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Zelfbeschikking West-Sahara te Leiden

To to the CEO of Fortis Bank
Mr. Anton van Rossum
and the Board of Directors
Archimedeslaan 6
3584 BA UTRECHT

Rotterdam, 17 July 2004

Dear sirs,

We hereby bring to your attention the activities carried out by one of the companies in your portfolio, and to make suggestions as to the immediate action that we recommend you take. The reputation as an ethical investor might be at stake.

A subsidiary of FUGRO NV (Leidschendam) called Svitzer (UK) has carried out a seabed mapping and detailed seismic survey in the coastal waters of Western Sahara, in collaboration with the US based company Kerr-McGee. The Netherlands Foundation for self-determination in Western Sahara is closely following, together with many other campaign groups on Western Sahara around the world, economic activities in Western Sahara. We would like to point out that any activity concerning the natural resources of this territory is a hazardous enterprise. Indeed, activities in Western Sahara could be just as harmful for Fugro as they proved for the Norwegian seismic survey company TGS-NOPEC in 2003. TGS-NOPEC stated that they would not have entered the territory had they known the consequences. As a major investor in Fugro, it is not only in the interest of Fortis Bank to be aware of this, but it is also your responsibility to ensure that the company hears and understands your opinion on this serious issue.

As you may be aware of, Western Sahara - the former Spanish Sahara - is considered by the UN as a non-self-governing territory (to be decolonized). It has been invaded in 1975 by Morocco and since then illegally occupied by Morocco. Morocco has no sovereignty whatsoever with regard to Western Sahara, and the people of Western Sahara have the inalienable right of self-determination. By carrying out the survey, Fugro can therefore be seen as being complicit to an illegal occupation.

For decades, the United Nations has been trying to ensure that the right of self-determination for the Sahrawi people is realised through the organization of a free and fair referendum. Only very recently, at the end of April 2004, the Security Council discussed again the latest peace plan for Western Sahara (including a referendum) that it had unanimously adopted in July 2003. As before, Morocco boycotts and in fact rejects the principle self-determination, to the great dissatisfaction of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The fact that Fugro accepted and proceeded to carry out this survey in the occupied territory of Western Sahara sends the wrong message as it adds legitimacy to Morocco's illegal actions and is politically very inappropriate.

Fugro has previously carried out seismic surveys offshore the occupied territory from June to September 2002. The exploration has been repeated this year, despite the fact that oil exploration

would be in violation to international law according to the UN. The rejection of the UN peace plan by Morocco must be seen in relation to its prospects for oil in the territory. Fugro also started new seismic surveys despite the fact that the company last year was threatened with law-suit last year should they continue their actions.

Furthermore, the activities of Fugro in this territory are unethical and contradictory to the spirit and practices of socially responsible entrepreneurship. Unethical because for the Sahrawi population in occupied Western Sahara, Moroccan occupation means constant and systematic repression and for the Sahrawi refugees in exile it means prolonged suffering and separation from their families who are caught in Moroccan controlled territory. The economic activities in the territory by foreign companies serve to corroborate their claim to sovereignty (which is totally false) and the profits for the Moroccan state only serve to strengthen their illegal occupation forces.

We strongly recommend you to enter into dialogue with Fugro and voice your concern about this unethical and controversial activity. If Fugro wishes to proceed with their activities in Western Sahara they must enter into dialogue with the Polisario Front - the legitimate representative of the people of Western Sahara – recognised as such at the highest level, including the Security Council of the United Nations.

Last year TGS-Nopec, carried out precisely the same kind of activities in the very same area. 25 of their shareholders sold their shares as a consequence, among them the ethical fund administrator Banco, an investor in the ABN-AMRO group. The company's two biggest shareholders, Storebrand Insurance and The Norwegian government, put pressure on TGS-Nopec to change its policy. The two investors had a total stock value of approximately 20 million euros. It was a result of the investors' critics or even divestments, that TGS-Nopec finally regretted their contract, and publicly renounced any more activities in the occupied territory of Western Sahara. Today, TGS-Nopec has established a Code of Conduct to ensure that they do not make the same mistake again.

On behalf of the international campaign for the protection of natural resources of Western Sahara, I suggests that you meet with our Foundation and some of the members of the international campaign group. We will be pleased to inform you of the juridical, political and human right issues that play a role in the Western Sahara issue.

I will contact you soon to discuss the option of a meeting.

Yours truly,

Ms Liesbeth den Haan, president

Enclosed:

1. Letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
2. Letter sent today to Fugro's President & Chief Executive Officer, Mr G-J. Kramer

On behalf of the international coalition for the protection of the natural resources in Western Sahara:

Laura Smith
Western Sahara Campaign - UK, coordinator

John Gurr
Western Sahara Campaign - Cymru (Wales), secretary

Erik Hagen
Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara, president

Pierre Galand, Sénateur (Belgium)
Comité belge de Soutien au Peuple Sahraoui, president
Coordination européenne de Soutien au Peuple Sahraoui, president

P. Pinto Leite,
International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (Leiden), secretary

Felipe Briones,
International Association of Jurists for Western Sahara, president

Marie-Claire Martinoli
Association de soutien à un référendum libre et régulier au Sahara occidental (Suisse)

José Manuel Taboada Valdés
La Coordinadora Estatal de Asociaciones de Amistad y Solidaridad con el
Pueblo Saharaui de España (CEAS-SAHARA), president

Philippe Riché
L'Association des Amis de la R.A.S.D. (Paris), member of the Council

António Baptista da Silva
Associação de Cooperação e Amizade com o Povo Saharaui (Lisbon), coordinator

Maria Augusta Ribeiro
Grupo de Braga pelo Saara Ocidental (Braga, Portugal), coordinator

Francisco Matias Garcia Garcia
Asociación de Amigos del Pueblo Saharaui de Molina de Segura, president

Asociación de Amigas y Amigos de la R.A.S.D.-S.E.A.D.en Lagunen Elkartea (Vitoria-
Gasteiz, Spain)

Berthier Perregaux
Comité Suisse de soutien au peuple Sahraoui, president

Giordano Molinazzi
L'associazione El Ouali (Bologna)

Bahia M.H. Awah
Radio Guiniguada 105,9 FM Canarias, journalist

Juan Saez
Asociación de amigos del Pueblo Saharaui de Albacete (Spain)

Jambrina Arriola
Asociacion de Amigos del Pueblo Saharaui AMAL of Santurtzi (Bizkaia, Spain)

Rafael Zulaika Ruiz
Asociación de Amigos/os de la RASD - Gipuzkoa en Donostia (San Sebastián, Spain),
member of the permanent committee

Beatriz Olagüe

Asociación Navarra Amigos del Sahara, spokeswoman

Miguel Ardid Gumiel

Colectivo de poesia salvaje and Colectivo de Barrio del Carmen Valencia)

Asociación Navarra de Amigos y Amigas de la RASD (ANARASD)

Lesley Osborne,

Australia Western Sahara Association (AWSA), secretary

Annelie Koschella

Medico International e.V. (Frankfurt), project Coordinator for Western Sahara

Carlos Ruiz Miguel,

Editor of Sahara Info (Spain)

Professor of Constitutional Law, University of Santiago de Compostela

J.F. Patiño

Asociación "Pinto con el Sahara" (Spain)

Malainin Lakhel,

Sahara Press Service (Tindouf), editor english pages