AFIEGO’s CEO, Mr. Dickens Kamugisha (2nd R), during a panel discussion at COP 27 in Sharm El Shiekh, Egypt in November 2022. Mr. Kamugisha shares a highlight of lessons from the COP in this newsletter.

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- Pictorial of our activities
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- Upcoming events
Dear reader, welcome to AFIEGO’s November 2022 newsletter.

From November 6 to 18, 2022, over 150 nations converged in the Egyptian city of Sharm El Sheikh for the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27). This annual event by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) seeks to build on previous successes and pave way for effectively tackling climate change.

Due to COP27’s relative proximity (taking place in Africa), but also through a continuous gradual shift in focus within the global climate justice community, the attendance of climate activists from East Africa’s Most Affected People and Areas (MAPA) was visible. Our CEO, Mr. Dickens Kamugisha, who together with other AFIEGO staff has since 2006 been fighting against the dangers of oil within and outside Uganda, also participated in the conference.

Mr. Kamugisha and over 600 civil society groups from Africa went to COP27 in Egypt with huge expectations, including the hope that, for once, the world would finally agree to end fossil fuel exploitation as a measure to fight climate change.

Unfortunately, no final decision was made at this summit to stop oil and other fossil fuel activities.

That said, COP27 provided space for discussion of critical issues, including the appreciation that climate change remains one of the single most significant dangers to humanity.

Further, COP27 discussed the need to keep global temperature rises below 1.5 degrees, the call for rich countries to provide funding for loss and damage, and the need to stop the west from using Africa as a gas station, among others.

Even though the pressing issue, which was the decision to phase out fossil fuels, failed, COP27 discussions covered other critical areas listed below:

- Putting in place a loss and damage fund for developing countries devastated by extreme weather events.
- Maintaining the global warming limit at or less than 1.5°C.
- Prioritising and supporting developing countries to transit to clean renewable energy such as off-grid solar and others suitable for poor and vulnerable groups such as women, youth and others.
- Ensuring effective implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The rich nations should support countries to meet their climate change commitments as outlined in their respective Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- The debate to completely phase out fossil fuels should carry on.
- Continue to phase down the use of coal, as agreed at COP26.
- Reform global financial institutions like the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), African Development Bank (ADB) and others to include and increase funding for clean and inclusive renewable energy for all.
- Adapt more adverse weather-resilient defences.

In our Word from the CEO, we tell the story...
of what AFIEGO’s CEO, Mr. Kamugisha, witnessed and experienced at COP27 and make recommendations for future COPs.

In our pictorial section, we bring you highlights of the activities that we and our partners implemented this month (November). For instance, this month AFIEGO was awarded the Right Livelihood Award at a ceremony held in Stockholm-Sweden. We share highlights from the ceremony.

Further, this month, a hearing on the court case that we filed in relation to the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project at the East African Court of Justice was held.

In addition, we supported the oil refinery-affected community to travel to the Masindi High Court for hearing of the court case that AFIEGO and the oil refinery-affected people filed against the Ugandan government over delayed, inadequate and unfair compensation.

We also organised a meeting through which we empowered youth on their roles in guarding against oil dangers.

Furthermore, we share highlights from our engagements at COP27 in Sharma El Sheikh, Egypt.

In addition, together with our partners, we participated in a meeting with an official from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during which we discussed our efforts to promote human rights and gender equality amidst oil and other activities in Uganda. We bring you this in our pictorial section.

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

For example, together with seven other civil society organisations, we issued a communique calling on the Masindi High Court to fast-track and conclude hearing of the oil refinery-affected people’s court case. The case was filed with AFIEGO’s support in 2014 to stop human rights abuses against over 7,000 people, including over 3,500 women, displaced for the oil refinery project in 2012.

We also supported communities whose land is being acquired for the EACOP project to write a complaint letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs calling for an end to the intimidation of persons affected by the project. The people are intimidated by security officials among others.

We also disseminated IEC materials and articles to raise awareness about our court case against the EACOP project at the EACJ.

In the media section, we bring you some newspaper articles written by our staff and partners that were published by national as well as international media houses.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Editorial team:
Diana Nabiruma
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Dear reader, I am one of the African civil society activists who participated in the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) held from November 6 to 18, 2022, in the city of Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt. At least 100 presidents, high-level government officials, and over 35,000 people from more than 150 countries participated in COP27.

