

Uranium mining a blessing or a curse ?

A report on the Training week on Uranium Mining Issues for African ngo's, 20th - 27th November 2010 Tanzania



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Introduction

Starting point

WISE has a strong tradition of work on uranium mining issues. Since the organization was founded (1978) the international network has been involved in campaigns, publications, research, media work, legal interventions and mobilization on uranium issue in Australia, Canada, Europe, the former Soviet Union, Latin America and Africa.

The WISE uranium project (mainly a website) is considered globally as one of the best information resources for all uranium mining related issues.

The focus on specific African uranium mining issues began around 2006/7, when we were confronted with a strong increase of cries for help and support from different African based NGO's, networks, individuals and stakeholders. Africa is the next frontier to meet energy needs. Renewed demand for uranium is being explored on the continent more than at any other time in history. Yet the continent's huge potential for truly renewable energy is not fully being realised.

Africa, with a population of approximately 680 million people, has poverty as its major challenge to economic and social welfare. Much as poverty looms across the continent, Africa is endowed with plentiful natural resources amongst which is uranium.

Arguments for the development of those mining activities are that this is an attraction of economic activities and that the country and its people will profit from the investments and the export. African civil society organizations, on the other hand, complain that in too many cases the classic colonial pattern seems to prevail: Africa's resources are extracted by outsiders, creating irreversible damage with benefits only reaching small local elites. The *resource curse* is a term often used in Africa to describe that the use or extraction of Africa's resources has not brought benefits to the people of the continent's negative impacts, such as human rights violations, loss of land and land-use rights and the loss or degradation of natural ecosystems do occur.

In 2008 we organized a speaking and learning tour in Namibia, together with the Dutch based SOMO and the Namibian NGO's Larri and Earthlife. We traveled the country with an international group of specialists and activists.

There the need for a truly Pan-African approach was identified and stressed, mainly by the African participants of the trip. In the following years there were gatherings in Chad, Tanzania and SouthAfrica but for many reasons none of these were a truly gathering of many involved countries.

In 2010/2011 WISE received a grant from the Dutch Ministry of Environmental Affairs for a large and comprehensive research comparing the uranium mining situation in four African nations with the situation in Australia and Canada. The full report will be ready in April 2011.

In the slipstream of this research project we managed to successfully raise funds for a full week of training for representatives of ngo's from 10-14 African Nations. The trainings project was kindly supported by different Dutch and international NGO's and networks.

Organization

Important part of the organizational process was the identification and selection of the to be invited representatives of NGO's from the different countries. As the ambition was to have people from at least 10 but hopefully 15 countries (both French- and English speaking) we also knew we would have to downturn several applicants. We could invite two participants per country, each representing a different NGO. We were hoping for - per country – a more environmental-focused NGO and a NGO working on Labor or Human rights issues.

The program of the week was developed in close cooperation and debate with potential 'teachers', NGO's in Africa and specialists within the WISE network.

The choice for the host country and accommodation for the training week was based on an analysis of expected related travel costs, a package deal for the venue and the (im)possibilities for a close working relationship with national NGO's in the host country.

Program

We developed an ambitious program wit a clear focus on transfer of semi-scientific information of many different aspects of uranium mining. The first five days were solely dedicated to presentations of specialist and the participants themselves. The last two days were dedicated to more strategy-oriented sessions. For a full overview, see page 6.

Goal and (expected) outcomes

The overall goal of the training week was to inform and to empower African NGO's dealing with uranium mining exploration or exploitation.

Furthermore networking between participants mutually as well as between participants and trainers was an important aim. For the first part of the week we described the goal as follows:

To share and provide content that participants can really use at home, a better understanding of the variety and complexity of the issues.

For the latter part of the week we formulated and communicated the following principles and points of departure:

- There is no hidden agenda from WISE
- We want to achieve a better understanding of each other's needs, offers and possibilities

- We would be very happy if, as a result, 1, 2 or 3 concrete plans would be developed in the last day. We have no strong opinion on what these should be as long as

1. they truly reflect the needs of the groups involved,
2. the group is really committed to the plan,
3. the plans are concrete, achievable and realistic.

WISE exists to support groups and initiatives (with a focus on grassroots initiatives) in the best way we can. We do not want to duplicate initiatives but inform people about what is already going on, encourage them to get involved and support them in their efforts.

Thank you's

Many, many thanks to all those involved, the sponsors, the participants, teachers, members of staff, advisors on the program, for working with us to make the training into a big success! We do think the week and the outcomes will contribute to a more effective network and more effective campaign and activities, all contributing to the common goal:

Keep uranium in the ground



We do hope the week in Tanzania has been proven to be helpful for the participants in their work back home. This report will not only remind us of a very energetic and powerful crowd of people but also remind us of what needs to be done.



Program of the Pan-African uranium trainings week, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, November 20 – 27, 2010, organised by



In cooperation with



Day	Time	Activity	Carried out by
Saturday 20	Whole day	Arrival participants to conference centre	
	19.00 – 21.00	Informal introduction of participants	All
Sunday 21	07.30	Breakfast	
	08.20 – 08.30	Welcome, aims of conference and this week's schedule/logistics, incl. Q&A.	Peer de Rijk
1	08.30 – 10.00	Very basic, general introduction to the nuclear fuel chain and the place of uranium. Presentation 60 minutes, Q&A presentation 1, 30 minutes	Rianne Teule , Greenpeace International
	10.00 – 10.30	Coffee break	
2	10.30 – 12.00	Very basic, general introduction to radiation: different types, how does it work, what are effects, a bit on health and standards, more on stakeholders in the debate on standards; who dominates the debate and why? Q&A presentation 2	Bruno Chareyron , Criirad
	12.00 – 14.00	Lunch and siesta/break	
3,4	14.00 -15.30	3 short presentations on the U-mining situation in Namibia (3), Niger (4)	Bertchen Kohrs , Namibia Solli Ramatou & Almoustapha Alhacen , Niger
	15.30 – 16.00	Tea break	
5	16.00 – 17.30	Very basic, general introduction on the Uranium market situation : mines, production and demand, price development. Q&A, presentation 5	Rianne Teule , Greenpeace International
	19.00	Dinner	
	20.00 – 20.30	Staff meeting, incl. possibility for questions and remarks from participants	
Monday 22	07.30	Breakfast	
	08.20 – 8.30	Good morning, program Q&A	Staff.
6	08.30 – 11.00	More in-depth on radiation with a focus on standards, health issues. Presentation of studies on health issues around U-mines Q&A presentation 6	Bruno Chareyron

	11.00 - 11.30	Coffee break	
7	11.30 -13.00	Uranium mining; introduction on the different techniques of mining , with many pictures to illustrate. Q&A presentation 7	Dave Sweeney, Australian Conservation Centre
	13.00 – 15.00	Lunch and siesta/break	
8, 9,	15.00 – 16.30	2 short presentations on the U-mining situation in Tanzania (8), CAR (9),	Mathias Lyamunda Tanzania., Paul Doko & Patrice Sanand, CAR
	16.30 -17.00	Tea break	
10	17.00 – 18.00	Presentation of health study in Namibia , Q&A presentation 10	Bertchen Kohrs, Earthlife Namibia
	18.00 -19.00	Free, open space	
	19.00	Dinner	
	20.00 – 20.30	Staff meeting, incl. possibility for questions and remarks from participants	
11	20.00 – 22.00	Practical training; how to use Geiger-counters	Rianne Teule (English) Bruno Chareyron (French)
Tuesday 23	07.30	Breakfast	
	08.20 – 8.30	Good morning, program Q&A	Staff.
12	08.30 – 10.00	Uranium-mining; the environmental consequences . With focus on water, tailing-dams, biodiversity, agriculture. Q&A presentation 12	David Fig , SouthAfrica
	10.00 – 10.30	Coffee break	staff
13	10.30 – 11.45	Uranium-mining; the social consequences . With a focus on employment, human rights, local structures, conflicts, corruption, forced migration etc. Q&A presentation 13	Judith Taylor , Earthlife SouthAfrica,
	12.00 -12.30	Presentation MP Tanzania lawyer Femapo	picture
	12.30 – 14.30	Lunch and siesta/break	
14	14.30 – 16.00	1 presentation on the U-mining situation in Cameroon (14)	Didrot Nguelpjouo & Jaff Napoleon Bamenjo Cameroon,
	16.00 – 16.30	Tea break	
15	16.30 – 18.00	Ming companies and host countries; who benefits most ? Q&A presentation 15	Joseph Wilde , SOMO
	19.00 dinner		
	20.00 – 20.30	Staff meeting, incl. possibility for questions and remarks from participants	
	20.30	Movie Criirad	

