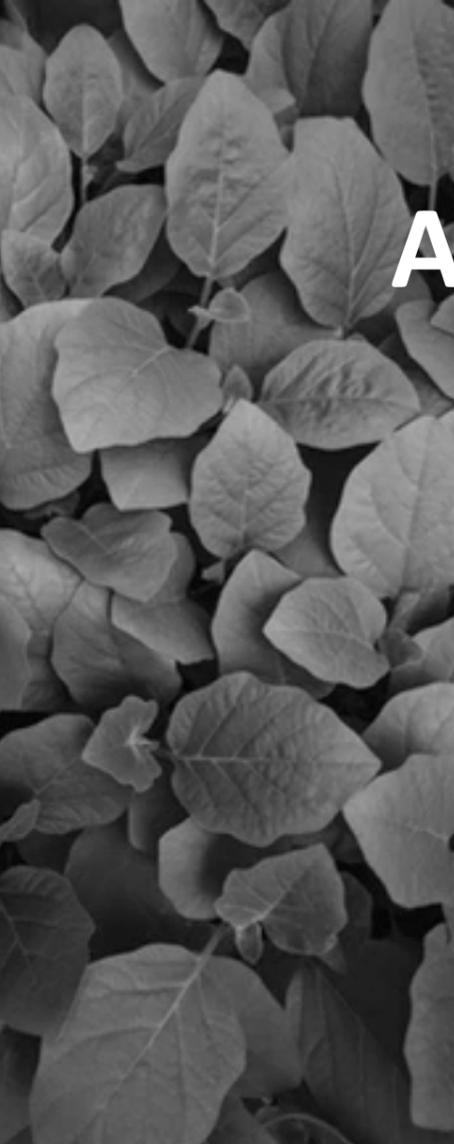




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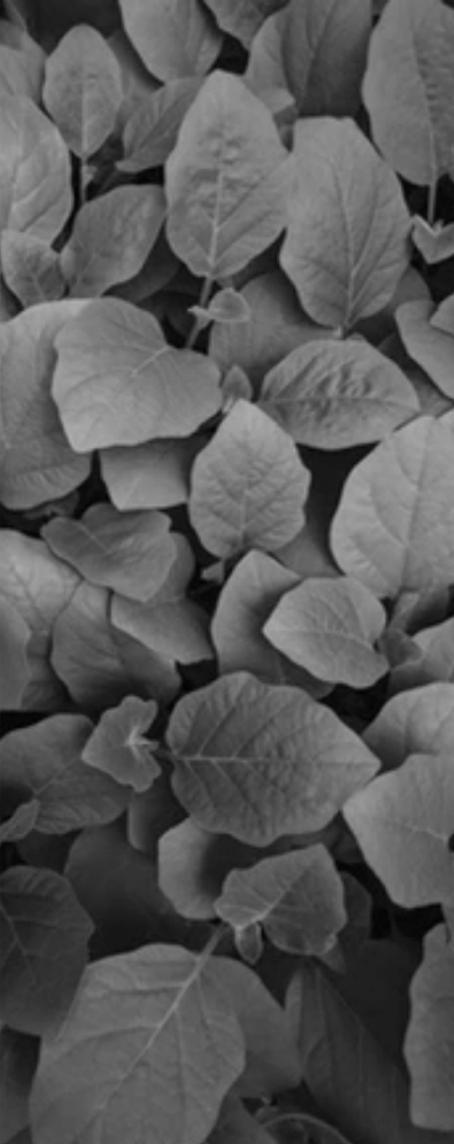
Report of the
**2ND
NIGER DELTA
YOUTH
ENVIRONMENTAL
SUMMIT**



Acknowledgement

This report was written by Ubrei-Joe, M. Mariere and Gadibia Victory. We appreciate the support of our partners, Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO), Edefe Unuezi Oduh Foundation, Yasuni Association, Center for Research in Environmental Resource Management (CREMA), Ecoactors, Eco Assurance and Rural Transformation Centre (EcoTrace) and Development Initiative for Community Impact, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) and Jewel Affairs. Sir Ayodele Othihiwha, former aspirant for Isoko Federal House of Representatives is also appreciated for his donation to support the program.

