

NAPE LOBBY

September 2010

34th Edition



**Environmental Sustainability and
Human Rights at Stake**

Uganda's Experience



Funded by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

Good governance is important at all stages of development. The environmental sustainability approach should be focused on all aspects of good governance; including transparency, human rights, respect for the rule of law and equity.

Human Rights are the bedrock of democracy. It is about respect for the dignity of the person, realization of his or her potential and creating an enabling environment for to participate in the conduct of public affairs. Respect for human right leads to peace and stability, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

NAPE File Photo



The notorious 'Kiboko' squad in action on the streets of Kampala. This Kiboko squad was born in 2007 to suppress the demonstration against Mabira forest give away

EDITORIAL

Environmental sustainability demands good governance at all levels of society, including accountability, transparency, respect for human rights. Failure to comply with the principles underlying good governance lead to underdevelopment.

The principles of good governance are not new. In short, good governance means anti-corruption, transparency and accountability by authority and its institutions, effectiveness and efficiency, participatory decision-making, responsiveness, consensus-building and orientation as well as equity. These are the major characteristics of good governance as outlined by the United Nations.

In a snapshot, Uganda has failed to reach the benchmark of acceptable standards in many aspects of development. The environment has suffered most. Regulatory frameworks to guide the use and management of natural resources available but poorly implemented, leading to massive abuse of the environment.

Bad governance and low levels of accountability are evidenced in the mismanagement of forest resources, wetlands and large infrastructure development among others.

The ethical and moral fibre of the country is collapsing. Land-grabbing by the rich and powerful and illegal settlement of foreigners in traditional lands, is accelerating the rate of cultural and spiritual erosion and destroying the ethical and moral norms of our people. Murders and mutilations are becoming common.

There is need for government to be committed to these virtues. Government should invest in people, environment and nature rather than those things that manifest as abuse of people, environment and nature.

In this issue, NAPE Lobby discusses how bad governance and lack of accountability have negatively impacted on the people and on nature, thereby prescribing conditions that encourage erosion of quality people's livelihoods and community cohesion.

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A Publication of the National Association
of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)
P. O. Box 29909 Kampala, Uganda
Phone: +256 - 414 - 534453
Fax: +256 - 414 - 530181
E-mail: nape@nape.or.ug
<http://www.nape.or.ug>

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Toothless NEMA fails to implement the Kaveera ban

By Allan Kalangi

The implementation of the ban on the importation and use of the hazardous polythene bags (*bivera*) has hit a snag following the reluctance and laxity of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to act.

NEMA, which is the statutory body supposed to advise the Government on best environmental practices and implement laws aimed at safeguarding the environment, has not effectively played its role in this regard.

And now hopes of having a polythene bag free Uganda have been dashed with President Yoweri Museveni's directive that the ban be deferred to a later date pending further consultations on the matter. This development is a big blow to environmentalists and all the other Ugandans who cherish environmental security and sustainable development of the Country.

The ban imposed by Finance Minister while reading the national budget for the 2009/2010 financial year got overwhelming approval by Parliament. However, in a rare and ironic twist of events, the Minister of Water and Environment Maria Mutagamba, whom everyone expected to welcome the move, came up in arms and vehemently opposed the ban. NEMA folded its arms and watched as Mutagamba

exchanged hot words with fellow Cabinet Ministers and MPs who care about the environment, and even moved ahead to open more polythene manufacturing plants.

How NEMA failed to implement the ban

Many critics have said that NEMA's soft stance on the ban could have given the leeway to perceive kaveera as not being a serious sustainability threat in Uganda.

During the kaveera saga, NEMA only told few media houses in Uganda that it was going to implement the ban but that is where it all ended. As Minister Mutagamba opened more plastic manufacturing factories, NEMA never issued any protest statement nor condemned the act in any way.

Other instances where NEMA has failed Ugandans

NEMA's failure story seems to supersede its success story. NEMA failed to advise the government to abandon plans to give away Mabira forest for sugarcane growing. It was only after the intervention of local people and Civil Society Organisations and some pressure groups that the government was compelled to reconsider its decision. NEMA never congratulated CSOs and local people upon this achievement for the country and

the whole world.

Early this year, the government said that it was planning to lease lakes to private developers. This revelation shocked many Ugandans and almost made them run out of their skins. But to NEMA, there seemed to be nothing out of the ordinary with this and it has since maintained its silence.

The chain of NEMA's failures include;

Failure to implement the 200 metres buffer zone for Kalangala; failed to implement safeguard policies in the Bujagali dam process; and failed to check mining in protected areas. For example in Queen Elizabeth National Park, limestone mining is currently going on day night despite such an activity being not consistent with Uganda's laws and having grave environmental consequences. As always, NEMA is keeping quiet.

Smoking in Public: Some time back, the Ugandan parliament passed a law banning smoking in public areas. But up to now, people smoke anyhow without any check and in many public places like bars, there are no gazetted smoking and non-smoking areas.

NEMA the White Elephant!

The question on the minds of many Ugandans now is, do we really need NEMA?



NAPE File Photo

Mismanaged plastic bags choke the soil.

Some people have argued that NEMA is needed because the mention of its name alone has restrained some from degrading wetlands fearing it may crack on them any time.

Others have argued that NEMA helps the government to secure international funding and donations in the area of environmental protection because having such a regulatory body is a prerequisite for many international funding agencies like the World Bank.

Other people have, however, argued that having no NEMA may be better than having NEMA, given its numerous failures and diminishing success. They say that NEMA is now nothing

but a white elephant! To back their perception of NEMA, they argue that NEMA consumes a lot of tax payers' money and yet seems not to do enough to protect the environment. Every financial year, the government allocates over Sh. 5 billion to NEMA. The money is supposed to help in the enforcement of best environmental practices in Uganda. But where does this money go when there is hardly any enforcement? In fact according to Frank Muramuzi, the Executive Director of NAPE, NEMA should be summoned by the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament to give a value for money accountability of the funds it receives from government.

NEMA seems to have been

relegated to rubberstamping Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for the different developmental projects in the country without giving a critical eye to the consequences. For example, the hydropower projects, and mining in Queen Elizabeth National Park, to mention but a few.

The respect that many Ugandans had for NEMA would be revived if it became more proactive and practical and begins to enforce laws and policies aimed at benefitting the current and future generations.

