

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BETWEEN BECC,
NLNG AND ECOSPHERE ON WEDNESDAY 13TH
AUGUST, 2003 AT NLNG OFFICE - BONNY**

1. ATTENDANCE

- Goni Ahmed – NLNG
- A.Y. Ibrahim – NLNG
- Mr. Josua Pepple – Chairman, Bonny Environment
Consultants Committee (BECC)
- Mr S. A. Abere – BECC
- Dr. V.C. Obinna – Ecosphere
- Ms. Jane Emeruem – Ecosphere
- Mr. Dagogo Halliday – BECC
- Dr. Amah Hart – BECC
- Dr. Brian Buckley – GM Production, NLNG

Recorded by Dr. V. C. Obinna.

2. OPENING

Mr. Goni Ahmed's Opening Remarks

Mr. Goni Ahmed made the opening speech thanking members of BECC and the Ecosphere Team for attending the meeting at short notice. He emphasized that the meeting is a follow-up to the stakeholder workshop of 11th August 2003 to discuss past EIA issues that BECC perceived as not being satisfactorily implemented. He seized the opportunity to brief BECC on the ESHA activities of train 6.

Mr Ahmed regretted the walk-out by BECC and other members of the Bonny and Finima communities during the impacts and mitigations workshop with stakeholders at the Presidential Hotel in Port Harcourt on the 11th of August, 2003. He pointed out that NLNG's doors are always open to the members of the community and regretted why partners should make such public 'displays' on issues that could easily be resolved amicably. He stressed that this meeting provided the opportunity for BECC and NLNG to revisit the issues.

Opening remarks by the General Manager Production

Mr. Brian Buckley, the GM production, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He stated that he was anxious to discuss past-agreed mitigations and gaps in implementation, if any. He said he was neither ashamed nor embarrassed by what happened during the meeting in Port Harcourt, though he was saddened.

He explained that train 6 is currently being planned for completion in 2006/07 and that after that, there are no current plans for further expansion.

3. RESPONSE BY THE CHAIRMAN OF BECC

Mr. Joshua Pepple, Chairman of BECC, pointed out that BECC was not fully in the picture of the Train 6 activities. The walk-out at Port Harcourt was as a result of what they considered to be failure on the part of NLNG to implement some agreed mitigation measures dating back to train 1. He referred specifically to a meeting held with NLNG on the 6th of August 2002 and to some action points in the minutes of that meeting.

The key issues raised from the minutes, i.e. the immediate bones of contention, were:

- Campaign to protect forests,
- The nature park
- The labour camp
- Solid wastes
- Contingency plan for possible gas disaster
- Fishermen and the fish-catch study

Discussion thereafter centered on these issues.

a. Campaign to Protect Forests

The BECC chairman pointed out that four communities, namely Akiama, Orupiri, Iloma and Kalaibiama had not been reached by the campaign. He complained of delays in arranging to visit these communities and the shuttling which they had to do between Community Relations and Environmental Departments, not being sure who actually to deal with. He expressed his wish to deal directly with the environment department.

In his response, the GM Production pointed out that the earlier campaigns organised by BECC did include specific provisions to include these communities. He was prepared to accept BECC's current view that their efforts did not succeed, as hoped, and that additional campaigns specifically aimed at these communities would be beneficial. He recommended that in the future they should deal with Mr. Goni Ahmed (Head of Environment) and directed that the time frame for visiting the remaining communities should be worked out with Mr. Goni Ahmed for implementation.

b. The Nature Park

BECC wished to know what was really happening to the nature park. Mr. Goni Ahmed pointed out that 40 persons had already been employed from within the community as forest guards to protect the designated park area.

Mr. Abere (BECC member) pointed out that the issue of the Nature Park had previously been discussed at the palace with Niger Delta Wetlands Center (NDWC) (the body handling the Nature Park). He expressed that the body was acting single handedly, i.e. without involving Bonny experts. According to him, two meetings had been arranged between BECC and NDWC, which did not hold.

