

## **October 2023; Issue 10**

# GOV'T, UNDERTAKE A STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT TO SUPPORT THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION IN UGANDA!



Ministry of Energy officials, other government leaders, civil society members, women and youth after an energy transition workshop organised by AFIEGO and IGEN-EA with support from the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment and IUCN-NL in Kampala this month (October).

### In this newsletter:

- Government must undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment to support the clean energy transition in Uganda
- Pictorial of our activities
- Lobbying
- In the media
- Upcoming events

### **Editorial**

Dear reader, welcome to AFIEGO's October 2023 newsletter.

Between October 18 and 20, 2023, AFIEGO and our Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA) partners with expert support from the Netherlands Commission on Environmental Assessment (NCEA) organised two critical workshops.

The first workshop, which took place on October 18 and 19, strengthened various stakeholders' capacity to monitor the implementation and compliance with Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as well as Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) reports in Uganda's energy sector.

When commercial oil deposits were discovered in Uganda in 2006, the Ugandan government, through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD), put in place a **SEA** for Oil and Gas Activities in the Albertine Graben in Uganda in 2013.

The SEA's objective is to ensure that environmental and socio-economic concerns are addressed as Uganda exploits the country's oil and gas reserves in the Albertine Graben.

The SEA contains "strategic recommendations for policies, plans, and programmes to guide environmental planning and decision making in the Albertine Graben ..."

In addition, since 2018, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has issued ESIA certificates of approval to oil and other companies for huge projects including the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), Tilenga and Kingfisher.

The certificates contain conditions that the developers of the above-mentioned projects must comply with to protect community rights and the environment amidst their activities.

Before the workshop, oil host communities and other stakeholders generally lacked the capacity to monitor compliance to SEA and ESIA commitments in the oil and gas sector. The ESIA compliance workshop of October 18 to 19, 2023 sought to remedy this challenge.

The second workshop, which took place on October 20, 2023, focused on the clean Energy Transition (ET) in Uganda. The two workshops took place in Kampala, Uganda.

Over 104 stakeholders including officials from the MEMD, Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, NEMA, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU) participated in the workshops.

The district chairpersons of Buliisa and Kikuube, other technical officers and community leaders from nine oil-affected districts also participated in the workshops.

Other participants included private sector workers, cultural and religious leaders, civil society groups and other stakeholders.

The two workshops were facilitated by a number of experts including Ms. Ineke Steinhauer and Ms. Leyla Ozay from NCEA as well as Mr. Gerphas Opondo from the Environmental Compliance Institute, Kenya.

Other people who made formal and informal presentations included Dr. Gerald Banaga, a commissioner who represented the Permanent Secretary of the MEMD, Mr. Ronald Angutoko from PAU as well as Mr.

Nicholas Kiiza and Mr. Zak Lubega from China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC).

Consultants also made a presentation about a SEA study that is ongoing in Zambia to guide Zambia's clean energy transition agenda.

The workshops were the first of their kind in Uganda as they involved empowering leaders and oil host communities to monitor the implementation of SEA and ESIA reports in Uganda to promote compliance. Emphasis was especially placed on promoting a clean energy transition in Uganda.

In our **Word from CEO and Partners**, we appreciate all the stakeholders including government officials who participated in the workshops.

Because AFIEGO strongly believes that the Ugandan government must promote a clean energy transition to address the climate crisis, we also use this newsletter to present a summary of recommendations that will be presented as a petition to the Ugandan government through the MEMD.

The petition will ask the MEMD to urgently conduct a SEA for the energy sector as a precursor to implementing a Just Energy Transition in Uganda.

In this newsletter, we also bring you our **pictorial** section where we share some of the activities that we implemented this month.

These activities include the hearing of the oil refinery-affected people's court case that was to take place in Hoima district, a meeting held in Kyakaboga-Hoima with the oil refinery-affected people and

a meeting held with Bugoma forest host communities in Kikuube district.

Other activities include meetings held with Tilenga oil project-affected persons as well as community observers in Buliisa district. The above meetings were aimed at strengthening communities to promote forest conservation, access to justice and green livelihoods.

In addition, AFIEGO's legal team and its private lawyers appeared before the Court of Appeal registrar in Kampala to discuss the Bugoma forest appeal case. Hearing of the appeal has delayed resulting in land grabbers continuing to destroy the forest. We shall continue to fight for the forest even outside court.

In our **lobbying** section, we bring you some of the lobby and advocacy products that we completed this month and will be disseminated in November 2023. For instance, AFIEGO and its consultants completed a study assessing the socio-economic implications of the EACOP and other oil projects on host communities. A research report will be disseminated online on November 7, 2023 and at a workshop on November 24, 2023.

