Court. Government and all Ugandans should support NFA's efforts.

- If the courts decline to cancel the Omukama's freehold title and Hoima Sugar's leasehold title, government should use her compulsory land acquisition powers under Article 26 of the Constitution to compensate the so called land owners for the sake of conserving Bugoma forest.

It should be noted that the Omukama leased the Bugoma forest land at a premium of UGX 3 billion and annual ground rent of UGX 30 million. The leasehold title to Hoima Sugar Ltd is valid for 99 years. It is a shame that the above small amount of money is about to make Uganda lose 20% of Bugoma forest. This is a forest that contributes part of the \$1.6 billion revenues that Uganda earns from tourism per year.

- Civil society actors should continue doing research and mobilising Ugandans to reject

anyone destroying Bugoma and other critical biodiversity in Uganda and across the borders for the common good.

CONCLUSION

Bugoma forest and other ecosensitive areas in the Albertine Graben are not only under land grabbing and sugarcane growing threats.

The areas are also under immense pressure from oil activities. Since 2006 when oil was discovered in the Albertine Graben, government and oil companies have continued to conduct and to plan new oil activities in critical biodiversity areas. These areas include Murchison Falls National Park, Bugungu Game Reserve, Budongo forest, Wambabya forest, Lake Albert, River Nile, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Lake Edward and others.

Destruction of any of Uganda's biodiversity portends badly especially at a time when the country has been battered by floods, locusts and COVID-19, all of which have been linked to environmental degradation with its climate change impacts.

We believe that it is important to protect the above-mentioned resources. For Bugoma in particular, we believe that if the NFA court cases are shielded from corruption and connivance, court will finally order for cancellation of the land titles that were issued to the Omukama and Hoima Sugar Ltd. With the current climate challenges mentioned above, Uganda cannot err and fail to protect and/or conserve the environment.

By CEO and Partners

Pictorial of our activities

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS IN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MEETING WITH NFA OVER BUGOMA FOREST



On June 24, 2020, AFIEGO and our partners organised a multi-stakeholder meeting with NFA to draw strategies to save Bugoma forest from land grabbing, sugarcane growing and oil threats.

The meeting, which was participated in by CSO, tourism association and environmental journalists' representatives, took place at NFA's head office in Kampala.

The number of participants at the meeting was limited to adhere to guidelines to limit the spread of COVID-19. The meeting enabled the above-mentioned stakeholders to draw strategies to save Bugoma forest.

In the photos are NFA officials and the Save Bugoma Forest civil society stakeholders during and after the meeting.



AFIEGO AND PARTNERS LAUNCH FOREST LIFE MATTERS CAMPAIGN AT A PRESS CONFERENCE



The above engagement with NFA was followed with the launch of the FOREST LIFE MATTERS campaign.

The campaign, which was launched on June 26, 2020 at Hotel Africana in Kampala, is an initiative of over 13 associations that bring together CSOs, tourism operators, Bugoma local community stakeholders and environmental journalists among others.

The campaign is aimed at stopping the destruction of Bugoma forest by land grabbers for sugarcane growing and to remind stakeholders that Bugoma is an important tropical rainforest with ecological, climatological and socio-economic importance.

It is envisioned that the campaign, which was launched at a press conference, will contribute towards saving the forest. In the photo are representatives of CSOs, tourism operators, Bugoma local community stakeholders and others at the press conference.

The number of representatives was limited to adhere to the COVID-19 restrictions.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS MOBILISE PUBLIC SUPPORT IN ONLINE MEETING TO SAVE BUGOMA FOREST



AFIEGO and our partners complemented the above efforts to save Bugoma forest through organising an online meeting on June 30, 2020.

At the meeting that drew over 50 participants, a wider range of stakeholders than those in the aforementioned activities drew strategies to save Bugoma forest.

Among the participants at the meeting were Bunyoro Kingdom officials, Bugoma local community stakeholders, CSOs, tourism associations, environmental journalists, youth, women and development partners among others.

