



September 8, 2026

EAST AFRICAN CSOS' COMMUNIQUE ON UGANDA'S CRUDE OIL NAMING CEREMONY

Uganda's oil projects are anything but sweet! They have left a sour taste in the mouths of oil host communities, biodiversity conservationists, climate change campaigners, and various businesses.

1. The undersigned oil host communities and East African civil society organisations (CSOs) from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) followed Uganda's crude oil naming ceremony. The ceremony took place at the Kingfisher Development Area (KFDA) in Kikuube district on September 2, 2026¹.
2. The Kingfisher oil project is operated by China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) (U) Ltd (CUL). The company's joint venture partners include TotalEnergies E&P U (TEPU) and the Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC), which holds the Government of Uganda's (GoU) stake.
3. During the ceremony, Uganda's president, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, joined by the country's Prime Minister, Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, as well as the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Dr. Monica Musenero, unveiled "Pearl Sweet"² as the commercial name of Uganda's crude oil.

¹ <https://x.com/KagutaMuseveni/status/2095157713500024937>

² <https://www.ceo.co.ug/museveni-unveils-pearl-sweet-crude-blend-as-uganda-prepares-for-first-oil-exports/>

4. The ceremony was also attended by representatives of government agencies and the oil companies operating in the Albertine Graben.
5. That Uganda's crude oil was named 'sweet' is a misnomer. We understand that the name is an identifier that is meant to alert the market that Uganda's crude oil has low sulphur levels. That notwithstanding, Uganda's oil sector cannot be described as sweet. For various sections of the Ugandan and East African public, it is a sour sector.
6. Why? The sector led to the forced displacement of over 118,000 people in Uganda and Tanzania³. The young, old, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), women and other vulnerable persons were not spared the vagaries of forced displacement. They were also not spared the sourness of being paid delayed, inadequate and unfair compensation.
7. The public is indeed well aware of the voluble complaints, and assertions made by oil project-affected people in Uganda and Tanzania that they were unable to replace the land that they lost to oil projects due to their being paid delayed, unfair and inadequate compensation⁴⁵. Needless to say, the oil projects left a sour taste amongst oil-affected communities in Uganda and Tanzania. The sour taste lingers to date.
8. In relation to the Kingfisher project area where the name 'Pearl Sweet' was unveiled, a sour taste also lingers amongst the project host communities. The project sits on the Buhuka flats, an area that, according to community testimonies, was previously used by families for grazing cattle as well as for farming and fishing⁶. However, the Kingfisher oil project activities and subsequent militarisation of the areas restricted access to land that communities relied on to make a living.
9. To make it worse, it has been said that the oil activities in the Albertine Graben attracted people to the area leading to many problems including

³ <https://www.amisdelaterre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/table-numbers-of-individual-persons-affected-by-tilenga-and-eacop.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.afiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Research-report-EACOP-project-impact-on-affected-people-in-Uganda-1.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/%D1%81%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%B6%D0%B8%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8/tanzania-report-findings-underscore-systemic-barriers-to-meaningful-community-participation-and-adequate-compensation-for-indigenous-groups-impacted-by-the-eacop-project-incl-co-responses/>

⁶ <https://cri.org/reports/they-dont-want-people-to-stay-here/>

destruction of critical biodiversity, especially the Bugoma Central Forest Reserve (CFR).

- 10.** Indeed, during the live broadcast of the crude oil naming ceremony, community members posted messages on YouTube, expressing pain over the destruction of Bugoma CFR. They also asked that President Museveni opens Lake Albert for fishing⁷. During his remarks at the name unveiling ceremony, the district chairperson of Kikuube district, Mr. Paddy Kisembo, also requested the president for a meeting to address the restricted access to Lake Albert.
- 11.** Fishers operating on the lake in Uganda report that their access to Lake Albert has been affected by the militarisation of the Kingfisher oil project area⁶. Other fishers report that oil-induced population influx has driven fishmongers, especially women, out of business⁸. They also note that climate change, which makes catching fish during heavy rains difficult, is affecting them.
- 12.** It is not only the fisherfolk in Uganda that are complaining. Fishers in the DRC assert that the Kingfisher and Tilenga oil project activities have negatively affected their fish catch. They argue that oil-induced pollution knows no boundaries for cross-border lakes such as Lake Albert, and that this pollution is affecting them. As a result, they filed a court case against the GoU among others at the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) in October 2025. They are seeking to halt the sour Tilenga and Kingfisher oil project activities⁹.
- 13.** Away from the fishers, Uganda's oil sector had been touted as an economic game changer that would create hundreds of thousands of jobs and enhance Uganda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Tanzania was also expected to reap economic benefits from the EACOP, the crude oil pipeline that traverses Uganda and Tanzania. During the name unveiling ceremony however, some Ugandan residents of Buhuka noted that they had not benefited from the Kingfisher project, whether through jobs or a visible improvement in living standards. In Tanzania, EACOP host communities