We are indebted to our Keynote Speaker, Professor Irwin Anthony Akpoborie, various resource persons, facilitators and the other participants in the conference for their contributions. The visionary leadership of the Executive Director, CODAF is well appreciated. We are indeed grateful to Ubrei-Joe, M. Mariere for initiating this laudable program for CODAF. To all our staff and volunteers, you are appreciated for your commitment and dedication to this



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Introduction

As a way of responding to the underdevelopment of the region, the federal government of Nigeria established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs. States also have their respective development commissions like the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC). With the presence of these institutions in the region it remains underdeveloped and local indigenous people have seen little of any improvement in their standard of living while suffering serious damage from their natural environment.

The Niger Delta Youth Environmental Summit was born out of the desire to enhance the capacity of the Niger Delta Youths to constructively question and analyze oil and environmental politics in the region. The first edition which was held at St. Theresa Girls Grammar School, Ughelli, in April 2017, focused on fighting Niger Delta Environmental Challenges through youth engagements in decision making. A world renowned environmentalist, Nnimmo

Bassey took the key note presentation where he addressed an audience of Eighty (80) youths selected from the nine Niger Delta States on “Our Niger Delta: Key Challenges and Possible Solutions”.

Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF) organized the second edition of the Niger Delta Youths Environmental Summit on July 24, 2018 at Oleh, Delta State, which focused on the development options for the region. The summit was well attended by over 200 participants drawn from the Nine (9) Niger Delta States. Government officials also boycotted the second edition just like they did in the first edition even after much effort to engage them. Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO), Yasuni Association, Center for Research in Environmental Resource Management (CREMA), Ecoactors, Eco Assurance and Rural Transformation Centre (EcoTrace) and Development Initiative for Community Impact are some of the Civil Society groups who supported and participated in the summit.

The summit took the form of paper presentations by resource persons drawn from diverse fields, particularly academicians, development workers, Civil Society, the Press, expert panel discussions and musical performance. A feedback mechanism in the form of comments, questions and answers as well as reports from breakout sessions were equally adopted as part of the summit. Songs were used to inform participants by Ubrei-Joe Jeru. The first song I will not dance to your beat was used to convey a message of breaking free from fossil fuels and all forms of false solutions to climate change. while the second one titled oil only flows when the earth bleeds confirmed the state of the Niger Delta environment. Both songs were coined from Nnimmo Bassey's collection of poems.

1.1 OPENING SPEECHES/ GOODWILL MESSAGES

In his opening speech, the Executive Director of CODAF, Benin Richard welcomed all participants to the second edition of the Niger delta youth environmental summit and noted that the overall

goal of the summit is to promote development pathways. He described youths as the building blocks of any nation and they show how far a country can go in sustaining itself. “Nigeria, a country blessed with both natural and Human Resources is said to be one of the richest in the world.

It is also a known fact that Nigeria is the most populous black nation on earth with over 198 million citizens, out of the general population of the country, about 29 million youths are from the Niger delta region” he reiterated.

Mr. Benin hinted that the Niger Delta covers an area of over 70, 000 Square kilometers and it is made up of 40 Ethnic groups and it is the largest wetland in Africa and it is rich in both renewable and non renewable natural resources.

The CODAF Boss lamented that 70% of the population of the Niger Delta lives below the poverty line with limited amount of disposable income, access to healthcare, clean water, educational attainment,

shelter and gainful employment despite the presence of institutions like NDDC, DESOPADEC and the ministry of Niger Delta Affairs created by government to tackle the needs of the region. While concluding his opening speech, Richard gave the assurance that if the majority of people present at the summit paid rapt attention and act on the discussion held, our course would spread like wildfire and may just as well reach the majority of youths among the previously stated 29 million in the region and further Our collective efforts to make a different satisfactory goal for the Niger delta.

With over fifty years of repeated and unabated oil spills and gas flaring from oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta, the environment and the livelihoods of the people has been considerably damaged, resulting to a decline in the mangrove forest, farm lands & produce, pollution of rivers and drinking water and negatively affecting the health of the people.