The meeting enabled the identification of several strategies to save the forest.

In the photos are the organisers of the meeting and AFIEGO staff during the meeting. AFIEGO's Mr. Dickens Kamugisha (bottom photo) can also be seen during a discussion on legal strategies to save Bugoma forest from land grabbers, sugarcane and oil threats.



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: AFIEGO CALLS CITIZENS TO ACTION TO SAVE ECOSENSITIVE AREAS FROM OIL THREATS



To mark World Environment Day on June 5, 2020, AFIEGO participated in media interviews through which the organisation drew attention to the threats faced by ecosystems today.

Among others, AFIEGO highlighted the threats posed by oil exploitation, oil roads, oil pipelines and other oil sector activities to national parks, forests, lakes, wetlands and other ecosensitive natural resources.

AFIEGO also discussed the land grabbing and other threats to Bugoma forest and called for their addressing. In the photo is AFIEGO's Mr. Dickens Kamugisha during one of the media engagements.

AFIEGO STRENGTHENS CLEAN ENERGY CHAMPIONS' DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL SECURITY



This month, AFIEGO disseminated physical and digital security guidelines to CSOs, fisherfolk in addition to youth and women clean energy champions in Uganda and the DRC to support them navigate the COVID-19 restrictions among other threats.

In addition, AFIEGO staff in the Hoima Field Office were supported to close the security gaps in the office by our partners, National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders.

In the photos are AFIEGO's Ms. Sandra Atusinguza following receiving equipment to close security gaps (top photo) in addition to the security guidelines that we disseminated (bottom photo).



Lobbying

This month, AFIEGO coordinated CSOs working for good natural resources' governance and produced a statement outlining key weaknesses in the 2020/2021 budget for government and parliament's action.

In addition, AFIEGO joined our partners under the Save Bugoma Forest coalition and wrote letters to NEMA and NFA requesting for meetings to draw strategies to end the threats against Bugoma forest.

Further, AFIEGO joined our partners and issued a press statement calling for an end to the destruction of Bugoma forest. We also launched the initiative, "Forest life matters".



CSO STATEMENT ON UGANDA'S 2020/2021 BUDGET: THE BUDGET WILL NOT PROMOTE ECONOMIC RECOVERY, COULD WORSEN CIVIC SPACE

1. Introduction

On Monday June 15, 2020, sixteen (16) civil society organisations (CSOs) working to promote good natural resources governance held an online meeting during which they discussed Uganda's 2020/2021 budget and the budget speech. The speech was delivered to parliament by Hon. Matia Kasujja, the Minister of Finance, on Thursday June 11, 2020.

During the meeting, the CSOs appreciated government efforts to ensure that the budget is reflective of the COVID-19, flooding, locust invasion and other realities that have dealt Ugandans a hard blow.

In particular, the CSOs recognised government plans to prioritise the reinstatement of Ugandans' wellbeing through enhancing healthcare provision, access to safe water and good sanitation and improving food security. The above have been negatively affected by COVID-19, flooding and the locust invasion that Uganda experienced earlier this year.

The CSOs also recognised government efforts to boost the economy through providing business stimuli by injecting over UGX 1 trillion into Uganda Development Bank (UDB), deferring tax payments for some tax compliant corporations and SMEs and allocating UGX 256 billion for the Youth Fund, Women Entrepreneurship Fund and Talent Support Scheme among others.

The CSOs further recognised government efforts to promote access to justice, peace and security and improve public service delivery.

While the above is the case, the CSOs noted that careful scrutiny of the budget and an analysis of the budget speech made by Hon. Kasujja presents one clear message: *the 2020/2021 Budget will not address Ugandans' challenges including a slowdown in the economy, job losses, youth unemployment, waning environmental degradation and other challenges that government set out to address in the 2016/2021 budget.*

In effect, Ugandans will continue to suffer from the impacts of corruption, COVID-19, environmental degradation and climate change among others unless they engage government. Most of these failures are a result of poor planning such as building dams but government fails



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kampala, Uganda

CSOs & TOURISM ACTORS CALL FOR AN END TO BUGOMA FOREST DESTRUCTION BY LAND GRABBERS, LAUNCH THE INITIATIVE "FOREST LIFE MATTERS"

The undersigned civil society organizations (CSOs) and tourism associations meet here today to launch the initiative "FOREST LIFE MATTERS". The CSOs and associations are working under the coalition, Save Bugoma Forest Campaign 2020.

