



# Niger Delta Dialogue

SEPTEMBER 17 – 19, 2017

"NIGER DELTA ENVIRONMENT - CRITICAL TO DEVELOPMENT"

RANDEKHI ROYAL HOTEL, G.R.A BENIN CITY EDO STATE



## NIGER DELTA ENVIRONMENT – CRITICAL TO DEVELOPMENT



Academic Associates PeaceWorks

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*A World of Peace*



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ACADEMIC ASSOCIATES PEACEWORKS  
WITH SUPPORT FROM  
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Participants at the 8th meeting of the Niger Delta Dialogue

## INTRODUCTION

The 8<sup>th</sup> Niger Delta Dialogue held in Benin City, Edo State on September 17-19, 2007. The original topic of the meeting Niger Delta Environment – Critical to Development was discussed as planned. However, time was also allocated to discussion of the Federal Government's Strategic Implementation Work Plan (SIWP) which had been presented at the National Council on Niger Delta meeting the previous week in Akure, Ondo State. Several civil society groups had rejected the SIWP when it was first presented. Thus, it was decided for the 8<sup>th</sup> Dialogue to study the environment aspects of the SIWP and for the 9<sup>th</sup> Dialogue to study the entire work plan intensively. This is with the goal of making improvements in the work plan and gaining ownership by the people of the region.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Niger Delta Dialogue had in attendance critical stakeholders from the region. The meeting was addressed by the Amanayabo of Opobo and Chairman of Rivers State Council of Traditional Rulers, HRM King Dandeson Jaja of Opobo (CFR) and HRM Obi Martha Dunkwe Omu Anioma. Other participants included the Special Adviser to the President on the Niger Delta and Coordinator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme Brig. Gen Paul Boroh (rtd) and representatives of the Hon. Ministers of Niger Delta, Health and Environment. Others included representatives of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA), the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency NESREA and representatives

of Oil companies. The Ministries of Environment from 7 states participated in the meeting. International development partners – EU, UK, UNDP, Germany – were also in attendance.



Chief Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni  
Executive Director AA PeaceWorks

### Evolution of the Niger Delta Dialogue

In their remarks at the opening ceremony, participants stated that the Niger Delta Dialogue (NDD) since its inception in June 2016 has provided a veritable platform for in-depth analysis, discussion and mapping out of strategies on various issues concerning the Niger Delta region. This it was noted has helped to reinforce various actions by other stakeholders, especially the Federal Government, State Governments, and the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) in enabling them take some of the needed steps towards ensuring sustainable peace and development in the region.

Chief Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni, in her opening statement, gave an overview of the evolution of the Niger Delta Dialogue which started in June 2016.

The initial meeting, held in Uyo, Akwa Abom State, was to be a one-off event. However, the 50 leaders who were invited from across the Niger Delta region, found that the dialogue a useful platform and it was agreed to continue regular meetings. Fortunately, the European Union has provided continuing support. She stressed the importance of the process as it has provided suggestions and solutions to some of the issues in the region. One of the successes of the Dialogue is the relentless effort of Group B who interfaced with the Niger Delta Avengers and other militant groups to secure ceasefire of the persistent attack on oil infrastructure.

The Niger Delta Dialogue has sought to bring in a variety of participants, knowledge sets and opinions. Over the course of 8 Dialogues, the following individuals and groups have participated:

#### June 2016

- NDD itself- traditional rulers, women and men leaders of thought, representatives of Militant groups, activists, other youth leaders, academics
- Presidential Amnesty Office
- NDDC
- Federal Ministry of Niger Delta
- State governments
- Members of armed groups
- International partners- EU, US, NSRP

#### July 2016

- External resource persons- Gbaramatu
- More traditional rulers
- New international partners- UK, Netherlands

#### September 2016

- Vice President's office
- NSA's office
- Pan Niger Delta Coastal States Stakeholders Consultative Forum
- Resource Persons- Bakassi, Omoku
- New international partners- France, DFID

#### November 2016

- State amnesty programmes- Bayelsa, Edo, Imo
- University of Port Harcourt
- PANDEF

#### February 1, 2017

- PIND
- SPDC
- National Assembly- Committee on Niger Delta
- State Houses of Assembly
- New international partner- Germany

