EAST AFRICAN
CRUDE OIL PIPELINE
HOST COMMUNITIES

Our Reality:
Communities Living with the Delays and Impacts of EACOP

SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

In this inaugural edition of our newsletter, we speak for ourselves and from our lived reality as communities directly affected by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) and the wider oil developments in Uganda.

We are the families, farmers, fishers, workers and community members from Buliisa, Hoima and Kikuube whose land, homes, farms, businesses and livelihoods have been disrupted by this project. For years, many of us have lived with uncertainty over our land, delayed or inadequate compensation, displacement, restricted access to livelihoods and growing concerns about the future of our communities.

While project deadlines have continued to shift, the consequences for us have remained real. Our lives cannot simply be postponed to another date.

The latest delay to EACOP's expected first oil timeline is therefore more than a change on a project schedule. It raises important questions about the risks, promises and costs that have been placed on affected communities. The project was initially expected to deliver first oil around 2018, with subsequent targets moving to 2020, 2025, 2026 and now 2027. Government officials have recently indicated that the pipeline is expected to be ready to receive crude by mid-December 2026, while commercial oil production is now expected before the end of June 2027.

For communities that have carried the social and economic costs of this project for years, every new deadline raises the same question: what happens to the people whose lives and livelihoods have already been disrupted while the project continues to change its timeline?

A delay does not erase our losses

The pipeline may be nearing completion, but for us, the story is not simply about kilometres of pipe being laid. It is about homes and farmland lost, livelihoods disrupted, families separated from their productive land, and communities living with uncertainty.

Some families have waited for years to rebuild their lives after losing land to the project. Others have struggled to restore farming, fishing, businesses and other sources of income. Many of us continue to question whether the commitments made to affected communities will actually be fulfilled.
We therefore cannot measure the progress of EACOP only by construction milestones. The real measure must also be what has happened to the people whose land and livelihoods made the project possible.

Rushed commissioning could increase risks to our communities

As the project moves towards testing and commissioning, we are concerned that pressure to meet the latest production target could result in rushed processes and inadequate safeguards.

Our communities live alongside some of Uganda's most important ecosystems, including Lake Albert and the Murchison Falls landscape. These ecosystems support fishing, farming, water access, tourism and other livelihoods on which thousands of families depend.

Testing and commissioning must therefore not be treated as a race to meet another deadline. Any failure involving oil, wastewater, chemicals, flaring or other hazardous operations could have consequences far beyond the pipeline itself.
For us, environmental protection is not an abstract issue. Lake Albert is part of our lives. Our rivers and wetlands support our farms. Our land feeds our families. Our environment is our future.

We will continue to demand accountability

We recognise that the construction of infrastructure does not automatically mean that the concerns of affected communities have been resolved.

As EACOP moves towards commissioning and possible operation, our demands for accountability become even more important. We want clear answers on compensation, livelihood restoration, land rights, environmental protection, community safety and the fulfilment of commitments made to affected people.

We also want government, developers and financiers to recognise that communities are not merely recipients of project decisions. We are rights-holders, and we must have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect our land, livelihoods, environment and future.

Our vision for a different energy future

We believe Uganda and East Africa can pursue an energy future that does not require communities to sacrifice their land and livelihoods.

Instead of concentrating investment in large, export-oriented fossil-fuel projects, we call for greater investment in community-owned and locally accessible clean energy, including solar, small-scale hydro, wind, battery storage and stronger local electricity networks.

Our communities need reliable and affordable energy for homes, schools, health centres, farms, businesses and local industries. We should be able to participate in and benefit from the energy systems built in our own communities.

Our message is clear: development should not mean dispossession, and energy security should not come at the expense of people, land and nature.

The latest EACOP delay reminds us that the future is still being decided. As communities living with the consequences of this project, we will continue to organise, document our experiences, demand accountability and put forward solutions that protect our land, livelihoods and future.

We are not simply communities affected by EACOP. We are the people whose lives have been directly shaped by this project, and we have the right to determine what happens to our communities and our future.

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