



April 2021; Issue 4

ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY ABUSES & INCREASING DEBT: IS UGANDA SEEING THE BEGINNING OF THE OIL CURSE?



AFIEGO following an April 2021 community sensitisation meeting with oil-affected persons in Kikuube district.

AFIEGO engaged EACOP and other oil-affected persons from over 87 communities in April 2021.

These shared their stories of pain and fears over the EACOP.



In April 2021, the Minister of Finance indicated that Uganda would engage its creditors to reschedule loan repayments.

Uganda's debt stands at over UGX 65 trillion. Every Ugandan owes UGX 1.5 million.

Increased borrowing in anticipation of oil revenues amidst environmental and human rights abuses has led to fears that Uganda may not escape the oil curse.

In this newsletter:

- Increasing debt & EACOP rights abuses could be making of the oil curse: Uganda should do better
- Pictorial of our activities
- Lobbying
- In the media
- Upcoming events



The month of April was one of contradictions. On April 23, 2021 for instance, government approved the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) report for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project.

At the launch of the report, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) indicated that the RAP implementation may cost over UGX 65 billion (\$18 million). Information from the EACOP RAP however indicates that the land acquisition costs for the priority areas will be \$45 million.

The cost will enable government to acquire land from 3,792 EACOP-affected households. The pipeline will cover 296km in Uganda.

The EACOP, which will be hosted in Uganda and Tanzania, will be 1,443km long.

As the RAP was being launched, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) was also announcing that government may soon reach out to its big lenders such as the World Bank, China, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and others to reschedule loan repayments.

Currently, Uganda's debt stands at over UGX 65 trillion (\$18 billion). Over 20% of Uganda's 2021/2022 national budget will be spent on debt servicing. In 2020 alone, government borrowed over UGX 15 trillion (over \$4.5 billion). This is the year that government had promised to announce the Final Investment Decision (FID).

Government continues to say that the increased borrowing is not tagged to anticipation of oil revenues. But the fact remains that since the discovery of

commercial oil deposits in 2006 in Uganda, the country has witnessed increased borrowing.

With the increased borrowing, not even the 2000 debt forgiveness has helped Uganda avoid debt stress. Many Ugandans believe that government's increased borrowing is the beginning of the oil curse for Uganda.

Indeed, during the month of April, the markers of the oil curse were evident not only in the form of the increased debts but also at community level.

In April, AFIEGO and our partners working to protect communities and the environment from oil dangers engaged people and leaders in 87 communities that were affected by the EACOP project's land acquisition processes.

During the engagements in which we reached women, youth, the elderly, men, local leaders, religious leaders, local government leaders, members of the media and others, the human suffering caused by the EACOP project was evident.

The EACOP project-affected persons (PAPs) shared heart-rending stories. Elderly women spoke of fears that because they are being forced to live too near the EACOP as only part of their land is being acquired, their health was being put at risk.

"Why should I live out my last years in fear because the oil companies insist that I should live near a heated pipeline? I have seen what is happening to the health of the people who live near oil infrastructure in South Sudan and I don't want to suffer like those people," one elderly woman said during our engagements.

Further, elderly men wanted to break down when they spoke of their dehumanization, and emasculation. They noted that as family leaders, they used to have a say as to how their land could be used. With the EACOP land acquisition processes however, their powers were taken away. As such, they can't do little things such as rebuilding their family's kitchens. They also cannot make decisions on where their family members get buried.

The people also decried the delayed compensation and intimidation due to the EACOP project.

In our **Word from CEO and Partners**, we bring you the EACOP-affected people's voices of pain. We also show how the approval of the EACOP RAP will not address the problems faced by the EACOP PAPs. Combined, Uganda's debt and mistreatment of the EACOP PAPs stand to put Uganda on course for the oil curse.

In our **pictorial**, we bring you some of the activities we implemented this month. For instance, we held community and stakeholder sensitisation engagements for over 87 communities that have been affected the EACOP project. We empowered the communities to defend their land and environment rights.

