

July 2022; Issue 7

KARUMA HYDROPOWER DAM: ADDRESS CAUSES OF DELAY TO PROMOTE CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY ACCESS



Photo credit: The East African

Karuma hydropower dam during construction

Photo credit: The East African

In this newsletter:

- Karuma dam: Address causes of delay to promote clean and affordable energy access
- Pictorial of our activities
- Lobbying
- In the media
- Upcoming events

Dear reader, welcome to our July 2022 newsletter. Two inter-related events took place this month. First, on Wednesday, July 13, 2022, the *Daily Monitor* published an article that revealed that government had **pushed** completion of the over \$1.7 billion Karuma hydropower dam to June 2023.

The hydropower project commenced in December 2013 and was supposed to be completed in December 2018. By the time the dam is commissioned, it will have been under construction for nearly a decade. It will also be commissioned over four years past its deadline of completion.

Each month of delay **costs** the government \$12m (about Shs44bn) in expenditures and \$17m (about Shs62.4bn) in lost generation revenues. A year of delay amounts to \$144m (about Shs535.8bn) in expenditures and \$204m (about Shs759bn) in lost generation revenues.

This money is paid by the poor Ugandan taxpayers' who are currently struggling with high fuel prices, increased cost of basic goods such as food and soap, starvation as seen in Karamoja and others.

The Ugandan government has taken little action amidst the above. The president, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, has made some state addresses.

On July 21, 2022 for instance, the president addressed the nation and noted that the solution to the high fuel prices, which led to the increased cost of goods, was a shift to electric cars. He observed that the **electric cars** are more cost-effective than

the fossil fuel-powered ones.

The president is right to rally for a shift to cleaner technologies. However, amidst delayed completion of dams and transmission lines, high electricity connection fees, a failing (free) Electricity Connections Policy, unaffordable power prices, unreliable power supply and heavy spending on fossil projects such as the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), this shift to clean technologies and clean energy will not be attained.

Delays in project completion lead to high project costs. This affects the overall benefits of that project, such as increased access to affordable power.

In our **Word from the CEO and partners**, we discuss how the delay to complete dams such as Bujagali, Karuma and other associated electricity failures present huge challenges for Uganda's efforts to shift to clean energy, cleaner transport and others.

Yet being one of the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change, and the least prepared to address climate change impacts as the July 30-31, 2022 **Mbale floods** in which 29 people died showed us, Uganda must urgently take climate action.

In this newsletter therefore, we make recommendations to support efforts to boost clean energy access and use.

In this newsletter, we also bring you our **pictorial** section. In the section, we highlight the activities that we and our partners implemented this month.

For instance, we participated in a webinar to highlight the impacts of the EACOP project on communities among others. The webinar targeted lawyers under the East African Law Society (EALS) among others.

Furthermore, we held a meeting with some of the lawyers handling the various court cases that AFIEGO filed to protect communities' rights and the environment amidst oil exploitation activities. We discussed strategies that can be used to fasttrack hearing of the cases.

In addition, we produced and disseminated a documentary on the impacts of oil activities on forests and communities in the Albertine Graben. We hope that the documentary will aid evidence-based advocacy for awareness and empowerment.

Furthermore, with our civil society partners, we engaged European Union (EU) members of parliament to discuss the impacts of oil on host communities.

Our Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA) partners also participated in a meeting with the MPs and shared the green economic alternatives that are available in Uganda.

This month, AFIEGO staff and our partners were also trained in safety to enable us to operate within the shrinking civic

space in Uganda. We share this and more in this newsletter.

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

For instance, AFIEGO and our IGEN-EA partners published a research brief on the tourism opportunities of Bugoma forest.

In addition, AFIEGO and our civil society partners wrote a letter to the Auditor General requesting him to audit the \$1.7 billion Karuma hydropower dam project.

Furthermore, we wrote two letters to the Deputy Chief Justice requesting that the court of appeal fixes two court cases we filed before the court for hearing. The cases relate to the protection of Bugoma forest and nine households affected by the Tilenga oil project.

Finally, in **in the media** section, we bring you some of the over 11 newspaper articles written by our staff and partners that were published in the leading newspapers in the month of July.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Editorial team:

Diana Nabiruma

Rachael Amongin

Balach Bakundane

KARUMA DAM: ADDRESS CAUSES OF DELAY TO PROMOTE CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY ACCESS

A deluge of rain hit the Mt. Elgon region this month (July). Locals report that this deluge intensified on Saturday July 30 and Sunday July 31, leading to four rivers bursting their banks. These rivers include Namatala, Nashibiso, Nabuyonga and Napwoli.