Mr. Fred Nohwo, in his goodwill message thanked the Executive Director of CODAF and the entire staff for putting the 2nd edition of the Niger Delta Youth Environmental Summit together and also the participants for being part of the process. He urged the participants to also feel the pains of those who's environment is constantly being degraded, while noting that the people of the Niger Delta is likened to those who suffer and continue to suffer within the Nigerian State, the ills of oppression because another group of people seek the preservation of life either through the annexation of landed property foreign to their immediate locality or the expropriation of resources to their region by other means.

Continuing, he lamented how resources from the region have been used to

develop other parts of the country while the people of the Niger Delta still wallows in abject poverty due to the underdevelopments and continued depletion of its rich biodiversity and natural resources. Fred called for change narratives from trading blames and swing into actions that will help salvage the region.

Fred Nohwo said "While the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) expressed satisfaction to their contribution to the development of the region, "I must say, we are yet to achieve the minimum level of development for a resource rich region like that of the Niger Delta". The current structure of the Nigerian state which breeds powerful individuals as against powerful institutions cannot and will not allow any of the identified institutions in the Agenda of this Summit to generate, in its wake, the needed developmental strides that we desire"

In his advice to the youths, he said "the Niger Delta Youth", must as a matter of urgency, retract their steps in the scheme of things under the

Nigerian political space. The time has come when we must maintain a total break from our past and begin the re-engineering of our future as a people and as a region.

The Niger Delta Youth must know that the exit of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) from Delta State and in particular, from Warri, isn't an isolated happenstance but one that will recur in Bayelsa, Eketand Port-Harcourt (depending on the oil mining company in your state) if we do not get our priorities right".

While concluding his message, the Executive Director of ECOTRACE, hinted that the aborted Ogidigben EPZ was as a result of land ownership claims. He then advised that we can learn to be our brother's keepers, we can learn to eat as kings and queens from the same table and avoid the loss of potential jobs and the associated boomerangs the Ogidigben EPZ was expected to generate.



Dr. Emma O. Idise, Chairman of CODAF Board of Directors was over Joyous while giving his goodwill message, for witnessing the 2nd edition of the Niger Delta Youth Environmental Summit and the outcome of the first edition is highly commendable. He said this edition was quite timely and the location is not also out of place because the awareness level of "resources democracy" is very low while calling that our resources should be placed in the care and control of the resource owners "Indigenous" people who are also the best custodian of the environment. While lamenting how politicians have constantly stood as betrayers to the effective

participation of indigenous people, especially youths in environmental decision making, he expressed satisfaction on how the summit has been designed to equip the youths with tactics to be in control of policies and monitor their implementations. Idise, said "our youth are deprived of the opportunity to learn, the opportunity to lead, the opportunity to lend and the opportunity to land." Concluding his goodwill message, he urged the youth to take elective positions and dissociates themselves from politicians because without the youth politicians can't win elections.



Dr. Morris Olory, National Secretary of Community Forest Watch, while giving his goodwill message, confirmed that the Niger Delta Ministry was exactly ten years this year and the summit is timely as it would help in evaluating the progress the Ministry and the Niger Delta Development Commission have made so far.

Continuing, he said, as an individual and as members of the Niger Delta States, we are stakeholders and we should make contributions and find out how we can take the Niger Delta to the next level.

Comrade Edafe Unuezi Oduh, an aspirant for Federal House of Representatives to represent the Isoko Federal Constituency, also spoke and reiterated that he was very happy to support and participate actively in the summit.

Continuing, he opined that “our youths are made to believe that questioning the system is waging war against it. Questioning the system is a way of doing for ourselves what our ancestors and our leaders failed to do for us. If we don't question the system, we would be failing the generations yet unborn”. He opined that the likes Ken Saro-wiwa and Isaac Boro that started the Niger Delta struggles, set the paths for the development of the region and implored the youths not to be afraid in advocating for a better society.

The way to go is to form pressure groups and never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. the House of Representatives aspirant, lamented the state of the Niger Delta environment while noting that is manically bewildered and her

resources are controlled by only a few individuals in government who use resources from the region to develop other parts of the country and leave the people in abject poverty, ecological abuse, social frustration and thereby incriminating the people and make them look as if they are their own problems.

