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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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EACOP-AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS WANT DISCRIMINATION IN LIVELIHOOD RESTORATION ACTIVITIES TO STOP

Households whose land is being compulsorily acquired for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) are demanding an end to the discrimination that has seen many, including vulnerable persons especially the elderly, be denied livelihood restoration items.

The EACOP Company claims to have compensated over 90% of the persons whose land is being compulsorily acquired for the pipeline project. The compensation processes were marred by claims of delayed, inadequate and unfair compensation, as well as claims that the project-affected persons were harassed and threatened with court action among others, compelling them to accept low compensation against their will. Some community and other human rights defenders were arrested as they defended the project-affected people's compensation and other rights.

Currently, through its sub-contractors, the EACOP Company is implementing a livelihood restoration programme that includes food distribution to the households that were displaced by the project. The company is also giving the affected households agricultural inputs ranging from seeds, coffee seedlings, banana suckers and other items.

The people however say that several households have been denied food.

The elderly Ms. Teddy Nakintu, part of whose land in Lwengo district is being taken for the EACOP says, "My family has not received any food. We have also been denied agricultural inputs like seeds because my family has been complaining about the fact that we have to live near the pipeline. We have been saying that for our safety, and that of my grandchildren, we must be relocated away from the pipeline, which is passing too near my home. When my son, who represents me, has gone to meetings where agricultural inputs are distributed to other EACOP-affected people, he is told that he will not be given anything."

Mr. Fred Lubowa, a person with a disability whose land in Kyotera district is being taken for the EACOP adds, "I have also not received any food assistance. In addition, community members are not happy because some of the commitments that were made to us have not been fulfilled. For instance, we were told that those who wanted to would be given cows during livelihood restoration. However, when some of us have asked for cows, we have been told that we will only be given pasture that we will plant and give to the cows that we already have."

Other commitments such as distributing 450 coffee seedlings to those with an acre of land, have also been broken, communities say. They note that only 100 seedlings have been distributed per household, especially in Lwengo.

The households are also complaining about the late delivery of agricultural inputs such as seedlings which are delivered when rainy seasons are almost over.

Ms. Amina Acola, a legal associate with Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) says, “Livelihood restoration is an important part of resettlement activities. It must be done well not only to enable compliance with international best standards but to also ensure that project-affected persons’ livelihood rights among others are not violated. The EACOP project developers committed to provide food assistance for 6 months to a year, agricultural inputs, financial literacy and enterprise development among others to EACOP-affected households to restore them to their pre-displacement socio-economic status or even a better one. This commitment must be complied with.”

The EACOP-affected households are also complaining about the following challenges:

- Low compensation leading to failure to replace the property lost to the EACOP. This challenge also affected children, who inherited land from their parents.
- Failure to support households with cultural properties such as shrines to replace all the properties that they lost to the EACOP.
- Failure to honour commitments to pay landlords 40% of the compensation given to their tenants; instead, the landlords were paid 30%.
- Failure to pay full compensation to some households. The households say they received only part of their compensation.
- In Kyotera, communities also complain that some households are yet to receive the enhanced compensation that they were promised for their coffee and banana plants.
- Lack of communication on whether the EACOP Company will compensate households for orphan land.
- Disbandment of resettlement committees and lack of adequate avenues for affected households to report grievances. Communities, especially those in Kyotera district, report that they do not have access to Community Liaison Officers (CLOs).
- No demarcations showing where exactly in the affected people’s land the EACOP will pass.
- Safety fears especially by persons whose houses are located too near the planned pipeline.

The affected people are calling on the EACOP Company to do the following:

- Pay full compensation to those households that are yet to receive full compensation.
- Avoid creating the impression that the compensation process is nearly complete before assessing whether the affected persons replaced their property and have been restored to their pre-displacement levels. Government and the EACOP Company should work with independent groups such as religious leaders, civil society organisations (CSOs), Uganda Law Society, Association of Ugandan valuers and others to conduct an independent evaluation to determine whether affected persons replaced their property and whether they

have been restored to pre-displacement levels. The EACOP Company should support those, especially the vulnerable including children, that failed to replace their property to do so.

- Relocate households that want to be relocated from near the planned pipeline.
- Distribute food to all EACOP-affected households and avoid existing discriminatory practices, especially those affecting the vulnerable, including the old.
- Adhere to commitments in the EACOP Resettlement Action Plan as well as the Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework by giving the affected households full information on where in their land the EACOP will pass, avoiding limiting the choices in livelihood restoration packages that households can receive and others.
- Stop harassing, intimidating, arresting and detaining community human rights defenders and civil society groups that support project-affected persons.

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For more information, contact:

Diana Nabiruma

Senior Communications Officer, AFIEGO

dnabiruma@afiego.org