The rivers, which flooded Mbale district in Eastern Uganda, left terrible destruction in their wake. Government **listed** the things that were destroyed or affected by the floods. They included: 14 bridges, nine schools, three health centres, 15 fishponds and 80 houses.

In addition, 29 people are confirmed to have lost their lives. Livestock, including 700 domestic animals and 4,500 chicken, were also killed. Such devastation!

The households that lost their homes sought refuge with their extended families or neighbours. They cried about the lack of food, as their gardens were destroyed. Some also noted that they felt like they were overburdening their neighbours or extended families that had given them refuge.

Families with as many as ten members moved into their neighbours or extended families' homes, placing more burdens on the households providing refuge.

It is likely that these affected families will take a while before they recover.



Locals engaged in rescue efforts after the Mbale floods. Photo credit: Yahoo!

CLIMATE CHANGE

To avoid catastrophes such as the one that happened in Mbale, it is paramount that not only Uganda and Africa take climate action, but that the biggest polluters that include the industrialised nations do too.

As you dear reader are aware, Uganda has increasingly experienced climate change impacts. These have included flash floods such as those that were recently seen in Mbale. Mudslides and prolonged dry weather conditions have also occurred.

These have caused food scarcity, death from starvation as was recently seen in **Karamoja**, increased public expenditure to alleviate the impacts of disasters and others.

Uganda is a poor country and it cannot afford the huge bill or social costs presented by climate change. These costs include provision of food relief and housing, repairing damaged roads, bridges and other infrastructure, addressing health challenges such as those arising from poor sanitation after floods and others.

Little wonder that the government largely left rescue efforts to locals after the flash floods in Mbale. No alternate housing for disaster victims was also available. Truthfully, amidst poverty, corruption and other ills in government, Uganda cannot afford to take care of its disaster-struck citizens!

TAKING ACTION?

In light of the above, it is good that the Ugandan president and government are encouraging use of clean energy and a shift to clean energy technologies such as

electric cars. The president proposed this solution this month (July) due to pressure arising from high fuel prices.

Some people have however rightly pointed out that the president's solution or push for electric cars is not feasible at the moment. Why?

KARUMA DAM & OTHER ELECTRICITY SECTOR FAILURES

About a week before the president proposed the shift to electric cars, it was reported that completion of the Karuma hydropower plant had been pushed to June 2023. Construction of the dam commenced in December 2013 and was expected to be completed in December 2018. The delay to complete Karuma dam has economic and clean energy access implications.

Yet Karuma dam is just one of many delayed and poorly implemented electricity projects in Uganda.

Other projects or electricity sector failures include the Bujagali dam project where government has lost over Shs388 billion in tax exemptions since 2012, the 'Free' Electricity Connections Policy where government has spent over \$200 million but has failed to hit its target of connecting 300,000 households per year to electricity and rural electrification projects which have failed to add the majority of rural populations to the grid.

Others include the unaffordable high electricity tariffs that have remained the biggest obstacle to expansion of the electricity market, unfair concessions with unfavourable terms to Uganda being given to companies such as UMEME and others. These failures negatively impact clean energy access and affordability.

IMPLICATIONS OF KARUMA DAM DELAY

The delay in completing Karuma dam also has implications as discussed below:

a) Delayed completion: By the time it is completed in June 2023, construction of Karuma dam will have taken nearly a decade. On average, hydropower dams take three to four years to develop. Delays in dam construction result in higher construction costs, which lead to higher power prices.

b) Costs arising from delays: Information available to us indicates that each month of delay costs government \$12m (about Shs44bn) in expenditures and \$17m (about Shs62.4bn) in lost generation revenue.

A year of delay amounts to \$144m (about Shs535.8bn) in expenditures and \$204m (about Shs759bn) in lost generation revenue. These unnecessary additional costs will never allow Ugandans access to affordable and reliable electricity.

c) Lessons from Bujagali: Indeed, projects such as Bujagali dam are clear examples of how delayed and mismanaged power projects can affect citizens. Despite tax exemptions of over Shs388 billion, Bujagali dam remains the biggest liability in Uganda's electricity sector. A unit of electricity from the dam costs over 11 US cents.

d) Power costs likely to increase: In relation to the above, while government had promised that power from Karuma dam would cost 4.97/kWh between year 1 and 10 of commissioning of the dam and US Cents 2.7/kWh from year 11 to 15 after the dam had been commissioned, this target is unlikely to be attained.

e) Deemed energy: Amidst the above, the Karuma dam power will be added to

the grid at a time when government has failed to find consumers for Uganda's 'excess' power. As such, Ugandans pay for power they do not consume (deemed energy). In this financial year, it is expected that government will spend Shs. 193 billion in payment for deemed power.

f) Unaffordable and inaccessible power:

With high power prices, payment for deemed energy and other challenges, efforts to drive a clean energy transition are unlikely to be attained.

By June 2020, only 19% of the Ugandan population was connected to the grid while over 90% were relying on biomass to meet their cooking energy needs. High power prices among other challenges undermine clean energy access and use. Amidst these conditions, the president's advice to shift to electric cars is untenable.



An electric motorbike; To scale up e-transport, electric sector failures must be addressed. Photo credit: Daily Monitor

OIL PRODUCTION

Moreover, Uganda is seeking to start oil production from protected and other areas beginning in 2025. This is at a time when it has become clear that Uganda is vulnerable and unprepared to deal with climate change impacts.

Burning of fossil fuels is the biggest driver of climate change. While some

government officials have argued that the proceeds acquired from the sale of Uganda's oil will be used to mitigate climate change impacts, this is hard to believe. Since commercial oil discoveries were made in Uganda in 2006, the Ugandan government developed a big appetite for loans. As at December 2021, Uganda's **debt** stood at Shs73.5 trillion (\$19.2 billion). Currently, Uganda's debt to GDP ratio stands at **54%**.

More loans will be acquired and added to the existing debt to implement the EACOP, Tilenga and Kingfisher oil projects. This means that by 2026, Uganda's total debt will reach over USD34 billion (UGX125.8 trillion).

An indebted country that has urgent needs to meet such as a huge public salaries' expenditure, education, healthcare and others is unlikely to use its little proceeds from oil to invest in climate adaptation measures.

CONCLUSION

The president's efforts to promote clean energy technologies must be lauded.

However, his government must deal with challenges such as delays to complete dams, poor procurement practices as was seen in the Karuma dam one, corruption that continues to fail policy implementation and an over-emphasis on investing in grid power. Off-grid solutions present the best opportunity for increasing clean energy access. We must also avoid the over USD15 billion planned oil investments, stop tax exemptions to electricity companies and others to promote good governance of the energy sector.

By CEO and partners

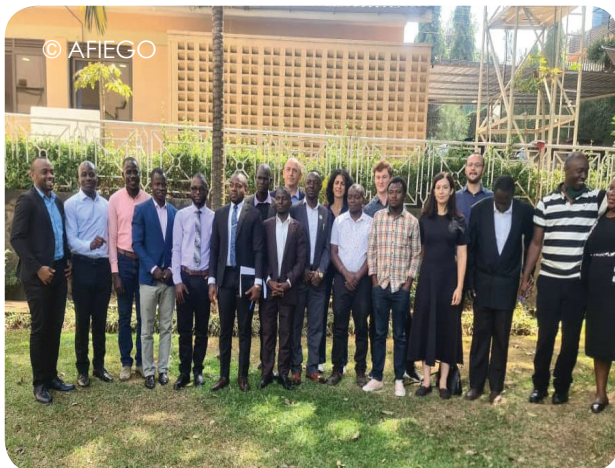
AFIEGO MEETS WITH LEGAL TEAM TO DISCUSS ONGOING COURT CASES



On July 14, 2022 AFIEGO held a meeting with some members of its legal team to discuss the progress of the court cases we have filed. The meeting discussed strategies to fasttrack hearing of the court cases.

It was agreed that AFIEGO and our partners write to the Deputy Chief Justice to request for fasttracking of the court cases that are aimed at promoting human rights and environmental conservation.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS ENGAGE EU MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ON OIL IMPACTS



On July 25, 2022, AFIEGO and our civil society partners engaged EU members of parliament in Kampala, Uganda.

Our engagement was aimed at strengthening efforts by the EU parliament to hold European companies working abroad accountable to promote human rights and environmental conservation.

