

November 2019; Issue 11

MURCHISON FALLS NATIONAL PARK, OIL & THE PROPOSED HYDROPOWER DAM: A CASE OF IMPUNITY, GREED AND CORRUPTION MEETING



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Tourists in Murchison Falls National Park



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A photo of Murchison Falls in Murchison Falls National Park. The falls will be destroyed if a dam is constructed at the Uhuru or Murchison Falls.

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Welcome to our November newsletter! This month, government announced some unfortunate news. Government told Ugandans that the proposal to conduct a feasibility study before development of a 360mw-dam at Uhuru Falls had been approved by cabinet.

The approval came only three months after cabinet announced that it had instructed the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) to halt plans for the conduct of a feasibility study for development of a dam at Murchison Falls. In particular, in August 2019, the Minister for Tourism, Hon. Ephraim Kamuntu, assured Ugandans that cabinet had instructed ERA to stop the planned feasibility study.

Readers will recall that in June 2019, ERA invited the public to submit comments on an application by Bonang Power and Energy (Pty) Ltd to conduct a feasibility study for development of a dam at Murchison Falls. However, only three months after cabinet stopped the feasibility study, the same cabinet announced that they had approved a feasibility study to be undertaken prior to development of a dam at Uhuru Falls.

This has left the public wondering: which is which? Why is government hiding the truth? ERA's June 2019 call for public comments was in respect to a feasibility study and dam at Murchison Falls. However, today, government is talking about a dam at Uhuru Falls, which is adjacent to Murchison Falls!

Government has created confusion and contradiction over the future of a critical ecosystem such as the Murchison Falls National Park landscape. This is regrettable and unacceptable especially because government has a constitutional obligation

to promote the right to a clean and healthy environment as provided for under Article 39 of the 1995 Uganda Constitution.

To make matters worse, the South African company, Bonang, which is set to conduct the feasibility study has no known capacity in dam construction. It also has no known track record for environmental conservation in addition to human, social and economic rights protection. In the absence of such a track record and a profile of the hydropower works that Bonang has undertaken, Ugandans should consider Bonang a front by corrupt middlemen who continue to cause untold suffering to Ugandans, especially vulnerable groups such as women, youth, children and others.

It is noteworthy Uganda's ecosystems and biodiversity which are destroyed by the corrupt have high biodiversity economic value. The ecosystems ensure that Ugandans earn or save trillions of shillings by doing the following: stabilising climate, purifying air and water, controlling soil erosion and floods, maintaining soil fertility, attracting tourists, providing rich and poor households with herbs, honey, fuel wood and others.

The Murchison Falls landscape also plays the above roles and has a high biodiversity economic value. A 2017 study that was undertaken by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) shows that the biodiversity economic value of the Murchison Falls landscape is over **\$60 billion (UGX 114 trillion)**.

In our **Word from AFIEGO & Partners**, we call for protection of the Murchison Falls landscape's biodiversity economic value from all dangers including dams, oil and

others. Ugandans will recall that Murchison Falls National Park hosts oil that is going to be extracted under the Tilenga project. Every Ugandan has a right, responsibility, duty and obligation to reject decisions that threaten biodiversity and livelihoods. We must not allow our biodiversity valued at over \$60 billion to be traded with projects such as dams, oil and others.

In our **pictorial** section, we share some of the activities we implemented this month. For instance, we facilitated two hearings of the case in which youth and civil society organisations (CSOs) want court to stop NEMA and the Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU) from implementing the Tilenga oil project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificate. The EIA certificate was issued in violation of Ugandan laws and international best practices.

In addition, we equipped communities with knowledge and skills to monitor implementation of the Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework (LARF), the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) report for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project and conditions of the Tilenga EIA certificate of approval. The LARF and RAP are key documents being used in the land acquisition processes for the EACOP project in ten districts in Uganda.

Further, we supported CSOs from the DRC to empower communities around Lake Albert in the DRC with knowledge of oil impacts on the environment and livelihoods. This was done through community sensitisation meetings and film screenings. As a result of the skills gained, the DRC communities petitioned Uganda's NEMA to ensure that the environment and livelihoods of local communities in the DRC

are protected. The Tilenga, Kingfisher and EACOP oil projects will have transboundary impacts as is indicated in the respective projects' Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) reports. These impacts will affect communities in the DRC.