The objective of the **FOREST LIFE MATTERS** initiative is to strongly object against the current attempt to destroy Bugoma forest by land grabbers for sugarcane growing, other destructive projects and to remind stakeholders that Bugoma is an important ancient tropical rainforest with ecological, climatological and socio-economic importance. Notably, the forest is a sanctuary for chimpanzees, an endangered species.

Despite the above, two companies, namely Hoima Sugar Ltd and MZ Agencies, are in the process of cutting down over 10,000 hectares of the forest for sugarcane growing.

On March 10, 2020, MZ Agencies obtained a court order to chase away National Forestry Authority (NFA) and UPDF soldiers that were guarding Bugoma Forest. The NFA and UPDF were protecting the forest from being destroyed for sugarcane growing and other land grabbers. On May 14, 2020, all security personnel guarding Plot 115 Nyamaboi and Plot 105 Nyayunga, which make up part of Bugoma forest (Nkwaki South sector), left. Consequently, up to 100 MZ Agencies workers started cutting down over 2,000 hectares of Bugoma forest. This happened even before determination of the main case that NFA filed to prevent destruction of the forest in the High Court.

Before this, on December 3, 2019, Hoima Sugar Ltd and Bunyoro Kiwira Kingdom got a favorable ruling from the Masindi High court ordering NFA and her agents to stop guarding the contested part of the forest (Muhunguzima sector of Bugoma) for Hoima Sugar to use the said land as it wishes. In the appeal, NFA requested that the status quo of maintaining Bugoma as a forest is preserved. However, the judge ruled that the applicant, NFA, failed to prove that there is a threat to the status quo but NFA's prayer was rejected in favor of Hoima Sugar to cut down the forest.



17 June 2020

The Executive Director,
National Forestry Authority (NFA),
Kampala (U).

Dear Sir/Madam,

R.E: REQUEST FOR A MEETING OVER BUGOMA CENTRAL FOREST RESERVE (CFR)

The undersigned civil society organisations (CSOs) working under Save Bugoma Forest, an initiative to save Bugoma forest from the ongoing land grabbing and other threats, take this opportunity to thank you and your team for the good work you are doing to promote conservation of our forests.

Since 2014, the undersigned CSOs that promote environmental conservation generally and forests in particular for the common good, have been studying and monitoring threats to Bugoma CFR. These threats include issuance of a Freehold land title to Bunyoro Kingdom, a leasehold land title to Hoima Sugar Ltd, a Freehold land title to MZ Agencies and others.

These titles are contested and cases have been filed in the High Court and Court of Appeal. The cases remain unresolved. As the cases are ongoing, Terms of Reference (TOR) for an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) study by Hoima Sugar Ltd were approved by NEMA. This process will result in issuance of a Freehold land title to MZ Agencies and land title to Hoima Sugar Ltd for sugarcane growing on the contested Bugoma forest land.

We are committed to protecting the constitutional rights of Ugandans including the right to a clean and healthy environment. We are also committed to protecting Bugoma CFR from the grave threats that the forest faces. Urgent action is needed to address these threats.

This letter is to therefore request you for an urgent meeting with six (6) representatives of the Save Bugoma Forest civil society stakeholders on June 24, 2020 at 11am or any other nearest date. The meeting will enable us to discuss ways to save Bugoma CFR.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Dickens Kamugisha, Contact persons for Save Bugoma Forest, Tel: 0782407088



LIGNES DIRECTRICES EN MATIÈRE DE SÉCURITÉ PHYSIQUE ET NUMÉRIQUE POUR LES OSC ET LES DÉFENSEURS DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

INTRODUCTION

Les organisations de la société civile (OSC) et les défenseurs des droits de l'homme et de l'environnement (DDHE) en Ouganda et en République démocratique du Congo (RDC) sont confrontés à un certain nombre de défis de sécurité physique et numérique.

