

A question was raised about how to support the IGAD peace process and bring the Sudanese to the table. Perhaps the IPF could play a useful role in setting goals/benchmarks. However, the interests of the IPF members may hinder any harmonisation efforts. NGO-IPF forum could be developed to generate some fresh ideas and address disfunctionality of the IPF. The link to the UN would be key in legitimising such a forum/process, therefore, it would be beneficial to convene such a group around a resolution or a presidential statement. A possibility of creating a 3rd technical committee of IGAD was also put on the table. Some participants agreed that technical committees often work since they focus on seemingly non-political issues.

Questions surrounding the rehabilitation of Talisman also came up during the discussion. Joe Stern asked what would be necessary for such a rehabilitation to occur. It is fairly clear that for the leadership of Talisman, efficiency comes before social responsibility. It is also clear that the value of Talisman's stocks is declining. Talisman is viewed negatively by some other private companies as well and may become a cautionary tale of what not to do in a conflict situation in the future. Talisman is compensating those who have been displaced as a result of its operations and its leadership believes the company can "come back." However, human rights monitoring and information gathering by NGOs is key to Talisman's compliance.

Eric Hoskins asked whether opening an office in Khartoum would be useful and whether it would not just legitimise the current regime (i.e., precisely what the Sudanese government is aiming for)? He reflected that, perhaps, establishing an information gathering office in the South or in Nairobi could offset the potential negative feedback. The Khartoum office could:

- support efforts of Minister Axworthy and others to develop and implement a mechanism to monitor human rights and Talisman,
- explore ways to address oil revenue (i.e., distribution, usage, etc.),
- fulfil the needs for an on-the-ground presence
- facilitate the peace process by serving the needs of Senator Lois Wilson and others.

Concerns remain about how to support the South. A possible answer would be from Nairobi, where a human rights monitoring capacity could be located. Would criticism about neglecting the South be deflected by enhanced activities in the area? Garry Kenny said that information gathering is really the only solid reason for opening an office in Khartoum. He reminded the participants about the useful role the Canadian Embassy played in South Africa, especially in human rights monitoring.

Joe Stern raised attention to the mounting pressure on Minister Axworthy to divest himself of the Sudan issue. There are little resources to spare and the political situation in Sudan is so complex that even if rules and regulations are developed and imposed/encouraged, there is no rule of law framework to ensure their implementation. Moreover, the regulation that has been developed is very modest and Talisman's oil operations are far from Ottawa. He also briefly raised the option of refusing visa service to Sudan. Others countered this pessimism by saying that the process is sound and perseverance will be rewarded in the long term.