Furthermore, our staff undertook media engagements in the United States (U.S.) to lobby for support for the court case which CSOs from France and Uganda filed against Total E&P Uganda in France. The CSOs accuse Total of failing to adequately protect communities and the environment from the dangers posed by their Tilenga and EACOP oil projects.

In our **lobbying** section, we share some of the lobbying activities we undertook this month. For instance, we wrote to the president asking him to publically commit that no dam will be built at the Murchison Falls. Further, as indicated above, we supported communities from the DRC to petition NEMA to demand that the authority does not make a decision on the Kingfisher and EACOP oil projects' ESIA reports without consulting them.

In addition, with 13 other CSOs, we issued a communique calling on NEMA to fill gaps in the 2019 draft ESIA regulations.

Finally, in our **in the media** section, we share some of the 12 newspaper articles that were written by our staff and partners this month. The articles were published by leading media houses in Uganda

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Editorial team:

1. **Diana Nabiruma**
2. **Sandra Atusinguza**
3. **Balach Bakundane**

MURCHISON FALLS NATIONAL PARK, OIL ACTIVITIES & THE PROPOSED HYDROPOWER DAM: A CASE OF IMPUNITY, GREED AND CORRUPTION MEETING

When commercial quantities of oil were discovered in Uganda in 2006, the president and his government assured Ugandans of miracles. They said that oil would transform the lives of citizens. They promised that oil would help citizens to overcome poverty as the sector would employ locals and Ugandan companies would supply it with goods and services.

Government also promised that income from the oil sector would be invested in infrastructure and would improve citizens' access to good transport, education and other services necessary for a dignified life. Citizens celebrated this news and lived in anticipation of the benefits of oil.

However, what the president and his government did not tell Ugandans is that environmental costs would arise due to oil production in Uganda. This is especially because the country's estimated 6.5 billion barrels of oil are located in the Albertine Graben.

The Graben hosts 70% of Uganda's protected areas including national parks and game reserves among others. The Albertine Graben also hosts lakes, rivers, wetlands, central forest reserves and others that are critical for Ugandans' wellbeing.

Over time, the Ugandan government has put in place laws including the 2008 National Oil and Gas policy, the 2013 upstream and midstream oil laws, the 2015 downstream law, the 2018 local content policy and the 2019 National Environmental Act. They have also put in place numerous regulations.

All these are aimed at promoting environmental conservation, transparency,

accountability and other aspects of good governance which would supposedly enable Ugandans to enjoy the perceived benefits of oil.

Unfortunately, despite the above laws and promises, oil sector activities continue to run amidst secrecy and several things are going wrong including:

- Oil agreements remain secret;
- Ministers sign tax exemptions without reading agreements;
- Oil companies refuse to pay assessed taxes;
- Government misuses oil revenues in disregard of national laws;
- Resettlement Action plans (RAPs) reports continue to be implemented before approval of ESIA reports and;
- NEMA continues to approve ESIA reports and issue EIA certificates of approval in absence of complete mitigation plans that would help to avoid or mitigate oil dangers on biodiversity and others.

ENTER A HYDROPOWER DAM

Before the above problems are addressed, cabinet has approved a feasibility study for a dam in the Murchison Falls landscape.

The study for the said dam is coming at a time when Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) and private companies are constructing a huge permanent road through Murchison Falls National Park and Budongo Central Forest reserve.

Currently, there is no indication that the road developer conducted and NEMA approved an ESIA report for the road. On the other hand, oil companies are denying that they need a road in the park. UNRA

itself is not telling Ugandans whether the said permanent road is intended to aid movement of elephants, loins and other animals or it is needed for poachers.

It is also noteworthy that oil will be extracted from Murchison Falls National Park under the Tilenga oil project.

In the face of the threats of oil and roads came the cabinet approval for the feasibility study for a dam. While cabinet announced approval of a feasibility study for a dam at Uhuru falls, ERA –the only independent power regulator in the country- announced and invited Ugandans to make comments on an application by Bonang Power and Energy (Pty) Ltd for a feasibility study for a dam at Murchison Falls.

