

Mr Lodewijk de Waal National Contact Point NCP Secretariat P.O. Box 20061 2500 EB The Haque

Postbus 20061 2500 EB The Hague The Netherlands www.government.nl

Contact DGBEB-IMH-SECR T +31 (0)70 348 5264

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Re Final Statement by the Netherlands' National Contact Point (NCP)

Dear mr. de Wash,

I have taken note of the Final Statement by the Netherlands' National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on the specific instance of an alleged breach of the Guidelines by Royal Dutch Shell ('Shell in the Niger Delta II') reported by Amnesty International and Friends of the Earth International.

While I understand the notifiers' reasons for withdrawing their notification, I do regret that the various parties did not take the opportunity to engage in a dialogue that could have led to a better understanding of the issues raised in the notification, or even an agreement. I strongly believe that dialogue and multistakeholder approaches are the only way to improve social and environmental conditions.

Oil has contaminated a large area of Nigeria, and the local population has suffered greatly from this pollution. The only way to resolve these problems is through dialogue and joint action by all the parties involved. In his capacity as special envoy, the former Dutch ambassador to Nigeria Bert Ronhaar has succeeded in bringing all the parties involved to the negotiating table. Mr Ronhaar has set talks in motion between the local Bodo community, the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), environmental NGOs and Nigerian authorities in the region. These talks are aimed at implementing the UN Environment Programme's recommendations for moving towards a solution. I am pleased to hear that five plenary mediation sessions have already taken place.

Like the NCP and the other parties, I am well aware that the situation in Ogoniland is complex and demands the attention of everyone involved. The NCP sees opportunities for a genuine dialogue in the evolving positions of Royal Dutch Shell and SPDC and in the involvement of other NGOs. I welcome the NCP's efforts to highlight opportunities for dialogue between the stakeholders. I hope all parties will seriously consider taking these opportunities for dialogue and making a concerted effort to improve the situation in Ogoniland. The NCP's offer to play a facilitating role if the parties so desire, could support this joint goal.

I would like to reiterate that the government expects all Dutch enterprises to act in accordance with the OECD Guidelines, irrespective of where they may operate. I trust that the NCP's statement and forward-looking recommendations will offer



the parties opportunities for future dialogue that will strengthen the authority and observance of the OECD Guidelines.

Yours sincerely,

Lilianne Ploumer

Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands