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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
KAMPALA**

CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS CALL ON MINISTER OF ENERGY TO HALT PROCESSING OF EACOP CONSTRUCTION LICENSE

Fifteen (15) civil society organisations (CSOs) that work in the oil and gas sector are calling on the Minister of Energy to halt processing of the application made by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) Company for a construction license.

The organisations that are making the above calls include community-based ones formed by communities whose land is being acquired for the EACOP project.

The above calls come 59 days after the EACOP Company submitted an application for a construction license to the Ministry of Energy on July 1, 2022.

“Section 9(1) of the 2013 Petroleum (Refining, Conversion, Transmission and Midstream Storage) Act, which is also known as the Midstream Act, requires any entity that wants to construct or operate any midstream facility say a refinery, transmission pipeline, gas conversion facility and others to get a license from the Minister of Energy,” Mr. Dickens Kamugisha, a lawyer and CEO of Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), says.

He adds, “In applying for the license therefore, the EACOP Company was complying with the law. The violation of petroleum laws that happened thereafter was unfortunate however and must be rejected by all right-thinking Ugandans.”

Per Section 12(1) of the Midstream Act, the Minister of Energy is supposed to cause the publication of a notice in the Gazette and at least one national newspaper with wide circulation after receiving an application for a construction or operation license for a midstream facility.

The notice is supposed to invite directly affected parties and local authorities in areas affected by a midstream facility to submit any objections, whether on personal, environmental or other grounds.

Mr. Kamugisha says, “The Minister of Energy is supposed to cause publication of that notice within 45 days after receiving an application for a construction or operation license for a midstream facility. However, as at August 25, 2022, 55 days had elapsed since the EACOP

Company submitted its application for a construction license. In violation of Section 12(1) and (2) of the 2013 Midstream Act however, the Minister was by August 25, 2022 yet to invite the public through a newspaper notice to submit their objections to issuance of a construction license to the EACOP Company.”

Mr. Brian Atuheire of African Initiative on Food Security and Environment (AIFE) says, “Uganda’s oil resources are located in the environmentally-sensitive Albertine Graben. The EACOP is also going to affect farmlands, forests, lakes, wetlands and rivers of not only community but national importance. Non-compliance to relevant laws will see huge negative impacts on host communities and other critical biodiversity arising from the EACOP.

Parliament must therefore task the Minister of Energy to explain why her ministry and sister agencies have consistently violated the law when it comes to the EACOP and related oil projects.”

Ms. Nankya, an EACOP-affected person from Kyotera district, says, “One of the laws that has been violated is the Constitution. While Article 26 of the 1995 Uganda Constitution provides that persons from whom government compulsorily acquires land must be paid prompt, fair and adequate compensation, compensation of communities whose land is being acquired for the EACOP started nearly three years after cut-off dates were placed on affected communities’ properties.

Today, many people are yet to be compensated and their families are facing untold suffering. Those from Kyotera, Kakumiro, Kikuube, Hoima and elsewhere are also complaining about low compensation.”

It will also be recalled that prior to issuance of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificate of approval to the Tilenga project developers in 2019, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU) violated environmental laws relating to public participation in EIA processes. AFIEGO and youth groups sued the two entities, calling for cancellation of the Tilenga EIA certificate in May 2019. Hearing of the court case is yet to be concluded, a miscarriage of justice.

Mr. Cyrus Kabaale of Strategic Response on Environment and Conservation (STREC) says, “By participating in processes through which Uganda’s laws are violated and courts fail to dispense justice, the oil companies including TotalEnergies, China National Offshore Oil Corporation [CNOOC] and Uganda National Oil Company [UNOC] that are operating in Uganda are aiding and abetting violation of laws.

Yet they continually tell Ugandans that they are committed to ensuring the highest standards in the oil and gas sector. How can any standards be met when national laws are wantonly violated?

The companies must stop aiding and abetting violations by refusing to participate in processes where laws are violated. On principle therefore, they must task the Ministry of Energy to stop processing their application for an EACOP construction license.”

Ms. Ireen Twongirwe of Women for Green Economic Movement (WoGEM) adds, “Civil society groups and Ugandans of goodwill should not look on as Uganda’s laws are violated. They should file court cases to stop the abuse of Uganda’s laws”.

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For more information, read this [communique](#).

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