



The effectiveness of the Petroleum Act (2012) and international practice in protecting the environment in Ruweng administrative area- South Sudan

By

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Introduction

The Environment and crude oil, as well as gas extraction, are closely related. The environment has been one single element that has suffered the effects of such activities and accordingly, it has attracted a bevy of international and national efforts and actions to reverse the damage already done and to prevent further damage. This study focused on assessing the effectiveness of the Petroleum Act of 2012 and international practice in protecting the environment in Ruweng Administrative Area of South Sudan. It reviewed how oil and gas extraction policies made under the Act have enhanced environmental protection in South Sudan.

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Study objectives

1. to examine the nature of the environmental degradation by oil and gas extraction in Ruweng Administrative Area,
2. to assess how the Petroleum Act of 2012 and international practice addresses the environmental degradation in Ruweng Administrative Area,
3. to establish the challenges encountered in the protection of the environment vis-a-vis oil and gas extraction in Ruweng Administrative Area.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Out of a study population of 168,463 (South Sudan statistics bureau), a sample size of 399 was taken. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used in selecting respondents. Data were collected using interviews, questionnaires, and documentary review methods.

Key findings

The study found that respondents were aware of the causes of environmental degradation in Ruweng Administrative Area. The respondents noted lost livelihood of residents at 14.2% due to ecological destabilization through contamination of land and water




bodies, thus leading to low agricultural production and reduction in fishing and farming activities caused land and water pollution.

The study found that oil extraction companies did not fully comply with both international environmental laws and international practices and South Sudan procedures and regulations. Companies did not commit to health and safety procedures in protecting the environment from pollution.

The study further found that there was a perception having to do with lack of political will to fully enforce oil and gas policies, implement and monitor oil management policy, enforce environmental management policies, and regulate exploration activities and oil reconnaissance activities. This led to a lack of safety inspection and audit of oil and gas activities. The study found that government and local leaders did not effectively sensitize the community or making the people aware of the dangers of oil waste in areas of residence.

Key recommendations

The South Sudanese government through the ministry of petroleum and the ministry of the environment should build the capacity of officers and enlisted personnel in the area of oil and gas extraction and provide them with the means of dealing with emerging environmental challenges. This will enhance monitoring and implementation of environmental laws through



inspections, reconnaissance, decommissioning, assessment, and auditing of activities to ensure compliance. This will assist with curbing and taking out all illegal activities related to environmental degradation under oil and gas extractions.

There should be a political commitment that should be reflected in the execution of environmental legislation, the follow-up of environmental management practices of oil companies is the responsibility of the government. There also needs to be the involvement and participation of, and cooperation from local communities, CSOs, mass media, NGOs, educational institutions, researchers can all contribute to create and raise environmental awareness towards the development of sustainable environmental management of oil for the benefit of all stakeholders including the government, oil companies, and societies.

The South Sudanese government through the ministry of petroleum and the ministry of the environment should ensure that all companies exploring and extracting oil and gas adhere to international environmental laws and standards, international practices, international humanitarian and human rights law, the Petroleum Act of 2012 including principles of distinction and proportionality. All oil companies and agencies should be registered by line ministries. The Government of South Sudan should equitably distribute oil and gas proceeds by providing basic needs like health, education, roads, etc in a balanced and equitable manner to the people of South Sudan. The government should also curb corruption and



ensure that all revenues from oil and gas are deposited into the national treasury.

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