The decision to approve the feasibility study and contradictions between cabinet and ERA demonstrate the high levels of impunity, greed and corruption that continue to undermine good governance in the country.

Yet without good governance in the form of good leadership, strong institutions, respect for laws and respect for citizens' rights to a clean and healthy environment, dams and oil will destroy our country as seen in oil-producing countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and others.

WHO IS BONANG?

Ugandans must ask ERA and the entire government to explain why Bonang is committed invest in a project that will destroy our iconic falls and expose Murchison Falls National Park to more destruction. As earlier noted, the park is already under stress from oil activities and road infrastructure.

As CSOs, we view Bonang as the epitome of environmental, economic and political corruption. How can government deal with a company that does not have any clear record of competence in dam construction? A search on Bonang fails to show the hydropower projects that the company has undertaken. The company's physical location is also sketchy. The address it listed on its website, before the website was pulled down, belongs to Rosebank Central Office station, a co-working space.

A company search also shows that Bonang was registered in 2014 in South Africa. In April 2016, the company was de-registered due to failure to file annual returns. The company was re-registered in December 2017 and it filed returns on June 26, 2019.

This makes one ask: What is the company's financial record and ability to meet its tax obligations? Further, what is the company's track record in meeting environmental and human rights obligations while delivering dams in critical biodiversity areas and others?

Like Eutaw, the fictitious company that was unearthed in the 2014 Katosi road scandal, Bonang is likely a fictitious company and is a front for some people who may be planning to cheat taxpayers' money.

ECONOMIC VALUE OF MURCHISON FALLS LANDSCAPE

The Murchison Falls landscape that Bonang and government want to destroy has a high biodiversity economic value of \$60 billion (UGX 114 trillion). This was ascertained in July 2017 when NEMA produced a report, *Economic valuation of protected areas in Uganda: A case study of Murchison Falls conservation area and Budongo central forest reserve*.

The report was produced with support from UNDP and through it, NEMA clearly indicates that any degradation of the Murchison Falls Conservation area and Budongo forest will result into loss of the biodiversity values of the two ecosystems. Ugandans must stand up to protect these values for the present and future generations. No one should be allowed to risk them with dangerous activities of dams and oil.

Below is a table highlighting the economic value of the biodiversity of the Murchison Falls and Budongo landscapes.

Table highlighting the biodiversity value of the Murchison and Budongo landscapes

Table 1: Value of Ecosystem Services and products in MFCBFC

Ecosystem products/services	Value of the service/product (Ushs)
Value of timber stock	146 billion
Non-timber products (mainly wood)	4.81 billion per yr
Non-wood Forest products	5.425 billion per yr.
Medicinal and pharmaceutical value	2.21 billion per yr
Soil erosion control	132.1 billion per year
Tourism value	110.4 billion in 2008
Carbon sequestration and storage value	3.75 billion per yr
Option, bequest and existence value	30.4 trillion
Relocation and rehabilitation value	114.438 trillion
Watershed protection and catchment services	26.5 billions
Research and education	47 million
Costs to the community	2.5 billion per yr
Opportunity costs for MFCA (livestock husbandry)	4.8 billion per yr
Opportunity costs for BCFR (sugarcane option)	20.4 billion per yr
Income of the MFCA	2.2 billion (2008)
Oil reserve	Value not yet established

VALUE OF DAMS AND OIL

Ugandans must ask themselves and government: What is the value of dams or oil? Since 2001 when government completed construction of Kiira dam and renovation of the Owen Falls Dam with a combined capacity of 380mw from the previous 60mw,

government assured and promised Ugandans to end energy poverty in the country.

Later, in 2012 when the 250mw Bujagali dam was commissioned, the president declared that Ugandans would enjoy affordable power. To date, we also have Isimba dam of 183mw and the Karuma dam of 600mw will soon be added to the grid. Unfortunately, all these dams have not helped Ugandans to enjoy the promised benefits of accessible and affordable power.

Currently, while government is proudly talking of excess power of over 500mw, only over 20% of Ugandans have access to power and of these, over 90% still rely on biomass to meet their domestic energy needs for cooking, heating and others.

