

## December 2021; Issue 12

### AFIEGO'S 2021 IN REVIEW: WHAT WE DID, LEARNED AND ACHIEVED

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*Bugoma forest communities during a sensitisation meeting that was organised by AFIEGO and our Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBFC) partners in Kikuube district in 2021.*

*AFIEGO implemented various activities and attained several milestones in 2021.*

#### **In this newsletter:**

- 12 months, 12 milestones in 2021!
- AFIEGO's 2021 in review: What we did, learned and achieved
- Pictorial of our 2021 activities
- Lobbying in 2021
- In the media in 2021



Dear reader, by the time you read this newsletter, the new year (2022) will have clocked in! Congratulations on attaining the successes that you realised in 2021, and for overcoming the challenges you faced!

As is the norm, at the end of 2021, AFIEGO undertook a reflection exercise to determine how we performed on the goals we set for the year. To recap, AFIEGO set some of the following 2021 goals:

1. To use litigation, stakeholder engagement and others to revitalise efforts to stop the destruction of Bugoma and other forests in the Albertine Graben due to oil, sugarcane and land grabbing challenges.
2. In relation to the above, to increase community participation in efforts to save Bugoma and other Albertine Graben forests.
3. Further, to work with like-minded campaigns to prevent or stop the environmental, biodiversity, climate change and social risks presented by the Tilenga, Kingfisher and East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) oil projects in Uganda.
4. In relation to the above, to use litigation in Ugandan, East African and international courts to stop the destruction of Bugoma forest and the dangers of Uganda's oil refinery, Tilenga and EACOP oil projects.
5. Further, to strengthen media reporting on the impacts of Uganda's oil and gas projects as well as the impacts of destruction of Bugoma forest.
6. In addition, to support the community and civil society African Great Lakes movement for clean energy including youth and women to promote clean energy and a just energy transition away from dirty fuels.
7. Relatedly, to empower the recently elected women, youth and other leaders and their

communities to drive the clean renewable and off-grid energy agenda in Uganda.

8. Further, to strengthen and coordinate efforts to promote green economic alternatives in East Africa through formation of an East African network promoting the same.
9. In addition, to increase the organisation's use of electronic or online communication tools to continue work even amidst COVID-19 restrictions.
10. Finally, to improve the operational space for civil society groups and build resilience to work amidst increasing risks for the common good.

We registered several milestones related to the above goals. In our **Word from CEO**, we discuss the work we did in 2021 and the achievements we realised. We also share the challenges we faced and our plans to overcome them in 2022.

For those looking for a few minutes catch-up, we summarise the key milestones accruing from the above goals in the section, **12 months, 12 milestones in 2021!**

In our **pictorial**, we share key highlights of our 2021 work.

In our **lobbying** section, we bring you some of the over 50 lobby and advocacy products that we produced in 2021.

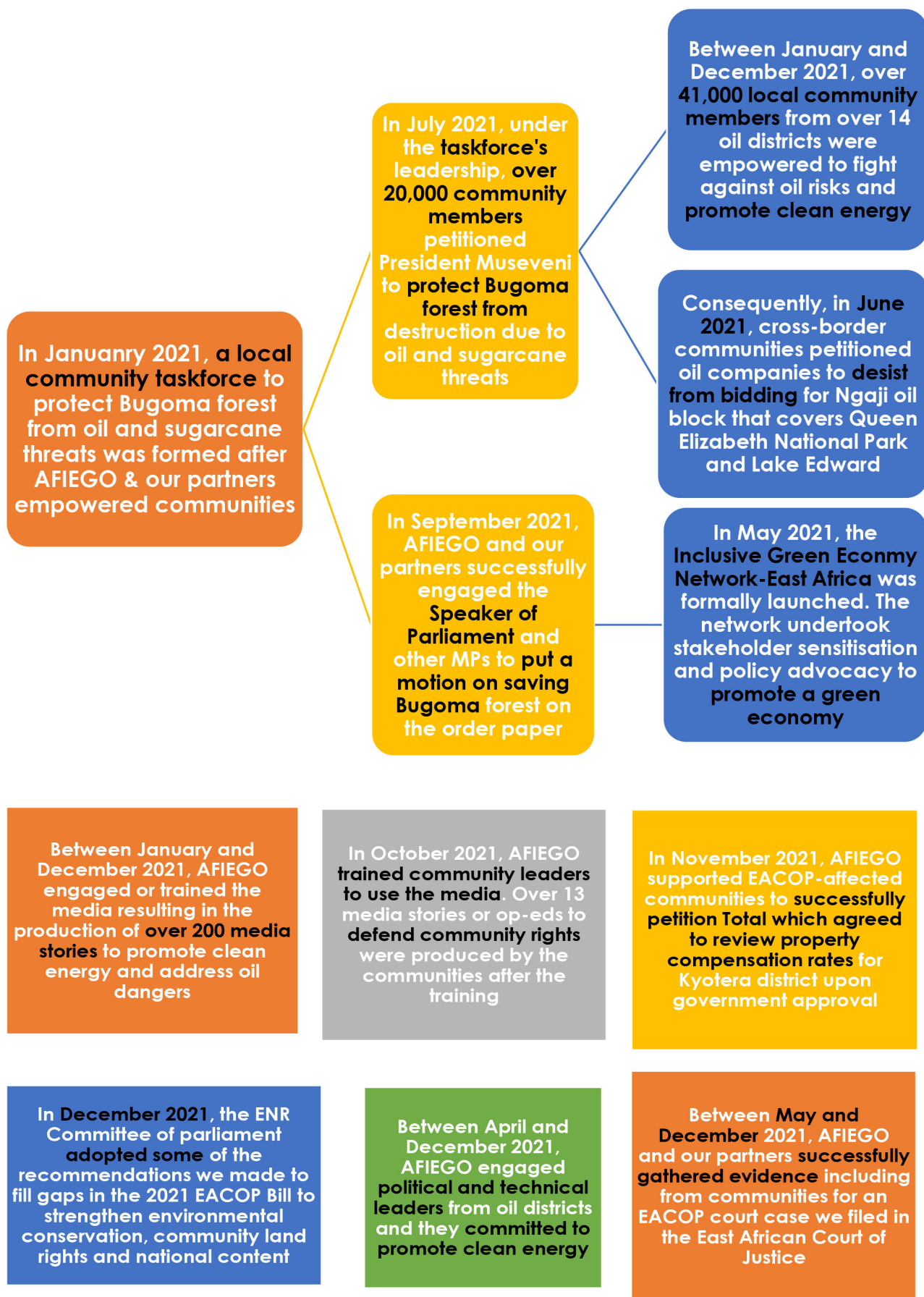
In **in the media** section, we bring you some of the over 201 media articles that were published from our work.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and, we wish you a happy and successful 2022.

