

GNPC to begin works on Volta Basin

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The Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) is to commence seismic activities on the Voltaian Basin in the Northern Region to determine its hydrocarbon potential.

This is expected to be done after the Corporation has completed its assessment and feasibility studies to determine the quantity and quality of hydrocarbon in the area.

The Voltaian Basin is an about 104,000 kilometres square onshore oil basin, spread across the country, 52 percent of which is located in the Northern Region.

This came to light when the GNPC held a stakeholders forum in Tamale to seek the views of affected communities.

The consultation forum forms part of its Environmental Impact Assessment process required by the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure the views of the affected communities are heard before execution of the project to avoid any future havoc and conflict.

The corporation has already held stakeholders' consultative forums in 12 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) such as Tamale, Yendi, Nanumba North and South, West and East Mamprusi, Mion, East Gonja, Savelugu/Nanton, Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo and Mamprugu-Moaduri with Central Gonja and Karaga to benefit from the forum.

Speaking at the forum, Mr. Seth Foli -- Environmental Engineer of the Voltaian Basin Project, said the project cannot be executed without notice to the communities though it has been approved by the appropriate authorities.

He said the project will affect vegetation in the communities, such as farming activities; creation of noise and dust will also affect the health status of the people, as well as disturbance of wildlife, archaeological, cultural and religious interests.

According to the engineer, measures will be put in place to ensure that the affected victims are well-compensated in order not to take their source of livelihoods from them, but rather continue life somewhere else.

He assured the views of the public will be addressed for peaceful cooperation when the exercise starts, with the majority of youth in the area benefitting from it.

Though the participants welcomed the initiative, which will go a long way to enhance the economic status of rural areas, they urged the GNPC to ensure fulfilling its promise and complying with rules and regulations of the EPA.

They also advised the GNPC to ensure the project does not affect their water-bodies -- and even where it does, it should endeavour to ensure the people have potable water to drink.

"We will be grateful if they can be free and fair in the course of paying the compensation to avoid any chaos," they said.

They called on the GNPC to collaborate with the traditional leaders to allocate a better place for some of the farmers to continue their farming activities and earn a living.

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