



# Niger Delta Dialogue

1ST-2ND FEBRUARY, 2017

**“NDDC And A New Development Agenda  
For The Niger Delta”**



Academic Associates PeaceWorks

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**"NDDC AND A NEW DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR THE NIGER DELTA"**

**ACADEMIC ASSOCIATES PEACEWORKS  
WITH SUPPORT FROM**

**EUROPEAN UNION**



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## INTRODUCTION



L-R: HE Nsima Ekere, MD NDDC; HRM King Dandeson Jaja of Opobo; Pastor Usani Uguru Usani, Minister of Niger Delta Affairs; HRM King Alfred Diete Spiff, Chairman of NDD.

The fifth meeting of the Niger Delta Dialogue held at Hotel Presidential, Port Harcourt, Rivers State between February 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017. The meeting discussed the theme **Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and a new development agenda for the Niger Delta Region**. In attendance were members of the Niger Delta Dialogue headed by HRM King Alfred Diete Spiff; the Honourable Minister of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, Pastor Usani Uguru Usani; the chairman of the Niger Delta Development Commission, Senator Victor Ndama Egba; the Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission, HE Nsima Ekere; Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta and Coordinator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme, Brigadier General Paul Boroh; members of the House of Representatives Committee on Niger Delta and representatives of international community (European Union, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom and

Germany. Also in attendance were representatives of Abia, Ondo and Imo State Governments as well as citizens from nine states of the Niger Delta.

### Day One

Day One was an in-house meeting of the Niger Delta Dialogue. It was a moment to assess what has been done so far since the beginning of the meeting in June 10, 2016, what are yet to be done, the state of the Niger Delta region now and what should be expected from the following day's meeting. It was also the moment to tell the story of progress made since the first Niger Delta Dialogue held in June 2016 so that new invites would key in going forward. Present at the meeting were HRM King Alfred Diete Spiff, King Dandeson Jaja of Opobo, and others members of NDD. Representatives of the international community observed the meeting.

Amb. Dr. Godknows Igali gave information on the status of the Niger Delta Dialogue vis-à-vis Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF). In his



L-R Front Row: Amb. Nkoyo Toyo, Pamela Braide, Prof. S.W.E Ibodje, Michael Ekpo.

L-R Back Row: Stephen Iyama, Uche Ifukor and Dr. Babajide Owonikoko

explanation, he stated that PANDEF itself was largely an outcome of the efforts of some members of team B and team A of the Niger Delta Dialogue. He differentiated that the NDD was involved in birthing PANDEF and will continue to focus on specific issues of interest. On the contrary, PANDEF is an omnibus mouthpiece for the entire region and will continue to engage government as necessary. He further stated that PANDEF is being restructured following the outcome of the Asaba meeting where a structure has been approved. This will include eventual participation of meetings based on representations from all ethnic nationalities and stakeholders.

Various concerns about the Niger Delta were raised. These concerns include: abject neglect, corruption of values and militancy in Cross River State and other parts of the Niger Delta region; Lack of productive engagement of the youth population in the Niger Delta States; Widespread poverty in the Niger Delta region; Unequal distribution of wealth in the Nigerian state; Effective use of available opportunities by the Niger Delta Dialogue; Running all-inclusive governance that will ensure better life for all in the Niger Delta region; Lack of transparency and accountability in the use

of oil resources in the Niger Delta Region; Poor boy-child enrolment in Abia State as a result of frustration from lack of productive engagement of youths in the state; Unproductive and vicious circle of the Niger Delta struggle; Divide and rule tactics of the FG on the Niger Delta region; Neglect of Ondo State from the scheme of things in the Niger Delta region; Decline in FG attention to the Niger Delta and shift to the North East; Neglect of women in the Niger Delta struggle; Lack of survival strategies of the post-oil Niger Delta; Sub Groups A and B are gradually becoming redundant and are unable to deliver on their mandates; Lack of unity among the ethnic nationalities in the Niger Delta; Lack of response to the demands of the Niger Delta people submitted by PANDEF to the FG.

To address these concerns the NDD must intensify engagement with appropriate authorities in both State and Federal Governments. The Day 2 meeting would have in attendance top government functionaries from NDDC, Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, The Presidential Amnesty Programme, National Assembly Committee on Niger Delta, and some State Government representatives. It would therefore present the opportunity to continue the engagement process and direct the attention of government to the issues identified.

## Day Two



Left - Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni, Executive Director AA PeaceWorks;  
Middle: Pastor Usani Uguru Usani, Minister of Niger Delta Affairs;  
Right: Amb. Nkoyo Toyo

### Opening Remarks

HRM King Alfred Diete Spiff welcomed everybody to the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Niger Delta Dialogue. He observed that since the Uyo meeting of June 10, 2016, the Dialogue meeting has gone a long way and has reached a situation where specific issues have been addressed and agencies of government devoted to the development of the Niger Delta region have been engaged for effective performance that will enhance the development of the region. He reminded the participants that the last meeting of the group, which held in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State thoroughly engaged the various amnesty programmes at the state and federal levels and some insights and recommendations that would help in repositioning the programme for better performance were enunciated. He explained that the day's meeting would focus on the activities of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). He expressed optimism that the meeting would be successful and ended by wishing participants a fruitful deliberation.