**Editorial team:**  
**Diana Nabiruma**  
**Rachael Amongin**  
**Balach Bakundane**

# 12 months, 12 milestones in 2021!

AFIEGO attained various milestones in 2021. In the graphics below, 12 milestones we attained in 2021 are shown.





## AFIEGO'S 2021 IN REVIEW: WHAT WE DID, LEARNED AND ACHIEVED

What a year 2021 was! While a number of good things happened during the year, major challenges were also experienced. For instance, forests and other protected areas within and outside Uganda's most ecosensitive region, the Albertine Graben, faced increased pressure or were destroyed for oil and sugarcane projects respectively. Communities that rely on these environmental resources faced a bleak future.

Moreover, the communities themselves, especially the oil-affected and forest-dependent ones, suffered major human rights abuses. These ranged from land, livelihood, cultural, freedom of association and other rights abuses.

Civil society groups, including AFIEGO, were not spared. Through the Bureau for Non-governmental organisations (NGO Bureau), government cracked down on 54 civil society groups and tried to close them. The civic space in which civil society groups operate continued to shrink.

Amidst the above, the climate crisis came to a head and scientists noted that clean energy must be prioritised over oil, gas, coal and other fossil fuels to address the crisis. In the African Great Lakes region including in Uganda however, the above warnings and calls were ignored by government and multinational companies as plans to exploit oil and gas in the ecosensitive Albertine Graben continued.

AFIEGO and our partners rose to the occasion and did the following to address the above and other challenges in 2021.

### KEY 2021 ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

**(a) Influencing the EACOP Bill:** Part of AFIEGO's core work includes working with communities and leaders to make input into national laws for the common good. In 2021, we worked with our partners and communities, including women and youth, to influence or lobby for the enactment of **over six policies and laws.**

Notable among these was the 2021 East African Crude Oil Pipeline **-EACOP- (Special Provisions) Bill.** When the bill was tabled before parliament for debate and enactment, and when parliament invited for the public's views on the bill, AFIEGO mobilised 14 other civil society and community groups and submitted a memorandum of proposals on gaps and weaknesses in the bill to parliament. This was in November 2021.

Thereafter, in the same month, we appeared before **the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee** of parliament and made proposals to fill the gaps in the EACOP Bill.

Some **gains** were made. For instance, prior to passing of the 2021 EACOP (Special Provisions) Bill by parliament in December 2021, the ENR committee made recommendations to strengthen the protection of environmental, national content and communities' land rights in the bill. This was in line with our recommendations to the committee.

Challenges such as passing of the 2021 EACOP Bill without adequate stakeholder engagement and failure to fill major gaps in the bill remained however.

**(b) Advocacy to influence other laws:** AFIEGO also engaged in advocacy for the enactment or improvement of key policies and laws.

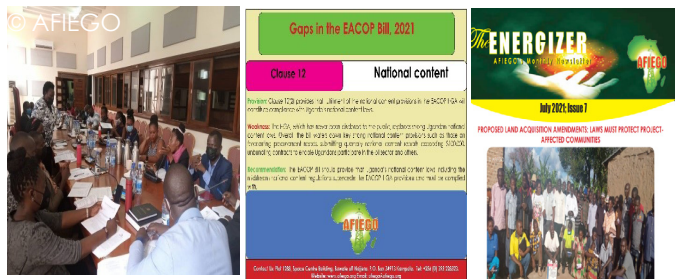
In July 2021 for instance, we made proposals to fill gaps in **Uganda's land acquisition laws** to protect community land rights and promote environmental conservation amidst oil and gas activities in Uganda.

Further, in August, October and December 2021, we undertook advocacy aimed at reforming the **2016 NGO Act** to protect civic space.

During the year (2021), we also campaigned for filling of gaps in the **2021 Public Finance Management (Amendment) Bill** to protect

Uganda's oil revenues; fasttracking of debate as well as enactment of the **2020 Electricity (Amendment) Bill** to increase clean energy access and; putting in place of a **Solar Energy Policy** to increase off-grid solar energy access.

By the end of the year however, the above bills or policies, save for the 2021 Public Finance Management (Amendment) Bill, were yet to be enacted.



**L: AFIEGO engaged the ENR Committee of parliament in 2021 to fill gaps in the EACOP Bill.**

**R: AFIEGO also engaged government to fill gaps in land acquisition laws.**

**(c) Forming community taskforce to save Bugoma forest:** By January 2021, Hoima Sugar Ltd had commenced on clearing parts of Bugoma forest for sugarcane growing. One of the key gaps in prior efforts to save Bugoma forest from destruction was inadequate community mobilisation and sensitisation.

Consequently, AFIEGO which retained the chairmanship of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBFC) in 2021, worked with our SBFC partners to mobilise and sensitise communities from over 30 villages around Bugoma forest in 2021.

The communities thereafter **elected a local taskforce to undertake** community sensitisation, media engagement and advocacy among others to protect Bugoma forest.

**(d) Mobilising stakeholders to protect Bugoma forest:** AFIEGO and our SBFC partners continued

to mobilise stakeholders to support saving Bugoma forest from oil, sugarcane and land grabbing challenges. In February 2021 for instance, AFIEGO and our partners organised strategic meetings with the **Kikuube district technical and political leadership** to mobilise their support for the protection of Bugoma forest.

