

AFIEGO's Weekly Energy News Roundup (9-13, March, 2020)

NEMA clears CNOOC on Kingfisher, but no end in sight to oil deadlock

On Monday March 9, 2020, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) granted an environment certificate to the China National Offshore Oil Corporation Uganda Ltd for its Kingfisher oil block, south of Lake Albert.

The issuance of the certificate is the culmination of the three-year back and forth approval process of Cnooc's environmental and social impact assessment study for the Kingfisher project in Kikuube and Hoima districts.

Zhao Shunqiang, the Cnooc president, said that receiving the certificate is a "milestone". But he said he could not tell when the ongoing deadlock between the government and the oil companies Total E&P, and Tullow Oil would be resolved to move forward.

Speaking after issuing the certificate, NEMA's Executive Director, Dr. Tom Okurut, said that comments collected from the public hearings and civil society organisations, including environmental activists from the DR Congo, were considered during review.

It is noteworthy that the majority of the 15,000 stakeholders who participated in the Kingfisher ESIA public hearings last year rejected the ESIA. However, NEMA issued the project an environmental certificate of approval. This is an unacceptable.

[Read more](#)

[Additional reporting by the New Vision \(March 10, 2020; pg.3\) and AFIEGO](#)

What will raise household electricity demand?

For years now, Uganda's domestic electricity demand has been meagre. Most of the electricity generated is consumed by industrialists who when combined utilise more than half of the electricity generated.

In 2018, Umeme collected Shs438b from 640.4Gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity consumed by domestic users compared to a total of Shs921b from all industrialists who consumed 2002.6GWh during the same period. The need for increased growth in domestic demand for electricity is now more than ever apparent as Uganda's generation capacity is this year expected to hit the 2000 megawatt (MW) ceiling.

As a result, government has formulated the National Energy Policy Bill currently in draft stage, amending the 2002 law to bolster domestic demand. Among the priority areas and strategic interventions, government highlights the need to increase access to reliable, affordable and modern energy services.

Lack of reliability of power amongst those with access to electricity has affected demand, pushing people to use alternative sources of energy.

[Read more](#)

We need a solar energy policy

In 2016, the government of Uganda signed the Compact Agreement in line with Power Africa and Energy Africa. Under the agreement, the country committed to promoting and expanding investments in offgrid solar opportunities for people as opposed to reliance on the hydro and fossil fuel-based grid.

It was recognised that grid electrification could not improve access to clean energy for Ugandans especially for vulnerable groups such as women, youth and others.

Government also committed to put in place a rural electrification law, a solar consumer protection law, create public awareness and many other relevant tools intended to expand clean renewable energy electrification as part of Uganda's obligations under the Sustainable Energy For All programme (SE4ALL), the Paris Climate Change Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other national, regional and international commitments aimed at promoting access to clean renewable electricity for all by 2030 as opposed to use of fossil fuels.

However, due to lack of an offgrid energy strategy and public awareness, the majority of citizens remain ignorant on how to make use of solar energy to improve their lives and income as well reduce on deforestation.

[Read more: Sunday Vision, March 8, 2020](#)

Our February newsletter discusses gaps and weaknesses in the 2018 Land Acquisition Bill.

As many of us are aware, government decided to amend the 1965 Land Acquisition Act following failure to amend Article 26 of the 1995 Uganda Constitution.

Government dropped plans to amend the article in 2018 and a Land Acquisition Bill to enable government to expeditiously acquire land was developed.

While the 2018 Land Acquisition Bill has some good provisions and is necessary to repeal the 1965 Land Acquisition Act which has some unconstitutional provisions, the bill in its current form is attempting to amend Article 26 of the 1995 Uganda Constitution. [Read more](#)

Climate change is having a major effect on all aspects of the environment as well as on the health and wellbeing of the global population. This is according to a new flagship report on the state of the Global Climate released by the World Meteorological Organisation.

The report confirms the information in a provisional statement issued at the UN Climate Change Conference in December that 2019 was the second warmest year on record, and that the period between 2010 and 2019 was the warmest decade on record. It adds that since the 1980's, each successive decade has been warmer than any preceding decade since 1850.

The report points out that Greenhouse gas emissions continued to grow in 2019 leading to increased ocean heat and such phenomena as rising sea levels, the altering of ocean currents, melting floating ice shelves, and dramatic changes in marine ecosystems.

The ocean has seen increased acidification and deoxygenation, with negative impacts on marine life, and the wellbeing of people who depend on ocean ecosystems. [Read more](#)

On March 8, 2020 (International Women's Day), AFIEGO and our partners from Uganda and the DRC celebrated women who are working with us and our partners in Uganda and the DRC to promote women's rights, environmental conservation and access to more affordable clean energy solutions such as solar.

See some of the women we celebrated in the posters.



March 16, 2020; Kampala: CSO meeting to discuss and challenge NEMA's decision on issuing the Kingfisher project developer an environmental certificate

March 17-20, 2020; Kikuube, Buliisa, Hoima and Kakumiro: Community sensitisation meetings on implementation and compliance with the 2019 National

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