



Culture Sector
Division for Heritage

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

H. E. Mrs Nimisha Jayant Madhvani
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary
Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of Uganda to
UNESCO
13, avenue Raymond Poincaré
75116 Paris

Ref.: CLT/HER/WHC/UGA/15/127/LM

24 August 2015

Subject: Attribution of oil drilling concession on Lake Edward Basin

Dear Ambassador,

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre has received information about the decision of your Government to open new oils blocks, including one in the Lake Edward Basin, inside Queen Elizabeth National Park, which is likely to impact on the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity of the Virunga National Park inscribed on the World Heritage List.

I would like to recall that Virunga National Park is a World Heritage property and also a RAMSAR site, inscribed on the List of Wetlands of International Importance. The site is situated in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and managed by the State Party of DRC. Nevertheless, the 'statement of outstanding universal value' of the property refers on several occasions to the importance of Lake Edward and its floodplains. Therefore, the potential oil drilling could become a transboundary issue. Furthermore, the World Heritage Convention stipulates in article 6.3: "Each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 situated on the territory of other States Parties to this Convention."

We would like to draw to your attention to the fact that the World Heritage Committee has adopted a clear position that oil exploration or exploitation is incompatible with World Heritage status, which is supported by the commitments made by industry leaders such as Shell and Total not to undertake such activities within World Heritage properties

We are sending this information to you (see Annexes I and II) in accordance with Paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines* to enable us to verify, with your authorities concerned, the source and content of the information that we have received. We look forward to receiving your response as soon as possible.

I thank you for your co-operation and for your continued support in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Please accept, dear Ambassador, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Kishore Rao
Director
World Heritage Centre

Cc: Uganda National Commission to UNESCO
Permanent Delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to UNESCO
Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la nature
UNESCO Office in Kinshasa
UNESCO Office in Nairobi
IUCN