Furthering his speech, he advised that young people should be at the forefront of the change and innovation we seek for the development of the region. Noting that if youths are empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace but if they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies.

While concluding, he said **“Our youth are not failing the system; the system is failing our youth. Ironically, the very youth who are being treated the worst are the young people who are going to lead us out of this nightmare.”**

We must understand the fact that every generation needs a new revolution.

The new revolution we need at this time is for young people to participate actively in politics which is the missing link in the society today. Let me sound this as a warning to all young people here seated, the penalty for refusing to participate in politics is that you end being governed by your inferiors.



A graphic featuring a green square with the number '2.0' in white, positioned above the words 'KEY NOTE' in large, bold, green capital letters. Below this, the word 'Presentation' is written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. A thick green horizontal line runs across the page, starting from the left edge of the graphic and extending to the right edge.

2.0 KEY NOTE Presentation

The keynote presentation which was based on **“Issues in Sustainable Environmental Resource Management of the Niger Delta: Identifying Roles for Young People”** was taken by Professor Irwin Anthony Akpoborie, Executive Director of CREMA. Starting the presentation, he outlined the various aspect of his paper and also expressed his disappointment on the attitude of government officials who were absent at the summit which is focus on the youths of the Niger Delta and despite all the commitment from the organizers in engaging them in this process.

Continuing, he explained all the features as was present in the map of the Niger Delta in slide, identifying the location of Niger Delta water

resources including all the rivers, crude oil deposits and the rich biodiversity hotspots. He said, the entire path ways of the great river Niger flows through the Niger Delta and everyone should be responsible for managing the resources that are under our authority. The water that flows through the Niger Delta is our comparative advantage in the local language.

The University don emphasized that the Niger Delta is one of the most oil-impacted ecosystems in the world. He drew attention of participants to the ongoing debate about two contemporary and controversial Bills that are being considered at the National Assembly: Petroleum Industry Bill and the National Water

Resources Bill. He identified contentious issues in both Bills and explained why the National Assembly should be urged to ensure that clauses that could have major negative impacts on the environment, welfare, livelihoods and well-being of the indigenous populations of the petroleum and water rich Niger Delta are excised from the Bills before passage.

He opined that the youths can actively document cases of pollution and resource depletion noting that with a photograph evidence of crude oil floating in creeks can make the operators to be more responsible to the environment.

Youths should take action that will improve the sustainability of the environmental resources in the region. The biggest oil spill that has ever happened in Nigeria was never documented and it happened in a riverine community called "Ogulaha" in Delta State and this explains how the actors in the Niger Delta have been so irresponsible to the management of their natural resources.

The youths must try their best to take a stand for their natural resources and only through such responsibilities can the youths begin to make their voices known and gradually develop the region. Irwin Akpoborie confirmed that there are regular oil spills in the Niger Delta and many of them are not documented and many more sites where crude oil are explored could possibly exist without our knowledge at the moment.

He lamented the visible dredging sites/burrow pits along Warri-river close to Osubi Airport, noting that this act of irresponsibility of resource extraction which is also visible in the entire coastal line of the Niger

Delta is causing infrastructural breakdown such as bridges, road networks and crude oil pipelines. Rivers are part of our lifestyle, our cultures and our identity, their mismanagement are resulting to environment degradations and coastal erosions. The continuous erosion of the coast means a continuous erosion of our culture, tradition, way of life and identity.

There are several bodies and existing laws responsible for the regulation of the petroleum and water industries **and some of them are: Federal Ministry of Environment, Department of Petroleum**

Resources (DPR), Federal Ministry of Water Resources, Petroleum Industry Bill, Water Resources Act, National Water Resources Bill, Delta State Ecology Law, Delta State Water and Sanitation Policy, Delta State Water Sector Bills. These institutions and regulations are meant to correct environmental and water resource dilemma in the Niger Delta but obviously they are either not concerned or not interested in these issues and so the youths should not sit without questioning the process. The 1991 incidence of injecting toxic waste into an abandoned borehole in Ozoro community in Delta State by a Company, confirms the weakness of these institutions in enforcing environmental regulations.