Government plots to Stop NGOs from working in Oil Region in Uganda

By Geoffrey Kamese
And Lilian Komugisha

Uganda has been grappling with a number of issues concerning its young oil industry. There is ongoing debate on whether the industry is a blessing and not a curse. While government has persistently and consistently assured Ugandans that the industry is a blessing, there is growing skepticism however, whether the industry will actually be a blessing for Uganda. Concern is growing about the impacts of the industry on people's rights and freedoms.

In July this year, a team of NAPE staff travelled to the oil region to familiarize themselves with the much hyped developments in the area, meet their community based partners and to educate the communities on environmental issues pertaining to the industry. The field visit which took the team through the Districts of Masindi, Holma and Bulisa was quite revealing. From the mission, it became apparently clear that for a very long time, the communities have had a lot of expectations in the industry. These expectations are however, beginning to wear away as a result of recent government actions in the area. There are fears that the industry will enslave and make them hopeless, given that the industry is marred with speculation, secretive deals and concealment of vital project information from the public.

Information gathered from the people in the area and the team's experience indicate that oil is being considered as a sensitive



NAPE File Photo

The District Security Officer, Hoime (right) in direct confrontation with NAPE staff

undertaking and as such, it has been made a number one security priority for the country. No wonder on the day the team visited Bulisa, they were arrested shortly after visiting Wanseko landing site on the Shores of Lake Albert by security officials led by the District Internal Security Officer (DISO). The van in which the NAPE Staff was travelling was surrounded by security officers in cars and motorcycles. The security officers included an army captain and the District Police Commander (DPC) among others.

The NAPE staff were grilled for some hours as if they were criminals. The security officials claimed to be working on the orders of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. When contacted by NAPE, the Permanent Secretary

said that NAPE was not supposed to access communities or even go anywhere within the shores of Lake Albert which is part of the oil region.

The security officers warned that unless NAPE and other civil society organizations obtained permission from Mr. Kabagambe Kaliisa, they would be arrested and detained if they dared go to the oil region.

After hours of detention, the NAPE Staff was released without any charge preferred against them. This was after the intervention of the NAPE Executive Director Mr. Frank Muramuzi who demanded to know the law which his staff had broken to deserve being arrested. But before their release, the security officials warned and maintained that NAPE Staff and



NAPE File Photo

NAPE staff in Buliisa

other civil society organization that dared to go to the oil region without permission would be arrested.

NAPE, has never the less, continued to work in the oil region despite the harassment and intimidation from security officials. We have continued to engage the government to remove such unnecessary and unlawful restrictions which infringe the rights of NGOs and citizens of Uganda.

CSOs have continued to engage the Energy and Mineral Development Ministry over the issue of accessibility to the oil region. As a result of this, government recently organized a big meeting that composed of police, military and Para military, permanent secretaries of all ministries, local government leaders and some NGOs operating in the Albertine region. In this meeting, government announced that it would not tolerate NGOs that are critical of the way government is handling the oil and gas industry. The few NGOs present in the meeting were not given chance to present their views, all presentations from morning to evening were made by government agencies.

The government is plotting

to apply the unfavorable NGO law to completely banish some NGOs that are critical of the oil companies and government operations in the area. The target could be NAPE and AFIEGO and their close local partners.

Governments' attempts to restrain CSOs operations in the oil region does not only apply to NAPE but to many other NGOs like Greenwatch and AFIEGO who were also stopped from accessing the area. Recently, Jens Finnas from Finland, who had visited the oil region, was arrested, temporarily detained and deported.

Recent developments in the oil industry indicate the likelihood of new friction between government and civil society organizations. The following are most probable;

- Government will likely use the unfavorable NGO law to intimidate NGOs that are critical of its handling of the oil and gas industry.
- Increased militarization of the oil region.
- NGOs, CBOs, individuals, researchers and foreigners are to be completely banned from working in the oil region leaving communities with no security and information regarding their rights issues of oil.

- Nearing the election period people and political parties are likely to be refused from talking about oil issues.

NAPE will continue to advocate for good governance in the oil and gas industry. This will be done through the recently formed Oil Watch Network which will link up with the media, churches and other networks to unearth and condemn bad practices in the oil region.

The view of NAPE is that the powers given to the security officers in the oil region by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development compromise the rights and freedoms of Ugandans and sets a bad beginning for the oil industry in Uganda. The powers cannot only be equated to the "pigeonhole" constitution, but it sets a bad precedence for constitutionalism and the rule of law in Uganda. A bad start will cost the country dearly and it may become difficult in future to come back on the right track.

While it is our prayer that sanity prevails in the oil industry, we shall continue to challenge the legality of the actions so far in place. The current orders and actions leave a lot to be desired. Time will tell if they will succeed!

How I Lost my Eye while Working for Bujagali Dam Project

By Isaac Kiira

When the Bujagali Dam construction started in 2008, activities such as fishing that used to be carried out around the Bujagali falls were stopped to give way for the dam construction. The young men and women whose livelihood was supported by the existence of the magnificent Bujagali falls lost their source of income. They had to find alternative means of survival. Some lucky strong men were offered casual employment in the dam construction project. Even then, however, the working environment in the construction process was undesirable.

As a young man of 24 years old, I found myself in a tricky situation after we lost our home in the Island we had lived for years. I was formally a fisherman. Now I am partially impaired after I started working for Bujagali dam project with Salini construction company, a subsidiary of Bujagali Energy Limited (BEL).

I was offered a job by Salini Construction Company in March, 2009 as a still fixer and welder in Bujagali dam project. My terms of reference in this job was welding, drilling concrete, and fixing nuts. I was supposed to work for 48 hours per week. But in a bid to realize additional money paid for overtime, I would work for 10 hours a day for 7 days a week. This means that I would work for 70 hours per week. Salini Construction Company did not provide me with adequate protective gear in the course of per-



Isaac before the accident



Isaac after the accident

forming my duty effectively. My work exposed me to intense light from welding machine, noise and dust for long hours. Besides, I could also lift heavy metals during the course of the work, which adversely affected my health. In September, 2009, I developed a severe chest pain and general poor health. When I reported my poor health to the company, I was given a company doctor who examined me and prescribed treatment. I was given the treatment and sent back to work without further explanations regarding my health status. I continued working, but in poor health. No sick leave was granted to me.

