

February 2022; Issue 2

GOV'T, PRIORITISE AFFORDABLE & RELIABLE CLEAN ENERGY ACCESS FOR SUCCESS OF PARISH DEVELOPMENT MODEL



President Museveni speaks during the launch of the Parish Development Model in February 2022. He noted that Uganda should not conserve poverty.



The parish model, which is aimed at increasing household incomes, will not succeed without addressing bottlenecks such as unaffordable and unreliable electricity.

In this newsletter:

- No clean energy, no poverty eradication! Gov't must prioritise clean energy access for success of Parish Development Model
- Pictorial of our activities
- Lobbying
- In the media
- Upcoming events



Dear reader, welcome to our February 2022 newsletter. On February 26, 2022, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, launched the **Parish Development Model (PDM)** in Kibuku district in Eastern Uganda.

The purpose of the model is to increase household incomes and enable inclusive as well as equitable socio-economic transformation in Uganda among others.

The model is based on seven pillars including: pillar 1 on production, storage, processing and marketing; pillar 2 on infrastructure and economic services; pillar 3 on financial inclusion; pillar 5 on development of a parish-based information management system and; pillar 7 on mindset change among others.

Under the pillars, concessional loans, technical support such as the provision of extension services, access to markets, and others will be provided.

The PDM is targeting the economic sectors of commercial agriculture, industry, services as well as information and communication technology (ICT).

To benefit from the model, the targeted 3.5 million households across over 10,000 parishes that are in the subsistence economy in Uganda will be organised into groups based on the work that they do.

They will then be given tailored technical and financial support to improve their socio-economic status.

The launch of the PDM took place at a time when Ugandans have failed to see the benefits from previous poverty eradication programmes such as *Entandikwa*,

Emyooga, Operation Wealth Creation, the Youth Livelihood Programme, Women Livelihood Programme and others.

Instead of helping the intended beneficiaries, the poverty eradication schemes have been used to enrich a few people and to promote political patronage.

As such, the PDM is being viewed with cynicism amongst some sections of the Ugandan population. Government officials have had to defend it.

While we understand why Ugandans are cynical, AFIEGO and our partners under the Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA) are interested in the successful implementation of the Parish Development Model. The programme should not be like its predecessors that have spectacularly failed, and have conserved poverty in the country.

As such, in this newsletter, we bring you our **Word from AFIEGO and IGEN-EA** through which we discuss the merits and gaps in the model. We make recommendations to address the gaps to promote green economic growth.

It is important to note that IGEN-EA is a 26-member civil society and private sector players' network. The network members advocate for inclusive and sustainable green growth that addresses climate change and promotes human rights.

The network represents the interests of clean energy operators, agro-foresters, small-scale farmers and tourism operators among others.

Away from the above, in this newsletter, we also bring you our **pictorial** section. In this section, we highlight the activities that we and our partners implemented this month. For instance, we organised a planning and reflection meeting for IGEN-EA members to set our agenda for the year. We also organised a media training for IGEN-EA members to strengthen the network's use of the media.

In addition, we supported the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBFC) community taskforce to participate in a meeting with the Ministry of Lands and National Forestry Authority (NFA).

The meeting was aimed at discussing stakeholder participation in the Bugoma forest boundary opening exercise, which is expected to recommence to protect Bugoma forest from land grabbers.

Before the above meeting, we supported the SBFC community taskforce to organise meetings with Bugoma forest host communities in Kyangwali sub-county, Kikuube district.

The meetings discussed the challenges the communities are faced with due to the boundary opening exercise.

We also supported the SBFC community taskforce to participate in awareness raising radio talkshows.

Away from the above, AFIEGO staff participated in a meeting with the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC). Staff discussed the human rights challenges communities face due to failure to access affordable and reliable clean renewable energy.

In addition, staff participated in a meeting with the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Hon. Liesje Schreinemacher, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Director for International Cooperation, Ms. Kitty van der Heijden. They discussed the civic space challenges of civil society groups in Uganda. We bring you the above and more in our pictorial section.

