



ENVIRONMENT GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE (EGI) UGANDA

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITIES ENGAGE PARLIAMENT ON THE KARUMA PROJECT – KEY RESOLUTIONS REACHED

Date: Wednesday, 21st August 2024

Location: Karuma, Kiryandongo District

On Tuesday 20th August 2024, the Environment Governance Institute (EGI) Uganda in Partnership with Friends with Environment in Development (FED) coordinated ¹representatives of the communities affected by the Karuma Hydropower Project to engage with Members of Parliament from the Natural Resources Committee, Sino-hydro representatives, and minister of state of energy Hon. Sidronius Okasai Opolot. This critical meeting offered a platform that aimed to address long-standing concerns, following several ²petitions submitted by EGI and its partners to the Parliament's Natural Resources Committee and to the President.

³The meeting, which took place in Kiryandongo, Karuma, led to key resolutions that both the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and Sinohydro must urgently act upon and report back to Parliament by Thursday, 22nd August 2024.

Key Resolutions:

To the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development:

¹ [Media report about the petition](#)

² [Petition to the speaker of parliament to set up a commission of inquiry to look into Karuma hydropower project](#)

³ [Media report about the petition](#)

1. **Set clear Timelines for Relocation:** The Ministry of Energy and Sinohydro are required to establish clear timelines for the relocation of the Project-Affected Persons (PAPs) and submit these to Parliament by 9:00 am on Thursday, August 22nd.
2. **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report:** The Ministry must present a copy of the CSR report covering the past 10 years to Parliament by the same deadline.
3. **Restoration of Land Titles:** All Original copies land titles for non-compensated PAPs must be returned to their original owners until full compensation and relocation, based on updated rates, are completed.
4. **Compensation and PAPs Status Report:** The Ministry was tasked to submit a comprehensive compensation and general PAPs status report to the committee.

To Sinohydro:

1. **Contract Agreement Submission:** Sinohydro should provide the corporate contract agreement between the government and Sinohydro for harmonization with community concerns.
2. **Budget and Financial Releases:** Sinohydro must submit detailed budget and financial releases for the Karuma project to both the natural Resources committee and COSASE for in-depth review.
3. **Tracking Project Staff:** Sinohydro is required to submit staff photos from the project's inception to date (over 11 years) to help identify the parents of abandoned Chinese children.
4. **Support for Abandoned Children:** The Ministry, in collaboration with Sinohydro, must mobilize funds to support the abandoned Chinese children and update Parliament on progress.

These resolutions mark a step in addressing the grievances of the affected communities and ensuring accountability in the Karuma Hydropower Project.

EGI anticipates that the resolution made will be adhered to and timelines set are respected for the good of the local communities.

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Notes to the editors

1.About Environment Governance Institute (EGI)

The Environment Governance Institute (EGI) is a not-for-profit non-government organization dedicated to promoting the sustainable management of environment natural resources in Uganda and the Great Lakes Region through lobbying, research and community education

2.Background to Karuma Project

In 2011, the government of Uganda, facilitated by the Ministry of Energy, initiated the acquisition of more than 465.52 hectares of land in Karuma, Nora, Awoo, and Akurudia villages in Kiryandongo district to make way for the construction of the 600 MW **Karuma Hydroelectric Power Station** located on the Victoria Nile, at the former location of the Karuma falls. China Export Credit Agencies financed the Karuma dam, loaning 85% of Karuma's cost to Uganda (NS Energy) making it the top financier for the energy sector, accounting for 33% of projected funding from FY2019/2020 to FY2023/2024 (Ven, 2020, p. 18).

To assess the socio-economic characteristics and property valuation of the affected individuals, a population and land census was conducted between October and November 2011. Energy Infrastructure (PVT), an Indian firm, undertook this census on behalf of MEMD (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development). The data collected during the census was compiled into the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) report, which was finalized in 2012.

However, before the completion of the RAP, the government set January 16, 2012, as the cut-off date, signaling that any development made on the affected land after that date would not be compensated. This effectively meant that the government had taken over the property of the Project Affected Persons (PAPs). The January 2012 RAP report outlines the details of the property owned by the PAPs and the commitments the government was obliged to fulfill to compulsorily acquire the mentioned property. Under Article 26 of the Constitution of Uganda, the RAP stands as the sole contract between the government and the PAPs.

Unfortunately to date, the government has failed to uphold most of the commitments made to the PAPs as outlined in the RAP.