

On the matter of inviting independent experts to sit in on Talisman's discussions with GOS on the peace process and human rights issues, Dr. Buckee pointed out that he has raised this issue with ministers and officials in Khartoum, and will continue to do so.

He stressed that Talisman believes it is acting in a responsible manner in Sudan, and is giving particular attention to seeing "what we can do to improve the lives of the local communities where we are active".

He expressed his conviction that Sudan desperately needs help, and he wanted help in deciding how best to further improve the development contribution which Talisman can make in the oilfields region.

Mission

With all these concerns in mind a team for the Assessment Mission was composed, arrangements made, and the team dispatched to Sudan. The names and biographical details of the team members are shown in an appendix to this report. Each teammember was chosen as an individual not as a representative of any organization. Each offered appropriate skills and was deemed, correctly, to be capable of reflecting Canada's commitment to the promotion of human security in Africa.

The work of the Assessment Mission included a brief fact-finding trip to Europe, for talks with the UN agencies in Geneva, particularly the International Labour Organization, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, and the High Commission for Refugees, and with the European Union in Brussels, which sent a mission to Sudan in November 1999.

The work in Sudan consisted, first, of meetings in Khartoum, with GOS, opposition, human rights, civil society, and diplomatic representatives as well as some encounters with displaced Southern Sudanese and the UN officials trying to help them. In addition, visits were made to oil pipeline sites north and south of Khartoum, and to Dilling, in the lower reaches of the Nuba Mountains. The mission spent three days at the Heglig operating base of the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, GNPOC, and from this base visited a number of communities in the vicinity. Included were Heglig market and the Talisman hospital nearby, Pariang, Bentiu, Rubkona, Mayom, and Abyei. In addition, extensive fly-over inspections were made during helicopter trips.

Much of South Sudan cannot be accessed from any area controlled by the GOS, and the mission flew to Nairobi, Kenya, on its way to Lokichokio, in northern Kenya, the operating base of Operation Lifeline Sudan. This humanitarian operation is a consortium of the UN and major NGOs, and it organizes relief shipments and other forms of assistance for often desperate communities in Sudan.