Further, AFIEGO supported our IGEN-EA partners to discuss a memorandum of understanding that will be signed by every member of IGEN-EA as the network's constitution.

Finally, in **in the media** section, we present to you some of the newspaper articles written by our staff and published in the leading newspapers in the month of October.

We hope you will enjoy the newsletter.

## **Editorial team:**

Diana Nabiruma Jenan Sheilah Apio Balach Bakundane

### **Word from CEO & Partners**

## GOVERNMENT MUST UNDERTAKE A STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT TO SUPPORT THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION IN UGANDA

Buliisa district in Western Uganda is picturesque.

Green undulating hills, a breathtaking rift valley escarpment, the Albert Nile and varieties of wildlife combine to create spectacular views.

Despite its beauty, some things stand out. These include the negative impact that oil and gas activities in the district have had on communities as well as the energy poverty experienced by communities.

If a visitor spoke with women, men and youth in Buliisa, the visitor would hear stories about how oil and gas activities have distorted life in the district.

A visitor will also likely see women carrying huge mounds of firewood needed for their families' cooking. The women often look like they are about to collapse under the weight of the firewood, a dirty form of cooking energy that most Ugandans rely on due to lack of accessible or affordable clean alternatives.

The use of firewood for cooking is not only bad for women's economic empowerment, health and others, it also largely contributes to environmental destruction and climate change in Uganda.



A woman carries firewood in Buliisa district

#### SEA, ESIA AND ENERGY TRANSITION

Between October 18 and 20, 2023 therefore, AFIEGO and the Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA), with support from the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Netherlands (IUCN-NL), organised two workshops.

attracted over The workshops 104 participants including officials from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, Ministry of Water and National Environment, **Environment** Management Authority, Uganda Wildlife Authority and the Petroleum Authority of Uganda.

Other participants included officials from oil host districts, oil companies' representatives, private sector players especially those in the clean energy and tourism sector, oil host communities from nine districts as well as religious and cultural leaders.

Civil society organisations' representatives and others also participated in the national workshops.

The first workshop, which took place on October 18 and 19, 2023, was organised to empower or strengthen the abovementioned stakeholders to enable compliance with Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as well as Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) commitments for the oil and gas sector. SEA and ESIA are tools used to address environmental conservation and socioeconomic concerns that accrue with projects.

The second workshop, which took place on October 20, 2023, was organised to promote the appreciation of the clean energy transition as a pathway towards transforming the global energy sector from a fossil based to zero or neutral carbon economy while ensuring clean energy access for communities, such as those in Buliisa.

At the start of the second workshop, participants discussed the context and realities within which any person interested in promoting a clean energy transition in a country like Uganda must bear in mind.

These include: severe energy shortages and insufficient investments in energy infrastructure, energy poverty where grid connections stand at 19%, lack of access to clean cooking solutions with over 90% of Uganda's population depending on dirty biomass for cooking, a weak transmission and distribution network, overreliance on hydropower and the grid, the ongoing push for oil exploitation and others.



Participants during the SEA and Energy Transition workshop in Kampala this month (October 2023)

#### POLICIES FOR ENERGY TRANSITION

Despite the above challenges, the Ugandan government has put in place policies and tools that could increase clean energy access.

For instance, the April 2023 National Energy Policy is seeking to strengthen the generation, transmission and distribution electricity infrastructure, increase electricity access and uptake of modern forms of energy, ensure energy efficiency and promote suitable utilisation of biomass while ensuring energy diversification.

The policy is also seeking to enhance energy related environmental and social safeguards among others. Notably, the policy provides for SEA processes.

Further, in Uganda, SEA as tool for long term planning is provided for under the National Environment Act of 2019 and the National Environment SEA Regulations of 2020.

## STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSEMENT & THE ENERGY TRANSITION

As earlier indicated in this newsletter, SEA is a tool designed to ensure that policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) integrate environmental and social considerations to enable sustainable development.

The SEA process has the potential to help a country avoid negative environmental and socio-economic impacts through ensuring that the right decisions are made.

More often than not, the negative impacts are caused my wrong decisions related to project site locations, project designs and implementation.

A good SEA can prevent or mitigate most if not all adverse project impacts at policy,

planning and programme levels.

Further, a good SEA can help decision makers to avoid unnecessary delays in the implementation of energy or other related projects because legally and socially unacceptable environmental and social effects are recognised and addressed at an early stage.