The GM Production wanted to know from Mr. Goni Ahmed what was the current status of the Nature Park.

In response, Mr. Goni Ahmed gave a brief history of the Nature Park, starting with the role of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), participation of some BECC members as experts in their individual capacities, and NDWC's enlistment due to their special expertise and knowledge of the Niger Delta. According to him, NDWC had series of consultations with different groups – chiefs, women, youths, etc, and that all groups within the community are in full support of NDWC's activities. In his opinion, NDWC had been doing well; they have employed guards from the community, undertaken enlightenment of the community through workshops, group/individual discussions and leaflets. The GM pointed out that he hoped BECC is aware of Finima community's attachment to their land and control. They have communicated a list of names mandated to work with NDWC on the Nature Park.

Mr. Ahmed further reported that a Management Plan has been produced by NDWC and a copy handed over to BECC for review/comments last year. The NDWC activities is transitional and that the park will be handed over to the community to manage. A Board of Trustees will be selected by the community from amongst the community and that NDWC's role would revert to advisory for a period of time to maintain standards.

Mr Abere pointed out that BECC should be involved in the activities of the park because they have qualified hands.

In response to all this, the GM Production stated as follows:

- NDWC is doing an excellent development job.
- If they did not regularly consult BECC, that was not intentional.
- An excellent management plan has been produced; BECC should comment on it as requested and forward to Goni Ahmed.
- Any organizational structure will not “fly” until it involves and has the support of the Finima people.
- There is a clear vision and strategy; however patience is required to ensure the complete buy-in of the community.

c. Labour Camp

The real issue here is how to return the site to what it was after demobilization. NLNG has already articulated and agreed to make all necessary plans towards this end.

d. Solid Wastes

It was agreed that there was no substantive issue. NLNG wastes are – and have been for some 5 years – been managed and by a local contractor, who is also represented on the BECC committee, to acceptable standard.

e. Contingency Plan for Possible Gas Disaster

The GM Production informed the house that:

- All residential areas are well outside the reach of 10^{-6} (QRA) sterile zone of NLNG.
- There is no realistically conceivable event that could happen in the plant that will necessitate evacuating Bonny Town.
- The plant is designed and operated to contain hydrocarbons and minimise any release in emergencies.
- Selected NLNG employees are trained to deal with all conceivable emergencies.

Mr. Hart (BECC member) pointed out about the need to educate the community on the nature of the risks. Even if they are not in any danger, he said, perceptions or misperceptions might lead to panic in the case of any event.

The GM Production agreed that an issue of enlightenment on the risks or their absence may exist. The challenge is to explain this in a way that is clear and comprehensible to the people.

Mr. Hart agreed with this.

f. Fishermen and the Fish Catch Study

The GM Production stated that an independent study carried out with BECC on behalf of the community has demonstrated clearly that there is “no measurable impact” on fishing from NLNG’s activities. Nevertheless, NLNG after consultation with BECC is procuring equipment for fishermen as gesture towards improving their economic development.

4. REACHING OUT TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Mr. Abere (BECC member) then suggested that NLNG should call a meeting of a cross section of the community and explain things to them, the way BECC was briefed today.

The GM Production thanked Mr. Abere for that suggestion. He remarked that NLNG continues to use all possible avenues to do this and looks forward to its next meeting with the Bonny Council of Chiefs to brief them on these and other matters between NLNG and the communities of Bonny Kingdom.

He observed that NLNG is a young company and continues to learn how to improve its relationships with and within the communities who are its hosts.

Mr. Goni Ahmed, prior to the departure of the GM production, accepted the need to continue to discuss with all cross-sections of the community, but appealed to BECC also shoulder its responsibilities to carry the message to the community.

On such a happy note, the meeting then came to a close at about 4 p.m.

Mr. Goni Ahmed
Nigeria LNG Ltd.

Mr. Joshua Pepple
Chairman BECC