The leaders we met included the RDC, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and others. In the same month, we also met with **religious leaders** from Bunyoro to mobilise their support to protect Bugoma forest.

Furthermore, in August 2021, AFIEGO and the SBFC including host community representatives met with the **EU Head of delegation**, H.E. Atillio Pacifici, and **seven EU ambassadors** to discuss the ongoing efforts to save Bugoma and Zoka forests from destruction. We also met with other stakeholders. The above stakeholders played a key role in continuing to ensure that pressure is applied in the ongoing efforts to save Bugoma forest.

**(e) Bugoma forest challenges put on parliament's order paper:** More work was undertaken to protect Bugoma forest. Notably, in September 2021, AFIEGO and our SBFC partners engaged the **Speaker of Parliament**, Hon. Jacob Oulanyah, to save Bugoma forest from sugarcane and land grabbing challenges.

The Speaker requested the SBFC to engage MPs to table a motion on the floor of parliament to save Bugoma forest.

AFIEGO and our SBFC partners successfully engaged MPs on the Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change (PFCC). A motion for parliamentary action to save Bugoma forest was **put on the order paper** in September 2021. Unfortunately, the motion mysteriously disappeared from the paper in October 2021 before parliament discussed it. AFIEGO will work towards remedying this challenge in 2022.

**(f) Successfully lobbying for opening of Bugoma forest boundaries:** AFIEGO and our SBFC partners started advocating for opening of the Bugoma forest boundaries by Uganda's Ministry of Lands in 2020. We demanded that the boundaries are opened with independent oversight to ensure credible results. A 2020 commitment to open the boundaries was made by the Ministry of Lands and National Forestry Authority (NFA).

In January 2021, we met with Ministry of Lands officials to determine how the boundary opening would be carried out with citizen participation.

Commitments were made by the Ministry of Lands to involve the SBFC, Institute of Surveyors, Uganda Law Society (ULS), religious leaders and others in the boundary opening exercise. In October 2021, AFIEGO and the SBFC once again met with the Ministry of Lands to discuss the progress of the boundary opening exercise.

The **ministry committed to open the boundaries in November 2021**, a commitment that was kept. However, stakeholders such as the SBFC were not involved in the actual boundary opening exercise, which could hurt the credibility of the boundary opening results.

**(g) Litigation to stop Bugoma forest destruction:** Hoima Sugar Ltd's unfortunate destruction of Bugoma forest is supported by decisions such as the giveaway of part of Bugoma forest land by the Ministry of Lands to Bunyoro Kingdom, which leased the land to Hoima Sugar; a High Court ruling allowing Hoima Sugar Ltd to retain ownership of the land and use it as they please and; approval of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for Hoima Sugar's sugarcane project by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA).

The August 2020 NEMA approval allowed Hoima Sugar to cut down the forest.

To remove the above barriers to save the forest, in January 2021, AFIEGO and our SBFC partners

filed a court appeal for cancellation of the ESIA certificate of approval that was issued to Hoima Sugar Ltd by NEMA.

While court ruled against AFIEGO and the SBFC in May 2021, we made arguments against the biased decision of the judge. We are happy to report that when other stakeholders including the Uganda Law Society (ULS) filed a case to stop the destruction of Bugoma forest, the judge who had ruled against AFIEGO and the SBFC removed himself from hearing the ULS case in December 2021. He noted that he did not want to be accused of being biased. This gives the ULS case a chance for fair hearing.

AFIEGO also filed other court cases challenging the constitutionality of giving away protected areas such as Bugoma forest.



**Community and stakeholder engagement meetings were organised by AFIEGO in 2021 to sustain pressure to protect Bugoma forest from oil, sugarcane and land grabbing challenges**

**(h) Empowering EACOP-affected communities on oil risks and land rights:** The year 2021 marked over three years since the compulsory land acquisition processes for the EACOP project that affected over 20,000 people in ten districts in Uganda commenced. Since the processes began, the people were deprived from using their land to grow perennial crops and set up new developments.

This led to grave impacts such as food scarcity, reduced household incomes, increased gender-based violence and others. Moreover, at the start of 2021, communities lacked knowledge on the environmental and social risks they faced due to



oil exploitation efforts.

To address this, between March and December 2021, AFIEGO worked with our partners and community-based monitors to organise community sensitisation meetings, radio talkshows and film screenings as well as to disseminate weekly news updates and IEC materials to empower over 87 communities to understand the risks of oil exploitation and demand for the respect of their rights.

Further, in November 2021, we supported communities from Lwengo and Kyotera districts to petition TotalEnergies to end the rights abuses. Consequently, in November 2021, Total committed to address grievances such as low compensation rates faced by the EACOP-affected people from Kyotera among others.

**(i) Training spokespeople from EACOP-affected communities:** In addition, to support EACOP-affected communities to use the media to defend their rights, in September 2021, AFIEGO trained community-based monitors from six EACOP-affected districts to use the media to tell their communities' stories. The trained community-based monitors published over five op-eds following the training. Over eight media articles or stories were also published following proactive engagement of the media by the monitors. AFIEGO also trained the media on oil impacts and supported journalists to undertake field visits and publish the communities' stories of pain.

**(j) Engaging parliamentarians on the EACOP project:** In April 2021, AFIEGO and our partners published a briefing paper through which we highlighted the risks of the EACOP project.

The paper, which was distributed to over 600 MPs and district leaders, was aimed at sensitising newly-elected MPs and district leaders about these risks so that they could make informed decisions to protect the environment and

communities amidst oil exploitation efforts in Uganda.

We also campaigned for contract transparency and called on the Ugandan government to publicly disclose the EACOP agreements that it signed with oil companies in April 2021. MPs picked up on this call and demanded for the same.

**(k) Legal efforts:** AFIEGO also continued to prosecute court cases in the Ugandan high court and the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) aimed at avoiding the risks posed by the oil refinery, EACOP and Tilenga oil projects. AFIEGO sensitised communities to understand the importance of these court cases, worked with our partners to gather community evidence to support the cases, mobilised and supported stakeholders to participate in the case hearings including in the hearing of the EACOP case at the EACJ in July 2021, trained the media to report on the court cases and others.



