



## UCCA STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS AND EVENTS ON WADELAI IRRIGATION SCHEME PROJECT

### *Introduction*

Wadelai Irrigation Project is one of the four irrigation schemes under Farm Income Enhancement and Forestry Conservation Project (FIEFOC-2) financed by the African Development Bank, supported by the Nordic Development Fund and Implemented in Uganda. The project aims at contributing to improvement of farm incomes, rural livelihoods, food security, climate resilience, sustainable natural resources management and agricultural enterprise development.

In February 2021, Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organization (BIRUDO), a member of the Uganda Consortium on Corporate Accountability (UCCA), conducted a situation analysis to assess the impact of the Wadelai Irrigation Project on the environment and livelihoods of the affected communities during its implementation in Wadelai sub-county, Pakwach District.

One of the concerns raised by the affected communities from the assessment, particularly the Paten community, was the acreage of land that the project sought to acquire for its agribusiness and infrastructure development components which leaves limited land for their own use. These concerns as raised by the community were documented by BIRUDO and shared with the District Local Government and the Project Implementation team with support from the UCCA. Consequently, a meeting was held with the community and the District Local Government wherein the community insisted that they could not give away their land until they were content that they have enough land left for their own use.

From March 2021 to date, the Uganda Consortium on Corporate Accountability (UCCA) organized a number of engagements with the African Development Bank, Nordic Development Fund, local government, and other stakeholders to address the concerns of the project affected persons.

Here below are the events and engagements as they transpired;

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021</b>	The District Linkages Coordinator, Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organization in Pakwach District receives a letter from Paten Clan Community drawing the attention of the organization to the forceful extension of Wadelai Irrigation Scheme on Paten Community Land.



- 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021** BIRUDO raises the Wadelai Irrigation Scheme Project issues during the UCCA 1<sup>st</sup> Bi-annual General Assembly.
- 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021** UCCA receives a concept note and letter from the Paten Clan from BIRUDO calling for UCCA's support through engagements with the Pakwach District Local Government, the Irrigation Project implementation team at the District and the community.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Mar 2021** Meeting held with the Project Implementation team and the Local government supported by UCCA. The situation analysis of the Wadelai Irrigation Scheme Project is presented to the Local Government and the Project Implementation team. A dialogue with community to address the issue is proposed. This would involve the District Leadership, CSOs and PAPs to further understand community grievances.
- 18<sup>th</sup> Mar 2021** Meeting among PAPs, Local government leadership was facilitated by UCCA and BIRUDO. A space for dialogue between the district leadership and affected communities was established. Over 100 PAPs shared their concerns.
- 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021** Meeting between UCCA, IAP, RICE-WN, BIRUDO and the Local Government was held. BIRUDO is given an ultimatum to stop operations within Pakwach District.
- 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021** IAP reached out to Mark Fodor of the Coalition on Human Rights in Development (CHRD) to inquire about handling reprisals for projects funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB).
- 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021** Nine clan leaders were arrested, on allegation of sabotaging the Wadelai irrigation scheme and threatening violence based on the community's letter to Chief Administrative Officer of Pakwach district expressing disappointment in the way the land acquisition was being managed. And the government is improperly using criminal proceedings in an apparent attempt to coerce the community to cede the land for Wadelai irrigation scheme.



- 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2021** BIRUDO hired a lawyer to support the nine clan leaders that were arrested, on allegation of sabotaging the Wadelai irrigation scheme and threatening violence. The lawyer secured bond for the nine clan leaders out of police custody.
- 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021** IAP reached out to the Coalition for Human Rights in Development (CHRD) with details of the project; CHRD responded to the request for support and proposed to link UCCA partners to their Security Working Group.
- 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021** Two clan members who are civil servants within the Pakwach District Local Government were summoned to appear before the award and sanction committee on allegations of sabotaging the Wadelai irrigation scheme and threatening violence based on the community's letter to Chief Administrative Officer of Pakwach District.
- 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021** A meeting was held between UCCA partners and the CHRD to discuss the status of the project. The Coalition provided contacts to reach out to at the Nordic Development Fund (NDF).
- 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021** Project reports were shared with the coalition staff for reference; A draft e-mail to the Nordic Development Fund was circulated for input from UCCA partners; BIRUDO reached out to CHRD and Frontline Defenders for support to the project affected persons; IAP provided contacts for the offices of the Executive Directors of the United States and Germany/Switzerland/Portugal/Luxemborg; E-mail sent to the Environmental and Social Specialist of the NDF.
- 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021** Government through Resident District Commissioner attempted to trespass on Paten clan land and arrested one person, who was later released without any charges. Furthermore, one clan member was beaten by the Uganda People Defend forces (UPDF) deployed by Resident District Commissioner and broke his arm.
- NDF responded to the communication from UCCA regarding concerns related to the Wadelai project in Uganda.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021** IAP reached out to the US Treasury with concerns about AfDB's failure to act upon attacks against the community by the implementers



of the Wadelai project; IAP reached out to the Independent Recourse Mechanism (IRM) of the AfDB with a request for confidentiality of community members facing reprisals for concerns raised about the project.

