PRESS RELEASE
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LUKOIL, VANCO, GNPC AND PETROCHI BOOST DRILLING ON WESTERN AFRICA SHELF

LUKOIL and Vanco, together with the state-owned partners Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) and PETROCHI, have developed a program of extensive exploration and appraisal drilling at two licensed areas on the continental slope of Western Africa's Gulf of Guinea: the Cape Three Point Deep Water (CTPDW – the waters of the Republic of Ghana) and CI-401 (the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire).

The company Ocean Rig, a subsidiary of Dryships Inc., has been appointed the drilling contractor for two exploratory wells at the new structures of CTPDW and two appraisal wells at the Dzata productive structure which has proved oil and gas occurrence. Then another exploratory well is to be drilled at the new structure of the CI-401 block. The two contracts, already in place, also provide for another, optional, well to be drilled, with the possibility of extending the contract for another year.

The drilling at the CTPDW is scheduled for April and May of 2011 and at CI-401 block for the first quarter of 2012. All wells will be drilled at locations with a sea depth of about 1,900 meters. The work will be conducted from a dynamically positioned drilling vessel of the sixth generation capable of operating at sea depths reaching 3,000 meters. The vessel will soon be launched from the Samsung shipyard in the Republic of Korea.

The CTPDW and CI-401 projects have a similar ownership structure: 56.66% is owned by LUKOIL, 28.34% by Vanco and 15% by state-run companies (GNPC and PETROCI, accordingly). Seismic surveys have been conducted at both of the blocks and one exploratory well has been drilled at each location. A major oil and gas field has been discovered at the CTPDW (the Dzata structure) at a depth of about 4,500 meters.

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