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AFRICA INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY GOVERNANCE

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10/July/2017

The Chairperson, Bunyoro Parliamentary Caucus
Hon Barnabas Tinkasimire
P.O Box 7178,
Kampala (U).

Dear Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR A MEETING BETWEEN YOUR OFFICE AND THE REFINERY-AFFECTED WOMEN IN HOIMA

The above refers

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) writes to you on behalf of nearly 50 refinery-affected women of Kabaale parish, Buseruka sub-county in Hoima district who are requesting for audience with their members of parliament from Bunyoro sub-region to address challenges they are increasingly facing because of government's failure to relocate them for over five years now.

The women thank you for the role you are playing in defending democratic governance and in ably representing their interests. They pray that you will give them audience and present their concerns on delayed relocation, lack of education for over 400 children, poor access to healthcare for especially the vulnerable including persons living with HIV and the elderly, lack of food and a number of other concerns.

AFIEGO, a public policy research and advocacy NGO dedicated to influencing energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable, has worked with oil host communities for nearly ten years. At their request, AFIEGO started working with the community affected by the oil refinery project in Kabaale-Hoima in 2012. AFIEGO works with the community to defend its rights while facilitating national development projects. The women requested AFIEGO to write to you.

In a document written on May 11, 2017 in Runyoro, 45 women raised the following concerns for your attention:

- (i) **Lack of food:** The women note that there is a lot of hunger in their homes since government placed a cut-off date of June 2, 2012 stopping families from growing perennial crops such as cassava, bananas, fruits and others. Honourable, with the bad weather conditions that were experienced last year, many crops that the women had grown but were not drought-resistant like cassava were destroyed, leaving families without food. Noteworthy is that these crops also assisted families in generating incomes to meet needs such as school fees and medical bills. Without food and income, families have been left to starve.

- (ii) **No education and children missing out on national ID registration exercise:** Government is in the process of registering pupils for national identity cards and it is capturing the pupils' data from schools; government has set a deadline of August 30 for completion of the registration. However, since 2012, the women note that their children have been out of school. This not only means that their children will miss out on the national identity card registration exercise, the children are also being denied a chance to acquire skills they will need to attain gainful employment as adults. Honourable, four schools including Nyahaira P/S and Kyapaloni P/S were closed because of the refinery project and to date, these schools remain closed. Over 400 children have missed and continue to miss school for five years.

- (iii) **Health centres too far away and access to HIV medicine compromised:** The women also note that the distance to the nearest health centre is too long. Moreover, they say, they cannot afford medicine as they have no sources of income because government stopped them from growing perennial cash crops such as coffee, tobacco, fruit trees and others. They also note that people living with HIV are supposed to have a balanced diet but they cannot because they are poor and are not allowed to grow fruits. Honourable, these people's lives are in danger as they cannot take their medicine without food.

- (iv) **Break-down of families:** The women also note that families have and continue to be broken up as men abandon homes leaving the women to care for all the children. Honourable, most of the men have gone ahead and married other women abandoning their previous wives and children because of the hard conditions in the refinery area. These conditions include lack adequate access to food, safe water and family income among others.

- (v) **Unsuitable resettlement area:** The women also note that the resettlement in Kyakaboga-Hoima in which government is planning on relocating is unsuitable for farming, the only means of income the women and their husbands have. They also note that the resettlement is unsanitary as pit latrines and kitchens are located too near each

other and that the area will breed quarrels. Moreover, they say, the area does not have water and government is yet to install electricity in the houses as promised in the refinery project's Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) report.

To address their grievances, the women are calling on their members of parliament who belong to the Bunyoro parliamentary caucus to use their oversight powers to compel government to do the following:

- a) Relocate their families within one month;
- b) Return their children to school without further delay;
- c) Provide food relief and adequate health services;
- d) Ensure that the resettlement/relocation area has water and electricity;
- e) Finally, government must follow the recommendations of the oil refinery project's Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) and avoid forcing them into a camp where their traditional lifestyles will be violated.

The refinery-affected women also humbly request to meet with their members of parliament who belong to the Bunyoro parliamentary caucus to provide support and use their oversight powers to help find solutions to the above-mentioned challenges.



Dickens Kamugisha,
Chief Executive Officer

Signed on behalf of the refinery-affected women.

CC:

- Minister of Energy
- Chairperson, Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association (UWOPA)
- Chairperson, Natural Resources Committee of Parliament
- Chairperson, Lands Commission of Inquiry
- All Bunyoro Area MPs
- Inspector General of Government (IGG)
- Chairperson, Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC)
- Speaker, Hoima District Council
- Chairperson, Hoima District Land Board