#### February 28, 2017

- Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Federal Ministry of Defence
- Presidential Commission on Small Arms/Light Weapons
- NEMA
- National Commission for Refugees
- Border Communities Development Agency
- Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources
- National Assembly- Committee on Foreign Affairs
- State Govts- Cross River State special rapporteur
- Resource persons- Savannah Centre, Southern Cameroun
- New International Partner- UK Foreign Office

#### June 30

- Cross River State Government
- State planning officers- Akwa Ibom and Rivers
- BRACED Commission
- New international Partner- UNDP

#### September 18

- Federal Ministry of Environment
- Federal Ministry of Health
- State Ministries of Environment
- NOSDRA
- NESREA
- Oil companies

The task now is to take the knowledge and insights gained during the Niger Delta Dialogues, spread awareness of the issues, and advocate for the implementation of solutions and recommendations.



## REMARKS BY MINISTERS



L-R: HRM Obi Martha Dunkwu  
Omu of Anioma, Raph Nnam NESREA, with Adeyinka  
Adewunmi NOSDRA-FMENU

### **Hon Minister of Environment Hon. Ibrahim Jubrin**

The Honourable Minister of Environment, Hon. Ibrahim Jubrin, was represented by the Deputy Director of Planning Policy Analysis and Research NOSDRA, Mr. Adeyinka Adewunmi. In his address, Mr. Adewunmi noted that the issue of environment is crucial to economic development and so must be given the attention it deserves. The Niger Delta environment is the largest wetland in Africa and maintains the third largest mangrove in the world. It has very rich biodiversity as globally acknowledged. However, it is sad to note that this ecological heritage is fast disappearing as a result of unsustainable economic activities in the region. Adewunmi further observed that since the commencement of oil exploration in Nigeria, thousands of spills have occurred in the Niger Delta region, adding that most of the spills were as a result of sabotage by people of the region. He maintained that only a few of the oil spills in the region were caused by equipment failure, operational errors or corrosion.

The spills have caused unspeakable pollution in the Niger Delta Environment leading to contamination of drinking water, surface water, destruction of vegetation and fragile ecosystem. Also, the overall impact of these spills is majorly on the health of the people of the Niger Delta and the country at large. It is therefore worthy to note that environmental sustainability is fundamental to sustainable development. For development to thrive in the Niger Delta region, it is crucial to harmonise the tripod elements of sustainable development which are;

- Economic growth
- Social and
- Environmental protections as they are critical

to the well-being of individuals and communities.

He called on individuals, communities and government to preserve the Niger Delta environment and natural resources, adding that the task of safe guarding the environment is a shared responsibility.

### **The link between Environment and health – Dr. Osagie Ehanire.**

The Honourable Minister of State for Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, was represented by Dr. Sunday Olotu. In his intervention, the speaker noted that creation was declared by God as good and excellent before it was handed over to man to take charge and dominate. He observed that Man's activity in his environment had brought out pollution, global warming, oil spillage, gas flaring Hurricanes and erosion, describing them as man's intervention with creation. He noted that oil spillage results in water pollution, air pollution, destruction of aquatic animation and the ecosystem.

Consequently, man is faced with the challenges of tackling health issues such as malnutrition, protein deficiency and loss of nutrients. He further laments the impact of gas flaring on the environment, describing it as destructive to vegetation. As a result, there is indiscriminate release of volatile organic solvents, chemicals such as Benzene  $C_6H_6$ , hydrogen sulphate which causes various breathing problems and respiratory difficulties including Asthma and chronic bronchitis. He stated that benzene is known to cause leukemia and cold related diseases. Also, acid rain, in reaction with zinc and asbestos roofing has negative effect/connnotations, leading to lung cancer. These and many more are health hazards related to degradation due to oil spillage and gas flaring.

Recent studies reveal that in Bayelsa, there is an 8% rise in the incidences of cancer due to gas flaring. As the realities of the negative health effect and other socioeconomic consequences of oil spillage and gas flaring come to light, there is need to take a concerted step to stop degradation in the Niger Delta. He expressed hope that the deliberations of the 8<sup>th</sup> Dialogue will initiate steps that will end oil spillage and gas flaring in the Niger Delta.