How about oil? What is its value when compared to conservation? It is estimated that the annual revenue that will be got from Uganda's oil is \$2 billion per year for the next 20 to 30 years. Uganda could therefore earn \$60 billion over 30 years of oil production.

However, before it earns USD60 billion, it must borrow and invest between \$15 and 20 billion in addition to the over USD 3.5 billion recoverable costs that have already spent by oil companies in oil exploration. It is therefore clear that our biodiversity is of greater value than oil, dams or other proposed dangerous activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What should be done?

To protect and conserve Murchison and Uhuru falls against degradation, we recommend the following:

- The planned feasibility study, whether it is meant for a dam at Murchison falls or Uhuru falls or even any other part of the park, must

be stopped by government.

ii. In addition, ERA should make public the full details of Bonang and all other companies that want to conduct a feasibility study for development of a dam at the Murchison or Uhuru Falls. What are the companies' track records in construction of dams? What are their track records in environmental conservation and protection of human rights?

iii. Further, government should urgently organise a people's public hearing or dialogue to discuss how to safeguard Murchison Falls National Park from the current and future dangers of degradation.

iv. In addition, in view of the fact that oil activities have opened our protected areas to dangerous activities such as dams, roads and others, no oil activities should ever again be allowed in critical biodiversity such as Queen Elizabeth

National Park, Lake Edward and others.

Just this month, a delegation from Ministry of Energy, PAU and the Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC) participated in the Africa Oil week in South Africa.

The objective of their participation was to popularise the five oil blocks that the Ugandan government put up for bidding in May 2019. Among these blocks is Ngaji oil Block which covers parts of Queen Elizabeth national park, a UNESCO-listed Human and Biosphere Reserve, and Lake Edward, a UNESCO-listed Ramsar site. No oil activities should be allowed in these areas.

v. Finally, CSOs should work with other relevant stakeholders to mobilise and sensitise citizens about the dangers of the feasibility study for a dam at the Murchison Falls or Uhuru falls. Informed citizens will hold government accountable and strongly oppose the pending damaging projects.

By AFIEGO and CSO partners

Pictorial of our activities

AFIEGO EQUIPS COMMUNITIES TO MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION OF LARF, RAPS AND TILenga EIA CERTIFICATE CONDITIONS



Between November 5 and 10, 2019, AFIEGO organised five community sensitisation meetings in the districts of Buliisa, Hoima and Kikuube that are affected by the EACOP, Tilenga and Kingfisher oil projects.

The objective of the meetings in Hoima and Kikuube was to equip communities with knowledge and skills to monitor implementation of the Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework (LARF) in addition to the Resettlement Action Plans (RAP) that is being used to acquire land for the EACOP project. AFIEGO also sensitised the communities in Buliisa, Hoima and Kikuube to monitor implementation of the Tilenga EIA certificate conditions.

AFIEGO will continue to mobilise and sensitise communities in all the districts that are affected by oil projects including the ten districts that are affected by the EACOP to promote environmental conservation and community livelihoods amidst oil threats.

AFIEGO FACILITATES CSOS AND YOUTH IN CASE HEARING ON CANCELLATION OF TILenga EIA CERTIFICATE



On November 5 and 20, 2019, AFIEGO supported hearing of the court case through which youth under the Guild Presidents' Forum on Governance (GPFOG) and CSOs want the Tilenga oil project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificate of approval to be cancelled.

The CSOs and youth argue that NEMA and PAU violated laws, procedures and principles of natural justice during the public review process of the Tilenga ESIA report in November 2018.

They argue that the above violations could not have allowed NEMA to make the best decision to promote environmental conservation and community livelihoods amidst oil threats.

NEMA awarded the Tilenga project developers with an EIA certificate of approval in April 2019 and the youth in addition to CSOs' court case was filed in May 2019.

The case is ongoing and the youth's lawyer is set to cross examine NEMA's witness as a means of having his key evidence being thrown out by court.

AFIEGO STRENGTHENS DRC STAKEHOLDERS' UNDERSTANDING OF OIL IMPACTS



Between October and November 2019, AFIEGO supported leaders of civil society organisations (CSOs) and fisherfolk from the DRC to sensitise communities in the DRC on the environmental and livelihood impacts of oil.