In early 2010, while on night shift, I developed severe pain in the eye as I was welding metals. We had a deadline to meet, so I had to work despite the pain. The doctor at the site administered eye drops to relieve the pain. In the morning after the night shift, I returned home and went back to the site in the afternoon for further treatment. At that

time, both eyes were hurting a lot and I could see with a lot of difficulty. The company doctor sent me to their private health centre for further investigations. At the Health centre I was seen by an Optician who prescribed treatment, however, the drugs were not available at the site and the company did not make an effort to ensure that the right medication is available to me. I was forced to use my meager salary to seek for medical treatment from Jinja hospital. It was in Jinja hospital that the diagnosis revealed a scar in my eye, probably inflicted by the welding strong lights. The doctor recommended that I should get the right treatment immediately to avoid eventual loss of the eye site. I took the medical report from Jinja hospital to the company doctor for advice and action.

The company, unfortunately, doctor did not believe that my eye sickness was caused by lack of adequate protective gear at work. He advised me to apply for my salary



NAPE File Photo

Bujagali dam under construction

Respect for human rights must be a core principle guiding development. The world commission on dams alludes to respect to human rights in large infrastructure development projects. "People who would be adversely affected by the project should participate in the planning and decision-making and have a share in the project benefits." In an attempt to partially implement this guideline, the Bujagali dam constructor offered employment to some of the affected communities in the project as casual labours because they are not qualified enough to undertake technical positions in the project.

advance and seek further medical treatment. I was given a sick leave for twenty seven (27) days and 100.000/- Shs, but this was not enough to buy the prescribed drugs. My sick leave ended but I was not yet fine to resume work. I contacted the Personnel Manager to ask for additional time to treat myself. The personnel told me that since I was not insured, and there was no physical accident at the site, the company was not responsible for my health problems. The Personnel Manager gave me a letter and told me to go home. I did not know what was contained in the letter because I do not understand English, and she did not give me any explanation. She told me that the company would contact me on phone. I went home and waited for a telephone call from the company, but

in vain. I went back to the Personnel Manager, but instead she asked me to return the company property that was in my position (overall, helmet, shoes and pinchers). I took back the items and I was told to sign, but I did not know what I was signing for. I was then taken to the accountant and then the cashier. The cashier gave me a document and told me that I was to sign for 835,500/- (eight hundred and thirty five thousand shillings and five hundred only). I was given two options, to either sign for US\$375 or leave and go away if I did not accept it. I was desperately in need of money to treat myself. I had no option but to take the money.

Salini Construction Company is responsible for my poor health and consequent incapacitation. Before I started working at the Bujagali dam

site, I was physically fit and able to support myself. Now I have to look on-to my economically stressed family for support. I blame all this on to Bujagali dam construction.

I come from a humble home. My family was relocated in 2000 from Malindi island on the Nile river, to give way for the construction of Bujagali dam. My father (deceased) was a fisherman and our livelihood largely depended on fishing and farming. We lost our source of income which supported our small family of six. My father fell sick a few months after we were relocated, and because he could not afford medical treatment, he died a year later. We are now living a life of desperation!

Corruption in Water Sector: A Governance Dilemma

By Timothy Mukeele



Photo by NAPE

Women and children queue for long hours in search for water for domestic use

Water is essential to the wellbeing of human kind, vital for economic development, and a basic requirement for the health functioning of all the ecosystems. Clean water, together with hygienic sanitation, is necessary to sustain human life and to ensure good health and human dignity. This is indeed a human right issue and a basic need for everybody that one would never imagine that in Uganda a big percentage of the people does not have access to safe water while others do not have adequate sanitation facilities.

There is sufficient clean freshwater in Uganda for everyone's

essential personal and domestic needs. However, what is lacking is the ...distribution networks and working systems to extract groundwater or harvest rainwater; exclusion from these services or facilities; inequitable allocation of water resources; and pollution limit people's access to sufficient clean and safe water.

In rural areas, many people collect water of poor quality from unprotected wells or surface water sources, often at a great distance from their homes, deterring them from collecting sufficient quantities. Latrines are often seen as unnecessary or unaffordable. In urban areas, low-income groups -

particularly those living in informal settlements - often lack access to adequate water supply and sanitation. Piped water supplies and sewers seldom cover informal areas, which mean that people living there access water from a variety of generally inadequate water supply options, such as wells built close to latrines or from small-scale water providers, such as door-to-door water vendors, whose water supplies may not be of good quality.

Sanitation in Uganda is severely neglected by both governments and households. The number of toilets in a given community is generally

inadequate, with no guarantee that they are hygienic to use. Because of the lack of sanitation at a household level (or, in many cases, at any level), many people will use plastic bags, streets or other unhygienic places for defecation.

Lack of access to water and sanitation has a severe effect on human health, exacerbates poverty and undermines economic development. It is estimated that at any one time nearly half the population of Uganda is suffering from health problems linked to inadequate water and sanitation. Cases of diarrhoea each year causes many deaths, mostly among children under five (National Development Plan Pg268). Lack of access to water and sanitation undermines economic and social development, due to the costs of disease, the unequal burden on women and children and the high costs of accessing water (in terms of time and money) that reduce people's ability to secure other essential goods. Water shortages and unreliable access to water can reduce crop production and livestock health and can undermine the viability of businesses run by poor women and men, including home-based activities. In addition, without sufficient water, the ecosystem, for example the proper growth of trees and other flora necessary to prevent soil erosion, cannot be supported.

It is therefore imperative that the right to water and sanitation is made a crucial aspect of the efforts to improve this situation in this country.

Water rights in the Ugandan context means water supply for each person that is sufficient and continuous for personal and domestic uses,

which normally include drinking, personal sanitation, washing of clothes, food preparation, personal and household hygiene. Clean water refers to safe water that in particular, is free from hazardous substances that could endanger human health, and whose color, odour and taste are acceptable to users.

Accessible water and sanitation means that water and sanitation services and facilities are accessible within, or in the immediate vicinity, of each household, educational institution and workplace. Sanitation is safe, adequate and conducive to the protection of public health and the environment.

Affordable water and sanitation a situation where water and sanitation can be secured without reducing any person's capacity to acquire other essential goods and services, including food, housing, health services and education.

