

### CSOS URGE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION LAWS

Oxfam in Uganda has over the years worked with partners to enhance the resilience of vulnerable people by building the adaptive capacity of communities to climate change in the different districts of Uganda.

Francis Shanty Odokorach, Oxfam's Country Director said that the organization's research and experience clearly shows that climate change is already exacerbating poverty and inequality of the already vulnerable communities in Uganda and further pushing them into poverty. Francis made these remarks during the national conference on youth participation and contribution to the climate change bill 2020.

He also added that Oxfam believes that influencing the government to invest in helping people adapt and build resilience will increase food security and highly contribute to lifting people out of poverty as well as close the inequality gap.

Hon. Rebecca Kadaaga, the Speaker of Parliament, encouraged the youth to plant trees in order to preserve the environment.

Oxfam partnered with Youth Go Green to provide a platform for young people to participate and make contributions to the 2020 climate change bill. This partnership aimed at advocating for the induction of the Climate Change Bill into law so that people and entities that violate the environment can be held accountable.



Hon. Rebecca Kadaaga (R) being welcomed by other dignitaries at the national conference on youth participation and contribution to the climate change bill 2020.



Jackson Muhindo Rukara, Oxfam's Resilience and Climate Change Coordinator, moderating a discussion at the event.

## PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

Access to fresh and nutritious food is critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. Farmers are at the frontlines working hard to ensure that we remain well-fed and healthy. Farmers in locust and flood affected areas were already having challenges with food production.

The COVID-19 pandemic has strained them and made it more difficult for them to sell their produce. Unreliable transport and the closure of some local food markets have also made access to food difficult.

Amidst all this, women farmers play a central role in producing our food and are working hard to ensure we have access to it. They are also primary caregivers across many of our rural regions taking care of children, the sick and elderly which increases their exposure to COVID-19. If they get sick it will lead to less food production.

On World Food Day, Oxfam urged governments to protect and support small-scale farmers that are producing 80% of the food we eat. Oxfam also asked governments to ensure access to food markets in order to end hunger during the COVID-19 pandemic.



## CSOS CALL FOR THE RECOGNITION OF UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

A 2018 Oxfam report on gender roles and the care economy in Ugandan households demonstrated the belief that domestic work is still largely done by women, much of which is unpaid. The report indicated that more women, about 18.2%, engaged in unpaid care work, compared to 3.1% of men while more men than women engaged in paid work activities.

While not officially recognized in national statistics, women's unpaid care & domestic work is not only necessary for everyone's wellbeing but is as valuable as any other economic activity.

In partnership with the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET,) Oxfam launched the 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the Women's Economic Empowerment and Care project on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020, aimed at advocating for the recognition of unpaid care and domestic work in policies, projects, budgets and programs.

Kemi Ndyeli, the Deputy Director, UN Women, said that most women spend 7 or more hours on unpaid care work a day leaving them with less time for education, leisure, and political participation. She also called for the need to strengthen the social protection system to reduce the burden of care work on women.

Winnie Kiiza, the woman Member of Parliament for Kasese district, said that she is bothered that sometimes, women have to choose between domestic roles and paid work. She said that if men and women share domestic work, there will be more room for women to unlock their full potential in the development of our country.

Francis Shanty Odokorach, Oxfam's Country Director, said that with improved gender policies and budgeting, the government can reduce the burden of unpaid care work, by subsidizing taxes on household items such as cooking gas to enable women spend less time on domestic work.



Dorothy Kisaka, the Executive Director of Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) also said that the potentials of women and girls have been locked down in unpaid care work. She added that while this potential is globally valued at 10.8 trillion, it is not quantified in national figures.

In her closing remarks, Jane Ocaya- Irama, Oxfam’s Women’s Rights Advisor, reminded participants to advance the issues of unpaid care work in their home



Dignitaries pose for a group photo during the launch of the 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the WE-CARE project.