Communities in the DRC that live around Lake Albert are going to be affected by oil activities on Lake Albert in Uganda. However, the communities' awareness of the impacts oil activities in Uganda would have on them was limited.

AFIEGO supported the above-mentioned leaders in addition to communities from the DRC to learn about oil impacts through exchange learning visits to Uganda, community sensitisation meetings and film screenings. It is hoped that the lessons gained will be used to safeguard the environment and community livelihoods amidst oil threats.

In the photo at the top are communities in the DRC during a sensitisation meeting and film screening in the Ituri region.

In the photo at the bottom are partners from the DRC, AFIEGO staff and youth champions after a film screening in Kampala.



AFIEGO SUPPORTS DRC STAKEHOLDERS TO MOBILISE THE PUBLIC FOR INVOLVEMENT OF DRC CROSS-BORDER COMMUNITIES IN UGANDA'S OIL SECTOR



In October 2019, AFIEGO supported partners including leaders of CSOs and fisherfolk from the DRC to engage the media and Ugandan public through a radio talkshow.

The objective of the radio talkshow was to mobilise the media and the Ugandan public to lobby the Ugandan government to involve cross-border communities living on the shores of Lake Albert in the DRC in oil exploitation processes in Uganda.

In the pictures are AFIEGO staff and CSOs partners from the DRC during the media engagements at Spice FM in Hoima district.



AFIEGO STRENGTHENS CLEAN ENERGY CHAMPIONS' UNDERSATNDING OF OIL IMPACTS AS WITNESSED IN ECUADOR AND U.S.



On November 12, 2019, AFIEGO organised a film screening for university youth and clean energy champions from Kasese.

The film screening raised the youth and clean energy champions' awareness of oil impacts on the environment and community livelihoods.

The film screenings also strengthened the youth and women champions' lobby and advocacy skills.

The films that were showed were shot in Ecuador, U.S. and Uganda.

In the pictures are the university youth, clean energy champions from Kasese and Kikuube in addition to AFIEGO staff.

AFIEGO MOBILISES PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR COURT CASE AGAINST TOTAL



In October 2019, AFIEGO staff participated in media engagements in the United States (U.S.).

AFIEGO used the media engagements to raise public awareness and mobilise public support for the court case which CSOs in Uganda and France brought against Total.

In the case, the CSOs accuse Total of failing to put in place adequate measures to protect communities and the environment from the threats of its Tilenga oil projects.

In the pictures is AFIEGO's Ms. Diana Nabiruma during media engagements at Voice of America (VOA).

Lobbying

This month, AFIEGO and 19 CSOs wrote to the president requesting him to publically commit that no dam will be built at the Murchison Falls.

Further, AFIEGO supported 23 CSOs from the DRC to petition NEMA to involve cross-border communities in oil activities in Uganda.

AFIEGO also issued a communique through which 14 CSOs called on NEMA to address gaps in the 2019 draft ESIA regulations.

In addition, AFIEGO and GPFOW issued a press statement that highlighted the outcomes of the third hearing of the court case in which CSOs and youth want the Tilenga EIA certificate of approval to be cancelled.



November 8, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kampala, Uganda

TILENGA EIA CERTIFICATE CASE HEARING: WITNESS SUMMONS FOR NEMA'S ISAAC G. NTUJU ISSUED

On Tuesday November 5, 2019, court heard the case through which civil society organisations (CSOs) and youth under the Guild Presidents' Forum on Governance (GPFOW) want the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificate of approval for the Tilenga oil project to be cancelled.

The hearing took place at the Kampala High Court and this was the third time that the court case was being heard.

During the hearing, the presiding Judge, Justice Henrietta Waluya, ruled that GPFOW's lawyer should cross examine Mr. Isaac G. Ntiju. Mr. Ntiju is the Principal Environmental Inspector on Oil and Gas at the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA).

He swore an affidavit on NEMA's behalf through which he denied that NEMA violated laws and committed procedural irregularities during the November 2018 public hearings on the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report for the Tilenga project.

