



EAST AFRICAN CRUDE OIL PIPELINE HOST COMMUNITIES

Statement by EACOP host communities about news that China would fund the pipeline

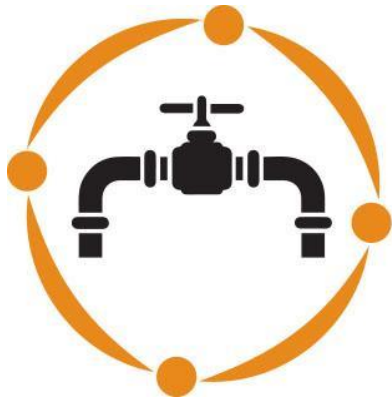
We, the representatives of the EACOP, host communities and activists opposed to the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), have gathered here to express our disappointment at the news that China was keen to provide funding for this controversial pipeline that will displace thousands of people, living them in abject poverty and destroying the environment and driving the climate crisis.

It's hard to believe China has not seen the problems this destructive project has caused on communities yet the pipeline hasn't been built yet; our understanding of this recent information if accurate is that China does not care for the people of Uganda as long as they can benefit from the profits TotalEnergies will make from exporting oil in Uganda to meet the energy needs of the Global North countries. This is a very disturbing idea because China is considered a developing country - although way ahead of most countries in that bracket - so it's inconceivable that it would fund a project that undermines locals in a developing country to put more money in the pockets of TotalEnergies shareholders, majority of whom are from rich countries.

While we are on rich countries, over 40 banks globally, including 28 European banks, have ruled out financing the controversial Uganda-Tanzania pipeline. The extent of the rejection of TotalEnergies's \$5 billion EACOP project by the banking sector is unprecedented in the oil and gas industry. It's therefore a wonder that China would be the one to bail out this project.

Our communities have continued to suffer the consequences of oil drilling activities in Tilenga and Kingfisher operated by TotalEnergies and China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC). The ongoing floods for instance have been exacerbated by these activities as a lot of the vegetation cleared left the people more vulnerable to the seasonal floods. Other impacts communities continue to face include:

- Irregular and forceful land acquisitions - more recently the use of courts to intimidate land owners as was the case with the 42 families from the Albertine region and the Masaka high court ruling against the 80 EACOP project affected persons from greater Masaka .



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- Loss of fertile agricultural land leading to food shortage problems as those who accept compensation are unable to find similar and equivalent land elsewhere.
- Harassment and intimidation of residents especially those who out of no options choose to continue fishing in lake Albert and end up having their boats confiscated and in some instances burned by the government security personnel deployed to protect the oil activities in L. Albert.
- Imprisonment of anyone who publicly voices opposition to the controversial project; particularly activists in Kampala who voice solidarity with PAPs in Bunyoro and Greater Masaka regions. As we speak, 15 students are in Luzira Maximum prison for nearly a month for protesting EACOP.
- Significant biodiversity loss in pristine environments like the Murchison Falls. This has also caused a lot of unnecessary human-animal conflict as the animals including Elephants raid peoples farms and destroy crops and in other instances get killed while crossing highways as they move away from their home that is now buzzing with oil activities
- Loss of cultural dignity, as the oil project activities continues to disrespect our community cultural values

Through the support of Civil Society and Environmental organizations, we've documented numerous problems that can be backed by independent research confirming all these challenges we share here. And the same is true in neighboring Tanzania where issues of irregular compensation and loss of land and livelihood are associated with this controversial pipeline, not to mention the biodiversity loss.

We find it quite ironic that China which is also considered a developing country would put money into a project that will ultimately put more money in the pockets of TotalEnergy shareholders as the project ships oil out of Africa to meet the energy demands of the Global North. One would expect that China would be more keen on South to South cooperation that would see knowledge transfer and investments in renewable energy that would truly benefit local communities especially because China has demonstrated it has the technology and is also a leader in the installation of renewable energy. This is the sort of investment and support we would require from a partner like China. But these news if to be believed makes us view China the same way we view this neocolonial project.



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We therefore implore China to refuse attempts to profit off of the backs of communities who are left in abject poverty and have the fabric of their lives unravelled by these opportunistic and short sighted projects and engage in partnerships that result in building communities through sustainable development.

We urgently call upon the Chinese government to:

- Publicly refute these claims about funding this controversial pipeline
- Address outstanding human rights violation allegations against CNOOC Uganda
- Engage meaningfully with local communities living in the Albertine region where CNOOC operates and explore renewable energy investments

We don't think all is lost. Ugandan communities, like anywhere in the world, want progress and development. China can be that responsible partner that communities in Uganda can look up to for skills transfer and responsible investments that do not harm communities or their environment. We desire food and energy sovereignty, and we can achieve this if countries that lead in renewable energy technologies, like China, can align themselves with the concerns of the community and support these types of investments.