It also gives citizens an opportunity to effectively participate at all levels of development processes.

The SEA processes therefore create project ownership by the host communities and social license for the project developers.

Further, the processes provide critical and timely information for the discussion about the feasibility of a project including the suitability of the location, the space required, the technology, the cost and other choices to be made.

The importance of SEA in decisionmaking can therefore not be understated more if you also consider the fact that SEA can help decision makers and planners to gain insights in cumulative impacts and alternatives of any project.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In light of the above, we are calling on the Ugandan government through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to do the following:

- **(i) Undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** to assess and document the benefits and tradeoffs involved in the different energy alternatives needed for the clean energy transition in Uganda;
- (ii) Urgently put in place and implement a clean energy transition policy to guide the country in planning to address the existing energy challenges;
- (iii) Assess the resources required for a successful energy transition for Uganda; and
- (iv) Mobilise the above resources to promote a clean energy transition, backed by SEA, in Uganda.

By CEO and partners

By CEO and Partners

## Pictorial of our activities

#### AFIEGO AND PARTNERS ORGANISE A STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP ON ESIA COMPLIANCE



Between October 18 and 19, 2023, AFIEGO and IGEN-EA with support from NCEA and IUCN-NL organised a two-day stakeholders' workshop on the effective implementation of SEA and ESIA commitments in Uganda's oil and gas sector. The workshop took place in Kampala, Uganda.

The workshop built or strengthened the participants' capacity to monitor and promote enforcement as well as compliance with oil sector ESIA certificates of approval to promote environmental conservation and human rights observance.

## AFIEGO AND PARTNERS EMPOWER STAKEHOLDERS TO PROMOTE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS IN ENERGY TRANSITION PROCESSES



On October 20, 2023, AFIEGO and IGEN-EA with support from NCEA and IUCN-NL organised an Energy Transition workshop in Kampala.

The main objective of the workshop was to empower targeted stakeholders to promote the utilisation of Strategic Environmental Assessment in Uganda's clean energy transition processes.

It is believed that the above will address environmental and socio-economic concerns in the clean energy transition.

#### AFIEGO SUPPORTS EXCHANGE LEARNING BETWEEN UGANDAN AND SAVE LAMU ACTIVISTS



On October 20, 2023, AFIEGO supported Ugandan and Save Lamu activists to participate in an exchange learning in Kampala, Uganda. The exchange learning enabled Ugandan activists to learn strategies that can be used to stop harmful projects to protect human rights and the environment.

#### AFIEGO UPDATES OIL REFINERY AFFECTED PERSONS ON THEIR COURT CASE



On October 27, 2023, AFIEGO together with her legal team organised an update sharing meeting with oil refinery-affected persons at Kyakaboga village in Hoima district.

During the meeting, the affected persons were updated on the status of their court case, which the people filed in 2014 to stop government from paying them delayed, inadequate and unfair compensation.

The case was supposed to be heard on October 27, 2023 at the Hoima High Court. The hearing did not take place due to a fire at the court that destroyed files.

#### AFIEGO MEETS TILEGA OIL PROJECT LITIGANTS AND LAND RIGHTS DEFENDERS



On October 27, 2023, AFIEGO and her legal team organised a meeting with Tilenga oil project-affected communities and observers in Buliisa district.

During the meeting, AFIEGO informed families that filed a case in Uganda's Court of Appeal about the upcoming hearing of the people's case. The families want to protect their land rights.

AFIEGO also listened to the people's grievances with a view of devising strategies to address them.

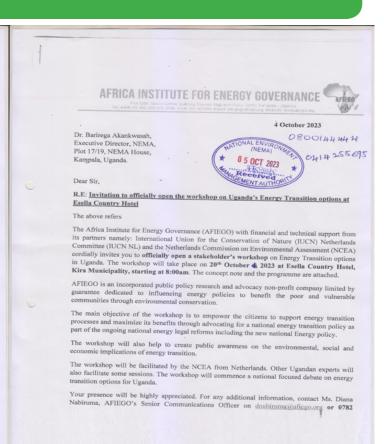
## Lobbying

This month, AFIEGO and its consultants completed a study assessing the socio-economic implications of the EACOP and other oil projects on host communities. The research will be disseminated in November 2023.

Further, AFIEGO supported IGEN-EA members to discuss the network's memorandum of understanding that will be signed by every member of IGEN-EA as the network's constitution.

In addition, AFIEGO and our partners from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continued to empower local communities to fight against oil activities in the Virunga and Queen Elizabeth national park areas. We called on the two governments to ensure that no oil activities are allowed in the above two critical ecosystems.