Non-discrimination and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups means that there is no distinction based on grounds such as race or color which leads to unequal access to water and sanitation. Non-discrimination also includes proactive measures to ensure that the particular needs of vulnerable or marginalized groups are met.

Access to information and participation: All people have the right to participate in decision-making processes that may affect their rights. All people are given full and equal access to information concerning water, sanitation and the environment.

Accountability is also an important aspect which means that persons or groups denied their right to

water and sanitation have access to effective judicial or other appropriate remedies, for example courts, the IGG or human rights commission.

Too often, the aforementioned basic human rights are blocked by aspects of bad governance—lack of proper accountability and corruption in the water sector in Uganda. To date, this facility remains unobtainable for a majority Ugandans. This is not due to scarcity, but rather a lack of good governance that has been clearly and deliberately crafted by the leaders and service providers for ulterior motives.

Corruption remains one of the least addressed challenges in relation to water resources and services. A certain section of our leaders have tacitly accepted corruption in the way water is governed. Corruption has been seen by most Ugandans as something that could "grease" the wheels of development efforts. It is not uncommon to find our "great and gallant politicians" openly and without any sense of shame "stuffing" themselves with public funds while oblivious of the poor and marginalized people who go without clean and safe water and sanitation facilities; this clearly infringes on their water rights. A visit to most of Kampala suburbs will portray a scenario where the affluent stay in state of the art mansions with all the water and sanitation facilities while the less privileged languish in the shanty neighborhoods in appalling water and sanitation conditions.

In recent years, thinking has shifted, and anti-corruption measures are now perceived as actions that just pass away without any much ado. Corrupt practices are detrimental to sustainable

water use and service provision. Corruption ultimately limits the scope for improving poor people's livelihood opportunities.

Corruption and abuse of power continues to siphon off scarce monetary resources and diminishes our prospects for providing water and sanitation for all. Corruption and abuse of power have to a larger extent, in the recent past:

- Discouraged investments within the water sector and yet it is supposed to be a priority sector. Reforms have been made though with little efforts.
- Undermined performance and effectiveness of both public and private sectors, leading to inefficient and unequal allocation and distribution of water resources and related services,
- Decreased and diverted government revenues that could be used to strengthen budgets and improve water and other services, especially for poor people,
- Made existing legislation, rules and regulations ineffective, this has increased water pollution and over-abstraction of ground and surface water.
- Diluted the integrity of the public service sector, since discretionary decision making has created unpredictability and inequalities and jeopardized the rules of law and justice.

The entire above mentioned are a symptom of governance deficiencies in both the private and public spheres. Enforcement of legislation is weak and judicial systems are inadequate. When these are combined with, for example, low wages, huge income disparities and accountability and transparency shortcomings, personal economic gain is more



Access to clean water

attractive than concern for the well-being of Ugandan citizens.

The establishment of well-defined and coherent roles and responsibilities, such as through legislation of formal and informal water rights, will lead to a number of social, economic and environmental benefits:

- It will promote equitable water use between existing user groups. It will also facilitate improved access to water by groups that previously have been denied formal or informal water rights.
- There will be accountability. It will establish access to water and sanitation as legal entitlements, which provided a basis for individuals and groups to hold the leaders and other actors to account. It will also provide the basis for actors within government to hold each other accountable to the objective of realizing the right

It will focus on the vulnerable and marginalized groups, focus on the need to prioritize access to basic water and sanitation services to all, including those that are normally

excluded

- It will improve the efficiency of existing water supply allocations. For example, those requiring additional water resources, such as growing towns, can increasingly meet their needs by acquiring the water rights of those who are using water for low value purposes.
- It will increase participation in decision making, provide genuine participation of communities in the holistic planning processes.
- It will increase willingness to take economic risks for investing in improved water management and practices in both rural and urban contexts and thus impacting positively on productive livelihood opportunities. It can also reduce the pressure on water resources as it is likely that those with water rights have incentives for sustaining water.
- It will lead to better water decision making.

Promoting Best Practices in Chemicals Management in Uganda

By Shillar Kyomugisha

Sound chemicals management is essential for sustainable development and is fundamental in safeguarding human health and the environment against harm from hazardous chemicals.

For sound chemicals management to be effective, it is important that people interacting with chemicals are aware of the dangers and benefits chemicals may have on their social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

More often than not, communities are not aware of the dangers of chemical use. There are no clear mechanism for awareness creation and feedback. This has left the populace more vulnerable.

Chemicals management entails carrying out a number of activities that among others include; safe handling of the chemicals during use, storage and disposal. The successful management of chemicals also entails putting in place sufficient regulatory measures to guide the use, storage and disposal of these chemicals. If not effectively managed, chemicals can cause significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.

Chemicals gain access to human bodies through consumer



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Human drugs can be a health hazard if mismanaged

products such as drugs, cosmetics, and foodstuffs. In Uganda the most harmful chemicals commonly found in some consumer products include; mercury, Lead, hydroquinone and Arsenic. The accumulation of mercury in the body can permanently damage the brain,

kidney, lungs and the developing fetus, increases blood pressure, causes skin and eye irritation as well as death. Chemicals such as Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals normally found in fatty foods, paints, pesticides and bi-products of industrial processes cause male reproductive problems

such as poor semen quality and at critical periods in foetal development causing abnormal mammary glands development. I. Phthalates that are used to polish nails and ingredients for some perfumes and cosmetics increase the risk of reproductive systems, birth defects, hormonal changes, causes allergies in baby boys and developing reproductive and nervous systems and organs in infants and fetuses. Phthalates also disrupt the timing of pubertal development in young girls and puts them at the risk of contracting cancer and diabetes.

In Uganda today, there are a number of new and complex consumer products on the market however, many of the products, are counterfeit and hazardous in nature. The management of these chemicals rich consumer products has not been that effective and therefore their effects have been adverse, persistent and in some circumstances have remained unpredictable.

Civil Society Organizations in Uganda have been promoting sustainable chemicals management through the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) that promotes risk reduction from chemicals, good governance, accessibility to knowledge and information, prevention against illegal international trafficking and capacity building and technical cooperation. Efforts have been made despite the fact that the adverse effects of hazardous chemicals are on rise

and have continued to persist in the country.

