

Coordinator Leonard Zulu: "Any legislative proposal that significantly impacts on partnerships, data or service delivery mechanisms relevant to health, education, social protection, or humanitarian scrutiny to ensure compatibility with international human rights law and international refugee law."

Cartoon. President Museveni has ordered a review of the Protection of Sovereignty Bill, 2026, following public uproar



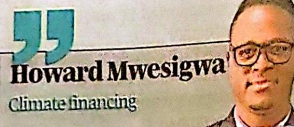
What the Sovereignty Bill means for climate finance mobilisation

Uganda's proposed Protection of Sovereignty Bill, 2026, comes at a moment of heightened global urgency on climate action, and equally augmented scrutiny over foreign influence in domestic affairs. At its core, the Bill seeks to safeguard national autonomy by regulating 'agents of foreigners', restricting foreign funding, and centralising oversight within the State's security architecture. While these objectives resonate with legitimate concerns about self-determination, the Bill could have far-reaching and unintended implications for the mobilisation of climate finance in Uganda.

Climate finance is, by its very nature, transnational. Uganda's climate ambitions, whether in renewable energy, climate-resilient agriculture, or forest restoration, depend significantly on external financing from multilateral funds, bilateral donors, philanthropic organisations, and private investors. The Bill's provisions, particularly those restricting foreign funding beyond Shs400m without ministerial approval, risk introducing uncertainty and bureaucratic hurdles into these flows.

For international partners, predictability is the currency. The requirement for registration as an 'agent of a foreigner', coupled with the possibility of suspension or revocation of such status, may be perceived as a regulatory risk. Climate finance actors, especially non-governmental organisations and implementing partners, could find themselves navigating a compliance regime that is both forbidding and unboundedly discretionary. This will lead to a redirection of investments to jurisdictions with more enabling environments.

Uganda's climate ambitions depend significantly on external financing...



Equally critical is the Bill's broad framing of foreign influence. By prohibiting activities that promote the interests of foreigners against those of Uganda, and by criminalising certain forms of policy engagement, the Bill could inadvertently constrain collaborative policy development, going to the heart of public participation in policy. Yet, climate policy thrives on precisely such collaboration, between governments, civil society, academia, and international institutions. The co-creation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), for instance, often involves technical and financial support from external partners. A vague, restrictive and hostile regulatory framework could stifle these processes.

CSOs stand at the frontline of climate action in Uganda. They mobilise communities, implement adaptation projects, and serve as intermediaries between global finance mechanisms and local beneficiaries. The Bill's emphasis on regulating CSOs, particularly those receiving foreign funding, may limit their operational space. If compliance costs rise or ap-

provals are delayed, project implementation could slow, undermining both climate outcomes and community resilience.

There is also a reputational dimension. Uganda has, over the years, positioned itself as a proactive player in global climate diplomacy. A legislative framework perceived as constraining international cooperation will not only affect investor confidence and the country's standing in climate finance negotiations, but also complicate relations with longstanding development partners. This is especially pertinent as global climate funds increasingly prioritise governance, transparency, and stakeholder inclusivity as criteria for disbursement.

This Bill is irredeemably irreconcilable with Uganda's Green Growth Development Strategy, the Climate Finance Strategy, the Uganda Green Taxonomy, the updated NDC, NDP IV, and the Ten-fold Growth Strategy, all of which require significant FDI flows into Uganda. Moreover, the global aid envelope is constantly shrinking with rising focus on private sector participation and blended finance instruments. Derisking such investments is decisive. The Bill achieves the total opposite—a Trojan Horse against the sovereignty of the people of Uganda.

Climate finance is not merely a financial instrument; it is a lifeline for sustainable development. The Protection of Sovereignty Bill, if enacted in its current form, risks obliterating that lifeline.

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