## UGANDA-NETHEHERLANDS DOUBLE TAXATION AGREEMENT DENYING UGANDA A FAIR SHARE OF OIL REVENUES

Oxfam Uganda, Oxfam Novib and Oxfam France investigated on the mega project led by the French energy giant TOTAL and other International Oil Companies (IOCs) which will allow for the exploitation of 1.4 billion recoverable barrels of oil located on the shores of Lake Albert in Uganda.

This exclusive case study, [The Money Pipeline](#), reveals the magnitude of Dutch investments in Uganda and how the Double Tax Agreement (DTA) between Uganda and the Netherlands will benefit oil companies but deprive Uganda of essential resources to finance essential public services and fight poverty and inequality, particularly vital in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the Tax Justice Alliance umbrella, Civil society organizations in Uganda have long been warning that Ugandan domestic revenues are plagued by a number of detrimental double tax agreements and that the country’s revenue collection is hampered due to the abuse of Double Taxation Agreements by multinational corporations (MNCs).

Oxfam has examined the central role played by the Netherlands in facilitating investments of MNCs in Uganda as well as the impact of the Double Taxation Agreement between the Netherlands and Uganda on future government revenues.

The Uganda-Netherlands Double Taxation Agreement provisions would allow TOTAL and other International Oil Companies to avoid paying \$287 million to the Government of Uganda over the 25 years project lifetime only in one Block (EA1.)

CSOs urged the government of Uganda and the Netherlands to finalize renegotiation of the Double Taxation Agreement and increase the final tax rate on dividends.

Joseph Olweny, Oxfam’s Financing for Development Coordinator, said that if the government wants to derive meaningful revenues from this energy project, it cannot let this detrimental DTA stand in the way.



Joseph Olweny, Oxfam’s Financing for Development Coordinator, speaking to journalists about key findings of The Money Pipeline Report.

## UGANDA RANKS POORLY AT TACKLING INEQUALITY

In 2015, global leaders of 193 governments promised to reduce inequality under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10. Therefore reducing inequality is a prerequisite for meeting the SDGs to eliminate poverty.

To this effect, Development Finance International and Oxfam produced the [third index](#) to ascertain the extent to which governments' commitments to reducing the gap between the rich and the poor has been achieved.

The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index uses a new database of indicators covering 158 countries, which measures government action on social spending, tax and labor rights – three areas found to be critical for reducing the inequality gap.

The third edition of the Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI) Index shows that countries such as Norway (ranking at 5 out of 158 countries) are taking adequate steps to reduce inequality among its population. Unfortunately, other countries such as Uganda are ranking poorly.

Uganda ranked 130 out of 158 countries in the CRII which confirms that the government has shown little commitment in reducing the inequality gap which is likely to worsen through the COVID-19 Pandemic period.

In a press conference to launch the CRII in October, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under the Tax Justice Alliance urged the government of Uganda to revise the FY2020/21 funding allocation to human capital development programmes, covering sectors such as education, health, and social protection, in line with the National Development Plan III strategic focus.

According to CSOs, this will also enable the government to fast-track the expansion of its social protection programmes and serve as a more direct, sustainable and inclusive mechanism for protecting people living in poverty.



Some of the members of the Tax Justice Alliance during a press conference to launch the third Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index.

## CSOS HIGHLIGHT GAPS IN THE TAX AMENDMENT BILLS FOR FY 2020/21

CSOs under the Tax Justice Alliance Uganda (TJAU) gathered on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at SEATINI Uganda offices to express their concerns on the delay by Parliament to pass the Tax Amendment Bills for FY 2020/21.

In response to the ailing economic situation resulting from the COVID-19 lockdown, government committed to putting in place a number of measures to address the arising challenges. These were put forward during the budget speech for FY2020/21 in which the minister committed to: Defer payment of Corporate Income Tax or Presumptive tax for Corporations and Small, Medium Enterprises (SMEs), defer payment of

Pay As You Earn by sectors affected, waive interest on tax arrears and provide for Tax Deductibility of Donations for the Corona Virus Response.

