



Press Statement:

December 9, 2021

RE: Kitubulu project site closed over continued breach of ESIA conditions

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has halted activities at a project site in Kitubulu, Katabi sub-county, Wakiso District for continued breach of conditions of approval in the Environment and Social Impact Assessment certificate. On November 2, 2021 during routine environmental surveillance, 2 supervisors were arrested from the site for the same offence.

The December 8, 2021 operation follows a public outcry on social media about the developer, M/s Speke Hotel (1996) Limited, dumping murram into Lake Victoria. A total of five people were arrested during the Wednesday operation, four trucks were impounded and the Environment Police Protection Unit has also been deployed on site to stop any further degradation.

In this particular case, the developer is in possession of a valid NEMA ESIA certificate granting them permission to develop a recreational area including a sand beach, marina and hotel within the 200metres buffer zone of the lake. The site in question is the former Ssesse Gateway Beach, that was later acquired by Speke Hotel (1996) limited. This explains the existence of some structures and vegetation species on the site.

However, the developer's claim that the murram is being ferried to the site to recover the original project area that was taken up by the rising water levels, is contrary to one of the conditions in the ESIA certificate the compels the developer to prevent degradation of the Lakeshore in accordance with the National Environment (Wetlands, Riverbanks and Lake Shores Management) Regulations S.I. No. 153-5. The developer is also required to apply for a Lake shore user permit from NEMA as recommended by Wakiso District Local Government (through the environment officer) but such a permit has never been issued.

While it is true that since 2019 the water levels in Lake Victoria, the Nile and other water bodies have been rising owing to factors associated with climate change including increased rainfall; other aspects such as encroachment on wetlands, lakeshores and river banks, and poor land use practices have amplified the impacts.

Lake Victoria is the largest lake in Africa and a major tourist attraction. Permission to develop recreation centres including hotels within the 200-meter buffer zone of the lake is granted on the basis of facilitating sustainable tourism, however, developers ought to utilize the resource sustainably.

Ends

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