### **Presentation by Nnam Ralph – South South Zonal Director, NESREA**

The director general of NESREA Dr. Lawrence Anukam was represented by Ralph Nnam. The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) is responsible for the protection and development of the environment and biodiversity conservation. Biodiversity boosts ecosystem. Mr. Nnam explained the provisions of the various laws on the environment and the penalties for defaulters. He stated that the aims of these laws are to protect the environment and conserve biodiversity. He informed participants that the agency has taken some steps to enforce compliance, which includes the NESREA Green Corps Initiative.

### **Hon. Saturday Idehen Uwuilekhue-Commissioner NDDC Edo State, and Chairman Committee on Environment, NDDC Board**

The commissioner highlighted some initiatives undertaken by the commission to include waste management schemes, purchase of waste disposal, collaborating with states and local governments in the region to mitigate the effect of environmental hazard in the region. He further stated that the commission is also partnering with other agencies to mitigate gas flaring in the region, especially in oil producing communities. He assured stakeholders of the commission's continued support in complementing efforts of other agencies for a developed Niger Delta.

## **“BUDGET BREAK DOWN FOR STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION WORK PLAN”**

S/N	Development Focus Areas	Total No. of Projects	Indicative Cost (₦)
1	Core Business Focus*	15	₦6,995,000,000
2	Jobs Creation	60	₦76,318,427,876
3	Focused Investments in Gas to Power	27	₦17,449,346,062
4	Incentive for Peace Investment Scheme	114	₦171,544,262,543
5	Massive Civil Infrastructure Initiatives	142	₦1,544,369,247,613
6	Environmental Remediation and Clean Up	61	₦53,177,900,778
7	Domesticate Oil Business Opportunities	10	₦4,324,600,000
8	Niger Delta Development Fund Initiative	4	₦110,602,500,000
9	Militancy to Education (MTE) Initiative	13	₦30,433,323,880
10	State Amnesty Programmes	2	₦0
11	Youth Business and Chamber of Commerce Initiative	8	₦43,151,000,000
12	Federal Government Partnership with States	14	₦774,427,208
13	Policing for Peace – Community-based Policing	5	₦6,000,000,000
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>475 projects</b>	<b>₦2,065,140,035,959</b>

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Prof. Eghosa Osaghae, Vice Chancellor,  
Igbinedion University, Okada.**



Prof. Eghosa Osaghae, Vice Chancellor,  
Igbinedion University, Okada.

In his intervention, Prof. Eghosa Osaghae noted that issues of the environment have been taken for granted for too long. He gave an overview of the theoretical and historical basis of environmental discourses and narrowed it down to the Niger Delta environment and its importance to development. He pointed out that it is important to x-ray issues pertaining to environment globally as they are not peculiar to Nigeria alone. Several communities in other parts of the world have dealt with environmental issues and the history of how such issues were resolved, the theoretical handles that were used to interrogate and understand, and deepen knowledge are critical to our understanding. He recalled how as a young man, in 1984 working on his honours project in history, he heard the narratives about the Ogoni people, government reports, panel reports and petitions that were sent to oil companies on issues pertaining to the environment, which showed that a long time ago, the consciousness of the environment and what it meant had started to crystallise but had not taken on any global significance. In most cases, issues of environmental rights and justice are articulated by the people who are directly involved. Hence, the advocacy for environmental defense of the Niger Delta must come from the region itself.

He explained that man inherited an environment and whatever man does to improve his standard of living technologically and otherwise, had involved the exploitation of the environment. The era of colonization involved the plunder and conquest of people and their resources. At that time, Nigeria was at the receiving end of the process of plunder. In the capitalist hierarchy, “we became hewers of

wood and drawers of water”, a people whose only responsibility was to provide raw materials through the exploitation of the environment. Those who later moved against colonization, oppression and marginalisation did not recognise the centrality of the environment. However, when Nigeria was liberated, its freedom did not also recognise the importance of the environment but became the gate keepers of the exploitation of the environment.

In the early 70s, oil became a critical commodity and the response of crude capitalism was to extend and expand the exploitation of the environment. Today, the Niger Delta environment represents the most challenging environmental situation in the country because it has been the most ravaged and exploited. However, the environment can be managed in a participatory manner. Citizens must move away from the mentality of blaming government to critically focusing on what individuals, states and local government levels can do to savage the region's economy. To deal with the Niger Delta environmental issues, there is need for a master plan and the neglect of the Niger Delta people must not be allowed to go on for too long.