- 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021** AfDB (Luther Yameogo, Principal- Civil Society Engagement and Advocacy) responds to communication from UCCA.
- 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021** US Treasury (Clarence Severens- Director, Office of Development Results and Accountability) responded to the communication; IAP held a meeting with the IRM (David Simpson, Director, Compliance Review and Mediation Unit) to share community concerns about the project and seek advice on raising a complaint.
- 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021** UCCA partners met and deliberated on remedies to the project affected persons.
- 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021** 16 Paten clan members were shot and wounded by Uganda Police and Uganda People Defend forces (UPDF) deployed by Resident District Commissioner, district chairperson and Chief Administrative Officer, Pakwach district local government.
- 11<sup>th</sup> August 2021** 4 Women were arrested by Uganda People Defend forces (UPDF) and beaten up while on their way to fetch water. One of them was pregnant.
- 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021** AfDB responded to a request by UCCA to intervene in the deteriorating situation around the Wadelai Project owing to the shooting and imprisonment of some of the project affected persons.
- 13<sup>th</sup> August 2021** UCCA issued a Press Statement on the insecurity arising from the implementation of the Wadelai project. The statement was shared with partners internationally.
- 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021** IAP reached out to the Executive Directors of the US and Germany/Luxemborg/Portugal/Switzerland requesting them to reach out to the Bank to stop the violence meted out on the project affected persons; KIOS Foundation reached out to the NDF and the Finnish



- Foreign Ministry raising concerns of violation of rights of project affected persons.
- 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021** Two clan members who are civil servants within the Pakwach district local government were interdicted from their office.
- The Office of the US Executive Director (Alternate Executive Director) of the AfDB responded to the communication from IAP.
- 18<sup>th</sup> August 2021** The Office of the Executive Director (Senior Advisor to the Executive Director representing Germany, Luxembourg, Portugal and Switzerland) of the AfDB responded to the communication from IAP; UCCA held a meeting with the Uganda NGO Forum seeking support to organize a meeting with the AfDB Country Office in Uganda; US Treasury responded to request from UCCA to address the violation of rights of project affected persons with the AfDB.
- 19<sup>th</sup> August 2021** UCCA partners met with staff from the AfDB Country Office (Country Manager) and presented the concerns from the project affected persons. The team promised to provide a response to the concerns raised; Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) published the statement issued by UCCA on the insecurity arising from the implementation of the Wadelai project on its website and reached out to the AfDB and NDF for responses.
- 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021** NDF responded to the request to compel the AfDB Country Office to respond to concerns of the project affected persons as raised in the Bank's meeting with UCCA.
- 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021** Paten clan filed a civil suit in the High Court of Uganda in Arua High Court against Pakwach district local government, Coil Company and Attorney General of Uganda.
- 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021** UCCA sent out a reminder to the AfDB Country Office to provide responses to the concerns raised from the project affected persons.
- 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021** AfDB Country Office responded to UCCA indicating that investigations are ongoing and that a response will be provided when they are finalized.



- 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021** Frontline Defenders shared an open letter to the AfDB and NDF for sign on by partners internationally.
- 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021** UCCA sent out an Open Letter to AfDB and NDF to address reprisals against the Paten Clan.
- 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021** Frontline Defenders supported UCCA to document the experiences of the affected persons for media advocacy; NDF responded to the open letter issued by UCCA.
- 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021** The IRM of the AfDB responded to the open letter requesting the affected persons to file a complaint for the bank's follow up.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021** US Treasury responded to the Open Letter from UCCA
- 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021** BHRRC shared responses form AfDB and NDF to the UCCA Press Statement on reprisals to the project affected persons.
- 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021** UCCA supported the community to file a complaint with the Independent Recourse Mechanism (IRM) of the African Development Bank.
- 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021** The IRM (through the Director) acknowledged receipt of the complaint filed by the community and informed the community about the commencement of the initial stages of the IRM process.
- 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021** The IRM notified the community that the complaint had been registered under complaint No: RQ2021/3