Par exemple, les gouvernements ont mis en place des lois déloyales des organes de l'état tels que la police pour intimider les OSC et les DDHE, entreprendre des campagnes de diffamation visant à nuire à la crédibilité des OSC et des DDHE, s'introduisent dans les bureaux, confisquent les ordinateurs, téléphones portables, appareils photo et autres des OSC et DDHE et arrêter, torturer et emprisonner les acteurs des OSC et DDHE, entre autres. D'autres crimes commis contre les OSC et les DDHE comprennent le piratage ou l'exploitation des sites Web des OSC et des DDHE et la communication.

Pour relever les défis de sécurité physique et numérique ci-dessus, ces lignes directrices ont été élaborées par l'Institut africain pour la gouvernance de l'énergie (AFIEGO), Innovation pour le Développement et la Protection de l'Environnement (IDPE) et Forum des engagés pour le Développement Durable (FORD), ils devraient être utilisés par les OSC et les DDHE en Ouganda et en RDC pour éviter ou minimiser les problèmes de sécurité afin que les OSC et les DDHE puissent continuer à jouer les rôles importants qu'ils jouent.

26 June 2020

The Executive Director,
National Environmental Management Authority,
Kampala (U).

Dear Sir/Madam,

R.E: REQUEST FOR A MEETING OVER BUGOMA CENTRAL FOREST RESERVE (CFR)

The undersigned civil society organisations (CSOs) working under Save Bugoma Forest, an initiative to save Bugoma forest from the ongoing land grabbing and other threats, take this opportunity to thank you and your team for the good work you are doing to promote conservation of our forests.

Since 2014, the undersigned CSOs that promote environmental conservation generally and forests in particular for the common good, have been studying and monitoring threats to Bugoma CFR. These threats include issuance of a Freehold land title to Bunyoro Kingdom, a leasehold land title to Hoima Sugar Ltd, a Freehold land title to MZ Agencies and others.

These titles are contested and cases have been filed in the High Court and Court of Appeal. The cases remain unresolved. As the cases are ongoing, Hoima Sugar Ltd is proceeding with the ESIA process.

As civil society stakeholders, our main aim is to work with government and others to promote and protect the rights of Ugandans including the right to a clean and healthy environment. This letter is to therefore request you for an urgent meeting with ten (10) representatives of the Save Bugoma Forest civil society stakeholders on 30 June 2020 at 10am or any other nearest date of your convenience. The meeting will enable us to discuss ways to save Bugoma CFR.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Dickens Kamugisha, Save Bugoma Forest, Mob: 0772362018.

OTHER SIGNATORIES:

NO	ORGANISATION	CONTACT PERSON	TELEPHONE	EMAIL	Logos of signatories

In the media

This month, staff, research associates and youth champions wrote over 11 newspaper articles which were published in the leading newspapers including the *New Vision*, *Daily Monitor* and *The Observer*.

The media also published articles from the press conference we held this month. Some of the published articles are captured below.

What is Uganda's expectations on climate change

By AFP Added 18th March 2020 05:25 PM

Over the last years, climate change has become an increasingly central concern not only for governments and society but also for businesses.



OPINION

I attended a National Post COP25 Feedback meeting in February 2020 in Kampala where key stakeholders around the five regions in Uganda came together to reflect on what happened at the COP25 in Madrid and strategize on the road to National climate ambition and COP26 in Glasgow.

Being stuck by bad faith negotiations that put policies and fossil fuel interests above people and the planet at the COP 25 in Madrid, Spain. This again exposed the apathy to the suffering of millions of people and a willful rejection of the science.