He concluded by saying that the people of the region must come together to articulate what can be done to salvage the Niger Delta environment and not continue to wait for government's intervention.

Response to the presentation- Amb. Nkoyo Toyo in her question stated that the Niger Delta has moved from the sense of aggregation and asked how the people of the region can break free from the governmentality mentality? Prof. Eghosa responded by saying that there should be a mobilization of people and consciousness. This should be at multiple levels, including communal level of engagement so that the people of the region can be properly organized to defend their autonomy.



L-R: HH Chief Anabs Sara Igbe, Richard Young,  
Nnimmo Bassey, Amb. Nkoyo Toyo with  
Prof. Eghosa Osaghae



## GOODWILL MESSAGES



L-R: Nnimmo Bassey, Richard Young EU Delegate, HH Chief Anabs Sara Igbe, Dr. S. Olotu representative of the Hon Minister of State Health, Prof. Eghosa Osaghae Vice Chancellor Igbinedion University Okada, HRM Obi Martha Dunkwu Omu of Anioma, Raph C. Nnam NESREA with Adeyika M. Adewunmi Representative of the Hon Minister of Environment, Chief Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni

### **Richard Young (EU Delegation)**

Richard Young of the European Union expressed delight that stakeholders of the Niger Delta have adopted dialogue as the first option towards resolving issues in the region. He said the Niger Delta is a region of special ecological importance with delicate mangrove forest and coastline. He noted that ECOCIDE has been taking place in the Niger Delta, that the region has been plundered. He expressed dismay that the plundering of the region has not delivered the expected economic benefits. He advised that there should be a shift in thinking and approach to ensure that resource exploitation does not cause severe damage to the environment. Mr. Young called on Niger Delta stakeholders to shift from just making plans and projections, and rise up to take actions and concrete steps.

### **High Chief Anabs Sara Igbe**

High Chief said he was happy, particularly because the Ministries of Health and Environment were present. He noted that the two ministries are charged with the responsibility of protecting the environment but have failed to live up to that responsibility. The ministries have not given the Niger Delta environment the attention it deserves. He called on the ministries and agencies to wake up to their duties and ensure that standards are maintained and adequate compensation paid to host communities that face the hazards of pollution.

### **Brig, Gen Paul Boroh**

The Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta and Coordinator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme, Brig. Gen. Paul T. Boroh (rtd) in his remarks welcomed the participants to the meeting, while saying that Niger Delta environment has over the years, suffered degradation due to the activities of multi-national oil companies and other activities. He

expressed hope that the solutions to the challenges facing the region in terms of environmental degradation will emanate from the dialogue. He assured participants of continued support from the Presidential Amnesty Office. He thanked the organisers of the NDD, while wishing the participants a robust deliberation.

### **Royal Address - Her Royal Majesty, Obi Martha Dunkwu**

Her Royal Majesty Obi Martha Dunkwu Omu Anioma, expressed gratitude to God for the 8<sup>th</sup> NDD, while also acknowledging the Oba of Benin and all participants at the meeting. She noted that over the years, focus had been on government's failure, while saying it is important for stakeholders to move from the mentality of complete dependence on government to an attitude shaped by selfless contribution to the holistic development of the region and country at large. She held the opinion that leadership and fellowship have corresponding responsibilities, while stating that leadership cannot thrive without responsible followership. As a grassroots leader, Obi Martha maintained that there is colossal failure of leadership and followership, saying that such gaps must be addressed.

She further noted that the most important asset Nigeria has is the environment, and not oil, adding that not much work had been invested in the citizens and the environment, particularly the Niger Delta environment. She further maintained that the Niger Delta environment daily suffers deliberate degradation resulting from man's activities, adding that there is need to check such unhealthy activities. She thanked the EU for providing funding for the NDD, while imploring the EU to replicate standards used in exploring natural resources in Europe, in Nigeria particularly in the Niger Delta region.



## STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION WORK PLAN



Standing Charles Achodo - MPR

Presentation of the Strategic Implementation Workplan for the Niger Delta by Charles Achodo, Adviser to the Minister of State Petroleum Resources. Achodo noted that there has not been effective coordination between stakeholders implementing activities in the Niger Delta. This has led to abandoned and uncompleted projects, and has also resulted in the duplication of projects in the region. He said this is one of the reasons for the setting up of the Inter-Ministerial Committee. The other reason for the establishment of the committee is to look at the 16-point Agenda and to distil out what can be achieved in the short, medium and long term. He stated that the 16-point Agenda can be divided into three major categories which are Security; Development; and Governance/Politics.