We also held over 12 community and stakeholder meetings with communities living around Bugoma forest in Kikuube district to strengthen them to defend Bugoma from oil and sugarcane threats.

We also met with government and religious leaders as well as organised media engagements to strengthen efforts to protect Bugoma forest. We directly reached over 500 stakeholders in our Save

Bugoma Forest engagements.

Furthermore, we commenced the process of filing a High Court case against Hoima Sugar Ltd, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), National Physical Planning Board (NPPB) and Kikuube district among others over the above parties' failure to enforce the Kikuube district Physical Plan of 2020-2040 to protect Bugoma forest.

We did much more as is captured in our pictorial section.

In our **lobbying** section, we bring you a communique that 44 civil society organisations (CSOs) issued. Through the communique, the COs rejected the secret agreements that were signed for the EACOP project. Furthermore, we issued a press statement through which over nine CSOs called on parliament to weigh the EACOP risks before approving a \$130 million loan request for the EACOP project.

In addition, with our partners under the Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA), we issued a statement calling on government to prioritise investment in green economic sectors over dirty energy projects.

In **in the media section**, we bring you some of the articles that were published from our media interviews in addition to articles that staff and our partners wrote. The articles were part of our public education and lobby in addition to advocacy efforts.

We hope you will enjoy the newsletter.

Editorial team:

Diana Nabiruma

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INCREASING DEBT & EACOP RIGHTS ABUSES COULD BE MAKING OF THE OIL CURSE: UGANDA SHOULD DO BETTER

Dear reader,

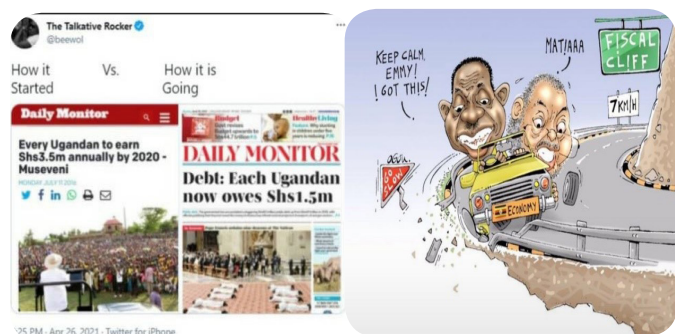
If you are based in Uganda, you must be aware of the raging debate over Uganda's escalating indebtedness.

While the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) previously indicated that Uganda's economy was 'swiii', meaning that it was in the take-off stage, the same minister shared some bad news with Ugandans this month.

Instead of delivering Ugandans to middle income status by 2020 as promised by government, the Minister noted that Ugandans been delivered into great indebtedness.

The level of Uganda's indebtedness has been discussed at length in the Editorial section and we will not belabour the point here. Overall, though, the country's debt stands at over UGX 65 trillion. This debt is set to increase as the country borrows to invest in Uganda's oil and infrastructure projects. Between \$15 to 20 billion could be invested in the oil sector.

With choking debt, government says that the country could ask the country's lenders to reschedule loan repayments, while borrowing more!



Uganda's debt has increased to over UGX 65 trillion. Increased borrowing in anticipation of oil revenues could see Uganda suffer the oil curse, economists such as the Bank of Uganda Governor have previously said.

EACOP-AFFECTED PEOPLE'S PAINS

While debate on the country's debt raged at national level, the pains of the EACOP project-affected persons (PAPs) simmered at community level.

As many of us are aware, the EACOP is a planned 1,443km pipeline that is expected to be built from Hoima in Uganda to Tanga in Tanzania. The EACOP will traverse a distance of 296km in Uganda.

Land for the pipeline is being acquired from 3, 792 households in ten districts, 27 sub-counties, three town councils and 171 villages in Uganda.

The land acquisition processes for the EACOP commenced years ago and the people whose land is being acquired tell stories of pain. Unless the people's grievances are effectively addressed, Uganda will be put further on course for the oil curse.