"NEMA's affidavit is couched in untruths and we are going to use the cross examination of Mr. Ntiju to disqualify it. We strongly believe that after the cross-examination, Mr. Ntiju's affidavit will be considered baseless and will be rejected by the High Court.

When this is done, NEMA won't have evidence to show that it did not violate the law during the public hearings on the Tilenga oil project's ESIA," Mr. Allan Baryo, the youth's lawyer, said after the hearing.

Mr. Ntiju is the only witness that swore an affidavit on NEMA's behalf. Quashing his evidence that was presented through the affidavit would help CSOs and youth win their cases.

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November 21, 2019

AFIEGO AND PARTNER CSOs' COMMUNIQUE CALLING ON NEMA TO ADDRESS GAPS IN 2019 DRAFT ESIA REGULATIONS

1. Introduction

On November 20, 2019, Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) and our partner civil society organisations (CSOs) organised a meeting to discuss gaps in the 2019 draft Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) regulations.

The draft ESIA regulations were developed by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) in line with Section 179(2) (c) of the 2019 National Environment Act. The section requires the Minister for Water and Environment to formulate regulations including those covering Environmental and Social Assessments. NEMA acted on behalf of the Minister of Water and Environment to develop the regulations.


The 2019 draft regulations will repeal the 1998 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations which do not conform to the 2019 National Environment Act that introduced new aspects such as ESIA.

The November 20, 2019 meeting that was organised by AFIEGO and our partners was attended by 14 CSOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) working to promote environmental conservation amidst oil threats.

The CSOs and CBOs included AFIEGO, World Voices Uganda (WVU), Centre for Constitutional Governance (CCG) and Guild Presidents' Forum on Oil Governance (GPFOW). They also included Green Organisation Africa (GOA), National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) and Oil Refinery Residents Association (ORRA) among others.

During the meeting, the participants thanked NEMA for developing the draft ESIA regulations. They noted that finalising and putting the regulations in place to support implementation of the 2019 National Environment Act is long overdue.

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November 28, 2019

President: Yoweri Kagame Museveni,
The Republic of Uganda-Kampala

Your Excellency,

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF UGANDA TO COMMIT AGAINST DAM CONSTRUCTION AT MURCHISON AND UHURU FALLS

The above refers

1. Introduction

We send you greetings and take this opportunity to thank you and your government for providing leadership to Uganda since 1986.

Up until now, your leadership has been critical in enabling our country achieve equitable and sustainable socio-economic transformation to meet national and international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Climate Change Agreement and others.


The above development goals, which your government has valiantly championed, are aimed at promoting environmental conservation, combating climate change and improving livelihoods especially for vulnerable groups such as women, youth, rural communities and others.

We are a consortium of civil society organisations (CSOs) working with end many Ugandans across the country. Our work gives us the privilege and honour to interact with ordinary citizens on a day-to-day basis.

As such, we often come face-to-face with the reality of the impacts of degraded ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes, national parks, game reserves and others. Degradation of the above ecosystems has left thousands of communities in unrelenting suffering.

It is against this background and based on our trust in your ability to provide the right leadership in environmental conservation that we have taken the unusual step of writing and directly appealing to you

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O/Ref.: DYCOPEA/011/2019

November 25, 2019
Bunja

The Executive Director,
National Environment Management Authority (NEMA),
Kampala (U).

R.E.: Objection to oil exploitation activities on Lake Albert

Dear Sir/Madam,

1. We, environmental and human rights civil society organisations (CSOs) from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), respectfully express our objection to oil exploitation efforts that are ongoing on Lake Albert in Uganda. We are doing so because these activities will hurt conservation of the lake and the livelihoods of communities.

2. As you are well aware sir/madam, over 100,000 households in the DRC rely on Lake Albert to meet their water needs. In addition, over 20,000 fishers in the DRC depend on Lake Albert to make a living from fishing. The lake is the life source for the above households and fishers. However, this life source is threatened by oil activities under the Tilenga, Kingfisher and the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) projects in Uganda.

3. Indeed, cognizant of the threats of the above projects, the Ugandan government ensured that the Tilenga, Kingfisher and EACOP oil projects' developers conducted Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) that would show how the projects' developers would avoid, minimise or mitigate the dangers the projects posed.