**AFIEGO empowered EACOP-affected communities to defend their land and environment rights in 2021.**

**AFIEGO also gathered evidence to support court cases we filed in Ugandan and East African courts to prevent oil dangers.**

**(l) Supporting the African Great Lakes movement to promote clean energy:** Between March and July 2021, AFIEGO supported the African Great Lakes movement for clean energy that is based in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to strengthen communities' understanding of oil and gas impacts.

With our partners, we organised film screenings

and radio talkshows, disseminated weekly energy news updates, distributed Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to communities to raise their awareness on impacts of oil and gas activities and others.

Following the increased awareness, communities undertook a number of initiatives such as petitioning oil companies in June 2021 to avoid bidding for Ngaji oil block in Queen Elizabeth National Park and Lake Edward.

**(m) Formation of IGEN-EA:** In 2021, AFIEGO and our partners supported the formation of the Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA). IGEN-EA is a network of 22 civil society and private sector leaders whose mission is to promote green economic activities in Uganda and the East African region.

In 2021, the network focused on campaigning for promotion of green economic alternatives such as agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, forestry and fisheries that promote environmental conservation and climate change mitigation while benefiting Ugandans and the economy.

**(n) International advocacy:** AFIEGO also participated in international advocacy efforts. For instance, in March 2021, with over 260 civil society groups from across the world, we wrote to 25 banks and reminded them of the importance of financing clean energy alternatives as opposed to the EACOP project.

With our partners, we also published a risk update in August 2021 that highlighted the risks of financing oil over clean energy projects in Uganda.

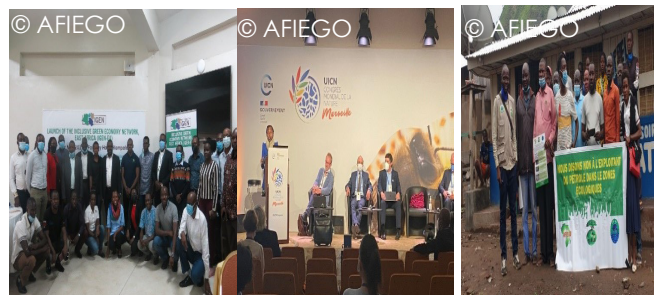
Further, with our partners, we also wrote letters and participated in banks' annual general meetings to call for financing of clean energy over oil projects in Uganda. Furthermore, we participated in a December 2021 meeting with US government officials and discussed failure by Uganda's oil

projects to comply with the IFC Performance standards. We did much more to mobilise financing for clean energy over oil projects.

Away from the above, in June 2021, we supported CSOs working in the extractives sector to strengthen their understanding of what the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** is. With the 14 civil society partners, in July 2021, we produced and submitted a report to the UN Human Rights Council with recommendations to improve human rights observance in the extractives sector in Uganda.

Further, in September 2021, AFIEGO participated in the **IUCN World Conservation Congress** in Marseille, France.

During the meeting, AFIEGO presented on the cross-border impacts of Uganda's oil activities, civic space challenges faced by women environmental defenders and others. We made recommendations to address the challenges.



**AFIEGO supported the formation of IGEN-EA and participated in international advocacy efforts to promote conservation of protected areas amidst oil exploitation efforts in Uganda**

## CHALLENGES

Despite the milestones that we registered, we faced several challenges in 2021 including the following:

**i. The EACOP Bill was hurriedly passed without adequate stakeholder engagement to allow oil exploitation with all the risks it poses to Ugandans.**



**ii. Further, government failed to table the 2020 Electricity (Amendment) Bill before parliament for debate and enactment.**

**iii. In addition, despite sustained women and youth advocacy, the Ministry of Energy was yet to put in place a Solar Energy Policy by the end of 2021.**

**iv. In addition, Bugoma forest was still being destroyed despite the sustained pressure to stop the destruction.**

**v. Moreover, parliament mysteriously removed the motion on saving Bugoma forest from the order paper. Parliament seems encumbered from discussing protection of the forest despite expression of interest in the same by the speaker and other MPs.**

**vi. Furthermore, courts undermined protection of the forest through making biased decisions and through being slow at hearing court cases. The EACOP case at the EACJ was also undermined by the slow hearing processes.**

**vii. By the end of 2021, the EACOP-affected communities were yet to be compensated for their land that is being acquired for the project.**

**viii. Moreover, community awareness of the potential environmental and climate change**

impacts of the project remained limited.

**ix. Furthermore, there were gaps in mobilising EACOP communities to build the unity needed to speak with one voice to defend their rights.**

**x. In addition, while EACOP community spokespeople had been trained, they still require support to be mouthpieces for their communities that are often overlooked in national debates that affect them.**

**xi. Allocating sufficient financing to clean energy was also still a challenge by the end of 2021.**

**xii. Moreover, the Ugandan government was still interested in exploiting oil and gas in protected areas such as Queen Elizabeth National Park, Murchison Falls National Park, Lake Edward and Lake Albert by the end of 2021.**

**xiii. Finally, the civic space in Uganda remained hostile and worsened. Civil society groups faced obstacles including arrests and detentions.**

AFIEGO will work towards addressing the above challenges in 2022.

Happy New Year!

**Dickens Kamugisha,  
CEO, AFIEGO**



# Pictorial of our activities

## AFIEGO EMPOWERS COMMUNITIES TO PROTECT BUGOMA FOREST AGAINST SUGARCANE AND OIL DANGERS



In 2021, AFIEGO and our Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBFC) partners sensitised over 20,000 community members from over 30 villages around Bugoma forest.

Through the community meetings and radio talkshows that we organised, we empowered the communities to participate in efforts to protect the forest.

A local SBFC taskforce was formed as a result of the empowerment efforts. The taskforce undertook initiatives such as organising radio talkshows and community sensitisation meetings.