In our **lobbying** section, we share some of the lobby and advocacy products that we disseminated this month.

Finally, **in the media** section, we bring you some of the over 12 newspaper articles written by our staff and partners that were published in the leading newspapers in February.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Editorial team:

Diana Nabiruma

Rachael Amongin

Balach Bakundane

NO CLEAN ENERGY, NO POVERTY ERADICATION! GOV'T MUST PRIORITISE CLEAN ENERGY ACCESS FOR SUCCESS OF PARISH DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Christine* is a single mother of four children. She lives in Hoima district. In 2012, government commenced on processes of acquiring her land, and that of 7,117 other people, for an oil refinery.

Government gave her and the other affected households two resettlement options: cash compensation or physical relocation. Christine and her family chose the latter.

In 2013, a few families received their cash compensation. As the years went by, most of the 7,118 families that opted for cash compensation grudgingly accepted and received their compensation. They left the oil refinery area.

Those that opted for physical relocation stayed on as other families left. They were waiting for government to complete their resettlement houses to relocate them.

Christine and her husband used to grow and sell food as well as cash crops to make a living to support their family. With the families that constituted part of their market relocating from the oil refinery area after receiving their cash compensation, the family income dwindled.

Faced with the task of providing for his family on meagre resources, the household head, the man, made off. He left Christine with four children to take care of.

In 2018, Christine was finally relocated by government to another village in Hoima district. The other families that opted for physical relocation were also shifted.

In the new resettlement at Kyakaboga in Hoima district, Christine lacked resources to start up a business. The impact that the

resettlement exercise had had on her family income meant that she had no money. Eventually, well-wishers extended her support and together with women in the resettlement, she started up a bee-keeping venture.

While the women are earning some money from the business to support their families, they are desirous of more capital, access to affordable power and others to boost their business.

Enter the Parish Development Model (PDM) which was launched by Uganda's president, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, on February 26, 2022.

The PDM has the potential to support Christine, and millions of other Ugandan households that are struggling. However, with the history of failed poverty eradication schemes, people like Christine and millions of other Ugandan men and women could be left in poverty despite the PDM.

What should be done?

GAPS IN THE PDM

After the PDM was launched, AFIEGO and our Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA) partners convened a meeting. We discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the Parish Development Model. Below, we discuss the gaps that we identified. These need to be addressed for success of the PDM.

a). Plans to extend unaffordable power to communities: As discussed earlier in this newsletter, the Parish Development Model is going to be implemented based on seven pillars. These include pillar 1 on production, processing and marketing, pillar 2 on infrastructural development, pillar 3 on

financial inclusion, pillar 5 on development of a parish-based information management system and pillar 7 on mindset change among others. Under pillar 2, government intends to extend power to communities to drive economic activity. However, government and indeed all Ugandans know that grid power in Uganda is so expensive that either Ugandans have to steal it to engage in economic activities and make a profit, or they suppress their demand. Without addressing the question of unaffordable power prices, the PDM could fail.

b). Unreliable power: In relation to the above, power supply in Uganda is unreliable. Upcountry areas especially suffer the brunt of unreliable power with some areas going for days without power. Yet government claims that the country has excess power. Communities without reliable power to undertake value addition of their agricultural products and other services are unlikely to be transformed from poverty.

c). Counterfeit solar products: Further, a sizeable number of Ugandan households resorted to the use of off-grid solar energy as opposed to grid power. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the number of solar energy connections stood at **38%** as at June 2020 compared to the 19% grid connections. Unfortunately, despite the appetite for off-grid solar energy, government has failed to control the importation and sale of counterfeit solar energy products.

