

LIMITED CIRCULATION

ENLARGED WORKING GROUP ON SUDAN:  
RESOURCE EXPLOITATION IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

March 31, 2000

Ottawa

On March 31, 2000, an enlarged Working Group on Sudan was convened to address resource exploitation in areas of conflict. The meeting was a part of a larger commission, *Sudan: Hosted by the Canadian Centre for International Policy Development*, it was chaired by Senator Lois Wilson and included, among others, *Sen. Sheila Copps, Sen. Joe Stort, Sen. Jean Proulx, and Penelope Simons.*

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Outlining the Problem

Consensus developed that operations of some foreign companies in conflict situations may aggravate civil conflict and have negative impacts on local human rights. Drawing on his own experience, *John Harker* pointed out that while some corporate executives profess values in common with human rights activists and NGOs, they often overlook and fail to acknowledge apparent human rights violations related to the operations of their companies. Therefore, companies have to be held responsible for their actions and account able to some code of conduct. *Sen. Smith* talked about the need to distinguish between those companies which deliberately exit from conflict and those which make peace agreements. Since the former are mostly multinationals (their location and identity easily changeable) monitoring and enforcement mechanisms should be directed at individuals and cash flows rather than the companies themselves.

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*Penelope Simons* drew attention to the culture of the business private company is to make profit. However, she believes that companies, unbound by state or other multilaterally based regulatory problems in countries (where they operated in Caspian region) from a legal obligation but have a moral/cultural one. She suggested change in that moral one that the profit logic guides the decisions of companies.

*Most participants* agreed that operations of private companies in conflict areas have to be monitored and regulated. They also suggested that international standards should be developed to regulate such operations.