Achodo said the plan aims to identify budgeted and actionable projects that can start to address the development challenges in the region. The delivery of these projects will build the necessary confidence with the region and demonstrate Government's commitment to peace and development in the Niger Delta. He stated that the provisions of the plan were taken from various sources which include:

- The development activities outlined in the Sixteen-point Agenda from PANDEF
- The 20-point agenda of Government adopted as strategic sets of objectives
- The specific development initiatives of the various Agencies and Ministries
- The various CSR projects by the IOCs
- The specific request from communities presented to the Acting President during his

visits to the region.

- Needs identified by the members of the inter-ministerial technical team during initial visits to selected host-communities  
He outlined the objectives of the Plan as:
- To provide a common framework for implementing concerted development in the region
- To provide a joint accountability framework for monitoring and evaluation of development projects in the region
- To provide a unified strategic response based on a shared vision for development action by the agencies driving development in the region
- To offer a set commitment to the region as a development compact

He elaborated that the Plan has 1 overarching goal, 3 sets of outcomes, 15 intermediate outcomes and 475 project activities that span the length and breadth of the region. He added that the plan focuses on 13 development strategic objectives for the region as contained in the 20-Point Agenda while aligning and including the specific development demands made by PANDEF in its 16-Point Agenda.

The strategic work plan is a common framework for implementing concerted development in the region. The inter-ministerial working group meets quarterly at the ministerial level to review progress. He concluded by saying that the work plan is a tool with which citizens of the region can hold the government accountable.



L-R: Livingstone Membere with Elizabeth Jarikre - Rapporteurs

## DISCUSSION – COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE WORK PLAN – CHAIR: NNIMMO BASSEY



L-R: Emem Okon with Nnimmo Bassey

### Highlighted for inclusion :

- Draft a framework that will include all environment and communities in Nigeria not excluding the Bakassi Communities and Cross River State in general.
- Corporate social responsibilities should be out of the document.
- Employ a holistic approach for environmental rights action.
- There is need to set up a one hundred billion dollar fund for the clean-up of the Niger Delta environment.
- Renewable energy
- Post-pollution Niger Delta
- There should be an M&E for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation of development ministries.
- Strengthen coordination among agencies driving development in the region.
- Need for an improved document

### His Royal Majesty King Dandeson Jaja of Opobo

In his response, His Majesty King Dandeson Jaja of Opobo expressed delight that participants had attended to the topic of discourse. However, he was not happy that the issues pertaining to the Niger Delta region had not gone beyond mere paper work. He maintained that PANDEF was not part of the process which drafted the work plan, adding that government decision to force the document on PANDEF is regrettable. He interrogated government's commitment towards enforcing the law on oil companies with regards to gas flaring in the region. He stressed the need for a new approach of dialoguing with the Federal Government to implement the 16 point agenda before issues of election takes

the floor in no distance time. He concluded on the note that the region wants to see things done the right way.

### Response by High Chief Anabs Sara Igbe

Chief Sara Igbe said that Niger Delta representatives in government are not sincere. He said PANDEF demanded that the document be withdrawn but our people in government are hell-bent at pushing their agenda through. He noted that there are obvious omissions such as the Bakassi issues, Amnesty Program, relocation of companies, etc. which were not addressed in the Plan. He said PANDEF observed that the 20 point Agenda presented by those in government are already in the budget which was passed without input by the people and does not address the demands of the people of the region. He noted that projects included in the work plan are the legitimate right of the region, with or without the 16 point agenda. To continue to sustain the peace in the region, government must act on the 16 point agenda.

### Reaction of State Actors to the Federal Government work plan (Chair – **Amb. Joe Keshi**)

**Amb. Joe Keshi** said some of the projects in the work plan can be handled by the state and local government. He stressed the need for the FG to allow the states to do what they can do well within their capacity. He also emphasized the need to create job opportunities in the region. He concluded on the note that it is important to critically study the document with a view of making input.

**Comfort Asuquo** of Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Environment also held the opinion that the document should not be discarded by the region. Input should be made into it.