The prompt action taken by the community people in taking the matter to court is commendable, but the issue is still unsolved till date. Youths have to stand up and make sure that the industries messing up the environment should clean up the waste and repair the damages done to our environment.

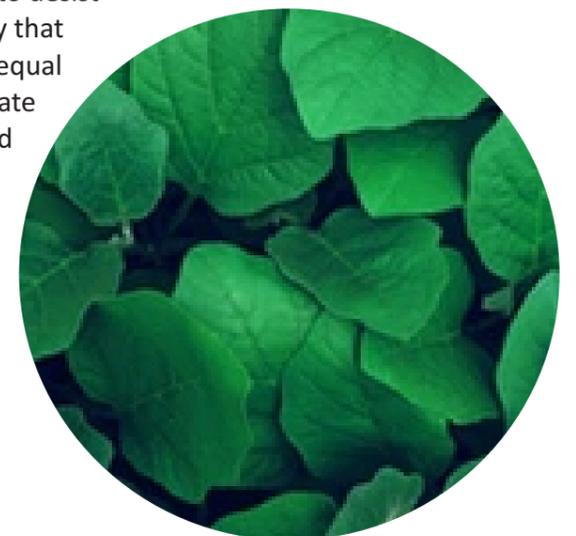
According to the Executive Director of CREMA, "reviews have shown that inadequate regulation and poor guidelines and applications are responsible for the degradation going on in the Niger Delta environment", he therefore, proposed that an Inspectorate should be setup to ensure safe efficient effective infrastructure and guide against misuse/abuse of natural resources noting that it will do better than DPR.

The keynote speaker reiterated that the quest for effective water resource legislation was much discussed during General Ibrahim Babangida's administration as a military head of state. He

signed the bill into law in 1993 and this was a decree and not a law according to Professor Akpoborie, the decree was changed into acts which directed the water resources to be owned by the Federal Government but it has been amended by the Federal Water Resources Act of 2018 which states that "all waters both surface and the underground belongs to the Federal Government". The management of the water resources is crucial, there is a human right to water and it entitles every human being the right to water. The right to water, states several obligations to respect, protect and to provide water to every human. The obligation to respect, requires the state parties to refrain from interfering directly or indirectly with the enjoyment of the right to water. And also to desist from any activity that would limit the equal access to adequate water supply and basic sanitation.

He informed participants on efforts made by his organization

CREMA in review an existing EIA made by AGIP Oil Company with a hint to the company that have operated her assets in Isoko land successfully for decades. CREMA also recommended strongly that water stations for the collection of basic data should be established in the area include public schools by the company's as part of her Corporate Social Responsibility. Stressing on the importance of data, he prayed for it to be implemented and encouraged the youths to pass this initiative to teach the children and their fellow youths about the environment.





“Teach the kids about the environment let them have environmental clubs in schools and in communities that are affected by environmental hazards” Akpoborie suggested.

One of the high points of the keynote speaker's presentation was on the global sustainable development goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a global blueprint for dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future. Three years into the implementation of the

Agenda, some countries are translating this shared vision into national development plans and strategies while others are moving in the opposite direction, seriously undermining the spirit and the goals. According to him, all the seventeen goals were suppose to have been met by 2030 noting that the sixth goal ensures access to water and sanitation for all. Clean, accessible water for all is an essential part of the world we want to live in. There is sufficient fresh water on the planet to achieve this. But due to bad economics or poor

infrastructure, every year millions of people, most of them children, die from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Speaking further he confirmed that all the seventeen goals are interconnected while explaining to the youths about the relationship between environmental degradation and extremism. He said, the reason for insurgencies like the Boko Haram and Militancy groups are because of climate change.

The Sustainable Development Goals are aimed at bridging the gap, rebuild trust by bringing people together around common goals which he confirms were the words of Antonio Guterres who is the secretary general of the United Nations.