A case filed in 2014 by the oil refinery-affected people will be heard at the Hoima High Court at 9am EAT on October 27, 2023.

Over 7,000 people were displaced by the Ugandan government for an oil refinery & other infrastructure amidst grave injustices. The people filed the court case to protect their human rights.

It has been a long journey but our determination for justice remains unwavering.

Join us in demanding an expedited hearing and justice for the people!





This month, AFIEGO staff, research associates and youth champions wrote newspaper articles that were published in the leading newspapers. Some of the published articles are captured below.

## Redeeming indigenous ways of preserving the environment



## EMPOWER YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE TO ADDRESS UNEMPLOYMENT

EDITOR: Last week, the media reported that youth unemployment has doubled, adding that the National Planning Authority (NPA) had noted a need to scale up the presidential skilling project to cover more areas in the country and curb the rising unemployment among youth. It is important to empower youth in the agricultural sector, since it continues to be the most important sector in Uganda, which employs approximately 72% of the population and contributed about 32% to the GDP Despite Uganda's economy generating 1.6 million jobs between 2016 and 2021, a significant number of youth struggle to secure employment or create their own opportunities. This has led to an increase in the unemployment rate from 15% to 16.5%.

unemployment rate from 13% to 16.5%.
The NEETs population (not in employment, education or training) has been increasing at a rate of 8.4% over the past decade action the surpose. at a rate of 8.4% over the past decade, raising the number from 2.5 million to the current 4.2 million. It is projected to increase to 5.8 million in 2031/32 if nothing changes.

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

Evidence reveals that youth engagement in agriculture is declining amid rising youth unemployment, yet the services and industrial sectors, despite growing at considerably faster rates, haves or created enough jobs for the burgeoning youthful labour force. Reports show that youth engagement in agriculture is likely to have implications on food security and employment, which is undermining Government efforts to drive economic growth through agriculture.

agriculture.
Findings reveal that a
relatively lower percentage
of youth use improved
inputs, such as improved
seeds, fertilisers, agricultural
chemicals and veterinary
drugs, thus limiting their
productivity and constraining
them to subsistence farming.

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In addition, youth are often disenfranchised in the ownership and management of critical assets in agricultural production, especially land. Youth are also less likely to access credit extension services and social capital (farmer group memberships) all key factors to agricultural transformation.

The Governments can empower youth in the agriculture sector, which will not only reduce youth unemployment, but also contributes to food security, economic growth and sustainable development in the long run by providing support and incentives for youth to engage in farming or related agriculture has the potential to create a significant number of jobs. Programmes and partnerships

should be established with educational Institutions to provide training and education in modern agricultural practices, technology and entrepreneurship to equip youth with the necessary skills to succeed in the sector, ensure that youth have access to land, capital and technology and support them in accessing markets for their agricultural products through involving them in building market inflastructure, establishing co-operatives, or promoting agribusiness value chains. The Government should encourage the adoption of innovative and sustainable agricultural technologies. This will not only increase productivity, but also attractech-savry youth to the sector and ensure youth have access of financial services, including savings, credit and insurance, which are crucial for managing the risks associated with agricultural research and extension services that are youth-friendly and address specific challenges faced by young farmers.

young farmers.

Olive Atuhaire,

Research associate

#### The role of women in the renewable energy sector



Countries around the world are experimenting with ways to make their economies greener by developing less polluting technologies, creating new green jobs, or by retrofitting existing sectors such as forestry, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, waste management, construction, public transportation and energy production

According to a large body of international literature, women and girls stand to benefit the most from the availability of sustainable, affordable and renewable energy sources. Unfortunately, women are still much less likely to have access or control over productive and natural resources and have less access to modern technologies or financial services, and receive pooreneducation, training and technical advice.

As energy consumers and beneficiaries, women have contributed to the design of household energy technologies and projects. Improved stoves programs have been more effective and produced more benefits when they have obtained women's input to product design.

As micro-entrepreneurs, women have used renewable energy to increase profits and efficiency in their informal sector enterprises, and have proven themselves capable of operating and also constructing renewable energy technologies on their own, when provided with the appropriate training and support.

As extension workers and caretakers, women have been

on their own, when provided with the appropriate and support.

As extension workers and caretakers, women have been effective in operation and maintenance roles of biogas, hydroelectric and solar installations. Though some costs may be higher, due to women's need for training and their restricted mobility, others are lower, due to less staff turnover and greater reliability.