The taskforce also mobilised over 20,000 people to petition the president, Prime Minister and Bunyoro area MPs among others to save Bugoma forest from oil, sugarcane and land grabbing challenges.

In the photos are AFIEGO staff, our SBFC partners and community members following meetings in Kikuube district in April 2021.



## AFIEGO AND PARTNERS ENGAGE THE EU, OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO PROTECT BUGOMA FOREST



In 2021, AFIEGO and the SBFC continued to mobilise stakeholders including the EU, district political and technical leaders, religious leaders, the media and others to sustain pressure or interest in protecting Bugoma forest, which was being destroyed by Hoima Sugar Ltd.

To this end, in August 2021, we engaged the EU Head of delegation, H.E. Atilio Pacifici, and seven other EU ambassadors (top photo).

In February 2021, we engaged with Mr. Amlan Tumusiime, the RDC of Kikuube district (bottom photo), other district leaders, religious leaders, the media and others.

The engagements sustained stakeholder interest in saving the forest.



## AFIEGO AND PARTNERS ENGAGE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT ON BUGOMA FOREST



In September 2021, AFIEGO and our SBFC partners including community representatives participated in a meeting with Hon. Jacob Oulanyah, the Speaker of Parliament (top photo). We appealed to the Speaker to use parliamentary powers to stop the destruction of Bugoma forest.

A petition, signed by over 20,000 people, to stop destruction of the forest was also handed to the Speaker.

The Speaker requested the SBFC to engage parliamentarians to table a motion before parliament to save Bugoma forest. The SBFC engaged MPs from the Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change (bottom photo) who agreed to table the motion. The motion was put on the order paper on September 28, 2021. However, the motion was never discussed.





## AFIEGO AND PARTNERS ENGAGE MINISTRY OF LANDS TO OPEN BUGOMA FOREST BOUNDARIES



In January and October 2021, AFIEGO and our SBFC partners including local community representatives engaged the Ministry of Lands to open the Bugoma forest boundaries.

During the January meeting (top photo), the ministry committed to open the boundaries with independent oversight. The ministry committed to allow the SBFC, Institute of Surveyors, Inter-religious council, Uganda Law Society and others to participate in the boundary opening.

During the October 2021 meeting (bottom photo), the SBFC reminded the Ministry of Lands of this commitment and requested for a concrete date on which the boundary opening would occur.

The ministry committed to begin the boundary-opening in November 2021. The commitment was kept though independent stakeholders such as the SBFC did not participate in the boundary opening.

AFIEGO also prosecuted court cases in 2021 to save Bugoma forest.

## AFIEGO EMPOWERS EACOP-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES ON OIL RISKS AND THEIR LAND RIGHTS



Throughout 2021, AFIEGO empowered communities affected by the EACOP oil project to understand the environmental and social risks of oil exploitation efforts.

AFIEGO also empowered the communities to defend their land rights. AFIEGO organised community meetings, film screenings, radio talkshows and disseminated weekly energy news updates, IEC materials and others to empower the communities in Uganda.

In the photos are EACOP-affected community members from Greater Masaka (top photo) and Bunyoro (bottom photo) during or after community sensitisation meetings in April 2021.

## AFIEGO TRAINS EACOP-AFFECTED PEOPLE TO UTILISE THE MEDIA



In September 2021, AFIEGO trained community-based monitors from six EACOP-affected districts to be able to use the media to tell their communities' stories (top photo).

The monitors were able to write op-eds and successfully engage the media to publish their community concerns following the training. AFIEGO also trained the media to report on oil impacts.

Further, AFIEGO supported journalists to undertake field visits to the EACOP-affected communities to document the affected communities' challenges in November 2021 (bottom photo). Media stories were published from the field visits.



## AFIEGO EMPOWERS MPS AND DISTRICT LEADERS ON OIL RISKS



In April 2021, AFIEGO published a briefing paper on the risks posed by the EACOP, Tilenga and Kingfisher oil projects.

The briefing paper was aimed at sensitising newly-elected MPs and district leaders about these dangers so that they could make informed decisions to protect the environment and communities amidst oil exploitation efforts in Uganda.

AFIEGO distributed over 600 copies of the briefing paper to MPs and district leaders.

In the photos are AFIEGO staff and our partners during and after handover of the briefing paper to district leaders in Kyotera and Lwengo districts.

## AFIEGO SUPPORTS TILenga-AFFECTED FAMILIES TO COMMENCE CASE APPEAL PROCESSES



In 2021, the high court ruled against nine Tilenga families that rejected the low compensation offered by Total for their land in Buliisa district. The land is being acquired for the industrial area in the district.

In June 2021, AFIEGO organised a strategic meeting (top photo) with the families and discussed the way forward after the ruling. The families agreed to appeal against the high court decision. The court case appeal processes were commenced.

AFIEGO continued to organise meetings with the families in 2021 to update them on the progress of the appeal process. In the bottom photo are the families after one such meeting in September 2021.

## AFIEGO STRENGTHENS CROSS-BORDER MOVEMENT TO PROMOTE CLEAN ENERGY



Between March and July 2021, AFIEGO organised community meetings, film screenings and radio talkshows for youth, women and other stakeholders from the cross-border areas of Uganda and the DRC.

The activities were aimed at strengthening communities' understanding of the potential oil impacts based on the experiences of various countries. AFIEGO also disseminated IEC materials, weekly news updates, newsletters and others to empower communities.

The youth and women were empowered to defend protected areas from oil risks.

In the photos are Ugandan and DRC communities as well as our partners after (top photo) and during the film screenings (bottom photo).



## AFIEGO SUPPORTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INCLUSIVE GREEN ECONOMY NETWORK



In 2021, AFIEGO worked with our partners to support the formation and establishment of the Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA).


AFIEGO and our partners participated in research to aid formation of the network, mobilised members to join the network, organised a meeting for the network members to build relationships and with the IGEN-EA members, officially launched the network in May 2021.

After and before its official launch, AFIEGO, which coordinates the network, organised planning meetings, community and media sensitisation engagements, radio talkshows and other activities aimed at promoting green economic alternatives in East Africa.