Wednesday 24	07.30	Breakfast	
	08.20 – 8.30	Good morning, program Q&A	Staff.
	08.30 – 13.00	Excursion; sailing	
	13.00 -14.00	Lunch	
16	14.00 – 16.00	The situation in Australia; 40 years of struggle, achievements, loopholes, challenges ; what has been achieved re. the development and implementation of criteria and legislation for U-mining. Lessons to be learned for Africa. Q&A presentation 17	Dave Sweeney , Australian Conservation Foundation
	16.00 – 16.30	Tea	
17,18,19	16.30 – 18.00	3 short presentations on the U-mining situation in Zambia, Chad, Malawi , Congo	Reinford Mwangonde , Malawi Amadée Bobitobi & Jean-Claude Masumbuko, Congo
		Free	
	19.00	Dinner	
	20.00 -20.30	Staff meeting, incl. possibility for questions and remarks from participants	
20	20.45 – 21.30	Presentation of first findings of the WISE research project	Fleur Scheele , WISE
Thursday 25	07.30	Breakfast	
	08.20 – 8.30	Good morning, program Q&A	Staff
	08.30 – 09.30	Open round, identification of everyone's ideas and thoughts on what the outcome should be of the strategy sessions	Guenter Schoenegg
	09.30 -11.00	Open space; working groups; identification of ten most prominent issues you would want to work on/you identify as highly needed activities	David Fig
	11.00 – 11.15	Coffee	
	11.15 – 12.30	Clustering	Guenter Schoenegg,

			Martin Petry, Jan Cappelle
	13.00 – 14.30	Lunch + siesta	
21	14.30 -15.30	Introduction to the concept of Strategic Action Planning . Presentation of a model. How does one get to a strategic plan, given that we all know we can't do everything, resources are limited, the road is long and the battle is tough. We want to provide a tool for the participants; how can they engage themselves in a process in which they can fruitfully come up with a comprehensive plan and planning.	
	15.30 – 16.00	Plenary: Identification of top 3 (maybe 4) priorities overall, out of the big list from the clustering in the morning session	Guenter Schoenegg, Martin Petry, Jan Cappelle
	16.00 – 16.30	Tea	
	16.30 – 18.30	Overview of already available tools, resources and possibilities at offer ; networks, media, trainings, projects. Short and simple introduction as to avoid duplication in next session; what is already available re. all kinds of resources, means and tools (money, programs, publications, tools, trainings, meetings, websites, gatherings, opportunities)	Jan Cappelle
	19.00	Dinner	
	20.00 – 20.30	Staff meeting, incl. possibility for questions and remarks from participants	
	20.30 -	Fire, music and dance	
Friday 26	07.30	Breakfast	
	08.20 – 08.30	Good morning, program Q&A	staff
	08.30 – 11.00	Workshop 3 (maybe 4) themes; make a concrete and realistic-as-possible action plan for the international network working with identified priority (outcome of the session day before, the pre-lunch session)	Schoenegg, Petry and Cappelle
	11.00 -11.30	Coffee break	
	11.30 – 12.30	Results/presentations workshop 3 (4)	