### Background on the Niger Delta Dialogue

The Executive Director of AA PeaceWorks, Chief Dr Judith Burdin Asuni, gave the background to the Niger Delta Dialogue, reviewed its activities since inception and also informed the gathering of what was expected from the day's meeting. She informed participants that the Niger Delta Dialogue meeting was conceived after the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta region in the early months of 2016 with the intention of bringing the Niger Delta people to dialogue with the federal government.

She said that the first meeting was held in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in which 50 well respected opinion leaders in the Niger Delta region met with the SSA to the President and Coordinator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme- Brig. Gen. Paul Boroh and the then Acting Managing Director of NDDC, Mrs Ibim Semenitari. She noted further that the major resolution of the meeting was that the dialogue should continue between citizens and government. This led to the Warri meeting of July 13-14, in which issues were identified, an action plan drawn up, and 2 subgroups established. Sub group A engaged the federal government while Sub group B engaged the agitators. Furthermore, issues affecting the Niger Delta region which has resulted in the resurgence of militancy were identified and classified as requiring solution that is either short-term (requiring quick-win solution; medium term and overarching or long term).

She also explained that the Port Harcourt meeting of September 19-20, 2016 discussed and mapped emerging issues of militancy in Cross Rivers, resurgence of militancy in upland Delta State and rising criminality in Omoku community. The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting in Yenagoa on November 2-3, focused on the various amnesty programmes in the Niger Delta region. She informed the gathering that the day's meeting would involve the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). She further informed the gathering that the next meeting of the group would be in Abuja and will discuss rising insecurity in Cross River State and its implications for the Gulf of Guinea. She concluded by welcoming all participants and wished them a productive deliberation.



Cross Section of Participants

## Reports From Groups "A" and "B"



Elder T.K Ogoriba Reporting on the Activities of Group B

The two groups formed from the Warri meeting of July 2016 to interface between the Niger Delta agitators and the federal government presented reports of their activities. The leaders of the groups did the presentation.

HRM King Dandeson Jaja of Opobo reporting on behalf of Subgroup A, informed the meeting that a 16-point agenda has been submitted to the presidency by PANDEF of which subgroup A is part of, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 2016; and that a couple of other meetings have been held with representatives of federal government but nothing concrete has emerged from the meetings. However, he expressed the belief that the presence of the Honourable Minister of the Niger Delta Affairs would afford the NDD the opportunity to know the federal government's intention on the submitted demands.

Elder TK Ogoriba, the leader of Sub group B chronicled the development of Subgroups A and B and their activities at ensuring peace in the Niger Delta region.

He expressed that members of Sub-group B have worked tirelessly risking their safety to ensure that peace returns to the Niger Delta region since the resurgence of militancy. He noted further that while this effort has resulted in securing ceasefire from the Niger Delta Avengers, government has not been actively responsive in addressing the demands of the Niger Delta people. He observed that since declaring ceasefire by the Niger Delta Avengers, oil production has increased from between 800,000 bpd to 1.2 million bpd to over 2.2 million bpd. The implication in finance is that the amount generated from the exploration has also increased from 12billion Naira to 26.4billion Naira daily on the scale of \$40 per barrel and 300Naira to a dollar. He ended by saying that the members of Sub-group B, the entire Niger Delta Dialogue and the indigenes of the Niger Delta region are displeased at the lack of action by the Nigerian government. He therefore advised the federal government to be pro-active as government inactivity on the demands of the people may result in brutal collapse of the ceasefire.

## Morning Panel on a New Development Agenda for the Niger Delta



Left: Mr. Francis Ntuma Chief Economic Adviser Cross River State;  
Middle- Mr. Sylvester Okoh Representing PIND

### Rethinking Development in the Niger Delta Region- Dr Dara Akala, Executive Director Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND)

Dr Dara Akala, ably represented by Mr Sylvester Okoh presented on “Rethinking Development in the Niger Delta Region”. He began his presentation by informing the gathering of the synergy between PIND and the Niger Delta stakeholders which culminated in a meeting held in October 2016 where best initiatives and policy options and approaches to peace and development in the Niger Delta region were discussed in detail. He also stated that this is already informing economic development initiatives by states such as Ondo, Cross River and Delta. He advised the NDDC to key into these initiatives by developing a long term development blueprint that will accommodate economic development initiatives of the states in the Niger Delta region. He advised NDDC to generate a long term development master-plan for the Niger Delta from the development plans of the respective states. This, he expressed, would guide development of any regime within the states in the region.

### Presentation by Mr Francis Ntuma, the Chief Economic Advisor to the Governor of Cross River State

Mr Francis Ntuma, the Chief Economic Advisor to Cross River State Government explained the economic initiatives of the Cross River State - to grow the economy and promote development in post-oil Cross River State. He explained that the

economic mainstay of the state has returned to agriculture and the state has developed as the second largest cocoa producer in Nigeria. He also pointed out that the state has enjoyed the support and collaboration of PIND, Ministry of Niger Delta, Ondo State and the private sector to achieve the fit.