**Dr. Emmanuel Urang**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Rivers State, called for synergy among government agencies, adding that there is need for an M&E to monitor the implementation of projects at all levels of government.

**Akionu Bola** of the Ondo State Ministry of Environment decried a situation where the states and local governments are alienated by the environmental laws. She said the laws are totalitarian in nature and ascribe total responsibility to the Federal Government. She called for the establishment of an institution to monitor the agencies driving development in the region.

The representative of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment, **Adike Anapuma Ezekiel** emphasised the need for government to put in place a mechanism to address gas flaring before talking about



L-R: Prince Yemi Emiko, Chief Dr. PEB Uku with Amb. Nkoyo Toyo

remediation.

### **Reactions of Civil Society - Environment, Health, Climate Change, Development, Conflict.**

#### **Chair: Prince Yemi Emiko**

Prince Emiko reminded the house that the issues of environment, global warming, and climate change are critical. Therefore, attention must be accorded it.

#### **Legborsi Saro Pyagbara**

The Niger Delta is one of the most fragile ecosystem in the world and also the largest wetland in Africa. One factor that triggers climate change is gas flaring and it has negative impact on human health and even agriculture. He stressed the need for huge investment in the renewable energy sector by state government and also, communities should begin to make room for climate change response mechanisms. There should be capacity development to understand climate signs and matching it with policy is crucial to address climate change. There is need to intensify communication and education on climate change, particularly at the community level.

#### **Ken Henshaw**

In his intervention, Ken noted that recent research has shown the abundance of livelihoods in the Niger Delta but majority of them have failed due to poor livelihood planning between government agencies at the different tiers of government with little or no consultation with citizens. Secondly, most of the alternative frameworks which had been developed are inorganic; they do not adequately meet the traditional livelihood ecology and concerns of the people. Examples include Banana farm in Ogoni land and Rabbitry in Ijaw land.

He said so many livelihood programmes have failed because there was no adequate engagement with the

people. He added that most of the intervention did not take into cognisance the context, culture and environment of the people.

**Henshaw** said going forward, three critical things should be considered. They are: (1) stop ongoing pollution, (2) The rise of artisanal refining is as a result of energy deficiency in the region, and (3) There should local renewable energy grids in remote parts of the Niger Delta. He concluded by suggesting that the communities should be linked in an integrated manner.

#### **Morris Alagoa**

In his intervention, Morris noted that government has not been able to address the root cause of militancy in the region. When amnesty was accepted by youths of the region, there was sudden calmness in the region which made everyone believe that issues pertaining to militancy had been addressed. He decried the poor state of infrastructural development in the region, particularly in the creeks, adding that the cost of transportation from the creeks to the state capital equals that of a person travelling from Delta to Lagos. He noted that there are so many spills in the region and the oil company had in most cases denied



L-R: Morris Alagoa with Ken Henshaw

responsibility. Consequently, there is need for an environmental tribunal to address some of the issues relating to oil spillage. Another challenge facing the region is erosion and many communities in the creek are gradually being washed away by erosion. Some of these problems identified can be added to the section on environment in the work plan.

#### **Emem Okon**

In considering the total well-being of an individual, emphasis is usually laid on the immediate environment of the individual, the air he breathes, the food he eats and the water he drinks. Most communities in the





L-R: Nwakwuhue Felicity Zonal Head NOSDRA with Legborsi Saro Pyagbara MOSOP

Niger Delta region do not have access to clean water and adequate functional health facilities. Environment is an integral part of the human well-being; therefore, issues relating to pollution should not be treated with levity. Women in most Niger Delta communities do not have access to maternal care. Globally, 23% of deaths are due to preventable environmental factors pertaining to climate change, pollution and flooding which impacts on human health. Conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta impact on health, as citizens of the region live in perpetual fear due to conflict situations. The government needs to carry out intervention in the area of trauma healing. Also most water sources in the region suffer pollution and many people drink water from unsafe sources. Women in the Niger Delta region have for so many years suffered rape and sexual violence. Therefore, it is important to address the issue of gender protection.

#### **Dr. Fidelis Allen**

Framing a shared understanding as basis of effective management of environment related conflicts - When discussing issues of environment and conflict in the Niger Delta, what readily comes to mind is the impact of oil pollution on the environment. However, it is also about the struggle for the resources in the environment.