The Government of Uganda through the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), National Drug Authority (NDA), Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry (MTTI), The Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development as well as the Ministry of Health have made efforts to counteract hazardous chemicals, with little success. Most of these institutions; if not all, are inadequately funded, staffed and equipped and therefore lack capacity to implement the various aspects of chemicals management including enforcing the laws in place. The available trained personnel involved in chemicals management are few in number, concentrated in the city centre, lack professional capacity that originates from bias on certain disciplines and therefore tend to only focus on their particular areas of specialization.

Programs carried out in Government Universities and other tertiary institutions lack critical concerns on safe handling of hazardous chemicals. This therefore means that issues of chemicals management like storage, transportation, manipulation, use and disposal have continued to be done without proper skills and equipment hence exposing the population to hazardous chemicals; more especially children and women.

Many consumers in the rural areas have not been sensitized on the dangers chemicals in the products they use present to their health and to the environment. These consumers have remained ignorant about chemical hazards and are least organized, least equipped and are not supervised; they have continued to suffer from the adverse effects of chemicals. On the other hand rural, consumers have not been involved in most government programmes and projects on chemicals management and therefore, most laws, regulations and Acts on chemicals management have remained on paper.

For chemicals management to be effective, it is fundamental for consumers from both rural and urban areas to be fully sensitized, informed about the dangers of hazardous products, consulted, involved, equipped and also should participate at all levels in decision making processes on chemicals manufacture, use, storage, transportation and disposal lest the adverse effects resulting from poor storage, poor transportation, poor use and poor disposal will be felt more by the ignorant, less informed, least organized, least equipped, least supervised and inaccessible consumers that constitute the largest percentage of Uganda's population.

The Sustainability School in Practice



Community members in a meeting to discuss issues of sustainability of community resources

By Oweyegha-Afunaduula

NAPE's Sustainability School (SS) Programme is progressively taking root with the establishment of Sustainability villages in five districts in Uganda.

The sustainability villages are spread in the Sustainability School's thematic areas of operation and are meant to help communities tackle challenges in the areas of good governance, accountability and human rights, water and sanitation, land use and food security, large dams and energy, deforestation and large plantation and climate change among others.

The Manager of the SS Oweyegha Afunaduula told NAPE Lobby that work is in high gear

towards achieving the goal of the programme which is, "To create a critical mass composed of communities, community leaders and growing civil society organizations able to hold the government, and global institutions accountable to the impacts of their actions on peoples' livelihoods and national development"

"We know time is needed for us to reach our goal but the beginning has been very encouraging and we are making good progress. The communities who are our primary target are steadily embracing the programme and we are working hard not to disappoint them," Afuna added.

NAPE's Sustainability School started operations in November 2009. It is not a physical school with structured classrooms and a set up of staff working on structured learning periods but is based on popular education. It is ideological, philosophical and is for the transmission of values and ethics which emphasize community empowerment.

The Executive Director of NAPE Mr. Frank Muramuzi said that the idea to form the SS was hatched after the realization that many people in communities were passive, unworried, fearful and reluctant to raise their voices to challenge the status quo and demand for accountability from their leaders. Muramuzi says that the

fearfulness, docility and complacency of the communities had led to government and its development partners to become obstinate and engage in acts of corruption, abuse of human rights, deforestation and environmental degradation, marginalization of women, and general poor service delivery among other vices that are threatening community sustainability. He says this trend can only be changed if communities can be sensitized and mobilized to start engaging their leaders and government and making them accountable for their actions.

The initial intervention of the School was to identify facilitators and Community Sustainability Educators and training them on the concept of the SS and guiding them on how to form the sustainability villages. Training and learning materials are also being developed to facilitate community education.

A team from NAPE which has been visiting the sustainability villages was happy to find that the communities have already embarked on the process of engaging their leaders. On September 12, 2010 the NAPE team together with a representative of Rosa Luxemburg, one of NAPE's International Partner Organisations, Carola Diallo visited Kalangala District where three sustainability villages have been established. They also moved with sustainability educators from other sustainability villages in Mukono, and Holma to share experiences with their counterparts in Kalangala. The Kalangala educators who



Safe and clean water is a sustainability issue for communities in Kalangala Island.

team to Kulugulu Sustainability Village where the members have mobilized themselves to fight for their community well that is being threatened by the palm oil plantations.

They said that accessibility to the well which serves about 200 community members has been hampered by the planting of the palms in the path. The chairman of the Sustainability village said they had written to Palm Oil Uganda complaining about the blockage of their path and that they had copied the letter to all the relevant district authorities. In the letter they demanded for the reopening of the path or creation of another water source that could be easily accessed. But in their September 12th meeting,

to humans and yet there had been no attend to stop these chemicals getting into their well.

They therefore resolved to write another letter to the palm oil company and the district officials raising the problem of fertilizers and that if they were not responded to in 14 days, they would meet again and decide a tougher action.

Afuna said that the Kulugulu Sustainability village is on the right track and that the School will continue to train the educators on how to make village action plans and ensure that their voices are heard when they are making any demands for good service delivery from their leaders.

Karuma Hydro Electric Power Project: Involve Communities & Supported them

By William O. Ogik

Karuma HEP Project –affected Person

The Karuma hydroelectric power (HEP) project was on and off the drawing board since the early 1990s. The project site is located at Karuma/Awoo village, a few kilometers upstream to the east of Karuma Bridge on River Nile. The project area is in Kiriandongo District and it is a home to people of various ethnic backgrounds and cultures. These people have lived in harmony for long. Their main occupation has been agriculture.

Kiriandongo District is a potential foodbasket for Uganda and beyond especially if irrigation from River Nile could be initiated. However, today, the area lacks the necessary infrastructure. The only all-weather road is the Kampala-Gulu highway. Electricity and modern food storage facilities are virtually non-existent. It is, therefore, unbelievable that the Karuma HEP project has not been given development priority it should deserve.

In the early 1990s a company known as Pakwach Power was first fronted for the Karuma project. That company faded into oblivion under mysterious circumstances.

In the mid 1990s, a Norwegian consortium called Norpak Power Ltd emerged as the new company to undertake the project. Indeed government officials introduced Norpak to the community

that would be affected by the project. Preliminary studies and surveys were carried out. Even the Environment and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the generation facility around the proposed site was reportedly approved by the relevant government authorities. The ESIA and other permits issued were for the generation of 200MW of electricity. Apparently the permits all expired before the actual construction could begin. The Norwegian consortium also dropped out of the Karuma project under unclear circumstances.