These counterfeit products not only stop increased uptake of solar energy but also fail to support economic activities. Moreover, off-grid solar technologies such as grinders, sun-driers, milk cooling systems and others that communities need are expensive. If left unaddressed, this challenge will fail the PDM.

d). Failure to provide for changing of mindsets on clean energy use: Mindset change is a key pillar of the Parish Development Model. Per information on the model, the mindset change

“pillar shall focus on adoption of the right way of thinking and opinions of public sector officials ... The purpose is to achieve realistic planning, implementation, resource utilisation ...” In a nutshell, the pillar is aimed at supporting implementation of the programme. However, community attitudes towards clean energy use aren't targeted by the model. Communities hold attitudes that undermine the productive use of clean energy. Without changing these attitudes, no poverty alleviation programme can succeed.

e). Inadequate emphasis on environmental conservation: The focus of the PDM is agricultural activities. The success of agricultural activities depends on good climate, fertile soils and other benefits that arise from environmental conservation.

However, little emphasis is placed on environmental conservation efforts in the PDM. For instance, the Ministry of Water and Environment is not on the PDM's Policy Development Committee to ensure that the environment is conserved during implementation of the PDM. Further, crops such as sugarcane are among the 18 priority crops that are to be supported. Sugarcane growing in Uganda has led to environmental destruction, with forests such as Bugoma being destroyed for sugarcane growing. Supporting crops that are grown in an environmentally-unsustainable manner will fail the attainment of the PDM's objective.

f). Tourism ignored: In addition, the PDM presumes that the Ugandans that need support are largely farmers. However, there are poor Ugandans who are engaged in community-based tourism initiatives. These Ugandans also need support.

g). Oil exploitation: The main aim of the PDM is to support effective production across all parishes in Uganda. It is hoped that the PDM will increase agricultural yields and promote value addition.

However, plans to implement the oil projects

of Tilenga, Kingfisher, East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), oil refinery and others that will produce an estimated over 105 million metric tonnes of carbon per year for the next 30 to 40 years will worsen and undermine agricultural yields due to climate change impacts.

h). Other gaps include the fact that while the PDM places emphasis on parish chiefs being responsible for implementation of the programme at the parish level, 5,192 parishes lack parish chiefs. In addition, the model could be subject to political interference like its poverty alleviation predecessors.

Recommendations

Since enactment of the 1999 Electricity Act to date, government has continued to work towards achieving access to clean, affordable and reliable energy services for all. Several national and global initiatives have also been put in place and signed by the Ugandan government to promote clean energy access for all and promote transition from the use of dirty energy.

These initiatives include the National Development Plan III, Vision 2040, 2016 Compact Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goal seven on enabling modern energy access for all by 2030.

Others include the Paris Climate Change Agreement, Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) and others.

If the above initiatives are well implemented, government can ensure that every Ugandan gets access to clean, affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services.

The Ugandan government should implement the above commitments.

We also recommend the following:

(i). Government should invest in supporting rural and poor communities to get off-grid solar rather than extending grid power to communities that have no capacity to pay monthly bills.

(ii) In addition, the PDM implementers should promote the productive use of off-grid electricity services so that farmers can use milling, milk cooling and other off-grid solar energy technologies to improve household incomes.

(iii) Further, parliament should enact a Consumer Protection law to protect consumers from counterfeit solar products that harm business growth and interest in the uptake of off-grid solar.

(iv) In addition, communities' mindsets towards clean energy use should be changed. Harmful attitudes that undermine clean energy use should be addressed.

(v) Further, government should support the formation of village companies that bring together households to start joint businesses that operate on electricity. Government should support feasibility studies to determine the best business, based on the available raw materials or services, for each village. This will ensure consumption of electricity while enabling every household to earn income for improved livelihoods. It's these efforts that enabled countries such as Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia and others to achieve 100% electrification.

(vi) Finally, the PDM should ensure that environmentally-unsustainable activities such as sugarcane growing in forests, charcoal burning and others are not supported under the PDM. Tourism activities should also be invested in.

By AFIEGO and IGEN-EA

IGEN-EA MEMBERS HOLD A PLANNING AND REFLECTION MEETING



On February 11, 2022, AFIEGO and the IGEN-EA members organised a planning and reflection meeting in Kampala.

The meeting was participated in by 25 people.

The meeting enabled the members to reflect on their 2021 journey and to plan for 2022.