OPINIONISTA: Why is Standard Bank embroiled in the financing of the potentially disastrous ...

dailymaverick.co.za



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Headlines:

EACOP AFFECTED COMMUNITIES DEMAND FOR QUICK COMPENSATION, COVID-19 RELIEF AID

June 17, 2020 Written by **Earth Finds**

Published in **Opinion** 0 comments



Activists in renewed fight to save Bugoma forest given away for sugarcane growing

Activists have renewed the fight to save Bugoma forest given away by court to allow sugarcane growing.

by **KENNETH KAZIBWE** — 4 days ago



Dear President Yoweri Museveni, I have not been one of your supporters, but when it comes to combating the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), saving lives and getting as many Ugandans back to work as quickly as possible, I am praying for your success, because so much is riding on the decisions that you, and only you, can make. So what I am about to say is truly in the spirit of being constructive. Your Excellency, you need a plan. COVID-19 has been a hard lesson to us the researchers. You know we have been working hand to mouth, renting and moving by public transport to our workplaces.

The three months of complete lockdown really left us empty. The little capital we were operating as was ideally finished and worst of all these commercial banks will not offer us small loans to restart because they want a lot of security which most of us do not possess.

Your honour, sometimes I wish had gone to school maybe I would be a salary earner and not bothering you at this time when you have a lot to handle, but all I had was a small piece of land which these investors you sent us convinced us to plant sugar cane, which has not yielded much.

Sir, thank you for the maize flour, you provided by the way, the beans were so delicious, but that is not what I made me write to you.

Sir, you know the situation is not easy and we are heading for election more specifically scientific elections. But do you know how many of us are going to drop out of school because our parents cannot afford school fees?

Sir, do you really know how many of us are going to be left unemployed? I really thought maybe I became a campaign manager for someone this season. But all that is now lost because of virtual campaigns. Life is not really easy I would think maybe you consider another sort of food distribution because we are going to die of hunger.

Sir, life is really hard I have had there is going to be online lessons and the Government is distributing self study materials, but do you think this will work?

Sir, it would be unfair if education is being left for a few because most of us cannot really afford online education.

Sir, on behalf of my private school teachers and headteachers, give them a hand by providing them with some small help, it can be food or salary either half of what they have been earning just to take them through this season.

We know that the only lasting solution to this crisis will be a vaccine. But what would give everyone a boost now is some intervention from your office of honor.

We need a fossil fuel exit plan

Since 2006, Uganda has been learning about the oil that was discovered in the Albertine Graben since 2006. However, to date 14 years later, we are yet to start the production of this oil. This shows how expensive it is to access fossil fuels not only financially, but also to the environment.

Among the few activities undertaken so far in developing Uganda's oil sector include a number of corruption incidences, human rights violations, unfair compensations and resettlements of affected communities in Hoima and Kikuli districts, which have been observed and documented by several Civil Society Organizations and the Uganda Human Rights Commission.

Considering that these developments are also happening in one of Uganda's biggest ecologically diverse regions and biodiversity hotspots, several key species of both flora and fauna have been and will be lost from the ongoing and planned projects like the Kabale oil refinery project, Hoima International Airport, oil development roads, East African crude oil pipeline project, Tilenga oil project, Kingfisher oil development project among others.

Even though all these projects have well written documents in form of Environment and Social Impact Assessment reports that demand for respect of environmental rights, many Ugandans believe this will not be the case considering our past history in dealing with implementation of such things, including related laws and so far there is no proof that the oil sector will be an exception.

We must know that the world is undergoing one of the greatest and most important energy transitions in history which is the shift from use of fossil fuels to clean and renewable energy.

The renewable energy alternatives are becoming cheaper and more advanced technologically yet the highest population in the world is also demanding for end to fossil fuel use driving many investors of fossil fuels to shift their money to developing cleaner energy options. This is backed up by a recent call from the Pope in Vatican calling for all Catholic investors to divest from fossil fuel industries and other entities that perpetuate climate change.

Global lockdowns implemented this year to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have brought down emissions and researchers estimate an annual decrease in carbon dioxide emissions between 4.4% and 8% the best ever since world war one all this attributed to the reduced use of fossil fuels.