The world is off-track in terms of achieving sustainable development and fundamental policy changes are necessary to unleash the transformative potential of the SDGs.” This is the main message of the Spotlight Report 2018, the most comprehensive independent assessment of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He said, this report was launched on the opening day of the High Level Political Forum at the United Nations in New York by a global coalition of civil society organizations and trade unions. The recommendations of the spotlight report as listed by Anthony Akpoborie are:

- v Governments should promote policies that are genuinely coherent in the interest of sustainable development,

- v human rights and gender justice. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs must not be hidden in the niche of environment and development policies but must be declared a top priority by all heads of government.

- v The national strategies for sustainable development should not be regarded as one among many but constitutes the overarching framework for all policies.

He added that the availability of quality, accessible, open, timely and disaggregated data is vital for evidence-based decision-making and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Other issues he pointed out were on the importance of record keeping which is vital in the management of the resources of the Niger Delta and most especially the world. Every activity done in the environment should be properly documented. There is nothing as

important as data, if the Niger Delta resources are to be effectively managed.

Professor Irwin Anthony Akpoborie hinted that budget tracking is a part of good governance in water resources development. He urged that the following questions relating to how much is allocated to water at all levels of government, the projects selection and review process, the exact cost of a liter of water delivered from a federal, state, local government, donor, NGO, private supplies and the broken down/abandoned schemes must be answered in water governance. Concluding his presentation, the speaker made the following recommendations:

- v Evaluation of Water Resources be undertaken by combined effort of Local Government Councils, NGOs, CSOs, etc

- v Undertake comprehensive inventory of Water Supply Projects: numbers, water quality and status

(Question: How many federal water projects are in Isoko South and Isoko North?)

3.0 Panel Discussion

- v Initiate meteorological data collection programs: for climate change and other issues
- v Insist on maps for various purposes including Land use and drainage maps to accompany all EIAs
- v Track budget allocations to water and environmental management at ALL Public Agencies!
- v Young People must take advantage of available training programs that would empower understanding of how government and policy making works
- v CSOs, NGOs, tertiary institutions must build capacity through short, certificate programs for young people and the elderly as well

The first panel was focused on answering the questions of whether the Niger Delta Institutions have met their minimum targets in line with the objectives that led to their establishment. It further assessed the environmental infrastructures whether they are in conformity with international acceptable standards and the role of young people in enhancing the effectiveness of the institutions. The four members in the panel were drawn mainly from the civil society actors and academic and they discussed as follows:



Ubrei-Joe, M. Mariere in his response to the above issues, said, the objectives of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, others including Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) etc. have not been met following the poor project performance of the region.

There is a huge short coming in the activities of these institutions relating the year of their establishment till date and the poor outcome of their so-called ability can

be associated to corruption. There is also inadequacy in the budget of these institutions. In the Niger Delta, there are records of regular oil spills as a result of equipment failures, road projects, bridges and drainage systems are broken down regularly which show that the environmental infrastructures in the region are below minimum standards.

Fred Nohwo, while giving his assertion, lamented the poor state of infrastructures in the Niger Delta noting that there are uncompleted infrastructures and the

materials being used in projects implementations are below minimum engineering standards.

Financial budgets to carry out development projects have longed been approved but currently no activities are ongoing in the Niger Delta which show the inability of the Niger Delta Institutions to effectively meet their desired objectives. The leaders of government are not doing their jobs for check and balance and they lack interest in the development of the region.

Mrs Rachael Missan-Rupee, replied with a “no, relatively”. She stated that “the NDDC and many other development institutions do not investigate the projects they intend to carryout, thereby leading to complete wastage of both financial and infrastructural resources”.

Due to corruption, the government tends to approve project not for the development of communities but for personal financial gain. She suggests that there should be a change of narrative that the institutions above have not done their job efficiently.

The youths should use their phones as a means to pressure the institutions to sit up and do a better job. There has to be an assessment of both the social and environment impacts of environmental infrastructures.

Infrastructural assessment has to go over several seasons not just for a short period of time. Several stories have been heard of assessment being done for just a couple of hours and that shows both a lack of knowledge and interest in the effectiveness and

standard of such projects and/or infrastructure. At other times, the community indigenes are not being assessed with questionnaires to ensure that these infrastructures meet environmental standards and as well satisfy the people of these communities.