The IGEN-EA members were also trained in media use.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS HOLD A PREPARATORY MEETING ON EACOP CASE AT THE EAST AFRICAN COURT OF JUSTICE



On February 22, 2022, AFIEGO and our partners who filed applications for temporary and permanent injunctions at the East African Court of Justice organised a preparatory meeting.

The meeting, which took place in Kampala, was participated in by AFIEGO, our partners and the lawyers handling the case.

The meeting enabled us to prepare for the case whose hearing was slated for March 2, 2022.

AFIEGO SUPPORTS A COMMUNITY MEETING ON BUGOMA FOREST BOUNDARY OPENING



On February 10, 2022, AFIEGO supported members of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign community taskforce to organise a community meeting in Kikuube district.

Through the meeting, the taskforce gathered community grievances on the Bugoma forest boundary opening exercise to support conservation of the forest.

AFIEGO SUPPORTS COMMUNITY RADIO TALKSHOW ON BUGOMA FOREST BOUNDARY OPENING



On February 10, 2022, AFIEGO supported members of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign community taskforce to hold a radio talkshow at Spice FM in Hoima district.

During the talkshow, the taskforce updated listeners on the challenges faced by communities in the Bugoma forest boundary opening as a means of promoting conservation of the forest.

AFIEGO SUPPORTS COMMUNITIES TO MEET WITH MINISTRY OF LANDS OVER BUGOMA FOREST BOUNDARY OPENING



On February 23, 2022, AFIEGO supported members of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign community taskforce to participate in a meeting with the Ministry of Lands and National Forestry Authority (NFA) in Kikuube district.

During the meeting, the taskforce shared their views on what must be done to ensure successful opening of the Bugoma forest boundaries while protecting community rights.

AFIEGO ADOCATES FOR INCREASED CLEAN ENERGY ACCESS



On February 23, 2022, AFIEGO participated in the annual report consultative meeting by the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) in Kampala.

During the meeting, AFIEGO shared CSOs' perspectives on human rights and access to electricity in Uganda.

AFIEGO DISCUSSES CIVIC SPACE CHALLENGES WITH DUTCH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



On February 2, 2022, AFIEGO participated in a meeting with the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Hon. Liesje Schreinemacher.

The meeting was also participated in by Ms. Kitty van der Heijden, the Director for International Affairs in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We discussed the civic space challenges faced by civil society groups in Uganda.



This month (February), AFIEGO and 52 civil society groups from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) issued a communiqué following the announcement of the Final Investment Decision (FID) for the Lake Albert oil project. AFIEGO and our partners called for the prioritisation of clean energy.

Furthermore, AFIEGO supported Budongo forest host communities to request for a meeting with NFA to address the grievances faced by the communities following opening of the Budongo forest boundaries.

February 18, 2022

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

Dear Sir/madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH BUDONGO AFFECTED COMMUNITIES ABOUT BUDONGO FOREST BOUNDARY RE-OPENING EXERCISE

The above refers.

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), writes to you on behalf of the 31 households from Murram and Karongo villages, Budongo subcounty in Masindi district surrounding Budongo forest who are requesting for your audience with you to present their petition over the injustices faced as a result of 2019 Budongo Forest boundary reopening.

The affected people from the two villages surrounding Budongo forest thank you for the role you are playing in promoting good governance in Uganda. In addition, they appreciate your good leadership to promote conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the country.

They request that you meet them and present their petition to you on **Friday, February 25, 2022 at 9:00am** at your offices in Kampala or any other place that is convenient for you.

A delegation of three (3) representatives from all the affected households by the forest boundary opening exercise including their partners of Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) and Tasha Research Association Limited (TRIAL) will come to your office to present the petition. We shall observe the Standard Operating Procedures due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

The petition that will be presented to you is a product from the affected local communities highlighting their challenges and concerns being faced as a result of dangerous activities that are taking place within Bugoma forest and therefore, seek your immediate intervention.

We are committed to working with you and government at large to ensure that Budongo forest is protected from all illegal activities and further ensure that other development activities are conducted in a manner that does not endanger human survival particularly we the communities that entirely depend the forest.

