Congo in discussions with Uganda over use of crude pipeline

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The Democratic Republic of Congo is in discussions with neighbouring Uganda for possible use of the east African country's planned crude oil pipeline to export petroleum, Congo's hydrocarbons ministry said.

Source: Reuters/Dado Ruvic/Illustration

Uganda is developing the $3.5bn 1,445km East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) that will start from oil fields in its Albertine rift basin on its western border with Congo to Tanzania's Indian Ocean seaport of Tanga.

The pipeline is for transporting Uganda's crude to international markets when the country starts production in 2025.

Congo's Ministry of Hydrocarbons said in a Twitter statement late on Tuesday, 9 May, that its minister Didier Budimbu met Uganda's energy minister Ruth Nankabirwa Ssentamu, with discussions involving access to the pipeline.

"Uganda acknowledged the crucial requirement of DRC to access the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) for the transport of crude oil to be produced from the oil exploration blocks located in the Albertine Graben in the Democratic Republic of Congo," the statement read.

Congo and Uganda share the oil-rich basin of Albertine Graben.

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Talks underway

Technical teams from both sides would discuss and prepare reports to be presented to the two ministers who would then brief the countries' presidents on signing a memorandum of understanding, according to the statement.

A spokesperson for Uganda's energy minister confirmed the talks and said the EACOP had been designed for potential use by Uganda's neighbours including Congo and South Sudan.

Last year, Congo put up for auction 30 oil and gas blocks, although environmentalists say development of some of the blocks would open up ecologically sensitive areas and release vast amounts of carbon into the atmosphere.

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