



global witness

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UN meeting on Sudan a missed opportunity to address critical issue of oil revenue transparency

Global Witness chastised participants of today's high-level meeting on Sudan, held on the sidelines of the UN summit in New York, for failing to adequately address the important issue of oil revenue sharing in spite of the fact that it is critical to maintaining the peace.

In a communiqué issued after the meeting, the participants, who included U.S. President Barack Obama, former President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki, and Managing Director of the World Bank Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, made no more than a passing reference to resolving "critical post-referenda arrangements – including [...] natural resources."

There were very few references to oil in the various speeches made at the meeting today and no direct mention in the communiqué, even though an agreement to share revenues between the north and south was a fundamental building block of the 2005 peace agreement, which bought an end to the 22-year civil war. Since then, mistrust between the two sides over how much oil is being produced, and whether the south is getting its fair share, has threatened to disrupt the fragile peace.

Dana Wilkins: "While we welcome the high level attention being paid to the situation in Sudan, we're disappointed that the opportunity for world leaders to speak with one voice on the critical issue of oil revenue transparency seems to have been missed. Oil was critical to achieving Sudanese peace and could easily be its undoing."

In September 2009, Global Witness revealed significant discrepancies between the oil revenue figures reported by the Sudanese government in Khartoum, and those published by the main oil company operating in Sudan, the Chinese CNPC. Similar discrepancies were noted 6 months later.

At a specially convened seminar in Khartoum in August 2010, Sudan's new petroleum minister, Lual Deng, pledged to increase transparency in the industry, including by publishing production and revenue figures and commissioning an audit. However, the new figures have yet to be published.

"A lack of transparency and information on oil revenue has fuelled mistrust between the north and the south since the peace deal was signed. With a referendum on southern independence due to take place in January, it is imperative that arrangements for sharing the oil wealth are made soon. Otherwise, the way will be paved for an almost inevitable return to conflict," said Wilkins.

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