Mr. Nnimmo Bassey giving his presentation

### Presentation by Mr Nnimmo Bassey

Mr Nnimmo Bassey spoke on the significance of entrenching environmental security in the development agenda of the Niger Delta region. The thesis of his presentation is that if the Niger Delta environment remains what it is today as gas continues to be flared and oil continues to spill, any peace initiative will not provide sustainable peace in the Niger Delta region because the environment constitutes an important aspect of peace and security that must be addressed. He therefore suggested the following:

1. The dialogue meeting must be extended or stepped down to the village level because this is where environmental degradation is most felt.
2. Ministries, Departments and Agencies that have to do with the Niger Delta region must have a part of their budget dedicated to addressing environmental issues of the Niger Delta region.
3. A team for environmental monitoring must be established at the local level.

## Presentation by Pastor Usani Uguru Usani, Honourable Minister of Niger Delta Affairs



Amb. Dr. Godknows Igali welcoming the Honourable Minister, Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs  
Pastor Usani UguruUsani

The Honourable Minister expressed delight in being in the meeting for the first time. He explained that he would have been in the previous meetings of the group but that he had most times been hindered by late invitation or clash of event with critical official assignments.

He stated that the presidency is studying the various reports submitted, and the major reason for lack of quick response by the federal government is ethnicity and division among the people of the region.

Giving a brief account of his stewardship, the Honourable Minister explained that when he emerged as the Minister for Niger Delta, he formed a team, which consisted of lawyers, engineers, accountants, and security experts among others to assess the activities of the ministry. The report of the team showed that budgetary allocation to the Ministry since inception stood at 700 billion naira while actual releases amount to over 420 billion naira. He reported further that the total number of projects awarded from 2009 to 2016 stood at 427 but only 12 percent of them have been completed. Average completion of the project is five (5) years while

articulated impact of the project is eight (8) percent. He explained further that while 70 percent of the projects are under construction, a large percentage of those projects are duplicated by amnesty programme (85%) and NDDC (98%). He observed further that many projects carried out by the Ministry, which have not been completed, were certified to be completed because majority of those who took up the contracts are also workers in the Ministry.

The Honourable Minister informed the gathering that in order to curb unnecessary duplication of projects and to fast track the development of the Niger Delta region, a number of actions were taken. First he met with Niger Delta states' governors to agree on framework to put resources into effective use in the region. He also agreed with NDDC to always look at their budget together to eliminate duplications. He informed the gathering that he has met with oil multinationals in the region and requested them to submit their plans regarding the development of Niger Delta region for the year 2017 to the Ministry to ensure equity and to curb duplication. Furthermore, he explained that the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs is in constant communication with private investors both within and outside Nigeria to grow the economy of the Niger Delta region. However, he lamented that states' governments of Niger Delta region are not doing enough as many of them fail to pay counter-part fund such as that of the UNICEF WASH Project. He ended with the assurance that the federal government appreciates the efforts of members of the Niger Delta Dialogue in bringing peace to the Niger Delta but advised the people to exercise patience with the government as all their demands will be acceded to.

## Presentation by the Managing Director of NDDC, HE Nsim Ekere



L-R: HE Nsim Ekere, MD NDDC; HRM King Dandeson Jaja of Opobo; Pastor Usani Uguru Usani, Minister of Niger Delta Affairs; HRM King Alfred Dete Spiff, Chairman of NDD; Brig. Gen. P.T. Boroh, SA to the President on Niger Delta and Coordinator, Presidential Amnesty Programme; Senator Victor Ndoma Egba, SAN, Chairman of NDDC; Amb. Godknows Igali.

The NDDC Managing Director noted that NDDC was created due to the agitation of the people of the Niger Delta region for better federal allocation. He however observed that the agency has not lived up to the expectation of the people. He expressed the opinion that the lack of development in the Niger Delta region does not only mirror governance challenges of the NDDC but that of the Niger Delta states and local governments. He said that since inception of the commission, a total of 8557 projects have been awarded out of which 3424 have been completed, commissioned and handed over to various communities and states. This constitutes about 40% of the projects awarded. He expressed further that there are about 2227 ongoing projects while over 6000 others have been awarded but not yet commenced.

He explained that the commission is not unaware of the significance of education in the development of the Niger Delta region; hence the Commission often embarks on scholarship programmes for the Niger Delta youths. He stated that the commission has

already given over 1411 students scholarship since 2010 out of which 1166 were supported in their masters degree programmes while 345 were supported in their PhD programmes. While acknowledging the enormous challenges of the Commission, the MD noted that the Commission's board since inauguration in September 2016 is committed to tackling its challenges and that of the entire Niger Delta region, using different strategies from what previous leaders of the commission have used. These include:

1. Constructive engagement of development partners and stakeholders in the development of the Niger Delta region by involving them in the development activities of the Commission and getting inputs from them into its development programmes and policies.
2. Careful review of the programmes of the Commission and restructuring of the commission to be responsive to the developmental yearnings of Niger Delta region. This will involve upward review of 1.2 billion naira ongoing projects of the commission because of the shrinking financial status of the commission which is now less than 250 billion naira per

year.