EACOP PAPs' STORIES OF PAIN AND FEAR

(a) Land acquisition woes: The land acquisition woes of the EACOP PAPs have been repeatedly told but they are worth re-telling. In May and June 2019, Total, using powers conferred on the company by government, set cut-off dates through which PAPs were stopped from growing perennial crops, refurbishing their property and setting up any new developments.

The constitutionality of companies acquiring land on government's behalf is questionable. The 1995 Uganda Constitution which confers on the Ugandan government compulsory land acquisition powers does not provide that government

may pass on these powers to a developer.

Be it is as it may, Total procured consultants including Newplan, ICS and others to conduct assessments and valuations of PAPs' property.

And there began the EACOP PAPs' stories of suffering.

(b) Intimidation: Among others, following identification of the EACOP corridor, the land acquisition process began with planning surveys and valuations. Socio-economic surveys of the EACOP PAPs were undertaken. The PAPs' affected properties were also assessed and valued.

At this stage, PAPs report that disputes arose as some of their properties were not captured on the assessment forms.

Instead of meaningfully addressing their challenges, the PAPs were intimidated.

Security agents such as Resident District Commissioners (RDC), District Police Commanders (DPCs) and others were used to intimidate the PAPs. To date, the PAPs continue to face intimidation as they try to defend their rights.

(c) Assessed but no assessment forms left: In addition, strange behaviour that can only be aimed at facilitation of corruption happened during the assessment phase.

PAPs especially those in Bunyoro report that though companies assessed their affected property, they did not leave any copies of assessment forms with the respective property owners. Instead, photos of the PAPs standing amidst their properties were taken!

(d) Not involved in setting of compensation rates: Prior to the assessment phase, the PAPs say that they were not involved in the setting of compensation rates for crops and buildings of a none-permanent nature.

Section 59 of the 1998 Land Act requires every district to put in place these compensation rates every year. However, since 2019 when the oil companies and their contractors commenced the assessment of the EACOP PAPs' property, PAPs say that they have never been consulted on the compensation rates as is provided for by the 1998 Land Act. This facilitated the under-valuation of PAPs' property in several districts.

(e) Lack of grievance-handling offices in communities: Further, while many PAPs are unhappy with the land acquisition processes, they remain stuck. Companies refused to open offices in the affected villages. In areas such as Greater Masaka, Total does not have any known office, the PAPs say.

This has denied the PAPs the ability to lodge grievances. Moreover, the PAPs report that oil companies recruited local council officials on Resettlement Committees (RCs).

The leaders were supposed to protect the PAPs' rights. However, today, the leaders especially those in Bunyoro look at the benefits they can make from working with the companies and ignore addressing of the EACOP PAPs' grievances.

(f) Reduction in EACOP corridor while ignoring elderly's fears: Land measuring 30 metres wide is being acquired from the majority of the PAPs. This means that some of the PAPs' land will be left over and the majority of the PAPs will have the pipeline constructed near their homes. This has raised fears especially

amongst the elderly.

The PAPs fear that living near the longest heated crude oil pipeline in the world poses negative impacts on people's health, wildlife and other critical biodiversity.



Ms. Jane Nalubowa from Kyotera district (2nd L), 75, is one of many EACOP PAPs who are fearful over living near an oil pipeline.

The PAPs are afraid that their health and ability to farm will be hurt by the pipeline.

(g) Fear of environmental degradation: Mr. Peter Twinamasiko is the vice chairperson of Nyakabaale village in Kikuube district.

During a community sensitisation meeting in Kikuube this month, one worry was foremost in Mr. Twinamasiko's mind: the invasion of forests such as Bugoma by land grabbers and loggers!

"Ever since the discovery of oil, many unknown people have invaded [Bugoma] forest," Mr. Twinamasiko says.

The majority of the PAPs we engaged this month said that since the commencement of oil activities in their villages, they have witnessed increased grabbing of protected land.

