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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hoima, Uganda

Host Communities Speak Out for Environmental Justice on World Environment Day 2025

In commemoration of **World Environment Day 2025**, the **Strategic Response on Environmental Conservation (STREC)** joined host communities in **Hoima, Buliisa and Kikuube Districts** to demand environmental justice and raise concerns about the growing threats posed by the **EACOP**, **Tilenga**, and **Kingfisher** oil projects. This year's global theme, **"Ending Plastic Pollution,"** underscores the urgency of tackling pollution that has invaded every aspect of life from the deepest lakes to the food we consume.

Community members used the day to call for urgent action to protect ecosystems, restore degraded environments, and champion sustainable alternatives to fossil fuel expansion. During community dialogue held in **Kabaale Sub-county** featured emotional testimonies from residents, shedding light on how oil activities are devastating local livelihoods and the environment.

"Oil companies have already begun polluting Lake Albert by pouring oil residues directly into the water. Aquatic life is dying, and those of us who rely on the lake are in danger," said **Jane Kusemererwa**, a resident of Kikuube.

"Our farmlands and homes are flooded with runoff from the Tilenga project. Clean water sources are gone, and we are now forced to rely on contaminated waste water," added **John Okello**.

"Our rivers are choked with plastic, affecting both fishing and farming," said **Jane Achieng**, a community leader in Kikuube. *"We need sustainable solutions that involve and empower our communities."*

"We used to farm, fish, and drink from the lake. Now, even the trees are dying," shared **Agnes Atuhairwe**, a farmer from Buhuka. *"Oil has brought us nothing but dust, fear, and broken promises."*

"We are not against development," stated **Peter Byaruhanga**, a local youth leader. *"But development should not destroy our land or silence our voices. We want clean energy, not pipelines and pollution."*

The event featured a **community-led tree planting campaign**, **youth-led exhibitions on renewable energy**, and the launch of a **photobook project** capturing the social and environmental impacts of oil activities in the region. The photobook, developed with community input, serves as a powerful advocacy tool to demand redress and meaningful change.

"The struggle to restore our land begins by listening to those most affected," said **Mr. Cirrus Kabaale**, Chief Executive Officer of STREC. *"On this World Environment Day, we call for a fossil-free future where communities lead the way in protecting nature and building resilient, sustainable livelihoods."*

STREC urges the **Government of Uganda**, oil companies, and international financiers to **respect community rights**, **halt the expansion of destructive fossil fuel projects**, and **invest in clean, community-led energy solutions** that prioritize people and the planet.

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