

Prelude to a conflict that seems to have no end (From page 5)

TECSBACO Refutes Fraudulent Claims

TECSBACO INTERNATIONAL COMPANY has refuted claims published in some of Sierra Leone's national newspapers that it is not legally registered to operate in the country. To prove TECSBACO'S legality to operate in Sierra Leone, the company has taken the rare and bold step to release state documents pertaining to the lease it signed with the government of Sierra Leone in February 2005. This newspaper, during the course of their investigations in Freetown interviewed the Managing Director of TECSBACO Mr Adul Bah. His version relating to the lease transfer will be published in full in our next issue. Mr Bah told The Globe that though he is not prepared to engage in any press war, he believes it is necessary to clear the air on certain important matters relating to their status and that of London Mining Plc.

PRESS STATEMENT ON THE LEGALITY OF THE TECSBACO MINING LEASE

Tecsbaco International Incorporated Company Limited has thought it to fit to make certain clarifications on allegations made on the legality of the mining lease issued to it by the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources (Lease No ML2/05 transferred to the London mining as acknowledged in the Ministry of Mines memorandum MD, T1/2001 of 28 August 2008) seen in many media publications in recent times. Tecsbaco would want to register that all such allegations are untrue and would therefore would want to make it very clear that owing to the legality of its licence, credibility and investment at stake, it is prepared to seek legal redress against whoever is found wanting in this respect under the Sierra Leonean and international laws-our solicitors in Belgium, England and Sierra Leone have already been contacted.

Tecsbaco would like to in no uncertain terms establish for the attention of all stake holders and the general public that contrary to the series of unchecked and unconfirmed newspaper reports, the lease it obtained from the government of Sierra Leone to mine at the Marampa for a period of 25 years (as evident in mines Ministry Memorandum M.DT1/2000 dated 25 February 2005) went through all legal ramifications and was stamped, sealed and delivered to Tecsbaco. by the then Minister of Mines Alhaji Mohamed Swarray-Deen witnesses and counter signed by the then permanent secretary Mustapha Rogers on the 21st of February 2005. This fact is supported by all the requisite correspondence and memoranda communicated between the Ministry of Mines, Tecsbaco, Geological Surveys and the Registrar General.

As a matter of great importance too, is the fact that newspaper publications and some government officials have continually contested the legality of the Tecsbaco Lease on the grounds that the mapped out coordinated as continued in the Tecsbaco lease are not genuine and that they don't carry government seal and stamp, or form part of the lease. It must in this vein be noted that not only that such allegation is misleading to the general public but that it is also meant to discredit the dispensations of government on issues of legal and business implications.

Tecsbaco would therefore want to make it very clear that there is no way a coordinate could be sealed and stamped separately from the bulk Lease document; nor it is that the coordinate map was prepared by Tecsbaco. What could have been the right thing to do was that the Department of Geological surveys- the technical department on such issues at the ministry of Mines should have advised against any anomaly during the drafting and issuance of the lease and not after more than three years of the issuance and subsequent transfer of the Lease Agreement from Tecsbaco to London Mining.

This fact is attested to by the Ministry's memorandum. M.D.T1/2000 addressed to the Provincial Secretary North; copy of the which has sent to Tecsbaco dated 2nd November 2005. Paragraph II of the said document says that "the enclosed is a copy of the map of the area that is the subject of the licence and the exclusivity of the licence therefore precludes all other exploratory and/or mining activities in the area during the term of the licence". If this is the case thus, it is but very appalling to note that despite the fact that some of the people making such unwarranted allegation are privy to such document, (copies of which could be found at the ministry and the Registrar General's office) they still could brave it to feed the public with what could only be termed as gross misinformation and dishonesty.

For the Journalists who betray the expected standard of informed and objective reportage in which they have never sought to investigate and cross check the issues involved (from the side of Tecsbaco International), it must be noted that Tecsbaco has in possession all the authentic and legal documents attesting to the legality of its lease licence obtained in February 2005 and transferred to London Mining Company as indicated in M.D.T1/2001; August 2005 of the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources memo addressed to London Mining PLC.

It should be seen that whatever has been going on in the press attacking the legality of the Tecsbaco lease could be nothing less than deceptive journalism and a ploy to discredit the more than three year existence of a legal, credible, sealed and paid up document; signed by the assigned officials of government in the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources, Department of Geological Survey and the Office of the Registrar General. This also hinges on the long years of credibility that Tecsbaco International Incorporated Company has attained; which nobody has the right to put to the shred because he or she does not want to take time to learn the truth.

While Tecsbaco would want to acknowledge that the media has the right to inform the public on matters of national and economic importance, it also wants to reiterate here that the media must do so responsibly and for the very benefit of the public. In this respect, Tecsbaco in a bid to make things clear for the public, enclose relevant documents attesting to the authenticity and legality of the lease it obtained from government in February 2005.

SEE NEXT ISSUE FOR THE START OF A DETAILED REPORT OF OUR FINDINGS FROM SIERRA LEONE