IGEN-EA ENGAGES EU MPS ON GREEN ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVES



On July 26, 2022, AFIEGO and our IGEN-EA partners participated in a meeting with EU members of parliament in Kampala, Uganda.

The meeting enabled us to share the green economic alternatives such as clean energy, tourism, organic agriculture and others that can be promoted in Uganda.

AFIEGO DOCUMENTS THE IMPACTS OF OIL ACTIVITIES ON COMMUNITIES AND FORESTS



Communities and forest suffering oil impacts in Uganda

In July 2022, AFIEGO produced a documentary highlighting the impacts of oil activities on communities and forests in the Albertine Graben.

The documentary is aimed at supporting various stakeholders to engage in evidence-based advocacy to promote human rights observance and environmental conservation amidst oil activities in the Albertine Graben.

AFIEGO AND OUR PARTNERS RAISE AWARENESS ON EACOP IMPACTS



On July 4, 2022, AFIEGO participated in an online engagement with key stakeholders to discuss the impacts and governance challenges of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project.

The engagement was organised by the East African Law Society (EALS).

The engagement raised awareness on the impacts of the EACOP project.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS TRAINED TO OPERATE SAFELY AMIDST SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE



Between July 11 and 12, 2022, AFIEGO and our partners were trained to operate safely within the repressed civic space in Uganda.

Our staff and partners were equipped with skills and knowledge to work safely amidst the hostile civic space.

In July 2022, AFIEGO and our IGEN-EA partners published a research brief on the tourism opportunities of Bugoma forest.

In addition, we wrote a letter to the auditor general requesting him to audit the Karuma dam project.

Furthermore, we wrote two letters to the deputy chief justice. We requested that the court of appeal urgently fixes and hears our court cases aimed at protecting Bugoma forest and promoting the rights of nine Tilenga oil project-affected households.

AFRICA INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY GOVERNANCE
P.O. Box 7083, Kampala-Uganda.

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
RECEIVED
26 JUL 2022
P.O. BOX 7785, KAMPALA

July 22, 2022

Mr. John Mwangi, Auditor General,
P.O. Box 7083, Kampala-Uganda.

Dear Sir,

R.E: APPEAL TO YOUR OFFICE TO AUDIT THE KARUMA DAM PROJECT

The above refers

On behalf of Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) and the undersigned signatories, I take this opportunity to thank you and your office for the continued efforts to promote transparency and accountability in the country. We appreciate the regular audit reports on relevant sectors of the economy that you have continued to compile and submit to parliament to support and facilitate the oversight role of the legislative arm of government.

AFIEGO is a Ugandan incorporated company limited by guarantee for none profit whose main objective is to influence energy policies for work for the citizens especially the poor and vulnerable communities.

Since 2013, AFIEGO and our partners have been monitoring and following the development of the Karuma hydropower dam project and its clear that from its inception up to date the dam continues to face many problems. The \$1.7 billion Karuma dam which commenced in 2013 was meant to be completed and commissioned in 2019 but now the commissioning has been postponed to June 2023. This is the fourth postponement and government has never clearly explained to Ugandans why for four years, the investor has failed to complete the project. Who pays the costs for the delays?

In all big projects such as Karuma, delays have far-reaching implications on clean energy access and affordability for citizens. For example, the Bujagali dam project which delayed for several years have remained a huge obstacle to Uganda's efforts to make electricity affordable for Ugandans and yet the Bujagali Energy Limited (BEL) that owns and runs the project continues to enjoy tax exemptions.

Regarding Karuma Dam project, the available information indicates that each month of delay costs the government of Uganda \$1.2m (about Shs44bn) in payments to the investor and \$1.7m (about Shs62.4bn) in lost revenues. As a result, it is alleged that every year of Karuma project delay costs Ugandan taxpayers approximately \$144m (about Shs535.8bn) in direct payments to the investor and \$204m (about Shs759bn) in lost revenues to Ugandans.

AFRICA INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY GOVERNANCE
P.O. Box 7083, Kampala-Uganda.

HIGH COURT OF UGANDA
26 JUL 2022
RECEIVED

July 22, 2022

Justice Phillip Odoki,
High Court of Uganda,
Kampala (U).

Dear Sir,

RE: LETTER REGARDING MISCELLANEOUS APPLICATION NO.140 AND 141 (AS CONSOLIDATED)

The above refers,

Greetings from Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO). AFIEGO is a Uganda incorporated company limited by guarantee for none profit whose main objective is promote equity and social justice in Uganda's energy sector to promote social and economic transformation.