February 10, 2022

THE FAMILY OF THE LATE SEREYI BUZINDE, KABAULE-KOOKI, LWANDA
SUB-COUNTY, RAKAI DISTRICT
CONTACT: 0705-233881

INSPECTORATE OF GOVERNMENT
COPY
10 FEB 2022
RECEIVED
CENTRAL REGISTRY
P.O. BOX 1882, KAMPALA

RECEIVED BY: [Signature]
10 FEB 2022
SECURITY REGISTRY

UGANDA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
10 FEB 2022
RECEIVED BY: [Signature]
CENTRAL REGISTRY
P.O. BOX 4929, KAMPALA

Dear Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR THE EACOP COMPANY TO ADDRESS THE ATTEMPTED GRABBING OF OUR EACOP-AFFECTED LAND

First and foremost, allow us to thank you and the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) Company Ltd team for the work you are doing.

We are the family of the Late Sereyi Buzinde from Kabaule-Kooki village in Lwanda sub-county, Rakai district.

We are writing to you today because we stand to, contrary to Article 26 of the Constitution, illegally and irregularly lose compensation for our land that is being compulsorily acquired for the EACOP project in the aforementioned village, sub-county and district.

ABOUT OUR LAND

In 1982, our father/grandfather, the Late Sereyi Buzinde, bought a square mile of land located at Block 83 in Kabaule-Kooki, Rakai district. Since then, this land has been retained in the family.

Information available to us and that in the Ministry of Lands' land registration systems shows that the land in question belongs to our grandfather, who bequeathed this land to us. Attached to this petition is our land title to enable you ascertain that our family owns the said land.

Part of our above-mentioned land (160 acres) is occupied by squatters. The squatters mostly grow crops. The majority don't own houses on the land.

We lived in harmony with the squatters until the EACOP project developers embarked on compulsory acquisition of land for the EACOP project in our district.

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF OUR LAND

MINISTRY OF LANDS, HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT
10 FEB 2022
RECEIVED
P.O. BOX 7006, KAMPALA

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
LAND REGISTRATION
10 FEB 2022
RECEIVED
P.O. BOX 7061, KAMPALA

February 2, 2022

UGANDAN AND DRC CIVIL SOCIETY COMMUNIQUE ON SIGNING OF THE LAKE ALBERT FINAL INVESTMENT DECISION (FID)

1. Introduction and background

The Ugandan government alongside TotalEnergies (U) B.V. and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) (U) Ltd announced the Final Investment Decision (FID) for the Lake Albert oil project yesterday on February 1, 2022.

The Lake Albert project consists of the Tilenga and Kingfisher oil fields as well as the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). The EACOP will run from Hoima in Western Uganda to the port of Tanga at the Indian Ocean in Tanzania.

The FID signing ceremony took place at the Kololo Independence Grounds in Kampala. It was presided over by the Ugandan president, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the Tanzanian vice president, H.E. Philip Isidor Mpango, TotalEnergies' president, Mr. Patrick Pouyanné, and several other officials.

Following signing of the FID, civil society groups whose main objective is to promote environmental conservation and the observance of human rights in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes Region at large discussed what the FID means for ordinary citizens and what needs to be done to avoid the dangers of oil activities.

Below are their observations.

2. Observations

(a) First, the civil society groups appreciated efforts by the Ugandan, Congolese and East African governments for seeking avenues to improve their countries' economies and consequently, communities' wellbeing.

(b) The civil society groups observed that despite contrary evidence in Uganda and among African oil-producing countries, the Ugandan government had widely marketed the narrative that Uganda's oil exploitation efforts would boost the Ugandan economy while improving communities' livelihoods.

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This month, staff, research associates, and youth champions wrote over 12 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.

LETTER OF THE DAY

We need to transition to a green economy

For Uganda to achieve sustainable development, environmental sustainability must be taken into consideration. This applies to policies, legislation, and programmes alike. Over the past years, the government has tried to take measures to ensure that natural development is in harmony with the protection of the environment.

A green economy is an alternative vision for growth and development, one that can generate economic development and improvements in people's lives in ways consistent with advancing also environmental and social wellbeing.