3.Ranking and prioritizing of development projects embarked upon by the commission to ensure that those with greatest value to the greatest number of people in the Niger Delta people are given attention, while those with less value on the people and those not properly procured will be weeded out. This, according to him, is necessary considering the limited resources of the commission and to make effective use of the limited finance of the commission.

4.Those who have been mobilised for projects but are yet to commence, majority of whom are from the Niger Delta region, will be forced to either carry out the projects for which they have been mobilised or refund.

5.Reformation of the governance system of the commission through digitization of operations and reliance on technology.

6.Restoration of the commission to its core mandate through a carefully crafted masterplan.

7.Coordination and collaboration with development stakeholders to achieve a common purpose of development of the region. This has already commenced with the coordination and collaboration with the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs.

8.The commission will encourage transparency and accountability in governance system to encourage international partnership.

9.Drafting of the budget of the commission will be done in constant consultation with Niger Delta stakeholders such as states, oil companies and local governments.

10.Reaffirmation of commitment to doing what is right.

He encouraged Niger Delta youths to shun restiveness and violence because it discourages economic development of the Niger Delta region. He promised that in the next few weeks, the commission will begin to engage Niger Delta youth and empower them. These empowerment programmes will be supported by the commission's



NDD Secretariate during registration

development partners and will be monitored closely to make sure that they deliver on their mandates. He also encouraged Niger Delta indigenes to be free to walk up to the commission and demand any information on the commission. Finally, he thanked the organizers of the Niger Delta Dialogue meeting for putting up such a programme and promised the people that the current leadership of the commission is committed to making positive changes in the commission that will allow it deliver on its mandate to the people. He however solicited the support of the people as the commission cannot perform when the people do not give their maximum support to it.

## Presentation by the Chairman of NDDC, Senator Victor Ndoma Egba, SAN

The chairman's address was on how best Niger Delta region economic development can be fast-tracked. He noted the BRACED Commission which was the combination of the states in Niger Delta- Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Delta States was formed to fast-track the development of the Niger Delta and to create an integrated regional economy but later became the victim of individual ambitions of the governors. He then suggested that any strategy for regional economic development of the Niger Delta region must not be allowed to be controlled by state governors. He also advised the commission to focus more on youth development because they constitute the real resources of the region. In developing the youth, he advised the commission not to leave behind sports and agricultural programmes.



L-R: Annkio Briggs; Chief GodspowerGbenekama; Israel Akpodoro; Famous Daunemigha; Morris Idiovwa.

## Comments by Participants

The various responses of the people are encapsulated in the points below:

1.The development of the Niger Delta region should be carried out with a sense of urgency as an era where oil is not longer sellable is gradually and steadily approaching.

2.It is not adequate to just say that most of those who have been awarded projects in the Niger Delta region by NDDC and have failed to implement them are from the Niger Delta region. They should be named and shamed by publishing their names so that the people will know them.

3.NDDC should quarterly publish contracts awarded so that people who will finally own the projects will monitor them until they are completed.

4.The NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs should be committed to major projects implementation that will fast-track the development of the Niger Delta region and not minor projects, like tables and chairs for classrooms.

5.There is a wide gap between the elite and “ordinary” man on the street.

6.The movement of development partners from the Niger Delta region to the North East is condemnable and unacceptable.

7.The NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta should relate with the people of the Niger Delta at the grassroots before formulating their policies.

8.The Niger Delta struggle has degenerated into the psyche of the people of the region. Therefore part of the

development endeavours for the region must also work on the minds of the people.

9.The approaches of NDDC and MNDA is too top-down instead of bottom-up and this is making the agency and the ministry far away from the people. Consequently, government has become alien to the people while the people also support anti-government activities that will better their living conditions.

10.Part of the problem of the delay in completion or execution of projects in the Niger Delta region is lack of prompt payment if awarded contracts by NDDC and MNDA.

11.Saying Dangote refinery and multinational companies do not want to come to Niger Delta because of violence is unacceptable as no state is immune to violence in Nigeria.

12.There should be equity in the treatment of all regions in Nigeria. No one region should be better treated while others are ignored.

## Response of the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs

The minister also responded to some of the issues raised by members of the Niger Delta Dialogue group. Firstly, he accepted that all the activities of the Ministry must be made transparent to the people and promised to comply with the demand of the people. However, he disagreed with the participants on the Ministry implementing minor projects such as table and chairs in classrooms. He expressed that most times, students do not have chairs and tables in their schools because states and local governments fail in their duties to provide them. The responsibility therefore falls on the Ministry and NDDC to provide these, as the students cannot continue to sit on the bare floor to take classes. He also agreed that the ministry should promote community engagement by coming down to the grassroots. On the issue of development partners and funders leaving the Niger Delta for the North East region, the Minister noted that there is no basis for comparison between the two regions because the needs and demands of the two regions are different. He explained that President Buhari is already working on dialoguing with the Niger Delta people but the people must exercise

patience and be ready to listen to one another. With regards to the 16-Point Agenda submitted to the presidency in November 2016, the Minister said the agenda is still domiciled in the presidency and that he knows little or nothing about the stage of the agenda. However, he promised to convey the yearning of the people on the 16-Point agenda to the Acting President who is the driver of the dialogue process at the presidency and provide feedback to the people.

## Response of the MD of NDDC



L-R: Amb. Godknows Igali; Amb. Nkoyo Toyo;  
Mr. Chijioke Amu-Nnadi (NDDC)

He expressed that the commission believes and is committed to using bottom-up approach in its engagement with people of the Niger Delta region. That is why the commission will commence direct engagement with the Niger Delta youths in a couple of weeks to come. He also highlighted that the major problem any representative of government has with the Niger Delta region is identifying the proper individuals to talk to. However, he noted that his presence in the Niger Delta Dialogue meeting has afforded him the opportunity to know and adopt a form of leadership through which he can engage the people. He also promised that NDDC is working on developing Gbaramatu kingdom by constructing a road from Warri through Escravos to Gbaramatu kingdom to make movement from Warri to Gbaramatu and the proposed Nigeria Maritime University easy. He said the commission is already reaching out to development partners to achieve that but craved for the support of the people to achieve it.



Middle: Brig. Gen. P.T. Boroh, SA to the President on Niger Delta and Coordinator, Presidential Amnesty Programme, flanked by members of the National Assembly Committee on the Niger Delta.

## Presentation by SA to the President on Niger Delta and Coordinator, Presidential Amnesty Programme, Brig. Gen. Paul Boroh.

Gen. Boroh disclosed that his office has met with NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs to agree on the framework for collaboration and working as a team for the development of the Niger Delta region. He said they have agreed to be meeting on quarterly basis and any other time deemed fit. He expressed his happiness to be in the meeting. He reiterated that the Presidential Amnesty Programme is on course. He said he is already working to ensure that the beneficiaries of the amnesty programme are gainfully employed. He informed the gathering that his office has approached several agencies such as Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency(NIMASA), Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Local Contents Commission, Ministry of Aviation, among others to secure job spaces for the beneficiaries. He said NIMASA has already promised to accommodate amnesty beneficiaries who studied marine related courses while a list of 4000 beneficiaries of the amnesty programmes who were trained on oil and gas have been submitted to NNPC and Local Content Development Board for job slots. He also informed that a list of 200 beneficiaries of the amnesty programme who have been trained in aviation has been submitted to the Ministry of Aviation for job slots while over 10 have been employed already.

## Panel on Tackling Empowerment Head on



L-R: Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni; Chime Asonye;  
Hon Remy Chukwunyere; King Diete Spiff; Olamide Falana  
Richard Young; Chuks Ofulue

An afternoon panel discussed “**Tackling Empowerment Head on**”. Representatives of Ondo, Imo and Abia states discussed their initiatives, in addition to the presentation by Francis Ntuma of Cross River State which was covered in the earlier panel. Hon Abdul Oroh, a former Commissioner of Agriculture in Edo State, also emphasized the importance of access to land and credit for youth who hope to engage in agriculture.

The panel was chaired by **Chuks Ofulue** of the **BRACED Commission** (Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwalbom, Cross River, Edo, Delta), who observed that unemployment remains the major problem of the Niger Delta region, 70% of the population of the Niger Delta is youth, of whom 65% are currently out of job, 22% are at work but only a small percentage does work that can be said to be sustainable. 11% of youth cannot be accounted for. Therefore the Niger Delta states must be proactive in their empowerment programmes. Mr. Ofulue emphasized that government should concentrate more on soft skills rather than technical training, as soft skills are the area of the future.

**Olamide Falana** spoke on behalf of **Bolanle Olufunmiloye** who is the chairman of the **Ondo State Wealth Creation Agency**. The agency was created in response to the low level of employment and high youth restiveness in the state. The state government has created 4 agricultural clusters, which will be expanded to 18. To date over 200 youth have been trained and empowered to start their own businesses.

The Ondo experience indicates that:

1. There should be a deliberate policy on youth empowerment in Niger Delta masterplan because it is only through this that the youth can be sustainably empowered year in year out even when government changes.
2. Niger Delta should also have a deliberate policy on girl-child development and empowerment.
3. There should be partnership between Niger Delta states and the development agencies of the region such as NDDC.
4. Niger Delta states and the people should be carried along by NDDC in project development, implementation and monitoring in the Niger Delta region.
5. Funding should also be decentralized.

**Hon Remy Chukwunyere** is the principal officer in charge of **Imo State Directorate for Employment and Job Centre**. The agency specializes in the area of sports and agricultural development. Because the job of the agency he heads is to provide jobs, he brought the agency in contact with PIND and USAID, and it is working on the rehabilitation and reintegration of members of armed groups who were disarmed by PIND's P4P in oil-bearing communities in Imo State by providing them an alternative means of livelihood so that they do not go back to the creeks. The agency has commenced a massive campaign for self-employment and a number of young people who have business ideas have been encouraged to start up with grants from the agency.