The Bill also provides for Value Added Tax exemption on materials used in containing COVID-19 such as face masks, motorized fumigation pumps, oxygen cylinders, biohazard bags and disinfectants. These are currently still subject to 18% VAT until this Bill is passed.

The application of VAT to these critical items means that they are all 18% more expensive than would if the Bill had been passed there by affecting the vulnerable poor.



The failure to pass the bills negatively impacted businesses which have had to incur expenses towards PAYE, Corporate Income Tax and Interest on penalties despite their deferral and suspension.

This has strapped businesses of the cash that was much needed for their revival amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to urge Parliament to heed to the concerns raised above and with immediate effect discuss the tax bills and forward them to the president for his ascent. This will go a long way in ensuring that there is a fair, just and accountable tax system in Uganda.



Members of the Tax Justice Alliance address a press conference on the delayed passing of the Tax Amendment Bills for FY2020/21.

## THE EASTAFRICAN CRUDE OIL PIPELINE POSES A THREAT ON GENERAL LIVELIHOOD

After nearly two decades of oil exploration, many communities fear the worst is yet to come. Foundation of Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) and National Center on Education Evaluation (NCEE) research reveals that these projects have already heavily impacted human rights associated with the land, livelihoods, and environment of communities in Uganda.

Despite the efforts of the government and oil companies, the risks related to the upcoming phases are huge, especially in a context where people are facing mounting threats to civic participation and general livelihood.

Despite plunging oil prices, a pandemic, and the climate crisis, oil projects are still moving forward around the world. Among the most ambitious is a proposal to exploit some of Africa’s biggest reserves under Lake Albert and ship the oil to international markets through the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP).

Two new community-based human rights impact assessments highlight serious, ongoing challenges and future risks linked to these projects. While independent research pieces, both reports offer community-driven recommendations urging oil

companies and governments, who are on the verge of making their final investment decision, to take urgent measures to avoid a human and environmental disaster.

These reports also offer recommendations to both governments advocating for fair land value and compensation of locals affected, protection of the environment by protecting ecosystems, culture and health of the affected communities, and commit to a free, open, informed, and fair conversation about oil development, which includes the risks.



The shore of Lake Albert, which is likely to be affected by oil drilling.

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO STAY SAFE

Amidst the prevalence of the global COVID-19 pandemic that has seen Uganda registering over 12,000 cases, the government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Health, has over time emphasized stringent standard operating procedures to keep every Ugandan safe.

For people in underserved communities whose meagre incomes declined following the lockdown, the supplies to follow these measures and guidelines are now considered a luxury as they struggle to put food on their tables.

With support from Oxfam, International Foundation for Recovery and Development (IFRAD) provided COVID-19 relief materials to their beneficiaries in form of Personal Protective Equipment to help them abide by recommended measures to stay safe in September. IFRAD distributed bars of soap, hand sanitizers, temperature guns, hand washing facilities and more than 800 face masks to their field focal persons and beneficiaries of the entrepreneurship skill straining program.

"COVID- 19 is now within communities and for our people here to purchase a face mask of 2,000 shillings, it is considered a wastage of money. When they received face masks and other protective equipment from IFRAD, they felt safe and protected," said Moses, District Coordinator in Nebbi District.



A beneficiary utilizing some of the safety materials distributed by Oxfam and IFRAD.

## EMPOWERING PEOPLE THROUGH GENDER ACTION LEARNING SYSTEMS

On 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> October, Oxfam was joined by staff from Community Empowerment For Rural Development-Uganda on a joint monitoring visit to Pakwach, Yumbe and Arua Districts in West Nile, to track the progress of the Empower Youth and Ignite Change project.

The visits to various learning centres and interaction with the GALS champions creating change revealed that the learning centres are hosting different trainings that foster change within the communities in which they are situated and beyond.



Members of the Poroporo Cooperative Society pause for a group photo after the joint monitoring visit.



