

Building oil pipeline won't improve our economy

Ugandans should not be easily excited that the oil pipeline project that was launched by President Museveni and his Tanzanian counterpart John Magufuli will boost the economy.

For instance, the government of Uganda has been promising oil-host communities that their lives would be improved. But what is surprising is that to date, the communities and the country at large, remain one of the poorest and characterised by high level of unemployment, food insecurity, and high cost of electricity, among others.

Moreover, to date we still do not have environmental laws in as far as oil-related activities are concerned. Further, the government has also been promising to provide refinery-affected people with land titles and houses for their families.

It also made commitments to build more roads, schools, and extend water and electricity services to the communities. But it is unfortunate that to date, none of these has been implemented for the benefit of the intended beneficiaries.

In addition to the above, the communities in Buseruka, Kabaale, and

Hoima were told that they were promised compensation in 2012 when the government acquired their land for the proposed oil refinery, but up to now, these people are still yawning for government help. Some of their children have even dropped out of school due to lack of school fees. They also face food insecurity.

Therefore, with all these challenges in the refinery-affected areas, it becomes difficult for Ugandans to trust that the oil pipeline would develop the economy.

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