



LEGAL NEWS

Republic of the Congo

November 2017 through January 2018

OIL & GAS

CONGOLESE NOC HAS NEW BY-LAWS

Prompted by the Hydrocarbons Code of October 2016, the statutory reform under way in the hydrocarbons industry has now reached the Congolese national oil company (Société Nationale des Pétroles du Congo, or SNPC). Although the most significant rights, duties and responsibilities of the SNPC were left largely untouched, Decree No. 2017-240, of 9 November 2017, reorganized its internal bodies and revised their respective powers.

EXISTING LICENSES EXTENDED AND RENEWED, AND NEW PRODUCTION LICENSES GRANT

In December 2017, the Ministry of Hydrocarbons granted five (5) production licenses to SNPC, the Congolese national oil company. These production licenses stem from the exploration licenses relating to two offshore blocks, Marine XI and Marine XII. Other onshore and offshore blocks also saw their respective production and exploration licenses extended or renewed late last year.

GENERAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

FURTHER REGULATIONS ON SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES

A new statute was added to the legal framework applicable to the Special Economic Zones (“SEZs”), which is being put in place since June 2017: Decree No. 2017-459, of 4 December 2017, which instituted the SEZs National Steering Committee. Amongst other responsibilities, the Steering Committee is charged with preparing the strategical guidelines for the activity and specialization of the SEZs, as well with approving of the contents of the related development and operation agreements.

AGRICULTURAL REFORM EXPECTED

The setting up of an ad hoc Committee for the preparation of the regional agricultural transformation project for East and Center Africa is a clear indication that a reform of the agricultural sector is to be expected in the near future. According to Order No. 7132, of 26 October 2017, issued by Ministry of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, the ad hoc Committee will comprise representatives of this Ministry and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Aquaculture. This Order also suggests that this could come to be a World Bank-sponsored project.

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