

Dear Mr van Beurden,

Thank you for being so kind to me at Shell's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in The Hague. You never once interrupted me when I spoke about the predicament of over 400,000 people living on top of the Groningen Field in the northeastern part of the Netherlands. I'm sorry for interrupting you a few times, though in my defence, I only did this because you didn't answer my questions, and twisted some of the facts.

You see, apart from being an "emotional and concerned mother from Groningen" (headlines in Dutch media), telling the CEO of Shell that his young daughters are lucky, because they get to live in a house that is not at risk of collapsing because of the actions of the company their father runs, I'm also a writer who is very keen on getting the facts straight. This is why I came to talk to you at the AGM.

Groningen is broken

I've informed you and your shareholders that Groningen is broken, because of the subsidence and quakes induced by NAM (50% Shell, 50% Exxon). For decades, NAM has been extracting gas from the Groningen Field, which is one of the largest natural gas fields in the world. Some of the oldest churches in northern Europe are currently shored up with scaffolding. They've stood there for centuries, virtually unchanged, but now the walls are cracked, the plaster is falling from the ancient ceilings. The same goes for tens of thousands of other buildings in this area. People have been evicted from their unsafe homes, several houses have been demolished, and more will be soon.

NAM indicates production will be dramatically reduced after 2020. On December 19th 2014, in an article in Journal of Geophysical Research, scientists working with Shell and NAM concluded we're to expect more severe quakes, with higher ground accelerations. Regional Safety Officers have said these quakes are similar to destructive quakes in Italy, Greece and Turkey. The difference is that the quakes in these countries are natural, and the quakes in Groningen are Shell-made. (Scientists working with Royal Dutch Meteorological Institute, TNO, State Supervision of the Mines AND NAM have acknowledged the relation between quakes and gas extraction in Groningen.)

In order to withstand these severe quakes, 152.000 homes and 18.000 other buildings need to be reinforced, according to an international study ordered by the province of Groningen. This will take at least 30 years, and will cost 30 billion Euros. Sadly, reinforcement ONLY serves to enable us to exit our homes safely after a severe quake – it doesn't prevent further damage.

All in all, I'm deeply offended by your calling this dramatic situation a **"nuisance caused by earthquakes due to gas production"** in your speech at the AGM.

NAM, Shell and liability

Recently, NAM announced that it is cutting costs. You've explained this is purely efficiency-focused, due to the fact that the gas price is low. You also told me that Shell is in no way considering divesting its 50% share in NAM. That answers one of my questions about liability. Here are three more:

* Is there an Article 403 statement (liability declaration) between Shell and its subsidiary NAM?

* Will Shell remain responsible for the risks and consequences of gas extraction, gas storage and waste products, even after all of the gas has been extracted and NAM has exited Groningen?

* Can NAM hand over the concession to another party without this having consequences for either Shell or Exxon? If so, is there a chance that NAM will hand over the concession to another mining company within the next two years?

I've also asked you about the Guarantee Fund for Mining Damage, which in part is funded by contributions made by NAM / Shell.

Should NAM go bankrupt because of the declining revenues combined with the staggering costs for repairing, reinforcing and rebuilding the province of Groningen, and should neither Shell nor Exxon assume its legal responsibilities to pay for our damages, under Dutch law we have no other option than to file a claim with this fund.

You didn't have an answer ready at the AGM, so I'll ask you again today:

* How much money is in the Guarantee Fund for Mining Damage? Is this enough to cover the cost to repair, reinforce and rebuild the province of Groningen?

Unfit sea dike, heavy chemical industry and natural gas condensate

When you told the audience that the Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs has already taken precautionary measures, together with State Supervision of the Mines, to mitigate the effects of gas extraction, I simply had to interrupt to correct you. In 2013, State Supervision of the Mines has stated that production should be cut back to 12 BCM per year to prevent severe quakes from occurring. As you mentioned, NAM is allowed to produce 16.5 BCM in the first half of this year alone, and God knows how many BCM in the second half of this year – vastly more than the stated safe limit.

In short: **we're not safe.**

This is why I'd like to draw extra attention to the indirect safety risks I mentioned at the AGM.

I've told you that I live close to the sea dike, where NAM's largest production facility has extracted over 4 BCM of gas from underneath the dike, and from underneath the Waddenzee, in 2014 alone. The Waddenzee is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world, listed as Unesco World Heritage.

The water board (dike manager) has declared this dike unfit. Groningen, like much of the rest of the Netherlands, is below sea level. Should the dike collapse after a severe quake, both your production facilities and our homes will be flooded. What will such a disastrous flooding in a Dutch province, caused by Royal Dutch Shell, do to your international reputation?

A little further to the East, also close to the sea dike, Chemiepark Delfzijl hosts 15% of the Dutch heavy chemical industry. This is where AkzoNobel produces chlorine. What will happen when a severe quake hits Delfzijl? Are the industrial structures designed to withstand the accompanying ground accelerations? Explosions and release of highly toxic substances could cost thousands of people their lives. What will your shareholders think when an entire Dutch city is wiped off the face of the earth because of the activities of Royal Dutch Shell?