Like all the previous COPs, COP 27 was planned and organised under the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty which extended the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that commits state parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.

The main objective of every COP is to provide an international forum to build consensus on fighting against global warming caused by climate change.

My participation at COP27 was part of our efforts at AFIEGO and all our partners to join hands with the rest of the world to make lasting decisions on how to stop the causes of climate change. These causes among others include, the continued use of fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal. Other causes include a lack of clean energy for cooking, which has left millions of poor people with no option other than cutting down forests and green vegetation for firewood and charcoal.

In the last ten or so years, like many other countries, Uganda has continued to suffer terrible climatic change impacts such as increased water levels in lakes and rivers, floods, mudslides and landslides burying whole villages, destruction of roads and other infrastructure, drying of rivers leading to failure of small hydro dams and others.

In view of the above and appreciation of the risks of oil, since 2006, AFIEGO and our partners from within and outside Uganda have been working to stop oil exploitation, especially in critical biodiversity areas such as lakes, rivers, wetlands, forests, national parks, game reserves and others. We have also been fighting to stop human rights abuses against oil-host communities.

I therefore went to COP27 hoping that world leaders would go beyond mere declarations to make concrete global decisions to tackle climate change once and for all. I hoped civil society groups like AFIEGO and others would use such global platforms to push for national action, including efforts to stop risky oil projects such as the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), Tilenga, Kingfisher and others.

However, there were lessons and disappointments at the COP. I share these below.

LESSONS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

a) Debates to reform global financial institutions:
I am happy that the COP27 delegates discussed the need to reform multilateral development banks (MDBs) like the World Bank, IMF, ADB and others to help low-income countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avert the effects of adverse weather conditions. There was no clear conclusion but the debate started. I hope it will continue so that MDBs are reformed to promote climate action and justice.

b) Funding for loss and damage: Even though no strategic concrete agreement was reached, there is no doubt that everyone at COP27 appreciated the need for rich countries to provide funding support to developing countries that continue to suffer critical climate change impacts. I hope that all those working to stop the causes of climate change will ensure that the future agreement does not allow the funding for loss and damage as a license for the rich to use
and misuse the developing countries but rather work as compensation for the damage and loss already suffered.

c) Consensus on 1.5 degrees: Unlike the fund, the decision on the agreed-upon threshold of global heating was final with the 1.5 degree Celsius previously assented to in COP21 and COP26 being retained. While this threshold remains high and may not be reached because of the double standards of rich countries and greedy companies that have allowed and continue to exploit oil, coal and gas, it provides a good step for activists to build more pressure for action against climate change.

d) Energy transition: For all the two weeks of COP27, it was clear that even those not willing to stop fossil oil exploitation were ready to discuss how to transit to clean, renewable energy worldwide. This momentum will continue to expand and hopefully lead to urgent action.

Despite the above positive discussions, COP27 had many disappointments including:

Failed consensus to phase out fossil fuels: Despite the scientific evidence showing that oil, gas, coal and others are the biggest causes of climate change and, therefore, global warming, COP27 failed to end fossil fuel exploitation.

No global forum was created to prosecute and punish polluters: While the global community created the International Criminal Court at the Hague to deal with critical cases of global nature where national governments had failed, the same global community at COP27 was unable to create a similar court to deal with cases of greenhouse emissions. Without a worldwide tribunal to curb impunity, climate change problems may continue to worsen.

Energy transition financing: COP27 failed to create a fund to fast-track the transition to clean, renewable energy in developing countries.

No funding for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): While the UN asked countries, including Uganda, to review and submit new NDCs, COP27 failed to commit rich countries to provide specific financing for implementing the said NDCs.

Recommendations
In view of the above, the following recommendations are made:

(i) Climate change financing should be in the form of grants and not loans. Continents like Africa, known to be the most affected by extreme weather occurrences, will need up to $145.5 billion annually to achieve climate action commitments and better climate justice.

While COP27 ended without a known source of financing for the loss and damage fund, the COP26 resolution saw 70% of the $100bn pledged disbursed through loans. Though timely, countries suffering the effects of adverse weather conditions should not be plunged into more debt; countries should seek a more grant-based funding approach.

(ii) Adopt clean-energy-targeted strategies: At least 75% of the World Bank’s energy funding should go directly to clean energy like solar and wind. This will help developing countries to achieve faster access to clean energy and shift people from reliance on firewood which continues to cause massive forest degradation.

