



Regional Environment and Development Dialogue

Chez Lando, 30 May 2017

RESOLUTIONS

We, representatives of governments, civil society, academia and private sector and other institutions having interest in sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources in the Albertine rift region, having met in Kigali on 30th May 2017 in a regional environment and development dialogue organized by Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS) and Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA);

Acknowledge the fact the Albertine Rift region is endowed with a great wealth of natural resources that can underpin development for our countries;

Recognize the high cultural diversity and rich history that characterize the populations of all the countries of the region;

Note with concern that the region is undergoing a rapid development process including but not limited to oil and gas, hydropower generation, roads and other extractive industries which have potential to degrade the environment if no safeguards are not put in place;

Appreciate that a number of steps have been made to establish conducive legal and institutional frameworks to harmonize natural resources governance across-borders;

Observe that countries such as Uganda and Rwanda have put in place relevant and appropriate good documents that guide responsible development at national level;

Commend the effort of some private sector players in the oil and gas, and mining sectors who apply in their activities the Mitigation Hierarchy principle and seek to achieve No Net Loss and/or Net Gain (NG) regarding biodiversity conservation;

Recognize that some ecosystems in the Albertine Rift region have such high global ecological importance that the cost of their destruction cannot be matched by any economic gain that could come from such a destruction;

Hereby recommend the following:

- ➔ EIA studies should be given enough time to develop deep understanding of the issues on-ground and allow space for public consultations;

- ➔ EIA process should be more transparent and necessary steps should be taken to ensure information on the EIAs is easily accessible by the public;
- ➔ EIA regulators should always remember that EIA studies are funded by project promoters and therefore should be more rigorous when checking the results of these studies;
- ➔ EIA experts should be independent and demonstrate a high degree of professionalism in order to not be influenced by their clients;
- ➔ Strategic Impact Assessments should be given their due place in national planning processes to ensure strategic decisions are taken on time;
- ➔ A convivial and collaborative atmosphere should exist between governments, civil society and private sector to ensure differences regarding priorities and concerns of each party are resolved in a non-confrontational way;
- ➔ Capacity and resources should be made available for the monitoring of environmental management prescriptions made in EIAs;
- ➔ Studies on the valuation of environmental services that don't have conventional market values should be conducted to ensure planners have a good basis to make sensible trade-offs;
- ➔ New methods and technologies should be applied when implementing development projects that leverage the potential of our modern understanding of the functioning of ecosystems, human societies, and socio-economical systems;
- ➔ Corporate Social Responsibility programmes and compensation plans of companies should be targeted and focused towards maximizing the benefits for local people to offset the loss of their livelihoods from the activities of these companies;
- ➔ Dialogue platforms should be encouraged to provide a mechanism for all stakeholders to come together to review the progress that is being made, identify gaps, and agree on steps to take to ensure development is not achieved at the expense of environment;
- ➔ Communities should be empowered to become shareholders and equal partners in the new big projects that are coming in the region in the natural resources sector;
- ➔ Governments should commit resources and time to ensure participatory monitoring of the environment by all key stakeholders;
- ➔ Private sector should develop business models and practices that integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- ➔ ARCOS and REMA's effort to organize this dialogue is commended and an event like this should be organized regularly at least once a year.