In the photos are AFIEGO staff and IGEN-EA members at the network's first in-person meeting in February 2021 (top photo) and at the launch of the network in May 2021 (bottom photo).

AFIEGO also worked with our CSO partners to participate in national and international advocacy to improve civic space and the human rights situation in the extractives sector in Uganda.






**Online UPR workshop for CSOs in the extractives sector**

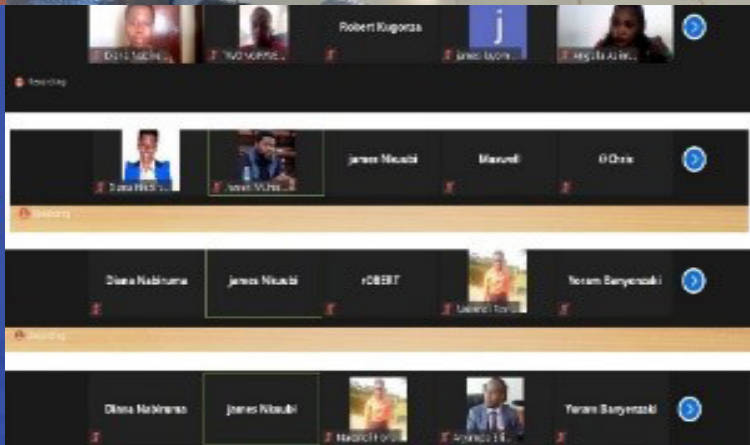
**ZOOM LIVE ONLINE**

**Purpose: To support CSOs to influence the Universal Periodic Review for Uganda for the promotion of human rights**

**When: June 10, 2021**  
**With Time: 9am EAT**

**A link will be shared with participants**

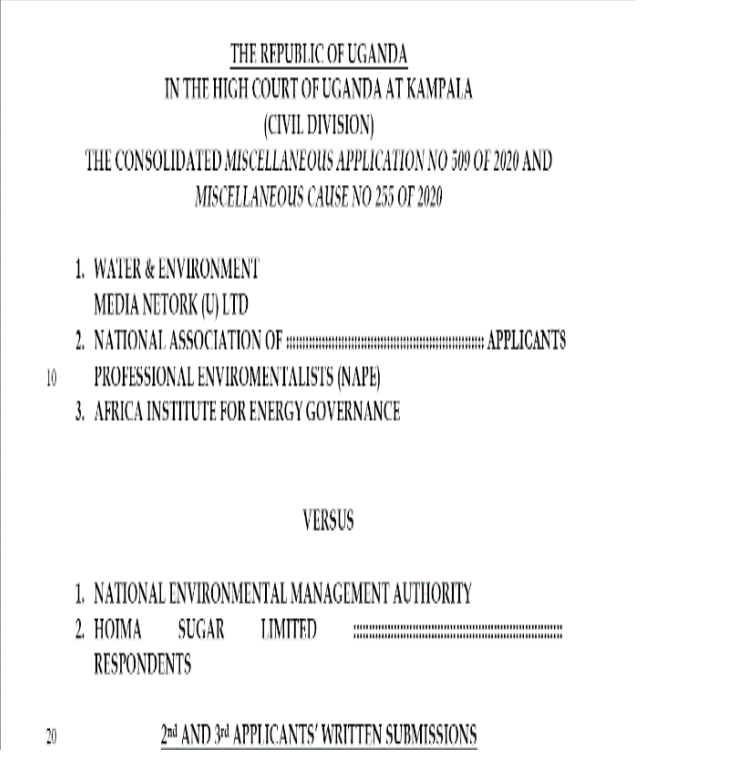
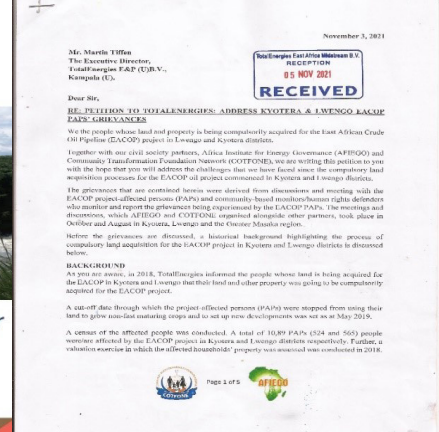
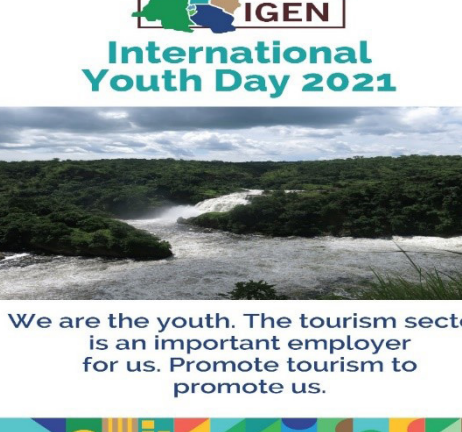
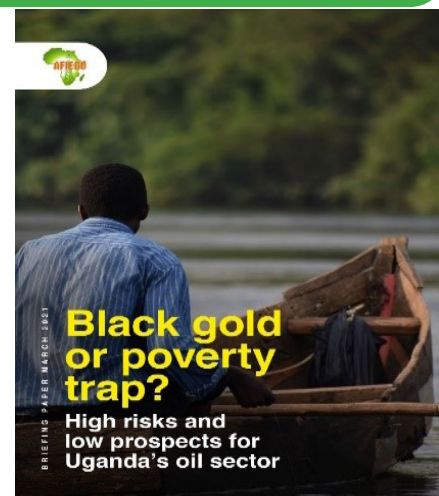
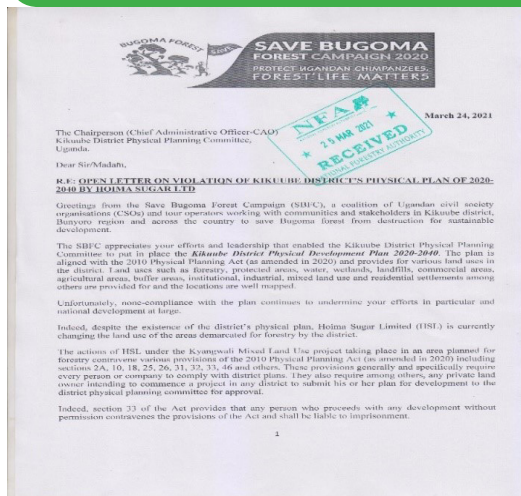






# Lobbying in 2021

AFIEGO and our partners produced over 50 lobby and advocacy materials including briefing papers, memoranda, memoranda, advocacy letters, press statements, petitions and others in 2021. Some of these, which led to the successes discussed in this newsletter, are captured below.





