

AFIEGO's Weekly Energy News Roundup (6-10 April, 2020)

Oil spill scare causing panic in Hoima District

Residents and local leaders in Kibiro Village, Kigorobya Sub-county in Hoima District have expressed worry over an oil spill after a geothermal exploration hole exploded, letting off spillage into the village and Lake Albert.

Some of the residents who spoke to Saturday Monitor said one of the holes that were being drilled exploded, letting out a waxy mixture containing crude oil which smelt like gasoline.

The explosion from one of the eight geothermal exploration holes happened on Saturday night.

"Last Saturday at around 8 pm, one of the holes exploded and there was a lot of spill, including crude oil. Even now you can smell it. The mixture flowed into the lake [Albert].

Fishermen struggled to wash their nets in vain. Even now it is floating in the lake, I can see it," Mr Apollo Kusiima, a local counsellor in Kibiro, Hoima District, said.

Last year, government awarded a Shs2.3b contract to Royal Techno Industries Ltd to drill eight temperature gradient holes to exploit geothermal energy at the famous hot springs.

This, however, was not welcomed by locals and Bunyoro Kingdom officials. [Read more](#)

Oil-affected youth call on government to promote eco-friendly green jobs

Youth coming from nine districts in the oil region have called on the Ugandan government to promote eco-friendly green jobs in the tourism and agricultural sectors.

The youth who made this call come from Hoima, Kikuube, Buliisa, Masindi, Kakumiro, Kibaale and other districts.

The youth made this call through a communique that they issued following being sensitised about the negative impacts oil activities have on the environment, communities' access to water, food security, fishing, community health and others.

The youth noted that while the oil sector will create only over 160,000 formal and informal jobs which will last for only 20 to 30 years, it has been prioritised at the expense of jobs in the agricultural, tourism and clean energy sectors. Yet jobs in these sectors have the potential to last an eternity. [Read more](#)

CSOs call on NEMA to stop issuing environmental certificates that endanger the environment

Following the handover of an Environmental and Social Impact (ESIA) certificate to the Kingfisher oil project developers in March 2020 by NEMA, civil society organisations have called on NEMA to stop issuing environmental certificates that endanger the environment and communities' livelihoods.

The civil society organisations say that both the Kingfisher and Tilenga oil projects' ESIA reports had gaps and weaknesses which were not addressed before issuing the project developers with ESIA or EIA certificates. The ESIA or EIA certificates also have gaps and weaknesses.

This, the CSOs say, will not promote environmental conservation and protect communities' livelihoods. [Read more:](#)

Animal viruses are jumping to humans. Forest loss makes it easier

The destruction of forests into fragmented patches is increasing the likelihood that viruses and other pathogens will jump from wild animals to humans, according to a study from Stanford University published this month.

The research, which focused on contact between humans and primates in western Uganda, holds lessons for a world reeling from the coronavirus outbreak and searching for strategies to prevent the next global pandemic.

“Covid has taught us that once a pandemic starts, it’s very hard to control,” said Laura Bloomfield, a doctoral candidate at Stanford and the study’s lead author.

“If we can decrease the potential for people to come into contact with wild animals, that is one way to decrease the likelihood of having recurrent pandemics.”

In Uganda, a rapidly growing population means more people are carving out patches of forest land to feed their families.

[Read more](#)

Power in a pandemic - why energy access matters during coronavirus

A pandemic puts pressure on every part of a country’s economy and society. For developing countries that were already facing major challenges before COVID-19, this pressure will be particularly painful.

As the virus spreads, especially across Africa and parts of Asia, one of the most used preventative measures is a luxury not all countries can afford. Social distancing and stay-at-home measures being adopted in many countries are predicated on an important assumption: that populations have access to reliable, affordable electricity to stay connected and continue to communicate with public services and one another remotely.

The reality is 840 million people – predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa – are living without access to electricity and hundreds of millions more only have access to very limited or unreliable electricity.

“It is noteworthy that for the April to June period, the Ugandan government reduced electricity prices by less than a shilling.

Electricity in Uganda remains too expensive and prices must be brought down to enable people to not only stay safe during this Coronavirus pandemic but to also engage in productive activities when the pandemic is over,” AFIEGO says.

[Read more](#)

Upcoming Events

April 17, 2020; Kampala: CSO’s online meeting to discuss and challenge NEMA’s decision on issuing the Kingfisher project developer an environmental certificate

Coronavirus: AFIEGO continues to call on communities and stakeholders to stay safe through following the Ministry of Health and World Health Organisation’s guidelines.

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