At the AGM I've also spoken about the natural gas condensate which NAM collects in tanks on their site in Delfzijl. On average, all of the natural gas condensate tanks together contain 20,000 cubic metres of this highly flammable, highly toxic and carcinogenic substance.

I have many questions about this site:

* Are all the tanks on site, including those with fire fighting foam, designed to withstand the impact of severe quakes? How does NAM intend to extinguish burning natural gas condensate when there is no fire fighting foam on site because the tanks containing the foam have burst open during a severe quake?

* According to NAM regulations, the fire department determines when to use the fire fighting foam. But firemen are not allowed to enter the site until NAM has deemed it safe. Can safety be determined from a distance? What good will such delaying and confusing precautionary measures do if every second counts?

* Is the site permanently manned? I've heard that it can take 30-60 minutes for personnel to arrive on site at night and on weekends. As the first 15 minutes are crucial for the safety of the people living in the vicinity, I'd like to know how this procedure relates to the rigorous safety measures NAM / Shell claims to have in place.

* The pipelines transporting the natural gas condensate from all over the province to Delfzijl are cleaned and inspected through a standard industry practice called 'pigging'. Can you confirm that this practice does not extend to the many dead-end points, nor to the pipelines on site?

* What additional measures does NAM take to prevent leakage and spillage of the highly toxic and carcinogenic substances benzene, toluene, ethylene and xylene (BTEX) into the ground?

* At a public information session on site, NAM employees disclosed that leaking pieces of condensate pipelines have been discovered near Weiwerd and Geefsweer. These pieces need to be replaced. Why is NAM waiting till 2016 to ask for permits to replace all of the pipelines, scheduling this for 2017?

* The blast wave of an explosion would shatter many windows in the vicinity. What then is the point of the one and only emergency advice regional safety officers offer people living near the site, namely to shut all doors and windows to prevent inhalation of toxic fumes?

* Natural gas condensate is highly flammable. Shutting doors and windows will not prevent the houses and high-rise buildings nearby from going up in flames when the tanks blow up after a severe quake. There will be many victims. People driving their cars on the main road a little further off may sustain serious burns because of heat radiation. Do you consider these to be acceptable risks?

* More than two years ago, the mayor of Delfzijl asked for a risk analysis of Chemiepark Delfzijl. Although the Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs recently stated there is no acute danger, he also mentioned it would take another two years before the detailed studies into these risks are complete. Would you agree that uncertainty about these grave risks, both for Chemiepark Delfzijl and for the natural gas condensate site, requires the shutdown of gas production until the situation is indeed fully understood and made safe?

* Why are NAM employees shrugging their shoulders at the mention of the unfit sea dike, saying "This is not our problem, but the problem of the dike manager"? What does this say about the mentality of your subsidiary?

Should the dike collapse, the tanks containing natural gas condensate may burst. The condensate will float on top of the water like an oil spill. The sea water would be severely contaminated, and the port of Delfzijl could easily catch fire. As you must surely know, cleaning up leaked or spilled natural gas condensate is extremely difficult: because the fluid is highly flammable, no ships or other equipment

with internal combustion engines can be employed in the clean-up, or even moved from the site, due to fire and explosion hazards.

* Would you agree that it is intolerable that NAM / Shell endangers the lives and the living environment of thousands of people in Delfzijl by taking these avoidable risks?

Safety? Show us that you mean it!

I'm happy that the Dutch court has ordered NAM to halt production around Loppersum, where we've seen some of the worst seismic activity. However, over the years production has been scaled up in the eastern part of the Groningen Field. Lately, we've had quite a few quakes near Delfzijl. The quakes seem to be migrating.

* Do you consider this, in light of the risks I have detailed above, a "nuisance" as well?

Mr. van Beurden, at the AGM you said that Shell is focussing first and foremost on the safety of inhabitants and the environment. As one Dutch citizen to another: **show us that you mean every word of it.**

Firstly, I'd like you to answer truthfully and in detail all of the questions I have asked in this document, and will ask in the future.

Secondly, living with the consequences of gas extraction takes its toll. I therefore ask you to compensate us, the people living on top of the Groningen Field, fully for all of our hardships and losses.

Thirdly, many people living on top of the Groningen Field are stuck with damaged and worthless properties. It will take decades to reinforce our homes, if at all possible. Thus, on behalf of all the people who want to move, I kindly request you buy our houses for a price that is by all standards reasonable.

Written on behalf of 400.000 people who are living on top of the Groningen Field, many of whom are living in intolerable conditions due to the actions and inactions of your company and its business partners, and want to leave as soon as possible.

Respectfully yours,



Nicolette Marié
NAM Casualty 21485 (Status: Unresolved)