In 2015, countries worldwide adopted the so-called 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These goals recognise that ending world poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth but also address a range of various social needs including education, health, social protection, and job creation, while at the same time tackling environmental pollution and climate change.

The green economy is highly relevant to Uganda, as it provides economic opportunities and growth. Uganda's economy is highly dependent on natural resources. At the same time, the potential for economic growth is put at risk through the existing environmental challenges that climate change and environmental degradation pose for Uganda's economy. Most of the population relies directly on natural resources for their immediate livelihoods, jobs, and well-being. Thus, managing natural assets and resources more sustainably will not only reduce vulnerability to over-exploitation and consequently reduce acute threats to the environment and economic growth, but also increase the benefits of using these abundant natural resources.



Therefore, Uganda is in a good position to shift to a green economy and to use the economic potential resulting from a green economy. This is mainly because its economic backbone and its most important sector for employment is based on agriculture which is where the economic transformation to a green economy needs to start.

Conserving and enhancing the natural capital of Uganda will be an important source of income, livelihood, and jobs for the majority of Ugandans and an entry point for a transition towards a green economy. Sectors affected by conservation of the natural capital include tourism, agriculture and clean renewable energy but also important service industries such as tourism.

Despite the continuous construction of hydropower dams for electricity, a high number of Ugandans do not have access to electricity. Uganda has enormous untapped potential sources of renewable energy including solar energy, biomass, and wind energy that incur low opportunity costs and entail the huge potential for job creation.

economic development and long-term energy security. This includes job creation through the development of new industries related to the renewable energy sector. It also includes powering of rural businesses, as well as the possibility to diversify local production processes, for example through the upgrading of farming activities, refrigeration possibilities, and many more.

In conclusion, Uganda should not opt for a 'grow first, clean up later' approach but rather strategies that can lead to more sustainable and inclusive growth opportunities.

Rachael Amogwa
Asst. Communications, AFICCO

GOVT SHOULD INVEST IN SOLAR ENERGY

EDITOR: Uganda remains highly dependent on hydro power electricity, which is hard to access by vulnerable groups in rural settings.

It is important to note that over 90% of Ugandans, especially women, girls, youth and others in Uganda still lack access to clean energy and depend on biomass and other dirty energy sources.

Most people, especially women and youth spend a lot of time in collecting firewood or burning charcoal. They also spend time in the kitchen cooking amidst smoke with all its health hazards. Lack of clean energy has worsened environmental degradation through destruction of forests for biomass energy.

Amidst climate change impacts, Uganda continues to pursue exploitation of oil. The signing of Final Investment Decision (FID) has confirmed oil exploitation in 2025. Ugandans need to be ready to protect the environment

YOUR MAIL

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

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amidst oil.

Failure to strengthen off-grid solar and investment in the renewable energy to diversify energy sources has continued to provide justification for oil and other dirty energy sources. Oil and other fossil fuels remain the single biggest cause of climate change.

It is important to know the harmful impact of oil on vulnerable citizens and also country at large – land grabbing, growth imbalance, food insecurity, environmental destruction, among others. All these challenges will lead to delayed transformation of our country from a peasant country to middle status in line with Vision 2040.

Amid such challenges,

investing in off-grid solar remains the accessible form of energy for vulnerable communities. Investing in off-grid solar will reduce deforestation hence mitigating climate change impacts. It will also improve the wellbeing of women since they will be free from smoke while cooking using clean energy.

I, therefore, call on the Government to invest in renewable clean energy as opposed to oil and other dirty energy sources. I also encourage Women and youth to urge policymakers to push for clean renewable energy.

The government and other stakeholders should formulate a solar energy policy so that citizens access cheap power. There is also need to reduce on the taxes imposed on the solar equipment so that vulnerable citizens be able to purchase them.

Ireen Twongirwe, executive Director, Women for Green economy Movement Uganda

Uganda should scale up solar power use

EDITOR: Recently, the energy and mineral development minister, Ruth Nankabirwa, together with Egyptian government officials, launched a sh20 solar power plant at Busitema University in Busitema district. Nankabirwa said the plant will meet Uganda's rising energy demand in an environmentally friendly manner.