(iii) Set up an international climate change court: A global platform like COP should be the avenue to ensure that an international court to deal with climate change crimes and injustices is established. This can take the form of the Hague-based International Criminal Court.

(iv) Nations also need to agree to phase out all fossil fuels including coal, oil and gas.

By Dickens Kamugisha, CEO, AFIEGO
AFIEGO SUPPORTS EACOP COURT CASE HEARING

On November 11, 2022, AFIEGO and our partners participated in the hearing of a court case against the EACOP project. The hearing took place in Kampala.

The case, which was filed in the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) by AFIEGO and our Ugandan, Kenyan as well as Tanzanian partners, is seeking to block construction of the EACOP over environmental and human rights concerns.

AFIEGO SUPPORTS OIL REFINERY-AFFECTED PERSONS TO ACCESS JUSTICE

On November 10, 2022, AFIEGO supported the oil refinery-affected persons to participate in their court case hearing at Masindi high court.

AFIEGO is supporting the affected people to seek justice following the violation of their constitutional rights to receive prompt, fair and adequate compensation.

The people’s rights were violated by the Ugandan government during the compulsory acquisition of the people’s property beginning in 2012. The people’s land was acquired for the oil refinery project.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS ENGAGE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON NATURAL RESOURCES GOVERNANCE

On November 25, 2022, AFIEGO and our partners organised an engagement meeting with youth in Kampala.

During the meeting, the youth were empowered on their roles and responsibilities in natural resources governance.
AFIEGO JOINS PARTNERS AT COP27, DEMANDS PHASING OUT OF FOSSIL FUELS

Between November 6 and 18, 2022, AFIEGO and our partners participated in the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt.

At the COP, AFIEGO and our partners demanded for the phasing out of all fossil fuels and an upscaling of clean energy.

AFIEGO RECEIVES RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AWARD

On November 30, 2022, AFIEGO and three others received the Right Livelihood Award at a ceremony that was held in Stockholm-Sweden.

AFIEGO was awarded for the courageous work that the organisation does in promoting the protection of community rights and climate action amidst mega projects like the EACOP.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS IN A MEETING TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

On November 24, 2022, AFIEGO and our partners under the Power of Voices programme participated in a meeting with a Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs official in Kampala, Uganda.

The participants discussed the achievements and challenges experienced during programme implementation.

They also explored new strategies to improve their work in promoting human rights and gender equality.
In November 2022, AFIEGO and seven other civil society organisations (CSOs) issued a communique imploring the Masindi High Court to fast-track and conclude hearing of the court case filed by AFIEGO and the oil refinery-affected people in 2014. The court case was filed against the Ugandan government.

Additionally, we helped the EACOP project-affected persons (PAPs) to write a complaint letter to the Internal Affairs Minister over intimidation.

We also issued IEC materials to raise public awareness of the risks of the EACOP project and benefits of off-grid solar energy.
In the media

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

What the youth expect of COP27

As the youth of Uganda speak at the presence of the government at the talks to protect the environment and address climate change, they expect the government to take steps to mitigate climate change. This month, AFIEGO staff, research associates and youth champions wrote newspaper articles published in the leading newspapers. The media also published articles from interviews we held this month; some of the published articles are captured below.

Involving learning institutions in combating climate impacts

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The off-grid solar and mini-grid sectors in Uganda employ nearly 30,000 people

The off-grid solar and mini-grid sectors in Uganda employ nearly 30,000 people

Challenges such as policy gaps & lack of funds undermining investment in the sector must be addressed.

I'm on the 2022 Apolitical 100

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Individually, with, and through YOU, we have made an impact. With YOU and with the support of YOU, we have been able to achieve amazing things that would not have been possible otherwise. From fundraising to activism, we have been able to connect with communities and mobilise them to take action. If you have a suggestion or idea, feel free to share it with us.
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

Upcoming events

December 1-6, 2022; Hoima: Stakeholder review meetings on outcomes of AFIEGO’s 2022 projects

December 7, 2022: Paris: Hearing of court case over Total’s failure to put in place adequate mitigation measures for the company’s Tilenga and EACOP oil projects

December 8-13, 2022; Bunyoro: Field exchange learning visits for university students to communities affected by oil projects

December 16, 2022; Kampala: Staff workshop on project outcome harvesting

December 22, 2022; Kampala: AFIEGO staff end of year annual meeting