



Delivered to:

UNESCO
The government of CANADA
The government of BOTSWANA
Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Ministry of Agriculture and Water Affairs
Ministry of Mines and Energy

To whom it may concern

RE: Oil and petroleum explorations in Kavango East and West

We, a coalition of concerned Namibians and global citizens, wish to raise the proposed oil and petroleum explorations and the possibility of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in Kavango East and West and neighbouring Botswana by the Canadian company Reconnaissance Africa (RECON AFRICA).

We would like you to support us in stopping this future-wrecking venture for the following reasons:

- Namibia was the first country to include environmental protections in the Constitution.
- Namibia, Canada and Botswana have signed the Paris Climate Agreement. With this signature, the respective governments agreed to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to below 2 degree Celsius this century.
- Namibia already draws financial resources from the Green Climate Fund to compensate the climate related changes.

Namibia is also a signatory to the Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In spite of these international obligations and commitments, the Namibian Government has granted a petroleum-prospecting licence for oil and gas explorations to a Canadian registered junior oil and gas company, RECON AFRICA. They bought the rights from Namibia and Botswana to drill in more than 35 000 km² in the environmentally sensitive Kavango basin.

The exploration sites are within the KAZA Transfrontier Park. The KAZA park is the largest terrestrial transfrontier conservation area in the world incorporating protected and communal land in Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The park has received enormous donor funds from foreign governments and donor organisations.

The prospecting area in Namibia and Botswana borders three National Parks; the Okavango River and the Panhandle supplies water to the unique OKAVANGO DELTA, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The prospecting area also overlaps with several community conservancies and community forests and another UNESCO World Heritage Site, Tsodilo Hills, revered amongst the First Nations San community who live nearby in one of their last refuges.

What we have heard from the Namibian government, Recon Africa and the EIA practitioner is that these oil and gas explorations will bring social development, job and opportunities to the country. Experiences from elsewhere in the world paint a different picture. Particularly worrisome is that RECON AFRICA claims it owns 90% while the Namibian Oil Corporation NAMCOR owns the remaining 10%. On the Botswana side, Recon Africa owns 100% of the mining license. We thought the days of natural resource extraction by foreign powers were over when our beautiful country became independent in 1990. This resource distribution smacks of neo-colonialism.

History shows us that oil and gas companies are driven by economic incentives with little care about the long-term impacts or how they undermine the climate and human development goals. What is particularly concerning to us is that the marketing material of Recon Africa makes implicit reference to fracking – e.g. “unconventional play”, “unconventional methods”, etc. These are industry codes for fracking. And while the EIA makes no mention of fracking, key players in the management team and board of Recon Africa are linked to fracking in the US and beyond.

It is absolutely shocking how little the Namibian public knows about this huge project and the impacts it will have. We have spoken and consulted interested and affected parties across Kavango East and West including those living near the drill sites. None of them including resident San peoples had been consulted.

We are deeply concerned about the anticipated and historically documented impacts of oil and gas explorations in environmentally sensitive ecosystems:

- depletion and pollution of restricted water resources (surface and aquifer)
- drilling onshore requires clearing the area of vegetation thus causing deforestation and desertification
- rising noise level rises from drilling (and potentially fracking), which impact people and wildlife
- poaching may increase
- air pollution which leads to health issues
- seismic activities including earthquakes may persist long after drilling

The extensive negative and long-term impacts to the environment and indigenous communities, tourism industry, and to Namibia's good international reputation outweigh by far the benefits. Where there is oil, there is unrest! Keep the oil in the ground.

To the Namibian Government: We would appreciate a public response that clearly lays out how the government will protect our environment, people, wildlife, water resources, archaeological sites, farms and protected areas.

Ignoring us would speak for itself! #frackrot

Yours faithfully,

Members of Frack Free Namibia
SavetheOkavangoDelta