		groups	
	13.00 – 14.30	Lunch and siesta/break	
	14.30 – 16.00	Who will be responsible for what, identification of tasks (following the outcomes of session V) And here we have to be very aware and awake; we should only list items and appoint people if it is realistic !! no false expectations, no illusions	Peer de Rijk, Guenter Schoenegg
	16.00 - 16.30	Tea	
	16.30 – 18.00	Plenary evaluation. Last remarks, calls, worries, compliments. Questionnaire & Evaluation	Schoenegg, Petry and Cappelle
	18.00 - 19.00	Free	
	19.00	Dinner	
	20.00 – 20.30	Staff meeting, incl. possibility for questions and remarks from participants	

Strategy sessions, November 25 and 26, summary

And then came the difficult part.....with a rich variety of people from many different backgrounds, experiences and cultures we worked our way through some strategy sessions, meant to deliver some clear idea of the way forward.

We started off with some introductions and skill-sharing on the principles of strategic action planning which were then used in working groups. These groups worked hard to come up with fresh ideas and meaningful thoughts for the whole group.

Hereunder an overview of what was listed by the different working groups. For those who did not attend the trainings week it will be hard to fully understand but we decided to run them in the report anyway as a service to those who actually did the brain-breaking hard work.

Awareness raising; Capacity Building; Information

Myth busting, information on:

- uranium not safe
- little economic benefit
- no or little community benefit

All stakeholders, politicians, decision makers, mining workers and the whole civil society need to understand the impacts of uranium mining and exploration before an approval of mining license.

Capacity building:

- research
- advocacy
- NGO's
- technical experts
- monitoring of uranium companies and actions
- documentation
- review and analysis of the laws & policies concerning u-mining

International Networking

- Sensitizing politicians + political processes to uranium issue
- Identify policy weakness & lobby for change
- IMF-bank policies
- Importance of strong national, environmental and radiation laws and regulation
- Yearly meeting of African NGO's
- Synchronisation of networks on natural resource management (more strength & avoidance of duplication)
- Promoting international experiences of successful resistance
- Identify common networking ideas – concrete activities

- * contracts
- Australia/Tanzania regarding Mantra
- Australia/Malawi/Namibia – Paladin
- AREVA

Publication of Information

- Document cases
- Information gathering and harmonization
- Sharing of info with governments
- Creation and distribution of community information
- End users strategy: highlighting the human + environmental impacts of uranium sourcing in user nations
- Access to governments information
- Use of media

Lobbying

- Research companies/law and report on the findings
- Ask for mining contracts to be made public before and after signing; also EIA's etc
- Mobilise all stakeholders eg: NGO's & communities and partners, NGO's in the respective countries
- Public actions
 - *contact media
 - *get legal advise and support
 - *engage politicians
 - *organise demonstrations
 - *share international media contacts

International lobby actions:

1. Launch complaints with national contact point (NCP) of OECD if mining companies are violating their guidelines for international enterprises
2. International awareness raising especially in importing/consuming countries
3. File complaints with ombudsman of IFC of the world bank regarding breaches of regulations
4. Lobby EU and governments buying minerals (U)
5. Lobby companies shareholders
6. Attend world social forum in Senegal – February 2011

Alliances

- AUA membership
- Anti-nuclear movement and groups
- Groups working with: water issues, health issues, agriculture issues
- Unions
- Lawyers/legal support

Media
Tourism
Faith based organizations
International Alliance for Natural Resources in Africa

Resources

- Funding
- Documented cases
- Capacity
- Time/Manpower
- Universities
- Internet
- Methodology of supporting feedback

Impose full responsibilities on companies

- Create a file on each uranium company
- Detailed corporate work on AREVA
- Compensation to mine workers with occupational illnesses (they need legal and medical assistance!)
- Compensation to communities resettled by mining companies
- Importers of uranium have to take responsibilities of mining impacts + informer