



commission for environmental impact assessment

Mr. F. Gribling
Central and Eastern Africa Division
Directorate International Co-operation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Bezuidenhoutseweg 167
2594 AC The Hague
THE NETHERLANDS

your reference

your letter of
28 June 2001

our reference
047- ab/ Sh/lw

subject
Advisory review of the environmental
impact assessment studies of the
Bujagali Hydropower project, Uganda

direct dial
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Utrecht,
26 October 2001

Dear Mr. Gribling,

By letter dated 28 June 2001 you, on behalf of the Minister, invited the Commission for Environmental Impact Assessment (the Commission) to advise on the environmental impact studies of the Bujagali Hydropower project in Uganda. It is my pleasure to submit herewith the advice prepared by a Netherlands working group of the Commission. I would like to draw your attention to the following points:

During its stay in Uganda, the Commission observed that there is much mistrust around the project mainly due to the fact that the project was not subject to competitive bidding. Also the Power Purchase Agreement between the Government of Uganda and the project developer is not open to the public. Piecemeal disclosure of information was given afterwards in response to critical remarks of NGOs and stakeholders. The Commission is of the opinion that full disclosure of available documents will facilitate the decision-making process and may help to improve the credibility of the developer.

The controversy around the project is also demonstrated by the recent visits (September 2001) to Uganda of the IFC Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman and the Inspection Panel of the World Bank. The IFC report is available and shows the same areas of concern as mentioned by the Commission in its advisory report. The Inspection Panel is still working on the complaint, which was put forward by an NGO.

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Finally, the Commission had discussions with its EIA-counterpart in Uganda, the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA). The NEMA already gave its certificates of approval for the project in November 1999 and July 2001. Therefore, a joint review of the quality of the EIA studies (the preferred approach which is normally applied by the Commission) was no longer possible. However, as the certificates of approval contain a number of preconditions, these have been taken into account by the Commission while drafting its advisory report. NEMA will also have an important role in monitoring the project, when the project will go ahead.

The Commission appreciates to be informed about the use that is made of this advice.

J.W. Kroon

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a series of horizontal strokes and a final vertical stroke.

Chairman working group
Bujagali hydropower, Uganda