The latest entrant into the proposed Karuma HEP project is Energy Infratech Pvt Limited. This company has its headquarters in New Delhi, India. It has sub-contracted a local company known as WSS Services Ltd to do preliminary work. Meanwhile Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) officials, with WSS staff, initiated some contract with the project affected community. Unfortunately they have not been keen to follow up and meet the community on a regular basis to establish how their lives and interests will be by the project. The crucial details on issues of displacement, compensation and resettlement have not been adequately explained to the community.

This cannot be a mistake or an oversight. It may be deliberate. All companies, local or multi-national are driven by profit motive. They will do anything to maximize their profit, especially when dealing with an unsuspecting community like the one in Karuma. It is therefore up to the affected community to be vigilant in order to get what they deserve.

In June 2010, a meeting was called by WSS/MEMD officials to tell the community about the study that would lead to new ESIA. They answered a few questions on the social and cultural aspects of the community. Crucial issues which the community wanted clarified were put off to be handled by another team later.

On 10th July 2010, a second team came to address people at Awoo village. The meeting was abruptly called amidst protests from the community. The community believed that it was once again "ambushed". There was no adequate notice on prior information but the meeting went ahead. The community was told that there is a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) to be followed. The team leaders said they were going to register people and their properties that will be immediately affected by the project plus. He outlined how the exercise was going to be



Karuma Falls on River Nile where the Karuma dam will be constructed

done.

When the exercise commenced the next day, it turned out to be haphazard. There was no transparency. Data assistants took forms to individual households. In most cases they read out questions to which households were required to respond. The answers provided were entered on the forms using pencil. The head of the household was then made to sign the form in ink without verifying what had been written down on their behalf. Because the exercise was hastily done, this strange way of conducting official business only came to light after the forms had been taken away.

It is, therefore, important that the entire exercise of registering the project-affected people with their properties is revisited.

The community has openly and enthusiastically embraced the Karuma HEP project. It also appreciates the need to fast-track

its implementation in order to bring development to the area. It is, however, incumbent upon government, through MEMD and the Karuma HEP contractors, to ensure that the project-affected community is not short-changed. Transparency, accountability and honesty must honestly must be adhered to and placed at the centre of community development. Anything dubious will only create more suspicion and mistrust and make development a myth.

It is therefore important that the entire exercise of registering the project-affected people with their properties be revisited. The community has openly and enthusiastically embraced the Karuma HEP project. They also appreciate the need to fast track its implementation in order to bring development to the area. It is however incumbent upon government through MEMD and the contractors to ensure that the project affected community is not short changed. Transparency,

accountability and honesty must honestly must be adhered to when dealing with the community. Anything dubious will only create more suspicion and mistrust.

Finally, in the meeting of 10th July 2010, the RAP team leader suggested that there may be two categories of project-affected persons. According to him, the first category is those who will be affected immediately by the digging of the Tunnel. The second will be those who will be "trapped" between the Tunnel and the River (see sketch of project layout). It is well known that the Karuma HEP project will not require the building of a dam. The affected community remains to be told in no uncertain terms how this new technology of tunneling will affect them and their livelihoods. This is particularly crucial in the case of those who may remain in the vicinity of the project for the rest of their lives.

NAPE takes Gender Mainstreaming to greater heights



NAPE staff and their spouses at NAPE offices

By Jennifer Amejja

The National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) has taken bold steps to mainstream gender in all its programmes and activities by dedicating a whole project to that cause.

"We have reached a stage where gender mainstreaming should be paid more than just lip service. We have opted for a practical approach where all our programmes, activities and working documents must be engendered," NAPE Executive Director, Frank Muramuzi said in June 2010.

Muramuzi said that the gender mainstreaming project is being supported by the American Jewish World Service (AJWS) and is part of the sustainability school programme which NAPE has been spearheading for the last one year.

As part of the gender mainstreaming project, a training workshop was organized in July 2010 for all NAPE staff, Board members and their spouses at Anderita Hotel in Entebbe.

In an interview with NAPE Lobby, the Training Officer NAPE Mr. Allan Kalangi said, "We organized the training on gender mainstreaming for staff and their spouses because we are aware that the family is the smallest unit of the community. If many families in a given community harness enough awareness on gender issues, in the long run the whole community will be engendered".

"The workshop was very interesting, educative and timely. It is not common to find a corporate body like NAPE having all their staff and spouses sharing a training

session on sensitive issues such as gender mainstreaming. Such kind of innovation is highly recommended and should be replicated in other organisations," said Ms. Christine Ampaire, a prominent gender activist in Uganda and the District Community Development Officer for Mukono, who was one of the facilitators.

The workshop whose overriding theme was on how spouses can continue to support NAPE to raise to greater heights, attracted about 50 participants and had the retired Chaplain of St. Francis Chapel, Makerere University Rev. Can. Ben Mugarura as the Chief Guest. This training workshop is in addition to the weekly trainings on gender and other topical issues that have been going on in NAPE for the last three months. According to the Executive

Director NAPE and the Training Officer, these trainings are set to be continuous.

The workshop was designed to help the participants (staff, staff spouses and the Board) appreciate the role they play in promoting the work of the organization. In addition, the training was also aimed at inspiring the participants to continue supporting their spouses while they carry out their challenging and demanding assignments.

Engagements

In the training, it was noted that NAPE as a lobby and advocacy NGO, had a number of activities, many of which had a number of challenges and risks. During implementation of some of its activities, NAPE holds meetings and dialogues with a number of stakeholders in different parts of the country. The stakeholders among others include communities, government, investors and donors. Some of the activities involve traveling from the work station in Kampala to other parts of the country and beyond. These activities are implemented by NAPE staff and involve a number of risks that eventually affect the family. The activities require consensus building among the spouses and the family at large and therefore, they call for gender mainstreaming to be an integral part of projects implementation.

By the end of the workshop, the spouses of staff and the Board of Directors had understood and fully appreciated the kind of work environment their spouses operate in while at NAPE. This

in the background, one can confidently say, "the workshop was a success" because NAPE showed that it had given gender mainstreaming the full attention it deserves as a strategy for improving effectiveness at the implementation stages of its projects.

In addition, NAPE has commissioned a research in communities in all its thematic areas of operation to mainstream gender in all its field activities. The research will help capture gender gaps with a view of addressing them under the sustainability school programme. The research findings will be published and it is believed that they will attract other partners and development agencies to participate in addressing the identified challenges to gender mainstreaming.