⁷ https://www.youtube.com/live/KthxcYT_P4?si=F-thl4v5NqORYuy9

⁸ <https://www.afiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Research-brief-Impact-of-Lake-Albert-oil-project-in-fisherfolk-in-Uganda-April-2024-2.pdf>

⁹ <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/a/story/uganda-ready-to-face-congolese-at-east-african-court-of-justice>

including indigenous people also reported that they were excluded from EACOP jobs¹⁰.

14. Previously, operators of micro and small enterprises in Uganda's tourism sector indicated that they had also not benefitted from the promised oil boom. Hotel owners as well as food and beverage service providers from Buliisa district in Uganda where the Tilenga oil project activities in Uganda are concentrated observed that Uganda's oil activities had had a sour impact on them, with some of their businesses nearly collapsing because of investing heavily in expectation of oil benefits, which never materialised¹¹. In addition, over 60 Ugandan business operators that supplied the oil sector and remain unpaid are crying foul¹².

15. Nature is also weeping. Research reports published from as far back as 2015¹³ to date show that Uganda's upstream Tilenga and Kingfisher oil projects, as well as the EACOP, have impacted elephants, mangroves at the coast of Tanga in Tanzania¹⁴ as well as wetlands associated with Africa's largest freshwater lake, Lake Victoria¹⁵. This lake is shared amongst Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. It is also the source of River Nile, which crosses 11 African countries. Communities rely on these critical resources to make a living. Their degradation leaves a sour taste and emptier pockets for them.

16. During the name unveiling ceremony, President Museveni indicated that proceeds from Uganda's oil would be used to electrify the country. However, available information shows that though the Ugandan government earned \$868.155 million in tax and non-tax oil revenues between 2018 and June 2025, the country remains energy poor¹⁶ with only over 20% of the country's population having access to grid power. Over 90% cook with biomass. Uganda is also highly indebted, and oil revenues are unlikely to offset the country's debt while also sufficiently increasing clean energy access.

¹⁰ <https://www.actionaidusa.org/work/along-the-pipeline-stories-from-tanzanias-eacop-corridor/>

¹¹ <https://www.afiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Research-brief-Tourism-and-oil-compressed.pdf>

¹² <https://observer.ug/business/over-9-7-million-debt-threatens-ugandas-local-oil-dream/>

¹³ <https://uganda.wcs.org/Admin-Plus/News-Manager/ID/8280/Evaluation-of-oil-impacts-on-elephants-shows-changes-in-their-behaviours.aspx>

¹⁴ <https://www.theeastaffrican.co.ke/tea/business-tech/tanga-energy-hub-faces-new-scrutiny-environmental-risks-5563790>

¹⁵ <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/environment-climate/article/2001554887/lake-victoria-at-risk-as-uganda-oil-project-threatens-shared-wetlands>

¹⁶ <https://www.afiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Publication-EACOP-is-being-constructed-but-at-what-cost-June-2026.pdf>

17. The social, environmental and climate change impacts as well as risks of oil activities are quite dire, so much so that some people that watched the name unveiling ceremony on YouTube observed that Uganda should be pursuing clean energy projects instead. We re-echo these citizen calls, asking that the GoU and other East African governments invest in clean energy instead.

18. The governments of Uganda and Tanzania should also restore community access to fishing grounds and grazing land wherever restrictions exist. Further, the governments should address the enduring compensation challenges that EACOP- and other oil-affected people are faced with, while demanding that the EACOP Company, CUL and TEPU restore the Ugandan, Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Congolese environmental resources that have been negatively impacted by their oil activities.

19. In addition, critical ecosystems such as Lake Albert, River Nile, Bugoma and Budongo Central Forest Reserves, Murchison Falls National Park and others should be protected from the ongoing degradation caused by oil activities. The oil activities affecting those ecosystems should stop.