**Chime Asonye** is the **Senior Special Adviser to the Governor of Abia State on Sustainable Development Goals**. He explained that the government of Abia State, since inauguration in 2015, has been pushing forward an agenda that concentrates on developing Aba into an economic hub of the state. This has resulted in empowerment that has increased demand for production and helps traders make money which has also boosted the IGR of the state from 20 million naira to one billion naira. He explained that the government of Abia State is currently adopting a three-prong approach to

engage Aba market. The first approach is regulatory and it involves formation of a special coordinating body for Aba known as Aba Urban Renewal headed by a Director-General. The second approach involves the development of a masterplan for Aba. The third approach, which is financial, has to do with raising funds for the Aba project with an Aba Urban Development Summit. He also said the government of the state, for the first time in ten years has conducted local government elections. This, he said has helped to promote responsive governance at the local level. He also reported that the state will commence a programme called education for employment in which people will be trained in technical and vocational



L-R: Fidelia Onoghaite of the Netherlands Embassy; Sophia Sabrow of the Embassy of Germany; Angelique Vander Made of the Netherlands Embassy; Alexandra Noll and Richard Young of the European Union.

skills, especially in the area of ICT and agriculture.

**Richard Young of the European Union** discussed the role of the EU in the Niger Delta in terms of development cooperation and empowerment. He explained that the EU has been working in the Niger Delta region since at least 2001 and their involvement is motivated by the desire to reduce poverty, improve the standard of living and ultimately reduce conflict in the region. Project activities have been implemented to attain these main objectives. One is the Micro-Projects Programmes (MPPs), which were run in different phases such as MPP3, MPP6 and MPP9. MPP3 involved the states of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers. MPP6 involved Abia, AkwaBom, Cross River, Edo, Imo and Ondo while MPP9 involves all nine states of the Niger Delta. The second programme was Water and Sanitation programme focusing on Cross River, while the third programme is the Niger Delta Support Programme which covers four

different areas: employment opportunities, public financial management, an extension of the water and sanitation programme to five other Niger Delta states, and an extension of the MPP9 project. Mr. Young explained that the Niger Delta Support Programme was put together after the amnesty programme and was implemented to support conflict reduction initiatives. He said that there was a fourth programme where the EU is also supporting vaccination programmes focusing on polio eradication in some selected states in the Niger Delta region, and that recently, the EU is thinking of expanding its programme on small arms and light weapons in West Africa to Nigeria and by extension, to the Niger Delta region.

What have these programmes achieved in the Niger Delta region? The following were identified as the achievements of these programmes:

- Over three thousand (3,000) micro-projects have been established across the Niger Delta in MPP3, MPP6 and MPP9. While MPP3 and MPP6 have been concluded, MPP9 is still ongoing till the end of 2017. It is expected that before the end of the programme, over 1,050 additional micro-projects will be completed.

- Significant numbers – over 100,000 - of community and grassroot leaders has been trained on community management focusing on financial management.

- A water and sanitation policy has been agreed, with over 700 water supply schemes put in place and with over 600,000 rural people benefiting from these schemes. Safe drinking water has been supplied to over 50,000 people in Cross River.

- Capacity building programme for teachers and increase in enrolment of students by 25%

- Supply of equipment for vaccination, including direct drive solar refrigerators important for immunization.

- Employment of youth in the implementation of these projects, including over 600 public works projects including road and drainage rehabilitation.

The major issues and challenges of the EU programmes in the Niger Delta as discussed by Mr. Young are that these programmes have been slow in implementation due to the following reasons:

- Lack of allocation of money for the purpose of the programme, caused by the failure of the state and local governments to pay their counterpart funds to ensure the completion of projects.

- Weak capabilities – notably on immunization programmes.

3. Lack of commitment – to put in place policies and implement the State Integrated Financial Management Information System.

4. Widespread unrest – recently contractors have been impeded by unrest.

The lesson learnt from the implementation of these programmes is that understanding the political economy of the Niger Delta region is very important for successful implementation of any project. He also stated that the EU has also learnt that they must not be over-ambitious in the implementation of these programmes but rather should be modest in their ambition.



Hon. Abdul Oroh making a remark, Anthony Ubani,  
Chief Lawal Africa (Right)

## Responses to the Panel Presentation on Tackling Empowerment

Most of responses to the presentations of the panel came as suggestions. The following are the suggested solutions to ensuring empowerment:

1. Government should engage the youth by training them directly rather than training them on skill acquisitions through skill acquisition centres.

2. Government should concentrate more on soft skills in the training of youths for skills, rather than technical skills as soft skills create more jobs than technical skills, as soft skills are the area of the future.

3. Government should encourage the youth to engage in agriculture not only by giving them incentives like micro-credit but also creating a good market for them where their products will be sold at reasonable prices.

