Nigeria: Gas Corporation NLNG Destroys Mangrove forest in the Niger Delta

Bonny Island, situated at the southern edge of Rivers State in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, has known no peace since the early 90s, when the Federal Government of Nigeria, in collaboration with its international partners started the multi-billion dollar project Nigeria Liquified Natural Gas Limited (NLNG). Due to its strategic position, the island hosts various oil companies world-wide famous for the social and environmental destruction they cause such as Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Agip, Elf, among others.

Nigeria Liquified Natural Gas Limited (of which Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation owns 49% of the shares, Shell Gas holds 25.6 %, the Elf Group 15% and Agip International 10.4 %) purchases natural gas from upstream producers and transports it through 217 kilometers of dedicated pipeline into its plant at Finima on Bonny Island, where the gas is processed into liquid natural gas and condensed for export to the buyers.

There are complex social and ecological problems associated with the project. The rural community of the Ijaw ethnic nationality is currently under severe and serious threat. Over 6,000 local residents are being affected by the clearing of their mangrove forest, with more mangrove destruction from the controversial gas line project forthcoming. The company with its consortium of international partners has just resumed the destruction of a large expanse of virgin mangrove forest located in the area.

It is important to highlight the role that funding agencies are playing in the implementation of these activities. On December 2002, NLNG signed a loan agreement for US$1,060 million, with four Export Credit Agencies (US Exim Bank, Istituto per I Servizi Assicurativi del Commercio Estero from Italy, Gerling NCM of The Netherlands and Export Credits Guarantee Department from the UK), the African Development Bank, 19 international banks and six Nigerian banks. The loans will be deployed towards the financing of the further expansion of transport facilities for NLNG's Bonny Island plant.

Bonny Island people have protested against the destruction of their mangrove forests, but the clearing is carried out under the watchful eyes of heavily armed security guards. The people from Bonny Island are therefore requesting support to their struggle. Please help stop further destruction of mangrove forest in the Niger Delta by writing letters of concern to the following government official:

The Rivers State Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
First floor , Podium block, Secretariate complex,
P.M. B. 5544,
tel: 234-84-238238
fax: 234-84-234460
e-mail: environs@infoweb.abs.net
For more information, contact - nigerdeltaproject@yahoo.com

Article based on information from: "NLNG Destroys Mangrove forest in the Niger Delta Again", Late

Friday News 112 th Edition, 13 March 2003, sent by Alfredo Quarto, e-mail: mangroveap@olympus.net ; NLNG web site, http://www.nigerialng.com