Both government and business people have encroached on protected areas or are conducting degrading activities including the construction of oil roads in the areas. The affected areas include Bugoma and Budongo forests as well as Murchison Falls National Park.

There were also plans to destroy Murchison Falls to build a hydropower dam and to build an oil pipeline across River Nile among others.

Communities especially in Bunyoro believe that destruction of these critical ecosystems will have grave environmental and social impacts because over 95% of the host communities depend on the environment to grow food, access herbs and others.

(h) Fear of climate change impacts: The PAPs also observed that they are witnessing violent rains and dry seasons. They think these will worsen with oil exploitation. The communities highlighted cases where oil has attracted bad people and these have destroyed forests, wetlands, parks, game reserves, rivers, lakes and other critical biodiversity resources.



Mr. Ronald Ssengabu (2nd R), whose kitchen collapsed but is unable to reconstruct it. Total refused the EACOP PAPs from refurbishing their property.

The PAPs have also perennially complained that they stand to be under- and unfairly compensated because of under-valuation of their property and delayed compensation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

i. Invest in cleaner energy sources:

Government should invest the planned oil investments of \$15-20 billion in clean energy sources such as offgrid solar which do not pose grave risks like oil and gas.

ii. Invest in tourism: Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan III (NDP III) identify tourism as one of the key sectors for Uganda. It is estimated that with strategic investments, the tourism sector could generate over \$5 billion per year for the country by 2040. Unlike oil, tourism activities are environmentally friendly and sustainable for livelihoods.

iii. Government and oil companies should stop illegal processes: Failure to process the EACOP Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) report alongside the

EACOP's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report as provided for under the law makes the EACOP RAP illegal and its implementation should be rejected. Communities should not be subjected to illegal processes.

iv. Stop intimidation: Government should arrest all those intimidating the PAPs who complain about the injustices being meted on them by the oil companies. CSOs should work with the PAPs to file cases against all those implicated in intimidation of the PAPs.

v. Development partners and home countries of international companies involved in the oil activities in Uganda should not allow the international companies to continue engaging in activities that threaten the environment and the lives of communities.

By CEO and Partners

In April 2021, AFIEGO and our partners empowered over 87 EACOP and oil-affected communities to defend their land and environment rights. Below are pictorial highlights.



Pictorial of our activities

April 6-15, 2021

AFIEGO and our partners organised community meetings for over 87 communities that have been affected by the EACOP project.

During the engagements, ways in which the EACOP PAPs' rights could be protected were discussed. In the photo is a meeting with the EACOP-affected people in Kyotera district.



April 6-15, 2021

The aforementioned meetings with the EACOP-affected people were organised in the Bunyoro and Greater Masaka sub-regions.

During the meetings, community monitors in Bunyoro were identified to support the protection of the EACOP-affected people's rights.

In the photo are some of the monitors and community members following a meeting in Kikuube district.



April 5-15, 2021

AFIEGO organised film screenings for EACOP-affected communities, sub-county leaders and members of the Inter-Religious Council from Bunyoro and Greater Masaka.

The films strengthened the stakeholders' understanding of the impacts of oil and gas activities on the environment.

In the photo are community members and sub-county leaders during a film screening in Lwengo district.



April 5-15, 2021

Following the aforementioned film screenings, the EACOP-affected communities noted that government and oil companies have not learnt from past land acquisition processes which left many affected people cursing.

The people also observed that it would be hard for Uganda to avoid the environmental impacts of oil.

In the photo are communities from Kikuube district during a film screening.



April 5-28, 2021

AFIEGO and our partners under the Save Bugoma forest Campaign organised community meetings in which we engaged over 500 people living around Bugoma forest.

The meetings enabled formation of committees to support community actions to protect the forest. Signatures for a petition to the president to protect the forest from land grabbing, oil and sugarcane threats were also collected.

It is expected that the petition will be delivered in May 2021.



