



**CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE INNOVATIONS**

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**A PROCEEDINGS REPORT FOR THE MEETING BETWEEN THE NATIONAL FORESTRY AUTHORITIES (NFA) ,CERAI AND BUGOMA HOST COMMUNITIES OVER BUGOMA FOREST DESTRUCTION.**



**NFA, CERAI AND BUGOMA HOST COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES AFTER MEETING.**

**NFA OFFICE, KAMPALA**

**DATE: MARCH 4, 2022**

## **Agenda**

1. Opening prayer
2. Welcome remarks by the NFA
3. Presentation of the petition by Bugoma affected communities
4. Reaction and way forward

## **Introduction**

Over years, CERAI and partners have been part of campaign save Bugoma forest from destruction. The forest have been under destruction by Hoima sugar limited which is destroying part of the forest for sugarcane growing. The campaign has delivered some level of success, however Hoima sugar limited continue to degrade part of the forest for sugarcane growing.

CERAI has been working closely with affected communities to stop the ongoing destruction and it's from this background that CERAI supported affected communities to have a meeting with NFA to present their petition over the ongoing Bugoma forest destruction.

The meeting was attended by NFA leaders, CERAI and representatives from Bugoma forest Host communities. The petition was presented to NFA and discussion followed.

## **Meeting proceedings**

Mr. Tom Okello, the Executive Director of NFA, welcomed the Budongo affected communities to the meeting. He thereafter requested members to introduce themselves.

Mr Tom Okello, the Executive Director of NFA welcomed team from CERAI and Hoima .He thanked them for the good work being done towards conserving the environment. He later informed participants that CERAI has pushed hard to have this meeting and it is an opportunity for them to share their issues with NFA for action.

He ended by assuring the meeting that it is a role of NFA to protect forests across the country and actions have already been done to stop the ongoing forest destruction.

Among the action, Mr Tom said that they issued Notice against Hoima sugar factory to stop the encroachment of part of the forests that was gazzetted for eco-tourism city. Further, NFA also directed Hoima sugar limited to restore the depleted part of the forest that it had encroached on for sugarcane growing. Finally, he said that the boundary re-opening of the forest is ongoing and encouraged CERAI and affected communities to cooperate within the exercise.

In conclusion, Mr. Tom noted that the meeting was scheduled following a letter that was written by CERAI that was dated February 10, 2023 requesting for a meeting with the Bugoma affected communities to present their petition on the ongoing Bugoma forest destruction.

He thereafter requested the team leader of the Bugoma affected communities to present the petition.

### **Presentation of the Petition**

The chairperson, Mr. Kashoborozi thanked NFA for giving them the opportunity to present their petition. He noted that following the ongoing forest destruction has directed affected them in many ways .He said Bugoma forest has many tourism opportunities ,communities have been using to get natural medicine and firewood ,Source of rainfall formation among others .He said any attack to this forest is attack to host communities and tourism industry at large .

Further, James said that the boundary re-opening exercise failed to include community members in the exercise and part of the communities land were gazzetted in Bugoma forest and communities have been stopped to access Bugoma forest since it's guarded by security

Among other concerns presented were:

- Violation of human rights by Hoima sugar limited
- Stopping communities from accessing the forest
- Lack of community participation in the boundary re-opening process
- Access without consultation
- Lack of community sensitization on grievance handling
- Livelihoods destroyed etc

Mr James concluded by requesting NFA to do the following:

- Stop the ongoing forest destruction by Hoima sugar limited
- Re-open the Bugoma forest boundaries and consider the original forest demarcations
- Ensure protection of community land and other property during the boundary re-opening exercise
- A clear and effective grievance handling mechanism be put in place before the next boundary re-opening
- Immediately compensate people whose crops were damaged in the previous boundary re-opening etc.

### **Way forward**

- Mr. Tom thanked the chairperson of Bugoma affected communities and CERAI director for the high level of maturity exhibited for having organized the people to present their

petition to NFA. He also thanked Bugoma affected communities chairman and CERAI team for not going to court, media and politicians to air out their grievances.

- He further noted that it is not in any interest for NFA or Government to take anybody's land without acquiring it in the right way.
- The ED NFA, therefore requested, the range manager Bugoma forest to work with the communities and find out more about their concerns raised.
- Mr. Tom noted that another meeting will be organized in Bugoma following the findings in the report that will be produced by range manager.
- Mr. Tom said that after reviewing the report, another decision will be made whether himself and his team will re-visit Bugoma or not.
- He concluded by thanking CERAI for mobilizing the communities to come air out their concerns.

The meeting was concluded following the above.

**END**

**Participants**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Organization</b>
1.	Tom Okello	M	NFA
2.	Barekye Gerald	M	CERAI
3	Mugabi Robert	M	NFA
4	Kashoborozi James	M	Hoima
5	Kamugisha Juliet	F	Hoima
6	Tumusiime Kato	M	CERAI
7	Kushaba Marvin	M	CERAI
8.	Nayebare Gloria	M	Hoima