According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics national housing survey, only 19% of Ugandans have access to grid electricity. The survey noted an increase in solar power usage from less than 20% to 50%.

In my home district, Ntungamo, most of the villages are still in darkness and in those that are connected to power, the residents cannot afford to pay the connection fees and bills. Most of them use solar to escape from darkness.

LETTER OF THE DAY

HAVE YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?
email: letters@newvision.co.ug

Many are still in darkness and have failed to run businesses that are powered by electricity. Even though the electricity connectivity rate has increased to 57%, comprising 19% on-grid connections and 38% off-grid connections, investing much in solar energy will be an opportunity for the country to boost production, education, research and agriculture. Most of the agricultural production in Uganda is seasonal because farmers depend on nature for rain. If solar irrigation equipment is extended to

remote areas, production will be all year round and this will improve the standard of living. It should be noted that Uganda's electricity per capita consumption is still low – 25kwh – compared to Africa average of 55kwh and the world at 2915kwh. This means there is a need to increase power availability if we are to reduce poverty.

Uganda is among the countries that have enough solar energy throughout the year – with mean solar radiation of 5.2kwh per square

metre per day on a horizontal surface. This would be a blessing to tap in since the sun is free of charge and available in all parts of the country. This will support solar water heating and solar photovoltaic can that can supply cheap power to rural institutions and households. For example, many health centres in remote areas lack electricity and do not operate at night because of lack of electricity – and solar energy would be the best opportunity for them. Solar power can help rural clinics and tourism areas with cheap, reliable and environmental friendly energy.

It should be noted that solar energy is free of greenhouse gases that are dangerous to human health and the atmosphere.

Gerald Berekye
Researcher

REOPEN BUGOMA FOREST BOUNDARY

EDITOR: Over the years, local communities around Bugoma Forest and different organisations have advocated for the Bugoma Forest boundary opening.

Last year, the lands ministry officials promised to have the boundaries opened. Engagement meetings were held and some decisions were agreed on. It was agreed that community sensitisation be carried out with the involvement of different stakeholders and local community members.

However, surprisingly, around November 2021, the National Forestry Authority (NFA) officials started the land demarcation process in total disregard of the issues that had earlier been agreed on. The team comprised security

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forces that scared away the people.

In view of the exercise being secretive, with no involvement of stakeholders and local communities, it left community members and other concerned parties such as Bunyoro kingdom grumbling.

Additionally, people's private land was also encroached on during the process, leaving many crops destroyed.

In respect to that, local communities have been left

pondering on what to do next because some have nowhere to go.

The affected communities are also wondering whether President Yoweri Museveni is aware of what is happening or whether the people behind the exercise are acting on his orders. Why did the NFA officials go ahead with the process, contrary to what was agreed upon by the lands ministry.

Local communities around the forest are appealing to the President to intervene and have the process done afresh as soon as possible. Many members of the community no longer access their gardens because they were encroached on by the NFA team.

We are going through a lot of suffering Mr. President. Please help you voters in Bunyoro.

Aganyira Comfort
Holma

Upcoming events

March 1, 2022; Online: Twitter Space discussion on the EACOP case at the East African Court of Justice

March 2, 2022: Arusha: Hearing of EACOP case at the East African Court of Justice

March 4, 2022 Kampala: Engagement meeting with NFA on grievances of Budongo forest host communities

March 7, 2022 Kampala: Engage the Principal Judge over delayed hearing of the Tilenga oil project-affected people's appeal case

March 10, 2022; Bunyoro: Disseminate IEC materials on the EACOP-affected people's RAP entitlements

March 15-30, 2022; Kampala: Participate in the Bugoma forest boundary opening

March 17-18, 2022; Buliisa, Hoima and Kikuube: Film screenings on the impacts of oil activities

March 26, 2022; Greater Masaka: Radio talkshow on the EACOP-affected people's RAP entitlements

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