Environmental problems manifest as economic, social, political and natural problems. Therefore, the subject of environment is an integrated one because of its link with political, economic, social and cultural systems. Though conflict cannot be completely terminated or eradicated, cases of environment related conflict can be resolved. In planning development of the Niger Delta, it is important to explore the opportunities available in the non-oil sector such as renewable energy. In the implementation of development plan, there is need to be conflict sensitive. Various ministries and government agencies charged with the

responsibility of drawing development plans, must be conscious of the fact that conflict is inevitable. In our economic process, there is need to also be conscious of conflict triggers, especially violent conflict.

When environmental and developmental policies are framed in a mutually exclusive manner, there is risk of having lack of cooperation from those who ought to cooperate at the point of policy implementation.

**Ani Esin**, a native of Bakassi expressed worry that the issue of the Bakassi people have not been addressed and is alien to the Plan. He said the people of Bakassi will not accept the document.

Other comments and suggestions on the Plan by participants include:

- CSR should be expunged from the Plan
- A holistic approach should be adopted in the implementation of the Plan
- There should be a policy on renewable energy sector and also get



Dr. F. Allen CCGS UNIPORT



Bola Akinyanmi  
Ondo State Min. of Environment



Dr. E. S. Urang  
Rivers State Min. Environment



Adike A. Ezekiel  
Baylisa State Min. Environment

## SYNDICATE GROUPS



GROUP 1

Participants were divided into two groups to look at what was presented and come up with action points that should be considered in the Strategic Implementation Work Plan for the Niger Delta. After a rigorous brainstorming, the groups came up with the following recommendations:

### Recommendations by Group 1

1. Surveillance of oil pipeline should be done by the communities instead of individuals
2. The Amnesty programme needs to be fully funded
3. The relocation of the headquarters of oil companies to the Niger Delta should be given a strong consideration
4. All Corporate Social Responsibility Projects proposed in the Strategic Implementation Work Plan (SIWP) should be expunged from the main document and included as an appendix
5. A holistic approach should be adopted in the choice of projects. The Niger Delta Master Plan should be adopted for the development of the region
6. Ownership and operation of modular refineries should be exclusively for communities or indigenes
7. There should be a strong commitment towards putting an end to gas flaring. The Gas Reinjection Act should be fully implemented.
8. Consideration should be given to the use of the gas to generate electricity for

communities of the Niger Delta

9. Remediation efforts should be comprehensive and not targeted at few communities. Government should fast track the Ogoni Clean Up as a model for remediation
10. Government should budget 100 billion dollars for the clean-up of the entire Niger Delta
11. There should be an audit of the EIA reports implemented by oil companies
12. The Land Use Act should be repealed and ownership of land be given to communities
13. Government should immediately set up a committee to address the Bakassi issue and should provide interim measures to ameliorate the sufferings of the people, while a long-term solution is being developed

### Recommendations by Group 2

1. There should be a framework for ending gas flaring by 2020
2. Power generation in the Niger Delta should be given strong consideration. There should be a diversification of energy sources through the adoption of renewable energy options
3. The capacity of regulatory agencies and other relevant stakeholders and institutions should be strengthened for more effectiveness and efficiency
4. The roles of the regulatory agencies should





GROUP 2

be clarified and reviewed for a more synergistic relationship

5. Security agencies should be more community and environmentally friendly and should stop the method of burning or destroying petroleum products seized from artisanal refineries
6. The Federal Government should reactivate all moribund assets and projects such as the Warri Port, Calabar Port, Koko Port, Delta Steel Company, Gelegele Port, Qua Steel, Oku-Iboku Paper Mill, and others
7. Government should set up a framework for the conservation of renewable natural resources

#### **Response to Group presentations by Charles Achodo**

On gas flaring, Charles noted that there is an already worked out framework to convert flare gas for commercial purpose and the project management team has already been constituted. On modular refinery issue, he explained that guidelines for modular refineries have been published on the website of the DPR. The Hon. Minister will be engaging on a state by state visit, basically to mobilise communities in that regard. For community participation of pipeline protection, a process has commenced. He concluded by saying that people of the Niger Delta region should begin to ask themselves how to rebuild the region, adding that the problem of the region is fundamentally rooted in the people and so they must take responsibility for rebuilding the region.



Cross section of Participants at the 8th Meeting of the Niger Delta Dialogue



## CONCLUSIONS

Arising from the discussion at the various sessions, as well as outcome of work groups, the following recommendations and conclusions were reached:

- a. The need for more sensitization and awareness on the peculiar and fragile nature of the Niger Delta environment and the imperative of preserving its integrity and biodiversity.
- b. The importance of increased stakeholders interaction and sustenance of efforts for greater ownership of various environmental policies, promotion activities and initiatives by State Governments, Local Governments and host communities.
- c. The imperative of building institutions and capacities at all levels of governance to handle issues pertaining to the environment.
- d. The urgent need to create greater understanding on the growing impact of climate change and other negative environmental phenomena such as deforestation, flooding, coastal erosion, human migration, human health and nutrition and the need to identify timely and coordinated action plans by the Federal and State Governments on mitigation and adaptation to climate change and environmental degradation.
- e. Addressing as a priority, the creation of a new development and livelihood framework in the Niger Delta based on environmental justice, prioritization of renewable energy sources as well as the protection of the needs of special and vulnerable groups such as women and children.
- f. Particular need for the Federal Government and its regulatory agencies to carry out a more robust oversight on the activities of oil and gas companies operating in the ND to show better environmental footprint in the various communities in which they operate.
- g. Need for the international oil companies and other operating entities in the Niger Delta to ensure the compliance with best global standards and strict adherence to the extant laws of Nigeria in their operations in the region and take greater responsibility in the question of environmental remediation.
- h. Need for the Federal Government to particularly follow through with the Ogoni Cleanup exercise through proper funding and implementation of programmes according to the planned timelines.
- i. Calls on the Federal Government and its agencies to come up with a clear programme on further studies to identify the overall impact of the sixty years of operation of Oil and Gas industries on Niger Delta environment with a view to taking actions on remediation
- j. Critical importance for the Federal Government to take timely action in bringing an end to gas flaring and oil spillages which have continued to negatively impact the environment and the socioeconomic wellbeing of the Niger Delta in the past sixty years.
- k. Need for the Federal Government to take early action to implement the 16 – Point Agenda of PANDEF, as that is critical to the long-term development of the region and its sustainable environmental preservation
- l. Need for the Federal Government to take early action to implement the 16 – Point Agenda of PANDEF, as that is critical to the long-term development of the region and its sustainable environmental preservation
- m. That the South-South region must return to build a more enduring and structured approach to the region's development and would need to bring back the role of the BRACED Commission to assist with tracking implementation and outcomes.
- n. Reflected on the proposed road map (SIWP) for the development of the region presented at the recently concluded 2<sup>nd</sup> Council on the Niger Delta which held at Akure in Ondo State 11-15<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2017 and recommends further inputs, wider consultation before finalizing the document to foster greater ownership by the concerned stakeholders from the region.



L-R: Amb. Joe Keshi BRACED Commission, Amb. Dr. Godknows Igali with Uche Ifukor Niger Delta Dialogue Communique Committee

**8<sup>TH</sup> NIGER DELTA DIALOGUE PARTICIPANT LIST**  
**HELD AT RANDHEKI HOTELS, BENIN CITY SEPTEMBER 17- 18, 2017**

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2	HRM Obi Martha Dunkwu Omu of Anioma	Delta	Omu of Anioma
3	Nnimmo Bassey	Benin	Environmentalist
4	Elder TK Ogoriba	Bayelsa	Izon Owei
5	HH Chief Anabs Sara Igbe	Warri	Activist
6	Legborsi Saro Pyagbara	Rivers	MOSOP
7	Prince Yemi Emiko	Warri	Itsekiri
8	Chief Dr. Mrs. PEB Uku	Benin	Olu of Warri Palace
9	Chief Godspower Gbenekama	Gbaramatu	Ijaw Nation
10	Hon. Morris Idiovwa	Warri	Chairman OML30 CDB
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12	Hon. Don Ben Donyegha	Benin	Activist
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30	Beggei Erepatei	Abuja	Amnesty
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32	Col. Dedis Abel	Abuja	Amnesty
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34	George Esiri	Abuja	Amnesty
35	Winter Edet	Abuja	Amnesty
36	Piriye Kiyaramo	Abuja	Amnesty
37	Gbaboyor Jude	Abuja	Amnesty
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# Niger Delta Dialogue

*A World of Peace*

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