

PETROLEUM EN CHAD 2003

1. CHAD CAMEROON PIPELINE

On 6 June 2000, the board of directors of the World Bank pledge its support to the consortium that is to exploit Southern Chad's oil reserves. Exportation will take place via a 1070 km pipeline, the final section will cut through areas inhabited by Bakola populations.

The project is to develop the oil fields at Doba in southern Chad (at a cost of US\$1.5 billion) and construct a 1,070 km pipeline to offshore oil-loading facilities on Cameroon's Atlantic coast (US\$2.2 billion). The sponsors are ExxonMobil of the U.S. (the operator, with 40% of the private equity), Petronas of Malaysia (35%), and ChevronTexaco of the U.S. (25%). The project could result in nearly US\$2 billion in revenues for Chad (averaging US\$80 million per year) and US\$500 million for Cameroon (averaging US\$20 million per year) over the 25-year production period.

The Bagyéli, or Bakola Pygmies as they are also known, are one of the three main groups of Pygmies in Cameroon, alongside the Baka Pygmies in the East and the Bedjang tribes in the Nditam region. Having settled in Kribi a number of years ago, they live in small encampments along the main road linking Lolodorf, Bipindi and Kribi.

A oil pipeline will pass through 120 Km of the territory of about 5,000 Bakola. This pipeline poses a threat to the Pygmies because it will mean radical changes to their way of life. ³For population for whom the Earth has great mystical significance, cohabitation with a huge pipeline will be extremely traumatic³ said Samuel Nguiffo from CED in Cameroon.

During the construction, with the arrive of machines, the local fauna will chase away, the staple diet of the Bakola people. They have lived always off the land, thereby doubling the disastrous effects of deforestation.

The arrival of building site personnel will be an added strain on their habitat. To reduce the impact on the everyday lives of the Bagyéli, COTCO (Cameroon Oil Transportation Company - an organization set up to oversee the construction of the Cameroon section of the oil pipeline) has forbidden the site personnel from hunting, fishing and picking edible plants and fruit from the trees.

As compensation, the Bakola they will receive up to US\$ 600,000 from the Environmental Foundation. This sum has not been allocated just to the Pygmies,

and will be spread out over 30 years, the theoretical duration of the project. Therefore, according with Samuel Nguiffo each Bakola is looking at US\$ 4 a year. Not much when you consider the collective damage to their way of life and culture: their sacred sites are under threat and their traditional and legendary plant-based pharmacopoeia risks finding itself in competition with community health centres set up under the COTCO scheme.

Theodore Downig, from the University of Arizone, made an analyses of Bakola Indigenous People Plan (IPP) for the Chad Cameroon pipeline project. The states that scale of impact on wildlife depends on time of the year as well as the Bakola Pygmy hunting territories. Estimates are needed for the potential environmental impacts on deforestation including that associated with the increased access to the region as a result of the project, exchange with the Bantu, entrance of substantial numbers of outsiders into the Bakola Pygmy, and long-term impacts on their hunting territories.

Socio-economic risk and impact analyses have, as their minimal initial step, the designation of the potential area of influence. The boundaries of this area are based on socio-economic criteria related to the livelihood needs.

Here too, the IPP has a serious methodologically flaw. It uses lineal distance from the pipeline, ignoring social, economic and ecological dimensions. No environmental or social risk assessment of the proposed infrastructure on the Bakola Pygmy can be considered minimally acceptable without identification of their use of the environment through a properly constituted cultural ecological analysis, complete with identification of hunting territories and seasons.

A major impact will be the presence of outside construction crews in a remote area. The anticipated impacts fail to identify the most obvious threats to the local population from the construction crews including increased drinking, physical violence, and prostitution.

The destruction to normal domestic cycle of development caused by this "short term event" cuts deep into the social fabric and undermines the ability of the population to recreate its family structure.

Additionally, he added that to what extent will the Bakola Pygmy benefit from a fund? The Plan does not provide information to determine the expected impact of its proposed expenditures in terms of the risks and government plans. Some of the costs associated with this Plan should not be considered benefits to the population.

For example, the costs of updating the census and an epidemiological survey is information primarily intended for administrative use by the Company and its subcontractor.

He added that The IPP fails to clarify how it approaches the sensitive issue of the relationship of the Bantu and Bakola Pygmy. Differences of opinions were

identified in their consultations. What is the ratio of benefits between the more directly dependent, Pygmy population and the Bantu? Unquestionably, the injection of funds, people, projects, and activities into this delicate interdependent relationship might lead to significant socio-cultural, economic and environmental changes. Anthropological assessment of potential socio-cultural and economic conflicts, based on scenarios, needs to be identified and options proposed. Both the Bakola Pygmy and Bantu should be informed of these likely impacts as part of the informed consultations.

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