

To  
Mr. Pierre Benichou, chairman of Geoex Ltd  
Mr. Tom Wolden, CEO of Multiclient Geophysical ASA

Brussels  
20 July 2018

**Re. Geoex Ltd's seismic study in the waters of occupied Western Sahara**

Dear Sirs

Western Sahara Resource Watch is writing to you in relation to Geoex Ltd's participation in the oil exploration along the coast of Western Sahara, as is evident from the map published on Geoex's website. The map indicates that Geoex carried out 2D survey work in 2017 offshore Western Sahara, all along the coast of the territory.

A press release from Rosgeo 26 March 2018 furthermore suggests that Geoex has engaged in 3D studies in 2018. <http://smng.com/press-center/news-and-media/213>

Finally, we notice that Geoex Ltd and its Norwegian subsidiary Multiclient Geophysical are behind recent advertisements in international business media for sales of seismic data from this exploration, and that this is to begin in Q32018.

We are confident that it is not in your company's interest to be associated with the conflict in Western Sahara and its resulting human suffering. As such, we urge Geoex and Multiclient Geophysical to immediately terminate its participation in oil exploration in Western Sahara and to refrain from selling the obtained data.

As you probably know, Western Sahara is a Non-Self-Governing Territory subject to a decolonization process under UN auspices. In 2002, a UN Legal Opinion issued at the request of the Security Council clarified that oil exploration and exploitation in Western Sahara can only be considered lawful if undertaken in accordance with the wishes and the interests of the people of the territory. The Saharawi people, and their political representation the Frente Polisario, have time and again spoken out against the oil industry in their occupied homeland.

In recent years, the Court of Justice of the European Union has clarified that Western Sahara is a territory that is distinct and separate from any country in the world, including Morocco. This ruling (C 140/16-P of 21 December 2016) comes with repercussions for European companies: Polisario has already initiated legal proceedings against companies in national courts in France and Spain, and is threatening further legal action.

It should be noted that Multiclient Geophysical also clearly acts against what is today the mainstream ethics in the community of seismic services companies in Norway. Other firms in the same sector in Norway, as Fugro-Geoteam, PGS, Spectrum, SeaBird Exploration and TGS-NOPEC have all stated they do not wish to engage in similar operations in Western Sahara.

Geoex has no right to acquire or sell data of the seafloor of Western Sahara in partnership with the Moroccan government. Contributing to Morocco's oil exploration in Western Sahara will directly undermine the rights of the Saharawis and the UN peace process. We call you to follow the example of TGS-NOPEC and the other seismic study companies that have regretted their involvement in such operations. As former executive in TGS-NOPEC, Mr. Benichou, you should be well aware of how this is considered to be in breach of basic corporate responsibility standards.

We request Multiclient Geophysical and Geoex not to sell the seismic data that it has acquired in occupied waters, but to hand them over to the people of Western Sahara.

It should be noted also that Multiclient is operating in disrespect of the advice of the Norwegian government, which urges Norwegian companies not to be engaged in commercial activities in Western Sahara due to considerations of international law.

We have finally one question:

What has been done to obtain the consent of the representatives of the Saharawi people in relation to these operations?

We look forward to hearing from you,

Best regards,

Sara Eyckmans  
Coordinator  
Western Sahara Resource Watch  
[coordinator@wsrw.org](mailto:coordinator@wsrw.org)

A copy of this letter is sent to:

- UN Special Representative for Western Sahara and Head of UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, Mr Colin Stewart
- Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Western Sahara, Mr Horst Köhler
- China National Petroleum Company
- Rosgeo