4. Thereafter, in 2018 and 2019, NEMA undertook public consultations on the ESIA reports for the Tilenga, Kingfisher and EACOP oil projects. Specifically, NEMA held public hearings

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In the media

This month, staff and research associates wrote over 12 newspaper articles which were published in the leading newspapers including the New Vision and Daily Monitor. Some of the published articles are captured below.

Doreen Namara, legal officer at Africa Institute for Energy Governance Don't pass a bad law: Address gaps in ESIA regulations

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations, which do not adequately address the needs of the public, should be revised, says Doreen Namara, legal officer at Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AIEG). She says the current regulations are outdated and do not take into account the needs of the public, particularly in the context of the 2019 national budget, which is expected to be passed in the coming months. She says the current regulations are outdated and do not take into account the needs of the public, particularly in the context of the 2019 national budget, which is expected to be passed in the coming months.

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Channel clean energy drive through education

EDITOR: The Government has over the past 10 years embarked on investing in the energy sector with the aim of increasing access to electricity to Ugandans. The 2019/2020 national budget, under the theme, *Industrialisation for job creation and shared prosperity*, largely moored on the long-term goal of elevating the country to a middle-income status through the implementation of the Vision 2040 programme. Electricity access remains the key engine for economic development, which is critical if the country is to achieve middle-income status by 2040. The path to becoming a middle-income nation means increased demand for energy in order to achieve Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13 climate action.

It is also important that we engage the young people in the pursuit of sustainable development and climate action. The Government should demonstrate its commitment to playing a leading role in the clean energy transition and to adopt a sustainable development model. It should be made part of the educational system. Working with the education ministry, the Government can inspire youth to support the action agenda and develop a model of collaboration that can be replicated elsewhere. Youth development should be prioritised because when we invest in our youth, we invest in our future. Incorporating renewable energy and sustainable development into different sectors, such as health and education, will enable us to harness young minds and prepare them to become environmental stewards. Therefore, renewable energy is a key solution to climate change and an enabler of universal energy access. It is also a contributor to UN's 2030 SDGs, such as good health and wellbeing, quality education (SDG 4) and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8).

Patrick Edema
Research Associate AFIEGO

Oil activities shouldn't tamper with sensitive ecosystems

EDITOR: For the last six months, the media has been reporting about many oil activities that will take place in sensitive ecosystems. The ecosystems include Murchison Falls National Park, wetlands and rivers, such as Kafu between Hoima and Kibale, Katonga in Gombe and Sembabule districts and Nabakazi between Mubende and Gomba, as well as Wambabya in Hoima, where the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) will pass. However, oil activities should not tamper with sensitive ecosystems that are vital for the survival of residents and the country at large. For instance, Murchison Falls National Park is a home to many species of mammals, including buffaloes, elephants, leopards and lions. All these contribute to both the income of the country and the local people, through creation of employment and tourism. Wetlands and rivers should not be disturbed because they provide water and are home to reptiles and amphibians. In addition, they help in

rain formation and they flow into big lakes, such as Victoria, which is shared by neighbouring countries. These sensitive ecosystems are under threat because of oil activities, including the EACOP project, oil roads and feeder pipelines. It should be noted that the massive destruction of these sensitive ecosystems is bound to result in climate change and the reduction of animal species due to the destruction of their breeding sites. In addition, the noise in park will lead to the migration of the animals. Furthermore, the pipeline proposed to be buried under the water could lead to water contamination in case of oil spills, which may threaten aquatic life and lead to disease outbreaks. Therefore, I call upon the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to be vigilant and not to allow the companies and agencies involved in oil projects to compromise the survival of Uganda's ecosystems.