4. Governments of Niger Delta states should adopt the Katsina State approach to youth empowerment where the state has set up a village with boarding facilities where youth are trained on different skills. When they graduate, the government of the state gives them a start-up grant. This has empowered the youth, reduced unemployment and has drastically reduced youth unrest in the state.

## Conclusions

The 5<sup>th</sup> Niger Delta Dialogue brought together a group of people who do not usually meet- top federal government representatives, state government representatives, National Assembly members, traditional rulers, community leaders, activists, representatives of ex-agitators, and members of the international community. In spite of this diversity, everyone in the room was concerned about the lack of genuine development in the Niger Delta and the repercussions that this has for peace and stability, not only in the region, but for Nigeria as a whole.

Everyone present at the meeting also agreed that the Niger Delta Development Commission has not achieved its maximum performance in the past. The presence of the newly inaugurated Chairman, Managing Director and all department heads of NDDC as well as the Honourable Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, provided an excellent opportunity for participants to directly hear their challenges and to make suggestions for better future performance.

The following recommendations to NDDC came out of the Niger Delta Dialogue discussion:

1. There should be transparency and accountability in the activities of NDDC.

2. There should be free flow of information from NDDC to the people of the Niger Delta region.

3. There should be frequent publication of contracts awarded by NDDC.

4. The regional economic development plan of the NDDC should not be owned and controlled by the governors of the region. However they should work in partnership. NDDC should key into these initiatives by developing a long term development blueprint that will accommodate economic development initiatives of the states in the Niger Delta region.

5. NDDC should spend more resources on youth development because youth constitute the future of the Niger Delta region. This includes sports.

6. The NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs should be committed to major projects implementation that will fast-track the development of the Niger Delta region, and not minor projects like tables and chairs for classrooms.

7. NDDC should adopt bottom-up approach instead of top-down approach that has made the agency far away from the people.

The Niger Delta Dialogue will continue to engage with NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs on collective and individual platforms to assist them in a new and more effective development agenda for the region.

**ATTENDANCE LIST FOR THE 5TH NIGER DELTA DIALOGUE MEETING  
HELD ON THE 1ST AND 2ND FEBRUARY 2017  
HOTEL PRESIDENTIAL, PORT HARCOURT**

S/N	Names	Address	Organisation
1	H.E. King Alfred Diete Spiff	Port Harcourt	Traditional Ruler
2	H.M. King Dandeson Douglas Jai	Opobo	Traditional Ruler
3	Barr. Samuel Ebiwanno	Ondo	Chairman Host Community
4	Hon. Morris Idiovwa	Warri	Chairman OML 30 CDB
5	Pamela Braide	Abuja	Independent
6	Anthony Ubani	Abuja	Abia
7	Prof. S.W.E. Ibodje	Warri	Agbasha Improvement Union
8	Chief Ani Eric Esin	Calabar	Opinion Leader
9	Micheal U. Ekpo	Lagos	Opinion Leader
10	Chief (Dr) Mrs P. E. B. Uku	Benin	Olu of Warri Palace
11	Elder T. K. Ogoriba	Bayelsa	Izon Owei
12	Chief Dan Ekpebide	Gbaramatu	Ijaw Nation
13	Hon. DonBen Donyegha	Benin	Activist
14	Chief Gbenekama Godspower	Gbaramatu	Ijaw Nation
15	Famous Daunemigha	Abuja	Izon Leader
16	Annkio Briggs	Port Harcourt	Activist
17	Ken Henshaw	Port Harcourt	Activist
18	Rosemary Ikuloh	Ondo	Ijaw Arobgo
19	Nnimmo Bassey	Benin	Environmentalist
20	Dr Chris Ekiyor	Patani	Ijaw Leader
21	Chilos Godsent	Imo	P4P / Chairman PC
22	Dr. Felix Tuodolo	Bayelsa	Former IYC President
23	Hon. Abdul Oroh	Benin	Former Commissionnal
24	Dr Judith Burdin Asuni	Warri	Facilitator, AA PeaceWorks
25	Amb. Dr. Godknows Boladei Igali	Abuja	Facilitator
26	Amb. Hon. Nkoyo Toyo	Abuja	Facilitator
27	Falana Olamide	Ondo	Resource Person
28	Dr. Francis Ntamu	Cross River	Resource Person
29	Chime Asonye	Abia	Resource Person
30	Sylvester Okoh	PIND	Resource Person
31	Chuks Ofulue	BRACED	Resource Person
32	Remy Chukwunyere	Imo	Resource Person
33	Gloria Udoh	Port Harcourt	SPDC
34	Alexandra Noll	Abuja	European Union
35	Richard Young	Abuja	European Union
36	Yakubu Ogwuche	Abuja	European Union
37	Wilson Otu	Port Harcourt	British High Commission
38	Fidelia Onoghaite	Abuja	Netherland Embassy
39	Angelique Vander Made	Abuja	Netherland Embassy
40	Sophia Sabrow	Abuja	German Embassy
41	Dr. Ukoha Ukiwo	Abuja	British Council NSRP
42	Olachi C. Ronnie		DFID
43	Victor Okorie		DFID
44	Brig. Gen. PT Boroh	Abuja	Presidential Adviser on Niger Delta/Hd Amnesty Programme
45	Maj. M. Abdul	Abuja	Amnesty Office
46	Maj. G. Bernard	Abuja	Amnesty Office
47	LT. Col. O. Segun	Abuja	Amnesty Office
48	Beggi Erepatel	Abuja	Amnesty Office
49	Paul Sautus O.	Abuja	Amnesty Office
50	Donald Wokoma	Abuja	Vice President's Office

