

Production resumes at Bonga and EA

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Clean up of the 20 December leak from the Bonga offshore oil field has now been completed successfully. Production resumed at Bonga on January 1 2012, following reinforcement of asset integrity and safety programmes.

Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCo) had shut down production from the field after a leak occurred on one of the three export loading lines as oil was being transferred from the floating production storage and offloading (FPSO) vessel to a loading tanker.

Shell Nigeria Country Chair, Mutiu Sunmonu, said "While investigation into the cause of the leak continues, we have isolated the faulty line, which was the only one of its type in the Bonga field, and reinforced our asset integrity and safety programme. This, together with additional inspection testing and monitoring, is what gives us the confidence that it is safe to restart.

"Furthermore, satellite and aerial imagery has confirmed that the Bonga oil leak could not have reached coastlines in the eastern Niger Delta, as some media articles have suggested. We were disappointed to see images of a third party spill, which appeared to be from a vessel, in the middle of the area that we had previously cleaned up. Oil from the Bonga leak had largely dispersed by Sunday, December 25, 2011 due to the integrated efforts of SNEPCo, the Nigerian government and our industry partners in the application of dispersants, and natural processes of dispersal and evaporation.

"We are taking samples of the third party spill as part of the joint investigation in order to establish beyond doubt that this is not Bonga oil on the beach. It will be good if all parties would wait for the outcome of the investigation. However, as any responsible corporate citizen would do, we are working closely with communities towards clean-up of the oil on some parts of the Western Niger Delta coastline, irrespective of its source."

In a related development, The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd (SPDC) resumed production at its shallow offshore EA Field on 27th December last year, on completion of the scheduled statutory inspection, engineering and maintenance works on the FPSO vessel, Sea Eagle.

The Sea Eagle was shut in on November 9, 2011 for the exercise, which included repairs to the Soft Yoke Mooring Platform and Relief Valve Recertification.

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