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Oil: Reduce pressure on biodiversity

The discovery of large oil reserves in Uganda in 2006 led to high expectations that the economy would be transformed fast. It is undeniable that oil fuels the global economy. Due to the enormous financial resources that can accrue from this industry, the discovery of oil in Uganda was greeted with optimism. A World Development Report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, for example, stated that extractive activities, including oil exploration, have profound social and environmental impact. Although the discovery of oil has brought high hopes and expectations, including employment opportunities to citizens as well as revenue, this dream remains illusory as the exploration of the oil resources can lead to the degradation of the environment, which can take many years to restore. Despite the strength to provide environmental mitigation measures for biodiversity conservation for oil activities and developments, biodiversity continues to disappear at an alarming rate. While oil development can be seen as a blessing in an area, they have a wide range of negative impacts on ecosystems, including soil, air and water contamination, habitat fragmentation and conversion, defor-



estation, erosion and sedimentation of waterways. The world's governments through the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), agreed on a set of 20 targets to help stop the loss, reduce the pressures on, and improve the state of global biodiversity. These were known as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets set in Aichi, Japan. In order to achieve them, governments need to implement action plans and strategies and this is where tools that show maps and spatial data, including the location of national parks and endangered species, made planning clearer. One such tool for viewing and

analysing biodiversity information is the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT). It is an innovative tool designed to facilitate access to a range of global and national data layers, such as protected area boundaries, biological information about habitat and species diversity indices, and key areas for biodiversity, which can be useful for research and conservation planning purposes. The tool is the result of a groundbreaking work and conservation partnership among BirdLife International, Conservation International, and International Union for Conservation of Nature and UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre. These are made possible by a diverse set of data providers, donors and funders in government, business and civil society from more than 200 countries. So, with Uganda's oil developments in the Albertine graben, one of the most bio-diverse regions in Africa hosting 40 per cent of Africa's mammals, 50 per cent of birds and about 20 per cent of the amphibians and plants, it is critical that we emphasise the protection of the biodiversity in the area.

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Uganda should learn impact of oil activities from others

On November 15, the youth champions on environmental conservation from different universities in Uganda got an opportunity to watch a film screening the impact of oil on the environment and community livelihoods. We were more than 20 youth whose goal is to promote environmental conservation. The film screening that was shot from Ecuador, changed our perception that oil activities would be a blessing to the country. From the film we watched, Ecuador started its oil development in the 1960s. When the oil was found, their economy improved greatly, but now

the nation is facing the long-term effects of oil exploitation. For instance, the Lago Agrio and Yasuni rainforests that were important ecosystems in country, have been destroyed by investors, who dumped toxic waste in the forest and crude oil in the Amazon River to the tune of 16 billion gallons a year. The soil was destroyed by contamination, and the carcinogenic effects included birth defects, a rise in miscarriages, and cancer in the local residents. It was not until 2011 that Ecuador's court system demanded more than \$18 billion from the investor, who fought the suit

and won. Besides, cultures have been destroyed and there are high crime rates in the areas where there are oil activities. Uganda is among the low developing countries in the sub-Saharan Africa and 21 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. The government of Uganda is promising the youth jobs in the oil sector. But first, it is important that the government learns from Ecuador about the negative impact of oil activities, including increased poverty. Patrick Edema,
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Oil is death: Govt should tread lightly on Ngaji block

Oil exploration in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, the oil spill block covering the Uganda side of Lake Edward and parts of the park, is a death sentence for the park's biodiversity. The park is home to many species of mammals, including elephants, lions, and hippos. The park is also home to many species of birds and reptiles. The park is a vital part of Uganda's natural heritage and its protection is a priority for the government. However, the discovery of oil in the park has led to a number of concerns about the impact of oil exploration on the park's biodiversity. The park is home to many species of mammals, including elephants, lions, and hippos. The park is also home to many species of birds and reptiles. The park is a vital part of Uganda's natural heritage and its protection is a priority for the government. However, the discovery of oil in the park has led to a number of concerns about the impact of oil exploration on the park's biodiversity.

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Upcoming events

December 5, 2019; Kampala: Public talk on renewed efforts to construct a dam at Murchison Falls

December 10, 2019; Kampala: AFIEGO Board members' end-of-year meeting

December 16, 2019; Kampala: Fifth court case hearing on cancellation of the Tilenga oil project's EIA certificate

December 18, 2019; Kampala: Staff end-of-year evaluation meeting

About Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) is a public policy research and advocacy NGO 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 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 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 energy resources for socio-economic development

Our Mission

To promote energy policies that benefit poor and vulnerable communities