First, we thank you for taking steps to hear our case that has been in court since 2019.

Second, Your lordship, on 23 May 2022, when our lawyers (M/S Allun & Partners advocates) appeared before you in your chambers, you advised them to wait for you to send them issues to be determined in the case. They shared their phone and email contacts with your clerk but to date we have never received the said issues.

The main objective of this letter is therefore to kindly request you to share the issues and give our lawyers directions regarding the hearing and final determination of our case. Our case was filed in 2019 and any more delays means more injustice and contrary to the Constitution of Uganda that provides for a right to access justice without delays.

We thank you for your kind consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Dickens Kamugisha, Chief Executive Officer-AFIEGO



Consultants:
Mr. Benedict Ntale
Mr. Paul Mwangi Lubega

Contractor:
Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA)

July 2022

AFRICA INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY GOVERNANCE
P.O. Box 7083, Kampala-Uganda.

COURT OF APPEAL
26 JUL 2022
RECEIVED

July 26, 2022

The Deputy Chief Justice,
Court of Appeal,
Kampala-Uganda

Dear Sir,

RE: REQUEST TO URGENTLY FIX AND HEAR APPLICATION NO 191 OF 2021

The above matter refers

Reference is made to the letter dated 12 April 2022, in which AFIEGO on behalf of undersigned nine Bulisa-Tilenga oil project affected persons wrote to your office complaining about the delay to fix application No 191 of 2021 (Happy Ignatius & 8 others vs Attorney General) for hearing.

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) is a Ugandan incorporated company limited by guarantee for none profit whose main objective is to promote good energy governance in Uganda. We support Projected Affected Persons (PAPs) and other citizens to enjoy their Constitutional rights.

The above application was filed on 13 July 2021 but to date, it has never been fixed for hearing.

Through the above mentioned letter, we appealed to your good office to ensure that the Court of Appeal immediately sets a date for a hearing of the above application filed by the Tilenga oil PAPs.

The appeal is against the High Court ruling of 30 April 2020 (Attorney General versus Happy Ignatius & 8 others-High Court MISC. CAUSE NO. 0025 OF 2020) which the attorney General won against the PAPs.

The High Court ruled that in cases where there is a disagreement between the government and any land owner affected by compulsory land acquisition, the government has a right to deposit any compensation amount assessed by the Chief Government Valuer (CGV) in court and can then proceed to evict the affected landowner. It is because of the above ruling that the PAPs are appealing.

The delay to fix and hear the applicants' application has resulted in extreme suffering for the affected communities, especially the nine PAPs. The PAPs are being evicted by the government and Total Tilengas. As a result of eviction threats, the PAPs are living in fear, desperation, and frustration. They need justice before their appeal is overturned by events.

This month, AFIEGO staff, research associates and youth champions wrote over 11 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.

Green investments yield green profits

Green investment is any economic activity that provides for investment, operation, and risk management in the fields of environmental improvement, climate action, and resource use efficiency.

It is seen that today's conscious consumers prefer companies that are responsive and responsible for a natural and social environment. To continue to use and grow profitably, companies should meet clients' changing preferences.

In terms of companies, sustainability is, adding value to the natural and social environment by doing the right thing, and in the meantime growing profitably.

Examples of these activities can be in the fields of climate smart agriculture, renewable energy conservation, and green transportation or infrastructure.

These can take the form of financing green products and services or green production and business processes that contribute specifically to climate change mitigation or adaptation, broader environmental sustainability, and a low carbon, and climate resilient pathway.

A new study by Bloomberg New Energy Finance found that global investment in transitional technologies reached \$755 billion in 2021. In order to stay on track for reducing net carbon emissions to zero, investment in transitional energy will have to reach over \$2 trillion between 2022 and 2025 and \$4.1 trillion over 2026-2030.

Uganda is blessed with the huge potential of renewable energy in form of solar, wind power, geothermal and other forms which offer better alternatives to oil while conserving the environment.

If we invested in renewable energy as opposed to oil, our country would generate much more revenue than the oil developments.

Agriculture alone can provide jobs to Uganda's unemployed youth if well harnessed.