51	Hon. Omoghehin Micheal	Abuja	House Comm.On Niger Delta
52	Hon. Oghene Egoh	Abuja	House Comm.On Niger Delta
53	Mr Asuquo Afangideh	Abuja	House Comm.On Niger Delta
54	Hon. Nasiru A. Ahmed	Abuja	House Comm.On Niger Delta
55	Hon. Isreal Gyang	Abuja	House Comm.On Niger Delta
56	Hon. Eta Mbora	Abuja	House Comm.On Niger Delta
57	Pastor Usani Usani	Abuja	Hon. Minister Niger Delta Affairs
58	Umoh Friday	Abuja	Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
59	Aka Samuel	Abuja	Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
60	Yinka Ricketts	Abuja	Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
61	Sunday Samuel	Abuja	Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
62	Dr Wilcox Samuel	Abuja	Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
63	Dorothy I. Esija	Abuja	Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
64	Sen. Victor Ndoma Egba	Port Harcourt	Chairman NDDC
65	Nsima Ekere	Port Harcourt	MD - NDDC
66	Anselm Agommuoh	Port Harcourt	NDDC
67	Ukeme Nkamare	Port Harcourt	NDDC
68	Felix Aomreore	Port Harcourt	NDDC
69	F. N. Ogbeide	Port Harcourt	NDDC
70	Chijioke Amu Amani	Port Harcourt	NDDC
71	Ituk Efiok Udo	Port Harcourt	NDDC
72	Amadi Macdonald	Port Harcourt	NDDC
73	Searchlight Ogboka	Port Harcourt	NDDC
74	Magnus Isaac	Port Harcourt	NDDC
75	Ikuomola Patrick	Port Harcourt	NDDC
76	Dillion Oyuwe	Port Harcourt	NDDC
77	Oke Bojuwoni	Port Harcourt	NDDC
78	Ovweghere Martin	Port Harcourt	NDDC
79	Engr. AA Samuel	Port Harcourt	NDDC
80	Apollos Idogho	Port Harcourt	NDDC
81	Ogheneovo Itefue	Port Harcourt	NDDC
82	Stephen Onerhime	Port Harcourt	NDDC
83	Wahoro Weli	Port Harcourt	NDDC
84	Eziokwu Okpara	Port Harcourt	NDDC
85	Friday Jim	Port Harcourt	NDDC
86	Jacob Nwazi	Port Harcourt	NDDC
87	Aniekan B. Akpan	Port Harcourt	NDDC
88	Buni Tukuli	Port Harcourt	NDDC
89	Edi Jedy Agba	Port Harcourt	NDDC
90	Ignatius K. B.	Port Harcourt	NDDC
91	Emmanuel Iroubor	Port Harcourt	NDDC
92	Peter Willie	Port Harcourt	NDDC
93	Richard Ekpayong	Port Harcourt	NDDC
94	Friday Bouy	Port Harcourt	NDDC
95	Micheal Utot	Port Harcourt	NDDC
96	Ernest Akpan	Port Harcourt	NDDC
97	Chief Africas Lawal	Port Harcourt	PIND Foundation
98	Igboro Kehinde	Port Harcourt	PIND Foundation
99	Franklin Nelson	Port Harcourt	Voice of Hope Dev. Institute
100	Eugene Nwanzi	Port Harcourt	Save Etche Project
101	Patrick Usen	Port Harcourt	Motive International
102	Akanimo Mathias	Port Harcourt	Motive International
103	Mustapha A.T.	Port Harcourt	DSS
104	Hon. Victoria Nyeche	Port Harcourt	Rivers State House of Assembly
105	Oby Uchechukwu	Port Harcourt	NDDC Today
106	Macfoniso Monday	Port Harcourt	AIT
107	Grace Ekang	Port Harcourt	Channels TV
108	Maurice Bassey	Port Harcourt	Channels TV
109	Lucky Friday	Port Harcourt	NTA
110	Ifeatu Agbu	Port Harcourt	NDDC (CAD)
111	Uche Ifukor	Warri	AA PeaceWorks
112	Okekpolo Ogochuku	Warri	AA PeaceWorks
113	Akor Christiana	Warri	AA PeaceWorks
114	Eruotor Friday	Warri	AA PeaceWorks
115	Ebivnie Emuobo	Warri	AA PeaceWorks
116	Jide Owonikoko	Warri	AA PeaceWorks



# Niger Delta Dialogue

*A World of Peace*

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