April 6, 2021

AFIEGO and our partners under the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign also organised a radio talkshow at Spice FM in Hoima district. We shared updates with communities and called on them to sign the petition to the president to protect Bugoma forest.

With our partners, we also called on communities to pressure Hoima Sugar Ltd, Bunyoro Kingdom and others to stop destruction of the forest.



April 6-8, 2021

AFIEGO and our partners organised engagements with district leaders in the EACOP-affected districts.

During the meetings, AFIEGO and our partners discussed the district leaders' needs amidst the EACOP project. AFIEGO also shared publications highlighting the existing and potential impacts of the EACOP project.

In the photo are AFIEGO staff and Rakai district leaders following one of the meetings.



April 9, 2021

AFIEGO and our partners organised a press conference to launch a briefing booklet calling on parliament to weigh the EACOP risks before approving a \$130 million loan for the EACOP project.

AFIEGO also shared the briefing paper with relevant MPs and district leaders this month.

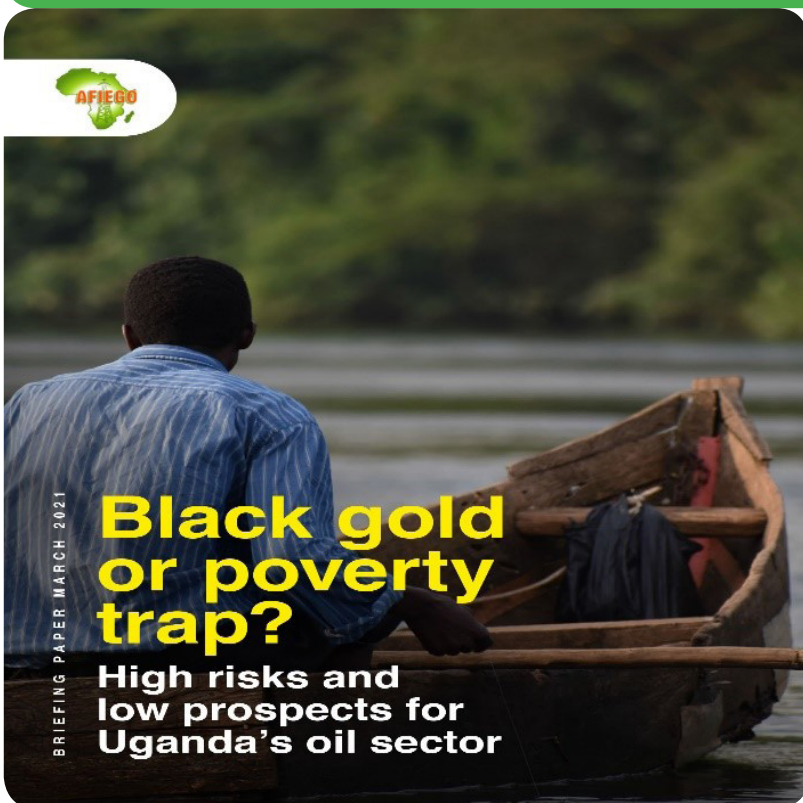
In the photos are AFIEGO staff, CSO partners and the media during the launch.



This month, AFIEGO and 43 Ugandan as well as Congolese CSOs issued a communique rejecting the secret Tilenga, Kingfisher and EACOP oil deals. This followed signing of the EACOP agreements by the governments of Uganda and Tanzania as well the oil companies operating in Uganda. The agreements were signed on April 11, 2021.

Furthermore, AFIEGO and our partners under IGEN-EA issued a statement after the signing of the above agreements. We called on the Ugandan government to invest in green industries.

In addition, with the support of our partners, AFIEGO produced a briefing paper on the risks and prospects of Uganda's oil sector.



09th/April/2021

CSOS LAUNCH BRIEFING BOOKLET, CALL ON PARLIAMENT TO WEIGH EACOP RISKS BEFORE APPROVING \$130 MILLION EACOP LOAN REQUEST

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
KAMPALA, HOIMA & MASAKA

Today, civil society organisations (CSOs) working for the promotion of environmental conservation and community livelihoods have launched a policy briefing booklet titled, *Black gold or poverty trap? High risks and low prospects for Uganda's oil sector*.