However, the employment potential of Uganda's agriculture and agri-food system remains largely untapped, despite providing 70 percent of the country's employment opportunities, contributing more than half of all exports, and about one-quarter of gross domestic product (GDP). Both the domestic and regional demand for agricultural commodities is on a rapid rise, and an increasing number of urban dwellers demand more processed food and protein-rich diets.

By 2050, the World Bank estimates that about 102 million people will live in Uganda, providing massive opportunities for the country's agriculture sector and wider agri-food system.

Uganda's oil developments including Tilenga, Kingfisher, and EACOP are projected to generate over 102 million metric tonnes of greenhouse gases per year which will pose grave implications on environmental, climatic, and social threats and risks, the projects will negatively affect forest reserves, rivers, wetlands, lakes, agricultural land, fisheries, community livelihoods, cultures and others yet over 75 percent of the population rely on agriculture.

The Advocates Coalition on Development and Environment warns that climate change will have a significant impact on Uganda's economy, which is heavily reliant on natural resources. Primary sectors such as agriculture, water, energy, and fisheries are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Further, the planned and ongoing oil developments are located in the Albertine graben which is a sensitive ecosystem of national and international importance.

The Albertine graben is a home to Lake Edward, and

Justice delayed is justice denied

EDITOR: Compulsory acquisition of land has always been a delicate issue and is increasingly so nowadays in the context of rapid growth and changes in land use.

Governments are under increasing pressure to deliver public services in the face of an already high and growing demand for land. Many recent policy dialogues on land have highlighted compulsory acquisition as an area filled with tension. The Government and other economic actors, according to Balemessa et al. 2016, argue that the often conflictual and inefficient aspects of the process are seen as a constraint to economic growth and rational development. They also noted that the process usually brings tension for people who are threatened with dispossession and that compulsory acquisition of land for development purposes may ultimately bring benefits to society but it is also disruptive to the people whose land is taken away. It displaces families from their homes, farmers from their fields and businesses from their neighbourhoods.

It may separate families and interfere with livelihoods. Compulsory acquisition of land and compensation deprive communities of important religious or cultural sites and destroy networks of social relations. If compulsory acquisition is done poorly, it may leave people homeless and landless, with no way of earning a livelihood, without access to necessary resources or community support and with the feeling that they have suffered a grave injustice.

If, on the other hand, governments carry out compulsory acquisition satisfactorily, they leave communities and people in equivalent situations while at the same time providing the intended benefits to society. No matter what form it takes, land acquisition leads to the displacement of people from their ancestral lands and home, loss of property and destruction of livelihoods.

Therefore, the Judiciary/Government should ensure that cases of this nature are fast-tracked or they should set up a tribunal in every region to ensure that in case there is such a complaint by the project affected persons, the cases are handled in the shortest time possible.

Christopher Opiyo, a refinery project affected person and the co-ordinator of Oil Refinery Residents Association Kabaale-Buseruka

LETTER OF THE DAY

Conserve nature to improve livelihoods

Nature is roaring and the impacts are yet to be felt even in the future. The toll humans have had on the natural world is incredible and it has to absolutely reciprocate.

People have the power in their hands to conserve nature but the powers have been violated for personal interests and the end of the day our actions bite back, humans have become the most significant manipulators of the natural world due to pollution, massive deforestation, improper disposal of plastic waste, destruction of wetlands, and contamination of water bodies.

The unsettled nature is biting back through climate change. These consequences include: disease outbreaks, hailstorms, heat overload, changing weather patterns, drop in water levels, and increased frequency of extreme weather events like floods, as well as drought, whose social economic impacts make communities very vulnerable.

Key sectors such as agriculture, health, wetlands, and forests are vulnerable to these climate change impacts in Uganda.

Further, the conservation estimates suggest that the projected net water demand by 2050 could reach \$5.5 billion, with significant losses expected in the Lake Victoria, Albert Nile, and Lake Kyoga Watersheds.

In the past, annual economic losses from droughts have been up to \$237 million. Similarly, future droughts are expected to have significant negative effects on water supply in Uganda.

More so Climate Risk Profile: Uganda (2020) report indicated that Uganda is at risk to natural disasters. The country experiences extreme weather events which lead to mudslides, landslides and flooding, particularly for the country's mountain regions and related districts such as Mbale in the

Mt Elgon region.

Extreme events leading to disasters such as floods, droughts, and landslides have increased over the last 30 years.

Flooding has become more frequent, largely due to destruction of wetlands, intense rainfall finds no ample place to be harbored. Over the past two decades, an average of 200,000 Ugandans are affected each year by disasters.

