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EACOP affected communities from Mubende district petitioned Stanbic bank and Absa bank to object financing oil and gas activities in Uganda

Grassroot organizations and representative of the EACOP affected communities from Mubende District have today May 13, 2022 petitioned Stanbic Bank and Absa Bank to object on financing oil and gas activities in Uganda.

Through the petition submitted to Ms. Anne Juuko, Chief Executive Officer, Stanbic Bank Uganda and Mr. Mumba Kalifungwa, Chief Executive Officer, Absa Bank Uganda, EACOP affected communities called on the banks to distance themselves from financing the EACOP oil project and Invest in projects that promote environmental conservation, climate justice and human rights protection of the people as opposed to fossil fuels projects.

They noted that the EACOP and other oil projects including the Tilenga, Kingfisher, and the oil refinery are located in the areas of social importance and critical biodiversity including land owned by most vulnerable people, national parks, game reserves, forests, water sources like lakes and rivers, sacred natural and historical sites, and many others. The impact of oil activities on these ecosystems is already huge the ongoing oil exploitation processes present huge social, environmental, economic, and political implications for our country and people.

For instance , in Uganda the EACOP project will affect 10 districts of Hoima, Kikuube, Kakumiro, Kyankwanzi, Mubende, Gomba, Sembabule, Lwengo, Rakai and Kyotera; 27 Sub-counties, 3 Town Councils and 171 Villages. Through the compulsory land acquisition, the project will abuse the land rights of over 13,000 households' in Uganda and Tanzania. Of these 13,000, roughly 200 households in Uganda and 331 households in Tanzania will have to be resettled, and approximately 3,200 to 3,500 households in Uganda and 9513 households in Tanzania will be economically displaced according to Oxfam, 2020.

The EACOP affected communities continue to suffer from untold grievances such as low and unfair compensation for crops, stopping communities from using their land to grow perennial crops and set up new developments has worsened poverty, food insecurity and has increased school drop-out rates especially among the girls.

Worst of all, the pipeline will run alongside the Lake Victoria Basin. Supporting of projects of this nature is like committing suicide to over 40 million people who rely on for drinking water and food production. In case of any oil spill from the pipeline at any point, there is a great risk that the spill will poison the lake and local communities will be left with no other means of survive.

We are also concerned about the loss of habitats and disturbances in ecosystems due to oil activities in Uganda could result in migration of animals to the DRC and other neighboring countries. This would result in human-wildlife conflicts, which could negatively affect environmental conservation efforts. This would be most unfortunate as our countries make money off tourism.

In addition to loss of habitants, oil activities in Murchison Falls National Park operate around the clock, disrupting wildlife, water sources human health, recreation and other aspects of the public lands that were set aside and held in trust for the Ugandan people. This is another source of worry especially communities.

Supporting oil exploitation project of this scale could lock Uganda into fossil fuel dependency and undermine the country's opportunity for a green transition, leaving Ugandans much poorer.

Further, the carbon footprint for the oil and gas development is too huge at a time when countries including Uganda and other are engaged in efforts to reduce their carbon emissions in line with the Paris Climate Change Agreement. It's estimated that the EACOP project will contribute to over 34.3 million metric tonnes of carbon per year when oil and gas production starts. (See Afiego 2019)

In the view of the above, EACOP affected communities are calling on Banks to do the following:

- **i.** Stop plans of financing oil and gas projects under the Tilenga, Kingfisher and East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) in Uganda
- **ii.** Promote clean renewable energy projects through approving only green projects that promote sustainable development.
- **iii.** Engage Total and other oil project developers to immediately pay us fair and adequate compensation.
- **iv.** Invest in projects that promote environmental conservation, climate justice and human rights protection of the people as opposed to fossil fuels projects.

END