## NAKIVALE REFUGEE SETTLEMENT COMMEMORATES GLOBAL HAND WASHING DAY (GHWD) 2020

On October 15<sup>th</sup> 2020, Pupils and refugees in Nakivale settlement gathered to scientifically commemorate global hand washing day at Rubondo Primary School under the theme “Hand Hygiene for all.” This took place during the re-opening of schools after a 7 months lockdown. Oxfam in Uganda and WASH Partners; Nsamizi, Malteser International, EWBs and stakeholders including UNHCR, UNICEF and Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), among others organized the GHWD aimed at increasing awareness and understanding about the importance of hand washing with soap or ash as an alternative in disease prevention.

The half day event kicked off with the assembling of different hand washing facilities ranging from locally available material, to fully assembled non-contact hand washing facilities. Pupils recited Poems relaying key messages creating awareness and calling for adoption of hand washing with soap or ash as an effective means of preventing disease outbreaks such as typhoid, cholera and COVID-19. Hand washing demonstrations were also conducted following the 7 steps .

The key messages emphasized in the events’ speeches were that personal hygiene and sanitation, constructing and proper use of latrines coupled with hand washing with soap or ash was the most effective way to prevent disease outbreaks.

The event was climaxed with hand washing competitions amongst Teachers, partners and pupils , where the 7 steps of hand washing criteria was used to assess and determine the winners. Emerging winners were each awarded a bar of soap and encouraged to continue the good practice in their homes as exhibited at the celebrations.

The event was closed with Oxfam’s donation of fully assembled non-contact hand washing facility and a few cartons of soap to Rubondo Primary School, which was received by the Head Teacher and Teacher in charge of Sanitation.

Over 200 pupils practiced hand washing and left with the knowledge that the simple act would help in diseases prevention especially during The COVID-19 Pandemic and would save lives.



A pupil demonstrates the 7 steps of handwashing



Some pupils of Nakivale primary school participate in a handwashing competition



The Head Teacher and sanitation teacher Nakivale primary school receiving non-contact handwashing equipment and some bars of soap

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- 287 Million Oil Dollars Could Be Lost – Oxfam Report: YouTube October 06,2020 <https://youtu.be/UMW12bkNqvA>
- OXFAM warns oil firms: YouTube September 10,2020 - [https://youtu.be/p8GYnx\\_TvD0](https://youtu.be/p8GYnx_TvD0)
- [Uganda and Tanzania sign \\$3.5bn oil pipeline deal](#) (BBC, September 14, 2020): See also: Algeria Business Info, EABW News, K24tv, and Nilepost.
- [Uganda's planned pipeline threatens communities, Oxfam says](#) (Bloomberg. September 10, 2020)
- [Uganda's \\$3.5 Billion Oil Pipeline Seen Threatening Communities](#) (Financial Post, September 11, 2020)
- [Oxfam warns oil firms](#) (NTV, September 10, 2020)
- [Uganda and Tanzania agree to build \\$3.5billion crude oil pipeline](#) (African STAND, September 13, 2020)
- [Tanzania, Uganda sign \\$3.5b oil pipeline project deal that'd create 10,000 jobs](#) (Channels Television. September 13, 2020)
- [African oil project to put families, ecosystem at high risk](#) (Energy Review, September 13, 2020) Quote by Caroline Brodeur
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- [Uganda and Tanzania sign \\$3.5bn oil pipeline deal](#) (Ibabanaija, September 14, 2020).
- [Uganda, Tanzania signs \\$3.5 billion deal for "world's longest" heated oil pipeline](#) (Republicworld.com, September 14, 2020)
- [Uganda and Tanzania to build East Africa's first major oil pipeline](#) (The Africa Report, September 14, 2020)
- [Uganda-Tanzania sign agreement for East Africa crude oil pipeline project](#) (Construction Review Online, September 15, 2020)
- [Tanzania, Uganda finalise Africa's longest oil pipeline deal](#) (The Exchange, September 15, 2020).



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