As the Ugandan government and oil companies prepare to make the final Investment Decision (FID) for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) and other oil projects soon, the briefing booklet highlights the economic challenges and uphill journey that Uganda's oil sector is faced with due to global energy transition, climate change mitigation efforts and others.

The briefing booklet is aimed at sensitising the public at large and guiding the Ugandan parliament which is assessing a \$130 million loan request for the EACOP project. It is hoped that the information in the booklet will guide parliament to make the best decision that protects Uganda's economy and environment.

It is notable that the briefing booklet has been launched following a three-day field visit by parliament's Budget Committee to the oil region. The visit, which took place this week, was organised by the Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU). The objective of the visit was to ostensibly support the committee, which in March 2021 refused to pass a budget request of \$130 million for the EACOP project, to appreciate the oil and gas sector.

While the Ministry of Finance, which made the aforementioned March 2021 loan request to parliament noted that the finances were urgently needed before the FID for the EACOP project could be made in March 2021, the MPs refused the request.

They cited secrecy in the oil sector which had resulted in MPs being denied the FID documents for which they were supposed to approve the budget request. The FID was postponed to April 2021 by government following the death of the former Tanzanian president, John Pombe Magufuli. It is expected that the FID will be made soon.

Parliament is still required to approve the loan request for the EACOP project.

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April 13, 2021

UGANDAN AND DRC CSOS' COMMUNIQUE REJECTING SECRET AGREEMENTS SIGNED FOR THE LAKE ALBERT OIL PROJECT IN UGANDA

1. Introduction and background

On Sunday April 11, 2021, the government of Uganda signed the Host Government Agreement (HGA) for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) in a ceremony that was attended by the presidents of Uganda and Tanzania as well as officials from Total and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). The signing ceremony also saw the Tariff and Transportation Agreement (TTA) for Uganda as well as the Shareholding Agreement (SHA) for the EACOP Company being concluded.

The shareholders in the EACOP Company are as follows: Total with 72% shares, Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC) with 15% shares, CNOOC with 8% shares and Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) with tentatively 5% shares.

Following the signing ceremony that was held at State House, Entebbe, the presidents of Uganda and Tanzania, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan respectively, issued an April 11, 2021 communique in which they directed that Tanzania urgently concludes the signing of the HGA and related agreements with the EACOP Company.

The presidents further noted that following the signing ceremony, the oil companies could launch the EACOP project and award the Engineering, Procurement and Construction Contracts (EPC). Hereafter, in a press statement issued by Total yesterday on April 12, 2021, the oil company noted that signing of the agreements "opened the way for commencement" of the Lake Albert project, comprising of the Tilenga, Kingfisher and EACOP oil projects.

The company further noted that "The main engineering, procurement and construction contracts will be awarded shortly, and construction will start. First oil export is planned in early 2025."

2. Observations

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INCLUSIVE GREEN ECONOMY NETWORK -EAST AFRICA (IGEN-EA)

20/April/2021

STATEMENT ON SIGNING OF EACOP AGREEMENTS: UGANDANS DESERVE A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC FUTURE BEYOND OIL

1. Introduction

The Inclusive Green Economy Network -East Africa (IGEN-EA) wishes to register its concerns over the signing of three agreements for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project.

The agreements were signed on Sunday 11th/April/2021 at a ceremony at State House, Entebbe in Uganda. The ceremony was participated in by the presidents of Uganda and Tanzania, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan respectively, among other Ugandan and Tanzanian government officials.

Other officials at the signing ceremony included the CEO of Total, Mr. Patrick Pouyanné and representatives of China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). Together with the Ugandan and Tanzanian governments, the aforementioned oil companies are the developers of the EACOP project.

