



UCCA STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS AND EVENTS ON THE WADELAI IRRIGATION SCHEME PROJECT

Introduction

Wadelai Irrigation Project is one of the four irrigation schemes under the 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 the 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;

Date

Activity

4th Feb 2021

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.



**UGANDA CONSORTIUM ON
CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

U C C A

18th Feb 2021

BIRUDO raises the Wadelai Irrigation Scheme Project issues during the UCCA 1st Bi-annual General Assembly.

25th 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.

17th 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.

18th 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.

1st 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.

17th 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).

29th 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.



**UGANDA CONSORTIUM ON
CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

U C C A

3rd 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.

13th 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.

14th 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.

15th 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).

16th 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.

19th 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.

23rd 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.

27th July 2021

AfDB (Luther Yameogo, Principal- Civil Society Engagement and Advocacy) responds to communication from UCCA.

30th 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.

5th August 2021

UCCA partners met and deliberated on remedies to the project affected persons.

10th 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.

11th 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.

12th 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.

13th 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.



**UGANDA CONSORTIUM ON
CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

U C C A

4th August 2021

IAP reached out to the Executive Directors of the US and Germany/Luxembourg/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.

16th 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.

18th 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.

19th 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.

26th 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.

27th 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.



- 1st September 2021** UCCA sent out a reminder to the AfDB Country Office to provide responses to the concerns raised from the project affected persons.
- 6th September 2021** AfDB Country Office responded to UCCA indicating that investigations are ongoing and that a response will be provided when they are finalized.
- 7th September 2021** Frontline Defenders shared an open letter to the AfDB and NDF for sign on by partners internationally.
- 9th September 2021** UCCA sent out an Open Letter to AfDB and NDF to address reprisals against the Paten Clan.
- 10th 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.
- 20th 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.
- 22nd September 2021** US Treasury responded to the Open Letter from UCCA
- 30th September 2021** BHRRC shared responses from AfDB and NDF to the UCCA Press Statement on reprisals to the project-affected persons.
- 11th October 2021** UCCA supported the community to file a complaint with the Independent Recourse Mechanism (IRM) of the African Development Bank.
- 12th 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.
- 5th November 2021** The IRM notified the community that the complaint had been registered under complaint No: RQ2021/3
- 8th Feb 2022** IRM conducted an Eligibility assessment for the complaint raised by the Paten community. This was to determine its admissibility.



**UGANDA CONSORTIUM ON
CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

U C C A

- 1st April 2022** UCCA and community members addressed concerns raised in the management response.
- 14th July 2022** UCCA supported the Wadelai community to prepare for the compliance review by the IRM
- 27th July 2022** IRM conducted compliance review meetings with the Paten community and representatives of the CSOs as part of the fact-finding for the complaint.
- 29th April 2023** The police allegedly shot at and teargassed community members who were demonstrating. Some community members were also arrested and these arrests continued, including allegations of some community members burning an excavator belonging to a contractor. The bank commissioned a fact-finding mission to Uganda to verify these community and project-related disruptions.
- 2nd June 2023** UCCA held a meeting with AfDB over the situational analysis in Wadelai.
- 19th- 23rd June 2023** AfDB conducted stakeholder round table meetings to ascertain concerns from the Paten clan and project implementation team. UCCA participated in these engagements.
- July 11th 2023** MoWE and Pakwach district local government convened a Stakeholder engagement meeting to openly discuss and amicably resolve complaints from the Paten community. UCCA & AfDB participated in the meeting.
- July 14th 2023** IRM shared the draft compliance review report for the complaint for UCCA's input and recommendation.
- 14th August 2023** UCCA assisted the complainants in making a response to the draft IRM Compliance Report.
- 16th October 2023** The draft Management Action Plan is shared with complainants, BIRUDO and UCCA.



**UGANDA CONSORTIUM ON
CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

U C C A

27th October 2023	UCCA held a meeting with the IRM over the draft management Action Plan and assisted the complainants in making a response to the draft Management Action Plan.
23rd January 2024	UCCA held a meeting with the IRM
8th March 2024	UCCA held a meeting with the Bank management over the updated Management Response and Action Plan
20th March 2024	UCCA assisted complainants in writing a response to the updated Management Action Plan
28th March 2024	Final IRM compliance Review report is released.
6th May 2024	Meeting with the AfDB to discuss the way forward in the implementation of recommendations in the Wadelai compliance report.
13th May 2024	Final Approved Management Response to the IRM compliance report is released.
17th May 2024	UCCA stakeholder meeting with AfDB, Ministry of Water and Environment, and Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to discuss the implementation of the management action plan
10th October 2024	UCCA stakeholder meeting with AfDB, Ministry of Water and Environment, and Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to discuss Terms of reference for Wadelai Mediation
3rd December 2024	Preparatory meeting between stakeholders and mediator ahead of scheduled Wadelai mediation.