

**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission: Hearing on World Bank Lending and Human Rights**

April 9, 2014

*Oral Testimony of Delphine Djiraibe, Human Rights Attorney, Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights*

Good afternoon, the Honorable Members of Congress, ladies and gentleman, I thank you very much for the opportunity to be here and to talk about WBG lending and human rights. I am a human rights lawyer from the central African country of Chad and have witnessed first hand the serious human right violations which occur in the context of the WBG financed Chad Cameroon project.

This mega project with a total cost of over US\$ 7 billion in one of Africa's most impoverished regions was meant to be "transformational".

Yet, even a World Bank internal evaluation for the project found that it had not contributed to poverty reduction, but that it had worsened the governance of Chad, which means more corruption and more human rights violations in the country.

People in the oil-producing region have been left without land for their livelihood; they have no more access to fresh water and no freedom of movement because the area is now like under military occupation.

And people like myself who speak out about human rights are in constant danger; there is no respect for civil and political rights in my country. Journalists and members of parliament are frequently arrested and kept in jail without due process.

On behalf of the German non-governmental-organization URGEWALD and the PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTER of Chad, which I am the director of, I would like to express our deep concern about the WBG's inability to learn lessons from past project failures.

We have analyzed the key elements of the WBG new corporate strategy.

This strategy which was approved in October 2013 consists of the same elements that were already present in the Chad/ Cameroun project.

For example:

Already in the Chad-Cameroon project IFC, IBRD and IDA worked together.

Already here, the WBG acted as a catalyst for massive private sector investment and the project was portrayed as a model public private partnership.

The new World Bank strategy wants the WBG to take on higher risk projects;

the risks of the Chad Cameroon project were extremely high but all of the risk was put on the poor and defenseless population while massive oil revenues have flown to the oil consortium and the ruling elite and military. There was no risk to the World Bank since its loans and credit have been repaid in full via an off-shore account based in London.

We hope that the US Congress will put pressure on the World Bank Group to learn lessons from the fiasco of the Chad Cameroon project and not keep repeating the same mistakes that lead to serious human rights violations and to environmental degradation.

Thank you and may God bless you all.

Delphine Djiraibe, Director, Public Interest Law Center, Chad