On September 17, 2021, Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) through its assessments, reported flooding events affecting the districts of Kapechorwa, Sironko, Mbale, Bukedea, Zombo, Kapelebyong and Katakwi.

The storm episodes affected seven districts and left one registered death from Kapechorwa District (male adult), Kapsinde sub-county due to landslides, 72 people injured, 597 individuals homeless, 51 individuals hospitalised, 51 individuals evacuated, 308 families displaced, 416 houses completely

destroyed, 829 houses partially damaged. Also, three health facilities were affected due to the floods, 61 water facilities and six schools affected in Bukedea, Kapelebyong, Katakwi and Oyam districts. Despite all the above catastrophes, people have continued to engage in activities that unsettle nature.

Increased intensity of heavy rainfall has led to greater impact of floods and is causing more damage due to expanded infrastructure, human settlement and general development of the country, due to rampant floods in major cities such as Kampala, Mbale, Kapelebyong, Katakwi, and Oyam.

Government should prioritize constructing proper drainage tunnels, most preferably underground flood ways and preventing rivers and lakes prone to floods from bursting their banks through construction of levees and reservoirs.

I urge the government and numerous stakeholders to champion

and support campaigns against environmental degradation through rejuvenating penitents because enough conservation awareness has been created by Ugandans are responding at a low rate.

There has to be a way to draw people in so that they can learn about it in a more value-neutral way through restoration, reforestation and a forestation of hilly and mountainous areas.

To be able to achieve sustainable development, Uganda's economic development framework and its poverty eradication strategies have to consider environmental conservation through enforcement of The National Environment Act 2019, The Integrated Water Management and Development Project, The convention on biodiversity agreement, Trees for Global Benefits (TCB) and Sustainable Development Goal 6&13.

Kemababazi Babra babrakemababaz192@gmail.com

EDITOR: Every day, the media reports about environmental destruction countrywide, which leaves everyone wondering if Ugandans really understand the values of environmental protection. People have continued to carry out farming in wetlands, forests, on lake shores and wildlife conservation areas.

For example, River Rwizi in western Uganda is drying up due to human activities. It has lost a considerable percentage of its water catchment due to crop growing on the river banks, which has resulted in silting, especially when it rains.

The surrounding swamps are also being cleared due to human pressure to create land for farming. Examples include Nyakafumura swamp and Kanyabukanya wetland in Karungu sub-county.

Many times, the President has ordered a total ban on rice growing in wetlands countrywide, indicating a sharp decline in wetland coverage from 15.5% in 1994 to 8.9% due to encroachment. The

SENSITISE PEOPLE ABOUT NATURE CONSERVATION

state minister for environment, Beatrice Anywar, has also been on the frontline to arrest and chase away people encroaching on the environment. Unfortunately, the implementation of the directives has not been successful.

All these destructions have had negative effects on both human and wildlife. For example, the continuous destruction of Bugoma Forest has forced wild animals to attack people and destroy crops in Hoima district.

As a result of increased encroachment on Bugoma forest reserve, the number of chimpanzees has significantly reduced, according to the Wildlife Conservation Society Project, basing on a census conducted in 2001.

The census indicated that Bugoma Forest was home to an estimated 570 chimpanzees, but they

have dwindled to 390. These chimpanzees are killed in the process of clearing their habitat for cultivation.

The continuous encroachment on the environment has also negatively impacted the tourism sector and human life. The increasing deforestation and oil extractions have increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which cause respiratory diseases.

I call upon all stakeholders, especially the National Environment Management Authority and National Forestry Authority, to carry out a mass sensitisation campaign to educate the public about the value of environmental conservation to protect nature.

Gerald Berekye, research associate

Upcoming events

August 2, 2022; Bunyoro and Greater Masaka: Collect community views on Uganda's draft Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy

August 5, 2022; Kampala: Support oil project-affected communities to submit their views on Uganda's draft Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy to Ministry of Lands

August 12, 2022; Hoima: Radio talkshow on the tourism potential of Bugoma forest

August 18, 2022; Hoima: Training and radio talkshow to enhance women participation in beekeeping in the Albertine Graben

August 19, 2022; Kampala: Reflection meeting for IGEN-EA members

August 22-30, 2022; Hoima: Community meetings to empower women and youth clean energy champions to promote clean energy

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