The agreements that were signed were the Host Government Agreement (HGA), Tariff and Transportation Agreement (TTA) as well as the Shareholding Agreement (SHA).

The Ugandan government signed all the three agreements. On the other hand, the SHA was signed by all the EACOP project developers, including the oil companies. However, the government of Tanzania has not signed some of the agreements such as the HGA.

Following the signing ceremony, Uganda's Minister for Energy and Mineral Development, Hon. Mary Goretti Kitutu, made a statement to parliament on Wednesday 14th/April/2021 in which she said that the signing ceremony marked the launch of Uganda's oil projects. Unfortunately, the minister did not provide information as to why Tanzania is still rejecting to sign some agreements.

IGEN-EA, whose membership includes associations of small-scale farmers, foresters, tourism operators, clean energy companies, hoteliers, educationalists, civil society and community-based organisations, wishes to register its concerns over the secretive agreements being negotiated and signed by Uganda.

IGEN-EA also expresses concerns over the Minister of Energy's statements that Uganda's projects were launched on Sunday 11th/April/2021 yet oil activities remain a big risk to Uganda's major economic activities.

The network members are concerned that the projects are being launched amidst lack of relevant adequate information, consultations and anxiety over the projects' impacts by the various stakeholders and citizens represented by the network.

The IGEN-EA members also fear that investment in the oil sector, which is being relegated as countries increasingly prioritise clean energy, is not the right development pathway that Uganda should be pursuing.

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In the media

This month, staff, research associates and youth champions wrote 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

Electricity Act 1999 should be amended to curb power theft

On Friday April 9, *Daily Monitor* reported that power distributor Umembe lost Shs98b 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 (Shs600,000) or two years imprisonment or both to anyone who steals power.

The Act does not provide stringent punishments 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 20, 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 183MW 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 Shs751.9 per unit for domestic consumers, Shs645.6 for commercial consumers and Shs361 for large industries.

If the service fee and Value Added Tax (VAT) costs are added to the above prices, domestic consumers pay nearly Shs1,000 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 present the Electricity Bill 2020 to Parliament and the Bill must address the following:

- Provide for tougher and deterring 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 provisions on alternative power

supply, specifically off-grid energy sector.

d) Provide for compulsory land acquisition in line with Article 26 of the 1995 Constitution to solve issues of deemed power.

e) Put a limit on borrowing money to invest in grid power that leads to high return on investment that make power very expensive.

f) Complaints 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.

g) Hold government officials, who sign bad power purchase agreement that cause losses to government through corruption, personally liable.

h) Provide alternative ways for distribution companies to be repaid other than cutting off power like to withholding money owed to Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Ltd (UETCL) to offset debts by hospitals.

i) Provide for standard electricity meters and make it punishable for a supplier who delivers substandard meters.

j) 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.

LETTER OF THE DAY

Encourage women to speak up about climate change

Women play vital roles in development of our society. Unfortunately, they are often left out of the planning and decision making of our societal agenda.

The exclusion of women in the decision making and governance of key aspects such as natural resources like land, water, forests, among others, is detrimental.

It should be noted that women are key custodians of natural resources and they have inherent and traditional knowledge of climate resilience, adaptation and conservation among other diverse knowledge.

According to the intergovernmental panel on climate change, "Gender is a key axis of social inequality that intersects with other systems of power and marginalisation, including race, culture, class/socio-economic status, location, sexuality, and age to cause unequal experience of climate change vulnerability and adaptive capacity."

In 2006, commercial deposits of oil were discovered in Uganda in the Albertine rift a rich and critical biodiversity area. This news came with a lot of excitement among the oil host communities and Uganda at large, and yes, there is too much hope that perhaps oil is a savior to Uganda's economic development and a path to the long awaited middle income.

I live in Hoima, one of the oil host districts and the excitement is too much among the people in this region that when oil production starts, there is going to be a lot of employment opportunities for local people. Unfortunately, little attention is being



paid to the social, economic and environmental costs that will come with oil and gas activities and how people especially women can prepare themselves to adapt to the likely challenges.

