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The Influence of the Discovery of Hydrocarbons in the Albertine Graben on the Diplomatic Relations between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Rest of the World.

In a region which has long been affiliated with war, a potential blessing such as the discovery of hydrocarbons has brought in hurried efforts to pacify and rehabilitate the vicinity in the hope of easing access to the discovered potential wealth. Historically, the discovery of oil and gas has always been a curse to the beneficiaries of moribund economic businesses, dragging the feet of pessimism and optimism to a fragile peak of debate. When the shores of Lake Albert were singled out as having just more than fish, salt and perhaps sand, expatriates suddenly began seeking affiliation and stomped into the region to acquire shares. Infrastructure is in the process of being developed, land has been cleared, houses demolished as preparations are underway for the establishment of a refinery, camps for oil companies and other establishments necessary for the successful execution of an environment conducive for an oil rich region. For the greater part, the natives in the Albertine region have become so engrossed in grabbing entrepreneurial openings that they have lost count of the damage that is manifesting in the environment as plot after plot of land has been marked off for exploration. The region has since known degradation, conflict and more losses than gains as various opportunists have continued to lay strategies that have placed Uganda against the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the rest of the world. This study examines these interactions and serves as an eye opener to the reality that Uganda and DRC are continuously drawing close to the fangs of a potential „Resource Curse“. The researcher learned that the discovery of hydrocarbons has impacted more negatively than positively on the political, social, economic and environmental aura of the Albertine Graben, in as much as the researcher unveiled several benefits. Thus, it was only seemingly fit to conclude that the future of the Albertine Graben is not secure, rather, there is a significant likelihood that Uganda and DRC will most likely end up as oil-cursed countries if government, oil companies, Civil Society Organisations, administrators and the masses do not take the initiative to avoid the foundational propelling factors likely to lead these countries into becoming oil-cursed.

The researcher recommends that actors participant in the oil game ought to unite and operate as transparent, dialogue-friendly, accountable and cooperative if the best is to arise out of the discovery of hydrocarbons in the Albertine Graben.

Key Words: