CNOOC LTD Form 20-F April 29, 2011

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 20-F
(Mark One)
REGISTRATION STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 12(b) OR (g) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
OR
Ý ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2010
OR
TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
For the transition period from to
OR
SHELL COMPANY REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
Date of event requiring this shell company report
Commission File Number 1-14966

CNOOC LIMITED

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

N/A

(Translation of Registrant's name into English)

Hong Kong

(Jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)

65th Floor, Bank of China Tower One Garden Road, Central Hong Kong (Address of principal executive offices)

Yongzhi Jiang 65th Floor, Bank of China Tower One Garden Road, Central Hong Kong Tel +852 2213 2500

Fax +852 2525 9322

(Name, telephone, e-mail and/or facsimile number and address of company contact person)

Securities registered or to be registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act.

Title of each class

Name of each exchange on which

American depositary shares, each representing 100 shares of par value HK\$0.02 per share
Shares of par value HK\$0.02 per share

registered New York Stock Exchange, Inc. New York Stock Exchange, Inc.(1)

Securities registered or to be registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act. None (Title of Class)

Securities for which there is a reporting obligation pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Act. None (Title of Class)

Indicate the number of outstanding shares of each of the issuer's classes of capital or common stock as of the close of the period covered by the annual report.

Shares, par value HK\$0.02 per share

44,669,199,984

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act.

If this report is an annual or transition report, indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Note – Checking the box above will not relieve any registrant required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 from their obligations under those Sections.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the Registrant is required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files).

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, or a non-accelerated filer. See definition of "accelerated filer and large accelerated filer" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Indicate by check mark which basis of accounting the registrant has used to prepare the financial statements included in this filing:

International Financial Reporting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board ý

If "Other" has been checked in response to the previous question, indicate by check mark which financial statement item the Registrant has elected to follow.

If this is an annual report, indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act).

⁽¹⁾ Not for trading, but only in connection with the registration of American depositary shares.

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TERMS AND CONVENTIONS

Definitions

Unless the context otherwise requires, references in this annual report to:

- 1 "CNOOC" are to our controlling shareholder, China National Offshore Oil Corporation, a PRC state-owned enterprise, and its affiliates, excluding us and our subsidiaries;
- 1 "CNOOC Limited" are to CNOOC Limited, a Hong Kong limited liability company and the registrant of this annual report;
 - 1 "Our company", "we", "our" or "us" are to CNOOC Limited and its subsidiaries;
 - 1 "ADRs" are to the American depositary receipts that evidence our ADSs;
- 1 "ADSs" are to our American depositary shares, each of which represents 100 shares of par value HK\$0.02 per share;
- 1 "China" or "PRC" are to the People's Republic of China, excluding for purposes of geographical reference in this annual report, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Macau Special Administrative Region and Taiwan;
 - 1 "Hong Kong" are to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China;
 - 1 "Hong Kong Stock Exchange" or "HKSE" are to The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited;
 - 1 "HK\$" are to the Hong Kong dollar, the legal currency of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;
 - 1 "HKICPA" are to the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants;
 - 1 "HKFRS" are to all Hong Kong Financial Reporting Standards and Hong Kong Accounting Standards and Interpretations approved by the Council of the HKICPA;
 - 1 "IASB" are to the International Accounting Standards Board;
- 1 "IFRS" are to all International Financial Reporting Standards, including International Accounting Standards and Interpretations, as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board;
 - 1 "NYSE" are to the New York Stock Exchange;
 - 1 "Rmb" are to Renminbi, the legal currency of the PRC; and
 - 1 "US\$" are to U.S. dollar, the legal currency of the United States of America.

Conventions

We publish our financial statements in Renminbi. Unless otherwise indicated, we have translated amounts from Renminbi into U.S. dollars solely for the convenience of the reader at the noon buying rate for cable transfers of Renminbi per U.S. dollar certified for customs purposes by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, as set forth in the

H.10 weekly statistical release of the Federal Reserve Board on December 30, 2010 of US\$1.00=Rmb 6.6000. We have also translated amounts in Hong Kong dollars solely for the convenience of the reader at the noon buying rate for cable transfers of Hong Kong dollars per U.S. dollar certified for customs purposes by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, as set forth in the H.10 weekly statistical release of the Federal Reserve Board on December 30, 2010 of US\$1.00=HK\$7.7810. We make no representation that the Renminbi amounts or Hong Kong dollar amounts could have been, or could be, converted into U.S. dollars at those rates on December 30, 2010, or at all. For further information on exchange rates, see "Item 3—Key Information—Selected Financial Data."

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Totals presented in this annual report may not total correctly due to rounding of numbers.

Except as otherwise noted, all information in this annual report relating to our oil and natural gas reserves is based upon estimates prepared by independent petroleum engineering consulting companies and reviewed by us, except for the information relating to certain of our oil and natural gas reserves for the year 2010, which was evaluated by us independently, such as Wenchang 13-1, Wenchang 13-2 and Dongfang 1-1 oil and gas fields offshore China, and Akpo and Egina oil fields in Nigeria. Our reserve data for 2009 and 2010 were prepared in accordance with the SEC's final rules on "Modernization of Oil and Gas Reporting", which became effective for accounting periods ended on or after December 31, 2009.

In calculating barrels-of-oil equivalent amounts, for reserves, we have assumed that 6,000 cubic feet of natural gas equals one BOE, with the exception of natural gas from South America which we have assumed that 5,800 cubic feet of natural gas equals one BOE. For production, we have used actual thermal unit of each oil and gas field for such conversion purpose.

Glossary of Technical Terms

Unless otherwise indicated in the context, references to:

- 1 "API gravity" means the American Petroleum Institute's scale for specific gravity for liquid hydrocarbons, measured in degrees.
- 1 "appraisal well" means an exploratory well drilled after a successful wildcat well to gain more information on a newly discovered oil or gas reserve.
- 1 "condensate" means a mixture of hydrocarbons that exists in the gaseous phase at original reservoir temperature and pressure and exists in the liquid phase at surface pressure and temperature when produced.
 - 1 "crude oil" means crude oil and liquids, including condensate, natural gas liquids and liquefied petroleum gas.
 - 1 "developed oil and gas reserves" are reserves of any category that can be expected to be recovered:
- (i) through existing wells with existing equipment and operating methods or in which the cost of the required equipment is relatively minor compared to the cost of a new well; and
- (ii) through installed extraction equipment and infrastructure operational at the time of the reserves estimate if the extraction is by means not involving any well.
- 1 "exploratory well" means a well drilled to find either a new field or a new reservoir in a field previously found to be productive of oil or gas in another reservoir. Generally, an exploratory well is any well that is not a development well, an extension well, a service well, or a stratigraphic test well.
 - 1 "LNG" means liquefied natural gas.
- 1 "natural gas liquids" means light hydrocarbons that can be extracted in liquid form from natural gas through special separation plants.

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1 "net wells" means a party's working interest in wells.

- 1 "proved oil and gas reserves" means those quantities of oil and gas, which, by analysis of geoscience and engineering data, can be estimated with reasonable certainty to be economically producible—from a given date forward, from known reservoirs, and under existing economic conditions, operating methods, and government regulations— prior to the time at which contracts providing the right to operate expire, unless evidence indicates that renewal is reasonably certain, regardless of whether deterministic or probabilistic methods are used for the estimation. The project to extract the hydrocarbons must have commenced or the operator must be reasonably certain that it will commence the project within a reasonable time.
- (i) The area of the reservoir considered as proved includes: (A) The area identified by drilling and limited by fluid contacts, if any, and (B) Adjacent undrilled portions of the reservoir that can, with reasonable certainty, be judged to be continuous with it and to contain economically producible oil or gas on the basis of available geosciences and engineering data.
- (ii) In the absence of data on fluid contacts, proved quantities in a reservoir are limited by the lowest known hydrocarbons (LKH) as seen in a well penetration unless geosciences, engineering, or performance data and reliable technology establishes a lower contact with reasonable certainty.
- (iii) Where direct observation from well penetrations has defined a highest known oil (HKO) elevation and the potential exists for an associated gas cap, proved oil reserves may be assigned in the structurally higher portions of the reservoir only if geosciences, engineering, or performance data and reliable technology establish the higher contact with reasonable certainty.
- (iv) Reserves which can be produced economically through application of improved recovery techniques (including, but not limited to, fluid injection) are included in the proved classification when: (A) Successful testing by a pilot project in an area of the reservoir with properties no more favorable than in the reservoir as a whole, the operation of an installed program in the reservoir or an analogous reservoir, or other evidence using reliable technology establishes the reasonable certainty of the engineering analysis on which the project or program was based; and (B) The project has been approved for development by all necessary parties and entities, including governmental entities.
- (v) Existing economic conditions include prices and costs at which economic producibility from a reservoir is to be determined. The price shall be the average price during the 12-month period prior to the ending date of the period covered by the report, determined as an unweighted arithmetic average of the first-day-of-the-month price for each month within such period, unless prices are defined by contractual arrangements, excluding escalations based upon future conditions.
- 1 "PSC" means production sharing contract. For more information about PSC, see "Item 4—Information on the Company—Business Overview—Fiscal Regimes."
- 1 "share oil" means the portion of production that must be allocated to the relevant government entity under our PSCs in the PRC.
- 1 "undeveloped oil and gas reserves" means reserves of any category that are expected to be recovered from new wells on undrilled acreage, or from existing wells where a relatively major expenditure is required for recompletion.
- (i) Reserves on undrilled acreage shall be limited to those directly offsetting development spacing areas that are reasonably certain of production when drilled, unless evidence using reliable technology exists that establishes reasonable certainty of economic producibility at greater distances.

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- (ii) Undrilled locations can be classified as having undeveloped reserves only if a development plan has been adopted indicating that they are scheduled to be drilled within five years, unless the specific circumstances, justify a longer time.
- (iii) Under no circumstances shall estimates for undeveloped reserves be attributable to any acreage for which an application of fluid injection or other improved recovery technique is contemplated, unless such techniques have been proved effective by actual projects in the same reservoir or an analogous reservoir, or by other evidence using reliable technology establishing reasonable certainty.

For further definitions relating to reserves:

1 "reserve replacement ratio" means, for a given year, total additions to proved reserves, which consist of additions from purchases, discoveries and extensions and revisions of prior reserve estimates, divided by production during the year. Reserve additions used in this calculation are proved developed and proved undeveloped reserves; unproved reserve additions are not used. Data used in the calculation of reserve replacement ratio is derived directly from the reserve quantity reconciliation prepared in accordance with U.S. Accounting Standards Codification 932-235-50, which reconciliation is included in "Supplementary Information on Oil and Gas Producing Activities" beginning on page S-1 of this annual report.

Our reserve replacement ratio reflects our ability to replace proved reserves. A rate higher than 100% indicates that more reserves were added than produced in the period. However, this measure has limitations, including its predictive and comparative value. Reserve replacement ratio measures past performance only and fluctuates from year to year due to differences in the extent and timing of new discoveries and acquisitions. It is also not an indicator of profitability because it does not reflect the cost or timing of future production of reserve additions. It does not distinguish between reserve additions that are developed and those that will require additional time and funding to develop. As such, reserve replacement ratio is only one of the indices used by our management in formulating its acquisition, exploration and development plans.

- 1 "reserve life" means the ratio of proved reserves to annual production of crude oil or, with respect to natural gas, to wellhead production excluding flared gas, also known as reserve-to-production ratio.
- 1 "seismic data" means data recorded in either two-dimensional (2D) or three-dimensional (3D) form from sound wave reflections off of subsurface geology.
- 1 "success" means a discovery of oil or gas by an exploratory well. Such an exploratory well is a successful well and is also known as a discovery. A successful well is commercial, which means there are enough hydrocarbon deposits discovered for economical recovery.
- 1 "wildcat well" means an exploratory well drilled on any rock formation for the purpose of searching for petroleum accumulations in an area or rock formation that has no known reserves or previous discoveries.

References to:

1 bbls means barrels, which is equivalent to approximately 0.134 tons of oil (33 degrees API);

1 mmbbls means million barrels:

1 BOE means barrels-of-oil equivalent;

- 1 mcf means thousand cubic feet;
- 1 mmcf means million cubic feet;
- 1 bcf means billion cubic feet, which is equivalent to approximately 28.32 million cubic meters; and
 - 1 BTU means British Thermal Unit, a universal measurement of energy.

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FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This annual report includes "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the United States Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. The words "believe", "intend", "expect", "anticipate", "project", "estimate", "plan", "predict" a similar expressions are also intended to identify such forward-looking statements.

These forward-looking statements address, among others, such issues as:

- •the amount and nature of future exploration, development and other capital expenditures,
 - •wells to be drilled or reworked,
 - •development projects,
 - •exploration prospects,
 - •estimates of proved oil and gas reserves,
 - •potential reserves,
 - •development and drilling potential,
 - •expansion and other development trends of the oil and gas industry,
 - •business strategy,
 - •production of oil and gas,
 - •development of undeveloped reserves,
 - •expansion and growth of our business and operations,
 - •oil and gas prices and demand,
 - •future earnings and cash flow, and
 - •our estimated financial information.

These statements are based on assumptions and analyses made by us in light of our experience and our perception of historical trends, current conditions and expected future developments, as well as other factors we believe are appropriate under the circumstances. However, whether actual results and developments will meet our expectations and predictions depend on a number of risks and uncertainties which could cause our actual results, performance and financial condition to differ materially from our expectations, including those associated with fluctuations in crude oil and natural gas prices, our exploration or development activities, our capital expenditure requirements, our business strategy, the highly competitive nature of the oil and natural gas industry, our foreign operations, environmental liabilities and compliance requirements, and economic and political conditions in the PRC and overseas. For a description of these and other risks and uncertainties, see "Item 3—Key Information—Risk Factors."

Consequently, all of the forward-looking statements made in this annual report are qualified by these cautionary statements. We cannot assure that the results or developments anticipated by us will be realized or, even if substantially realized, that they will have the expected effect on us, our business or our operations.