SIGNATORIES

No.	Name	Country	Logo
1.	EACOP Host Communities (EACOP HC)	Uganda	

2.	Environment Governance Institute (EGI)	Uganda	
3.	Youth for Green Communities (YGC)	Uganda	
4.	Centre for Environmental Research and Agricultural Innovations (CERAI)	Uganda	
5.	Liberty Probono Initiative (LPI)	Uganda	
6.	Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)	Uganda	

7.	Strategic Response on Environment Conservation (STREC)	Uganda	
8.	National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)/Friends of the Earth Uganda	Uganda	
9.	Activists for Climate Justice Initiative (A4C)	Uganda	
10.	Centre for Citizens Conserving Environment & Management (CECIC)	Uganda	
11.	Women on Environment Mission (WEM)	Uganda	
12.	Women for Green Economy Movement, Uganda (WoGEM)	Uganda	
13.	Oil Refinery Residents Association (ORRA)	Uganda	

14.	African Initiative on Food Security and Environment (AIFE)	Uganda	
15.	Center for Conservation and Eco Energy Initiative (CCEI)	Uganda	
16.	South Western Institute for Policy and Advocacy (SOWIPA)	Uganda	
17.	Youth Concern on Environment and Development (YCED)	Uganda	
18.	Initiative for Green Planet (IGP)	Uganda	
19.	Youth for Nature Conservancy (YNC)	Uganda	

20.	Women for Green Nature (WGN)	Uganda	
21.	Nature Talk Africa (NaTA)	Uganda	
22.	Foundation for Ecological Preservation (FEP)	Uganda	
23.	Buliisa Patience Alliance Group (BUPAG)	Uganda	
24.	Oil and Gas Residents' Association (ORGHA)	Uganda	
25.	Buliisa Natural Climate Conservation Agency (BUNCCA)	Uganda	
26.	Association of Greater Masaka EACOP PAPs petitioners (AGMEPP)	Uganda	
27.	Tulwanilile Obwekanya Group	Uganda	

28.	Environmental Conservation Alliance Group (ECAG)	Uganda	
29.	Fem Earth Organisation	Uganda	 FEM EARTH ORGANISATION <i>Women for the planet</i>
30.	Green Conservers	Tanzania	
31.	GreenFaith Tanzania	Tanzania	
32.	Organisation for Community Engagement (OCE)	Tanzania	
33.	Kigoma Development Organisation (KDO)	Tanzania	
34.	Pastoralist Livelihood Support and Empowerment Programme (PALISEP)	Tanzania	

35.	Indigenous Women Development Affairs (IWADA)	Tanzania	
36.	Tanzania Environmental Governance Alliance (TEGA)	Tanzania	
37.	Alerte Congolaise pour l'environnement et les droits de l'homme (ACEDH)	DR Congo	
38.	Forum des Engagés pour le Développement Durable (FORED-ONG)	DR Congo	
39.	Engagement Communautaire pour la Sauvegarde de la Biodiversité (ECOSBiodiversity)	DR Congo	

40.	Association des Femmes Juristes du Congo (AFJC)	DR Congo	
41.	Actions des Femmes pour la Paix (AFP asbl)	DR Congo	
42.	Association des Filles Mères (AFM)	DR Congo	
43.	Fédération Émergente pour la Génération des Entrepreneurs du Congo (FEGEC)	DR Congo	
44.	Women's Environmental Justice and Public Interest Law Initiative (WEJ-PLI)	DR Congo	
45.	Association des Mamans pour le Développement et la Paix (AMDP)	DR Congo	
46.	Association pour Entraide et le Développement Intégral de la Femme (AEDIF) Femmes au cerveau vert pour l'avenir assume (FCVA asbl)	DR Congo	
47.	Action pour la paix et le Développement Durable	DR Congo	
48.	Droits Environnement et	DR Congo	

	Citoyenneté DEC-Organisation		
49.	Union Congolaise pour la Conservation de la Nature et le Développement durable (UCCND ASBL)	DR Congo	
50.	Aid Life Learn Environment (ALLEN+)	DR Congo	
51.	Climate Clock DRC	DR Congo	
52.	Coalition des Volontaires pour la Paix et le Développement, CVPD	DR Congo	
53.	Innovation for Development and Environmental Protection	DR Congo	

54.	Femmes au cerveau vert pour l'avenir assumé, FCVA asbl	DR Congo	
55.	Quest For Growth and Development Foundation	Nigeria	
56.	Laudato Si Movement	Kenya	
57.	AbibiNsroma Foundation	Ghana	
58.	Oil watch Africa	Africa	