Meanwhile, the group of civil society organizations that are trying to advance the narrative about the negative impact of fossil fuels on our social, economic and environmental aspects are being tagged as "anti-development project" and different other names, indeed the civic space

is shrinking and with Covid 19, it's extremely difficult to hold community sensitization meetings.

I also believe that perhaps oil will lead Uganda to its dream of becoming middle income, but it is important to weigh the social, economic and environmental impacts.

In my opinion, I think government should support and invest a lot in preparing the communities in terms of building their resilience and adaptive capacity to respond to the likely negative impact of climate change.

The preconceived narratives about employment opportunities will create a lot of tension among Ugandan communities especially the people in the oil host communities when they realize that there is no or limited jobs for them in the sector.

Government should increase funding for agriculture in the region to counteract the preconceived narrative about employment opportunities, yet the sector will not employ everyone.

Government should also ensure that women and children are involved in all part project planning and developments through a meaningful consultation to enable them take part in the decision making and governance of natural resources.

Christopher Opolo
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EACOP deal must respect rights

Currently described by the World Bank as the hottest inland exploration frontier in the world and the country to watch in the oil and gas, Uganda has discovered 6.5 billion barrels of oil.

As Uganda begins the final journey to historical production of oil and gas, the failures and weaknesses of earlier problems particularly the construction of an oil refinery that commenced in 2012 should not be forgotten but, rather, drawn lessons to make the process of doing the EACOP project fair and transparent. It is important to remember that the EACOP project passes through 10 districts and crossing so many areas of natural importance that are fragile and need to be treated and

handled with utmost care.

The process of constructing the EACOP should adhere to the law particularly article 26(2) of the constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 as amended to the effect that no person shall be compulsorily deprived of property or any interest in or right over property of any description except where the following conditions are satisfied.

The major oil players should and must look at including everyone before key decisions on environment and investments are made. Many other key points like meeting international standards, global warming, agriculture, accumulated debt to find the

project among many others, should be given serious consideration.

I urge the governments of Uganda, Tanzania and all major players to track back and take precautionary measures on whether the impacts of oil development and production outweigh the rights of people and areas of natural importance like lakes, rivers, parks, etc. Development is important but the inherent rights of citizens must be given priority. The question whether it's a milestone deal for all involved depends on the mitigation of negative impacts and threats they pose.

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Civil Social Organisations have called on Members of Parliament to consult widely before they approve the \$130m loan request for the East African Oil Pipeline Project

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Ugandans criticize oil pipeline deal with Tanzania and Total

Ugandans are making disparaging comments on social media about the multibillion-dollar oil pipeline deal that the country has signed with Tanzania and Total. The agreement

Date 13.04.2021

Author Isaac Mugabi

Related Subjects OPEC
(Organization of the Petroleum
Exporting Countries), People's
Republic of China

Keywords Uganda, Tanzania, Yoweri

Upcoming events

May 5, 2021; Kampala: Petitioning Ministry of Energy to make EACOP agreements public

May 6-7; 2021; Makerere and Kyambogo universities: Student film screenings on impacts of oil and gas activities on the environment and community livelihoods

May 10; 2021; Kampala: Petitioning NEMA to complete and operationalize the draft ESIA regulations

May 12-13; Kampala: Workshop to strengthen extractives CSOs to participate in the UN's Universal Periodic Review for Uganda

May 14; 2021; Kampala: Launch of the Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa

May 18, 2021; Kampala: Engagements with EITI secretariat to discuss EACOP project risks

May 20; 2021; Greater Masaka, Bunyoro and Kampala: Support EACOP-affected communities to petition oil companies and Ministry of Energy to end violation of their rights

May 21-28, 2021; Hoima, Kikuube and Kakumiro: Community empowerment meetings on the EACOP project RAP

About Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) is a public policy research and advocacy organisation dedicated to influencing energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable. Based in Kampala, Uganda, the organisation 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 clean 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