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SPECIAL NOTE ON THE FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND CERTAIN STATISTICAL INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THIS ANNUAL REPORT

Our consolidated financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2008, 2009 and 2010 included in this annual report on Form 20-F have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards, or IFRS, as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board.

In accordance with rule amendments adopted by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, which became effective on March 4, 2008, we are not required to provide reconciliation to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles in the United States.

The statistical information set forth in this annual report on Form 20-F relating to China is taken or derived from various publicly available government publications that have not been prepared or independently verified by us. This statistical information may not be consistent with other statistical information from other sources within or outside China.

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PART I

ITEM 1. IDENTITY OF DIRECTORS, SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND ADVISERS

Not applicable, but see "Item 6—Directors, Senior Management and Employees—Directors and Senior Management."

ITEM 2. OFFER STATISTICS AND EXPECTED TIMETABLE

Not applicable.

A.

ITEM 3. KEY INFORMATION

The following tables present selected historical financial data of our company as of and for the years ended December 31, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Except for amounts presented in U.S. dollars, the selected historical consolidated statement of financial position data and consolidated statement of comprehensive income data as of and for the years ended December 31, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 set forth below are derived from, should be read in conjunction with, and are qualified in their entirety by reference to, our consolidated financial statements and their notes under "Item 18—Financial Statements" and "Item 5—Operating and Financial Review and Prospects" in this annual report. As disclosed above under Special Note on the Financial Information and Certain Statistical Information Presented in this annual report, our consolidated financial statements as of and for the years ended December 31, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 have been prepared and presented in accordance with IFRS.

SELECTED FINANCIAL DATA

Year ended December 31,					
2007	2008	2009	2010	2010	
Rmb	Rmb	Rmb	Rmb	US\$	
(in millions, except per share and per ADS data)					
73,037	100,831	83,914	149,119	22,594	
17,397	22,967	20,752	32,446	4,916	
290	2,179	529	1,488	225	
90,724	125,977	105,195	183,053	27,735	
(8,040)	(9,990)	(12,490)	(16,204)	(2,455)	
(3,657)	(5,150)	(3,889)	(8,204)	(1,243)	
(3,432)	(3,410)	(3,234)	(5,580)	(845)	
(7,936)	(10,058)	(15,943)	(27,687)	(4,195)	
(6,837)	(16,238)	(6,357)	(17,706)	(2,683)	
(614)	(1,541)	(7)	(27)	(4)	
(17,083)	(22,675)	(20,455)	(32,236)	(4,884)	
(1,741)		(2,264)	(3,063)	(464)	
(185)	(1,307)	(231)	(941)	(143)	
(49,525)	(72,112)	(64,870)	(111,648)	(16,916)	
673	1,091	638	704	107	
(2,032)	(415)	(535)	(1,222)	(185)	
1,856	2,551	54	995	151	
902	476	200	427	65	
	Rmb (in mile of the content of the c	2007 2008 Rmb Rmb (in millions, except) 73,037 100,831 17,397 22,967 290 2,179 90,724 125,977 (8,040) (9,990) (3,657) (5,150) (3,432) (3,410) (7,936) (10,058) (6,837) (16,238) (614) (1,541) (17,083) (22,675) (1,741) (1,743) (185) (1,307) (49,525) (72,112) 673 1,091 (2,032) (415) 1,856 2,551	2007 2008 2009 Rmb Rmb Rmb (in millions, except per share and continuous) 483,914 17,397 22,967 20,752 290 2,179 529 90,724 125,977 105,195 (8,040) (9,990) (12,490) (3,657) (5,150) (3,889) (3,432) (3,410) (3,234) (7,936) (10,058) (15,943) (6,837) (16,238) (6,357) (614) (1,541) (7) (17,083) (22,675) (20,455) (1,741) (1,743) (2,264) (185) (1,307) (231) (49,525) (72,112) (64,870) 673 1,091 638 (2,032) (415) (535) 1,856 2,551 54	2007 2008 2009 2010 Rmb Rmb Rmb Rmb (in millions, except per share and per ADS d 73,037 100,831 83,914 149,119 17,397 22,967 20,752 32,446 290 2,179 529 1,488 90,724 125,977 105,195 183,053 (8,040 (9,990 (12,490 (16,204) (3,657 (5,150 (3,889 (8,204) (3,432 (3,410 (3,234 (5,580) (7,936 (10,058 (15,943 (27,687) (6,837 (16,238 (6,357 (17,706) (614 (1,541 (7 (27) (17,083 (22,675 (20,455 (32,236) (1,741 (1,743 (2,264 (3,063) (185 (1,307 (231) (941) (49,525) (72,112 (64,870	

Share of profits of associates	719	374	173	199	30
Non-operating income/ (expenses), net	(7)	(62)	(34)	142	21
Profit before tax	43,310	57,880	40,821	72,650	