# In the media in 2021

In 2021, AFIEGO staff and our partners produced over 98 articles that were published by Uganda's major newspapers.

Our press statements and media interviews also resulted in the production of over 103 media stories that were published in Uganda, DRC, Nigeria, South Africa, France, the UK, and other countries.

Some of our 2021 media output is captured below.

## Electricity Act 1999 should be amended to curb power theft

On Friday April 9, Daily Monitor reported that power distribution companies have lost Sh599 to power theft in Jinja Sub-region between January and March and that such loss is greatly attributed to the outdated Electricity Act 1999.

As much as the Judiciary created a Utilities, Standards and Wildlife Court to prosecute culprits involved in stealing of utilities such as power, the Electricity Act prescribes very weak punishment for culprits. Power theft, illegal connection and vandalism in Uganda are rampant crimes where wires are left exposed which at times lead to electrocutions.

Section 88 (1) of the Electricity Act 1999 imposes a penalty of 30 currency points (Sh200) or two years imprisonment or both to anyone who steals power.

The Act does not provide stringent punishment to culprits of power theft or vandalism to equipment from the network, despite the huge losses the habits cause to the company and the country at large.

The Electricity Amendment Bill 2020 to repeal the Electricity Act of 1999 was approved by Cabinet on July 30, 2020, but it is moving at snail's pace yet the electricity sector is facing a lot of challenges that can only be addressed by amending the Electricity Act.

On top of power theft, the electricity sector is facing other challenges such as high power tariffs, even after commissioning the 131MW hydro power dam, the power tariffs remained the same as in the previous years.

**"The Electricity Act 1999 imposes a penalty of 30 currency points or two years imprisonment."**

**Doreen Namara Electricity**

The prices include Sh751.9 per unit for domestic consumers, Sh464.6 for commercial consumers and Sh104.6 for large industries.

If the service fee and Value Added Tax (VAT) costs are added to the above prices, domestic consumers pay nearly Sh1,000 per unit of power. The cost paid by the commercial and large consumers also increases.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) should work with Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) and prevent the Electricity Bill 2020 to Parliament and the Bill must address the following:

- Provide for tougher and deterrent punishment for power theft and vandalism;
- Distribution companies should be penalised for power outages and compensate the affected users for the loss suffered due to power blackout;
- Make provision on alternative power supply specifically off-grid energy sector;
- Provide for compulsory land acquisition in line with Article 26 of the 1995 Constitution to solve issues of deemed power;
- Put a limit on borrowing money to invest in grid power that leads to high return on investment that make power very expensive;
- Compulsions filed at the electricity tribunal must be concluded in 30 days from the day of filing and appeals from the tribunal to High Court in 40 days from the day of filing the appeal;
- Held government officials who sign bad power purchase agreement that cause losses to government through corruption, personally liable;
- Provide alternative ways for distribution companies to be repaid other than cutting off power like withholding money owed to Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Ltd (UETCL) to offset debts by hospitals;
- Provide for standard electricity meters and make it punishable for a supplier who delivers substandard meters;
- Make it mandatory requirement to use metallic and concrete poles and replace all the wooden electricity poles within a year from the passing of the Act.

**Ms Doreen Namara is a legal officer at AFIEGO Africa.**

## Locals decry varying compensation rates

**BY WILSON KUTAMBA**

**KYOTERA.** Locals in Kyotera, Lwero and Sembabule districts, who were displaced by the oil pipeline project have raised a red flag over disparities in compensation rates.

Mr. Salongo Gyengye said his neighbour's cassava garden was valued at Sh3,000 per plant, while his was valued at Sh1,000 by the government chief value.

"The government didn't consider our loss in the neighbourhood," he said.

Mr. Gyengye accused the government of failure to compensate project affected persons three years later.

Mr. Ivan Katende, a resident of Kibukuba Village in Tororo, said he plans to set up a resident committee to speed up the compensation process, saying many elderly beneficiaries have since died.

Mr. James Bala, a resident of Kibukuba Village, Kibuku county, said they were asked to open bank accounts and they have since accumulated 'bank chag'.

He also revealed that government's decision to take up the land for the pipeline project has increased domestic violence and misunderstandings among orphans over ownership rights.

Mr. Josiah Mubiru, a resident of Sembabule District, accused the government of undervaluing of their properties.

According to Mr. Madhu Yasin, the coordinator of Community Transformation Foundation Network (CTFON), a network of community-based organisations in Masaba sub-region, the compensation process has been marred with impunity and corruption.

"Some PAPs (project affected persons) are intimidated and arrested by police when they interact with media or CSOs," he said.

Ms Diana Nabwera, the senior communications officer at AFIEGO, said it's unfortunate that some compensation will not be made to PAPs to replace the land or assets they lost.

"Total and all joint venture partners in Lake Albert project indicate that they will adhere to the basic international practices of the issue."

Mr. Salongo Gyengye said his neighbour's cassava garden was valued at Sh3,000 per plant, while his was valued at Sh1,000 by the government chief value.

"Compensation will be paid in a two-year period from high account opening. The project will start PAP Enrollment, findings and signing of Compensation Agreements (shortly payment will take place immediately thereafter)," he explained.