Countries are also drafting strategies to

reduce dependence on fossil fuels like oil and coal with most of them setting targets on when they will become fully dependent on renewable energy sources. Many factories are also diversifying production like in automobiles to increase use of vehicles that need renewable energy creating a reduced demand in fossil fuels in the near future.

Therefore, why is Uganda stuck on oil production that is already proving to be costly and chaotic for Uganda, where shoddy tax deals have already happened, a lot of secrecy has interrupted, key environmental protection aspects neglected and private developers seemingly take the driving seat yet the world is undergoing a major energy transition?

The Government should be focused on producing a clear exit strategy from use of fossil fuels and increasing development of renewable energy sources to cope up with the global pace of energy development and current war against climate change or else oil will turn out to be the worst things that has ever happened to Uganda.

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Covid-19: Time for solar companies to increase supply

In Uganda, it is clear that the spread of Covid-19 and social-distancing policies have led to massive consequences.

Over the past few years, off-grid solar companies have been gaining momentum, providing safe, clean, and affordable energy solutions to many people in various regions and preventing millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions and indoor pollution caused by combustible fuels for lighting and cooking.

But the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis may lead to unprecedented threat that could destroy solar companies and harm many.

In strategy terms, this is a typical 'freeze' response. However, freezing and seeing the current period as a threat would be a mis-

take. In every business especially the off-grid solar sector, each day brings a series of threats and opportunities.

If we choose to focus on the former, we find ourselves in constant survival mode, putting efforts into extinguishing fires instead of innovation and creativity.

This is the time to have a fresh look at current events and capture the many opportunities that come our way. Some of the opportunities for change and innovation include supporting medical teams with solar power. Most rural population rely on underdeveloped health services, with medical teams lacking basic diagnostic tools and equipment. Some health facilities do not have sources of power, it is time to get them connected.

Moreso, many people who previously used crowded kiosks to charge their cellphones or watch the news each day are now home without any source of power, now is the time to connect them to solar energy.

Also with many investors affected by the global economic crisis, donations and investments are likely to be cut. This might have a devastating effect on large grid projects for massive infrastructure. Off-grid companies will be able to fill in the gap quickly and affordably with their on-ground operations and solar energy systems to claim a massive

chunk of the market.

The food sector is also expected to change, with countries already investing resources to increase domestic food supplies for food security.

In Uganda, where only a negligible percentage of all agricultural land is irrigated regularly, solar companies can play a key role in providing solar irrigation systems, which will drastically increase crops and efficiency, if we choose to fight instead of freeze, this crisis might be the biggest opportunity of the decade.

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Upcoming events

July 3, 2020; Kampala: Submission of memorandum of proposals to NEMA to save Bugoma forest from land grabbing, sugarcane, oil and other threats

July 8, 2020; Kikuube and Hoima: Media engagements to mobilise communities to save Bugoma forest from land grabbing, sugarcane, oil and other threats

July 13, 2020; Buliisa, Hoima and Kikuube: Media engagements to empower stakeholders on the Tilenga and Kingfisher oil projects' environmental certificate conditions

July 14, 2020; Kampala: Meeting with the Minister of Water and Environment and other stakeholders to strategise on how to save Bugoma forest from land grabbing, sugarcane, oil and other threats

July 17, 2020; Nationwide: Distribution of information sheets on worldwide just energy transition efforts and their implications for Uganda's oil sector

July 22, 2020; Kasese and Ntoroko: Media engagements on how communities can lessen climate change impacts through lobbying for the promotion of off-grid clean energy

July 31, 2020; Kampala: AFIEGO staff and stakeholder half-year review of the organisation's work

About Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) is a public policy research and advocacy NGO dedicated to influencing energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable. Based in Kampala, Uganda, the organisation was born out of the need to contribute to efforts to turn Africa's 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 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 energy resources for socio-economic development

Our Mission

To promote energy policies that benefit poor and vulnerable communities