As leaders, networkers and lobbyists, women have successfully influenced energy policy decisions at the local, national and international levels. More important is that women have a role in determining the use and benefits of the project and in managing these arrangements, and that they maints and a control of the project and in managing these arrangements, and that they



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## Increase investments in renewable energy

t is noted that more than 18 million Ugandans continue to live without access to electricity, limiting the country's potential for economic growth and human development.

The Government made domestic and international commitments to increase access to modern energy services to all Ugandans. In the National Development Plans II (2015/16–2019/20), the Government targeted to increase power generation capacity from 825MW in 2012 to 2,500MW by 2020 through investing in renewable energy sources, including hydropower and geothermal.

Under the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) Action Agenda, which was launched by the United Nations (UN) Secretary General in September 2010, 20 Uganda targets to double the share of renewable energy in the energy mix by 2030.

Despite Uganda's abundance of renewable energy resources, which include hydropower, biomass, solar energy, geothermal and wind energies, it has found it challenging to utilise many of these renewable energy resources. Furthermore, Government's efforts have largely focused on increasing energy access by supply through investing in hydro-electricity plants, which produces power that is expensive. This has made Uganda continue to fail at its commitment to long-term plans for a transition to decarbonised economies and increasing access to clean, affordable and reliable energy

and increasing access to clean, affordable and reliable energy
According to the energy ministry, less than 20.6%, of the rural and 55% of the urban population have electricity services (MEMD, 2015).

It is noted that majority of households depend on traditional biomass, which consists of fuel wood, charcoal, tree leaves, animal dung and agricultural residues burnt for residential use, which is unclean and inefficient as a fuel source.

Most households in Uganda use firewood for cooking with majority cooking indoors with no chimneys and ventilation. This exposes them to biomass smoke leading to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. In addition, due to lack of electricity, majority of households use traditional lighting technologies, such as candles or kerosene lamps, that give poor lighting and emit toxic furnes.

Furthermore, dependence on biomass energy is increasing pressure on natural resources, especially forests. The high rates of deforestation in Uganda are partly attributed to charcoal burning.

The National Forest Authority (NFA) estimates that Uganda has been losing 250,000 hectares of forests annually for the period 2005-2010, leading to climate change, which results into prolonged dry spells.

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#### How oil activities harm women



In the realm of environmental and economic discourse, the negative impacts of oil activities are well-documented. From pollution and climate change to political conflicts and corporate power, the consequences of our global thirst for oil are far-reaching and significant. However, one aspect often overlooked in this dialogue is the gendered impact of oil extraction, production, and consumption. The truth is, women bear a disproportionate burden from the negative consequences of the oil industry, and it's time we shed light on this issue.

Health and environmental consequences. Oil activities are notorious for their adverse effects on the environment, including air and water pollution, habitat destruction, and greenhouse gas emissions. Some affected area in our communities have already experienced this problem. Women, especially in developing countries, are more likely to live in close proximity to oil fields and refineries. This proximity exposes them to higher levels of pollution, leading to increased health risks, including respiratory problems, cancer, and reproductive issues.

Economic disparities Oil-rich regions often witness economic disparities, with wealth concentrated in the hands of a few. This inequality affects women significantly. The influx of male labour into the industry creates a gender gap in employment opportunities and exacerbates income disparities. Women are often left with fewer job opportunities and lower wages, pushing them into vulnerable economic positions.

Land rights and displacement: Land is a valuable resource, and oil exploration frequently involves land acquisition and displacement of communities. Women, who often rely on land for subsistence farming and housing, bear the brunt of these forced relocations. They not only lose their homes and livelihoods but also face increased vulnerability to violence and exploitation during such upheavals. In my region, some land and property have already been taken way under devaluation and displacement of communities. Women, who often rely o

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## **Upcoming events**

November 7, 2023; Kampala and Online: Launch of a research report on the socio-economic impacts of the EACOP resettlement activities on the affected persons

November 13, 2023; Kampala: Reflection and planning meeting for Just Energy Transition project partners

November 15, 2023 Kampala: Hearing of an appeal case filed by nine Tilenga oil project-affected households

November 20-24, 2023: Kampala and Bunyoro: Solidarity exchange learning between women clean energy champion groups and AFIEGO's partners

November 24, 2023; Bunyoro: Dissemination of a research report on the socio-economic impacts of the EACOP resettlement activities on the affected persons

November 29, 2023; Arusha: Delivery of a ruling on the EACOP case at the East African Court of Justice

November 30, 2023; Kampala: AFIEGO Board members' end-of-year meeting

## 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