Many people have erroneously always perceived gender as women's issues. However, since the beginning of the weekly staff training, this ideology has continued to change at NAPE. Actually NAPE has discovered that for the success of its projects, both men and women had to be on board at all levels of the projects implementation right from the project design. These are some of the challenges of mainstreaming gender at any given organization.

Gender mainstreaming is an issue that NAPE seriously considers as a get-way to sustainable development. The organization has already developed a Gender policy to guide gender mainstreaming in all its activities. The policy requires that all projects

that are implemented in NAPE must be gender mainstreamed right from project design. When included from the time of proposal design, it enables to monitor and capture the level of success of gender mainstreaming not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. It also enables evaluators who are gender blind to follow up how gender was mainstreamed right from the beginning to the end of the project (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages) and appreciate its value as far as the success of the project is concerned.

The lessons learnt at every stage are also recorded for future references and for other partners to borrow a leaf from and see the benefit of gender mainstreaming as an upfront core project other than a side issue.

In conclusion, the guest of honor, Rev. Canon Benon Mugarura said that environment is a creation of God and it has to be used sustainably by people created in God's image. Therefore, when NAPE is protecting the environment, it's doing God's work. He cited the recent pollution in Lake Victoria as a result of human activities which has turned the water green is absurd. He asked NAPE to work towards ensuring safe and clean Lake Victoria for the benefit of Ugandans and the region as a whole.

Rival groups fuelling death of infant oil industry

Re-produced from the Daily Monitor

By Daniel K. Kalinaki

Lack of transparency and failure to set up laws to manage the country's oil industry has left Uganda vulnerable to vultures, writes DANIEL K. KALINAKI.

A couple of weeks ago, Energy Minister Hillary Onek received a text message on his cell phone. The message informed him that six million Euros had been paid into Mr Onek's account in 'Emirates Bank' somewhere in the Middle East.

It was not the first time Eng. Onek was being accused of allegedly taking money over the oil deals. President Museveni was reportedly told that his minister had taken \$2 million from Eni, the Italian oil firm, to help it muscle its way into the Ugandan oil industry. It was alleged that Mr Onek had spent the money on a hotel he is building in northern Uganda.

Mr Museveni initiated his own investigations and found that the \$2 million bribe story was false and that the energy minister had actually borrowed over a billion shillings for his hotel.

Cash flows

Mr Onek's troubles started when Heritage announced last November that it had agreed in principle to sell its stake to Eni. A senior cabinet minister with high-level government connections was fronting for Eni and had sent

another senior female minister to Italy to meet officials from the company. With the help of the two ministers, Italy's foreign minister Franco Frattini met President Museveni at State House Entebbe on January 15 to support Eni's bid.

A few days later, Cabinet met in Kampala to discuss Eni's proposed entry into the country. At this time Tullow Oil had indicated that it intended to exercise its pre-emptive rights and buy out Heritage's 50 per cent stake in block 1 and 3A, the same stake that Heritage had agreed, in principle, to sell to Eni for \$1.5 billion. Eng. Onek and his permanent

secretary, Mr Fredrick Kabagambe-Kaliisa, attended the meeting and Mr Kabagambe-Kaliisa told Cabinet that it was not desirable to have a monopoly in Tullow or any other oil firm.

Mr Onek went public with this position on January 21 and announced that the government would support Eni's bid in order to avoid having a monopoly. Angry Tullow officials sought the audience of President Museveni and protested against the position. Mr Museveni telephoned Eng. Onek who was on leave in Kitgum to find out the basis of his position. The minister informed the President that it was the



NAPE at Kasemene Oil Well in Kaisotonya

position of the ministry and had been discussed and endorsed by Cabinet.

Because of Tullow's pre-emptive rights, the President and Mr Onek agreed to allow Tullow exercise its right as long as government's concerns about the monopoly were taken into consideration. Mr Onek directed state minister for energy, Peter Lokeris, to withdraw a letter Onek had written to Tullow and Heritage blocking the proposed takeover of the latter's assets by the former.

Although Eng. Onek had communicated a ministry position that had been defended in Cabinet by his permanent secretary, word started going around that he had received money from Eni to push its bid and had acted arbitrarily. While the allegations against Eng. Onek were never proven, Eni's entry into the picture sparked off a war of influence peddling as ministers, technocrats and other power brokers sought to push either Tullow's interests or those of the Italians.

Hole of shame

The influence peddling that has characterised the negotiations over the country's young oil industry has often allowed officials to connive with foreign firms and put personal gain above national interest.

Early this year, a government delegation, which included the ministers of energy, finance and foreign affairs, as well as other technocrats, visited Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates and met with government officials there. The officials in the oil-rich host country were stunned to learn

from the Ugandan delegation that the cost of drilling an oil well in Uganda was between \$20 - \$30 million, compared to \$7 - \$10 million in other parts of the world, including the Middle East.

The Abu Dhabi officials offered the Ugandan delegation \$6 million to carry out a technical audit of what exactly the oil firms prospecting in Uganda are doing and why it costs so much.

More than six months later, the government is yet to take up the offer because, sources familiar with the matter say, such an audit could expose the true cost of Uganda's oil exploration programme – and those officials who are benefitting from the apparently inflated costs. Heritage claims it spent \$150 million in its exploration work in Uganda – although documents in the Energy ministry indicate a lower figure of \$125 million.

Tullow Oil, whose drilling operations were fewer than those of Heritage, says it has spent significantly more money – \$500 million – in the process. Under the Production Sharing Agreements, the oil firms are entitled to recover these sums.

An audit done earlier by Ernst & Young raised some queries about the verification of the sums that the oil firms claim to have invested but a technical audit, which certain government technocrats are reluctant to do, would help set a benchmark and a reference point for future oil well drilling activities.

Vultures ahead

None of the officials in the oil firms, the energy ministry, Uganda

Revenue Authority or other government officials were willing to comment on this matter, citing its sensitivity. Those officials who spoke to us did so on condition of anonymity in order not to jeopardise on-going negotiations between government and the oil firms.

Our investigations, however, reveal that the absence of strong institutions and predictable government positions has allowed personal interests to interfere with government policies and positions.