**EDITOR:** There have been media reports about land delays in opening Kibukuba district leaders because of developments taking place in the area. Developments such as oil and gas plus sugar cane growing have led to massive land grabbing from the poor. Residents are regretting why the developments came in their areas. Many people in the Bwera are in fear of their land being taken by investors and the rich. Recently, residents of Nyangwale, Rwekaba, Kibukuba and Rwekaba in Kibukuba sub-county, Kibuku district were seeking the intervention of Kibuku district local government after receiving eviction threats from Hitanga Sugar company. The intimidations have created tension and resulted in Bwera host communities not accessing the forest for water, firewood, local herbs and their gardens. The communities need immediate intervention from the Government. Eviction threats have become rampant among the Buguma communities due to delays in opening forest boundaries and the Government's failure to allocate money for the process. The above scenarios have led to increased land conflicts in Bwera sub-region, especially Kibukuba where there is both sugar cane growing as well as oil and gas activities. Since 2016, the massive destruction of Buguma forest reserve has been taking place under the watch of the authorities, with some officials supporting the sugar factory activities. Now that part of the forest has been cleared, the factory has started encroaching on land of the host communities. This means that most of Buguma communities are likely to become landless if Hitanga Sugar evicts them. The boundaries' opening was supposed to be done in February, but was delayed. The Government needs to open the forest boundaries to the host communities, understand the communities, reduce the tensions, host communities and increase conservation of the critical ecosystems. Therefore, I call on the district commissioner, Kibukuba district environmental officer, Ministry of Water and Environment, environmental Police, National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Ministry of Lands and urban development and the President to ensure that there is immediate opening of Buguma boundaries to reduce tension in surrounding communities.

**Paul Kato, research associate at Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) Kampala**

## EACOP-affected people need help

Kyotera is one of the districts where government, through TotalEnergies, is acquiring land for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project.

Land for the EACOP project is being acquired from over 3,000 households with over 20,631 people in ten districts. These are huge numbers.

In Kyotera, the number of affected households is 524. Of these, 51 are losing land they use to grow crops and support their families while 13 will be displaced.

The 13 households are losing their houses and will have new houses built for them by government through TotalEnergies. There are disputes already as regards the types and sizes of houses that TotalEnergies wants to build!

Recently, through its sub-contractors, TotalEnergies, carried out what it called the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) disclosure exercise. During the exercise, the persons whose land and other property is being acquired for the EACOP were shown the compensation that is due to them.

Unfortunately, the exercise was characterised by several flaws. The first was that the assessment forms that the affected landowners or users were given were in English. The majority of the affected people do not speak English. Community-based monitors or other trusted people who do so and could have assisted the affected people to interpret the forms were not allowed to support the affected people.

Many have reported that they signed forms whose contents they do not understand.

When EACOP-affected people or human rights defenders complain about the project, they are intimidated by subcontractors and security agencies. This kind of intimidation must stop.

**Rodgers Ntumwa & Herman Bbale, Kyotera.**

## BUGOMA FOREST BOUNDARIES SHOULD BE OPENED

**EDITOR:** There have been media reports about land delays in opening Kibukuba district leaders because of developments taking place in the area. Developments such as oil and gas plus sugar cane growing have led to massive land grabbing from the poor. Residents are regretting why the developments came in their areas. Many people in the Bwera are in fear of their land being taken by investors and the rich. Recently, residents of Nyangwale, Rwekaba, Kibukuba and Rwekaba in Kibukuba sub-county, Kibuku district were seeking the intervention of Kibuku district local government after receiving eviction threats from Hitanga Sugar company. The intimidations have created tension and resulted in Bwera host communities not accessing the forest for water, firewood, local herbs and their gardens. The communities need immediate intervention from the Government. Eviction threats have become rampant among the Buguma communities due to delays in opening forest boundaries and the Government's failure to allocate money for the process. The above scenarios have led to increased land conflicts in Bwera sub-region, especially Kibukuba where there is both sugar cane growing as well as oil and gas activities. Since 2016, the massive destruction of Buguma forest reserve has been taking place under the watch of the authorities, with some officials supporting the sugar factory activities. Now that part of the forest has been cleared, the factory has started encroaching on land of the host communities. This means that most of Buguma communities are likely to become landless if Hitanga Sugar evicts them. The boundaries' opening was supposed to be done in February, but was delayed. The Government needs to open the forest boundaries to the host communities, understand the communities, reduce the tensions, host communities and increase conservation of the critical ecosystems. Therefore, I call on the district commissioner, Kibukuba district environmental officer, Ministry of Water and Environment, environmental Police, National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Ministry of Lands and urban development and the President to ensure that there is immediate opening of Buguma boundaries to reduce tension in surrounding communities.

**Paul Kato, research associate at Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) Kampala**

## Museveni should assent to Climate Change bill

I am appealing to President Museveni to sign the climate change bill, which the parliament passed on April 27, 2020 into law. Climate change is one of the major threats to Uganda's sustainable development and efforts to end poverty. More so, it's important to note that the poor and vulnerable citizens are hit hardest by climate change effects.

Uganda has experienced increased adverse weather patterns such as prolonged drought in the north, landslides in the east, and devastating floods, all of which have continuously affected the vulnerable and marginalized poor Ugandans.

Climate change is likely to increase food insecurity in Uganda, shifts in the spread of diseases like malaria, soil erosion and land degradation and flood damage to infrastructure and settlements, just to mention a few.

Furthermore, global emissions of greenhouse gases are still on the rise due to climate change. Even with our commitment to cut net global emissions to zero by 2050, the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will continue to increase for the coming decades, and average global temperatures will increase unless we sign the bill into law to find basic ways to mitigate and adapt the effects of climate change.

**Ireen Twongirwe Kampala.**

## AFIEGO hunted for its work – CEO

**By Kazi Njema Reporter - October 29, 2021**

The Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Dickens Kamugisha, has decried the manner in which the NGO Bureau is exerting high handedness on Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in their civic operations.

**Need Help? Chat with us**

**Mr Kamugisha says the recent arrest and detention of AFIEGO staff was intended**

## 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