Several months after a Petroleum Bill was drafted to set up a National Oil Company as well as the relevant laws to explore, produce and refine the country's oil resources, it is yet to be discussed and passed by Cabinet – and is likely to be pushed to the back-burner during the silly election season.

The lack of these institutional safeguards has left decision-making vulnerable to the clash of egos and personal interests. It has led to the government sending out contradictory positions and left Uganda's young oil industry vulnerable to the vultures. And it appears that you either join the vultures or risk being devoured by them.

Remember the text message sent to Eng. Onek's cell phone? Well, security sources investigating the matter told Daily Monitor that the account number and bank named in the text message do not exist. The phone used to send the text has been switched off since and the matter has all the markings of a malicious hoax.

Uganda pays high cost for land degradation

Soil productivity declines

Most farmers don't use fertilisers

Ephraim Kasezi
Kampala

Uganda loses up to 12 per cent of her gross domestic product due to environment degradation which has led to declining agricultural productivity. Agriculture Minister Hope Mwesigye said yesterday.

Ms Mwesigye said Uganda is in a comparatively enviable position of having the largest percentage of arable land in East Africa which stands at 46



WORRIED: Ms Mwesigye (L) with AGRA and Alliance for the Green Africa at Speke Resort Mityama

Environment abuse is alarming

EDITOR—I am gravely concerned about the criminal abuse and degradation of our environment by very selfish individuals. These people include even influential (landlords) It is disheartening to see people shamelessly reclaiming swamps by dumping soil there. Above on Kampala-Jinja Road and now what I mean. There is senseless cutting down of trees without replanting, excavating hills and dumping untreated raw waste into Lake Victoria which is our biggest source of fresh water. Then there is the practice of releasing thick clouds of smoke into the environment, all in the name of primitive accumulation of profits. Much as these profits may be coming in in the short-run, there is no wealth creation because more money is spent on medical and other bills by the same people to correct the environmental damage.



Reclaiming wetlands has become a common practice although it is illegal.

Simply visit any children's ward and see how many innocent souls are on breathing machines! And what is more, it is the

dumping soil into and reclaiming a swamp opposite Spar Motors in Kampala has disregarded UNEP directives to stop

Take stern action to redeem Uganda's forests

SOMETIMES the money given to people or players follows them. Take for instance the acronym NFA (National Forestry Authority), which means, "I am dying" in most Shona languages. The NFA's report says NFA is in a bad shape. The report recommended that Daniel Alimkwas, the former executive director, be terminated and or was sacked. The NFA discovered that NFA was dealing with irregularities. Ironically, it was Alimkwas who spent a can of worms claiming that shamba land was stolen from him by his wife. He said the money belonged to his brother. However, the NFA doubts his brother's abilities to amass such riches. Many people agree that the



BY
GERALD
TENYWA



Let's save our wetlands

Wetlands, other than forests, are of paramount importance to our food and water security. They are also known for their biodiversity. One of the major wetlands in Uganda is the Kyoga wetlands, which are located in the Kyoga region. The wetlands are home to many species of birds and fish. They also play a vital role in the water cycle and in the regulation of the climate.



BALACIK, A. The wetlands of Kyoga are the lifeblood of the region.

Wetlands are also a source of food and income for the people who live in the region. They provide a source of fish and other aquatic life. They also provide a source of raw materials for the construction industry. The wetlands are also a source of recreation and tourism. They attract many visitors who come to see the beautiful scenery and the diverse wildlife.

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Multi-billion Chogm trees Entebbe highway cut down

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Red flag raised over failure to protect environment

Fish stocks in water bodies

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SELECTIVE CRACKDOWN! Law enforcement officials said people who had not had a licence to fish in Lake Kyoga were being fined.

The Executive Director of the National Association of Professional Environmentalists, Mr. Frank Mwanuzi, said that the government had failed to protect the environment. He said that the government had allowed the illegal logging of trees and the dumping of waste into the water. He said that the government had failed to enforce the law and that the people who had been fined were the only ones who had been punished.

According to statistics, the government had lost 100,000 hectares of forest in the last five years. This was a significant loss, especially in a country where forests are a vital source of income for many people. The loss of forests had led to a decline in the number of fish in the water bodies, which had caused a decline in the income of the people who had been fishing.

The loss of forests had also led to a decline in the quality of the water. The water had become polluted with the waste that had been dumped into it. This had caused a decline in the health of the people who had been drinking the water. The loss of forests had also led to a decline in the biodiversity of the area, which had caused a decline in the number of species of plants and animals.

The loss of forests had also led to a decline in the income of the people who had been living in the area. The people had been dependent on the forests for their livelihoods. They had been using the wood from the forests for fuel and for building houses. They had also been using the land for agriculture. The loss of the forests had caused a decline in the income of the people, which had led to a decline in their standard of living.

The loss of forests had also led to a decline in the health of the people who had been living in the area. The people had been exposed to the pollution that had been caused by the loss of the forests. This had led to a decline in the health of the people, which had caused a decline in their quality of life. The loss of forests had also led to a decline in the health of the animals that had been living in the area.

The loss of forests had also led to a decline in the health of the plants that had been living in the area. The plants had been exposed to the pollution that had been caused by the loss of the forests. This had led to a decline in the health of the plants, which had caused a decline in their ability to grow and reproduce. The loss of forests had also led to a decline in the health of the soil that had been living in the area.

The loss of forests had also led to a decline in the health of the water that had been living in the area. The water had been exposed to the pollution that had been caused by the loss of the forests. This had led to a decline in the health of the water, which had caused a decline in its ability to support life. The loss of forests had also led to a decline in the health of the air that had been living in the area.

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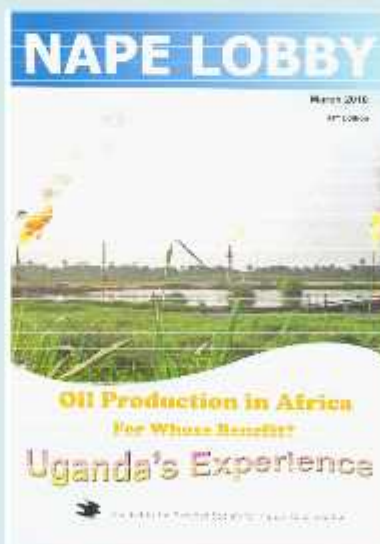
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