Dr. Emma O. Idise in his feedback, hinted that the institutions have failed in their bid to developing the region. Citing issues of corrupt practices, he laid emphasis on a road project located at Ozoro community in Delta State that has been awarded to more than one contractor over the years to do the same job as if they are doing different projects.

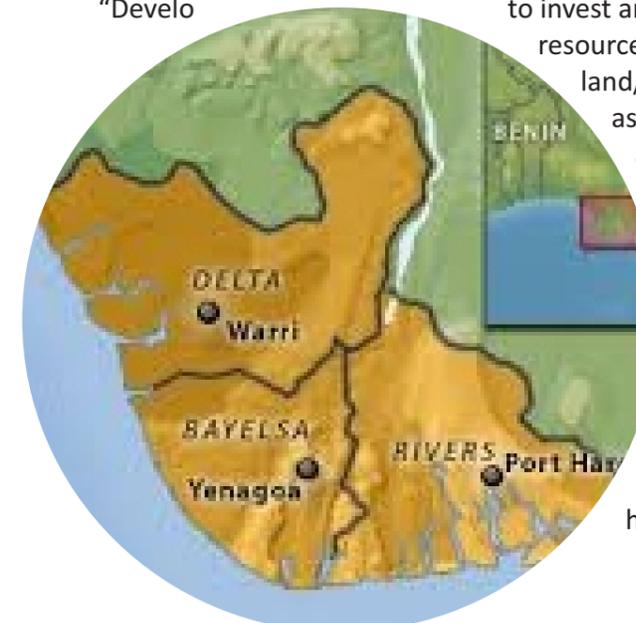
The institutions do not go to the communities before approving their contract and the result of this behavior is the wastage of financial resources and the misuse/abuse of facilities and most frequently the abandoning of projects midway.

There is need to examine how development projects affects the environment. For example; will it affect the wild life and natural resources in a negative way? Would it cause

discomfort or hinder the activities of the people in that area? All these should be carefully analyzed. All these impacts assessment report should be shown to everyone to see and the youths need to understand these impacts and how they can be mitigated.

4.0 Development Options for the Niger Delta

The second paper which is titled “Development options for the Niger Delta” was presented by the Executive Director; Sabina Idowu-Osehobo of Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO), who was ably represented by Mr. Andrew Udah. Sabina Idowu-Oserobo started her presentation by congratulating CODAF for its second edition of the Niger Delta Youth Environmental Summit that she is gladdened to see youths from the Niger Delta committing and contributing their resources through engagement of youths in decision making process to addressing challenges in the region. According to the LAPO's Executive Director, this year's theme “Develo



ment Options for the Niger Delta” no doubt is a well thought-out topic and very relevant to focus on if the Niger Delta is to be preserved. It is worthy of note to commend the government and its agencies on the deliberate and attempted programs and projects suggested and implemented as a developmental option. Perhaps the activities are either not being exploited to its full potential or they are inadequate.

When we think and talk about the Niger Delta, what comes to mind is “OIL and Oil Money” as we all know the region is well endowed with crude oil resources and has been the hub of economic activities that has sustained the nation's wealth. The region attracts both the national and multinational groups to invest and tap the

resources found in the land/environment; as such their activities have led to the degradation of the area. Should we continue to agitate, of course that is a worthy cause however, what

the future holds for the Niger Delta people should be the focus.

We must start and continue to ask questions as; what NEXT if oil ceases today? What NEXT if the nationals and multinationals decide to leave the region?

So the theme “Development Options for the Niger Delta” is well selected.

If development options must be proffered; Agriculture should be looked into again and again. Yes, the lands (waters) have been degraded but the Niger Delta still has upland mass that can still support farming. Fishing on the high waters/seas may have been hampered due to pollutions in the waters, but fish farming can be taught and encouraged. In Warri and other major cities of the region we are aware of fish farming going on by individuals and cooperatives. The same land believed to have been polluted is been utilized by others for production purposes.

Are these groups of productive persons adequate; No, do they need support Yes.

Development should start with self and culminate into prospects. Youths from the Niger Delta should look into educational advantages to be able to exploit the prospects in the region. Professional and vocational courses such as Engineering, Electrical and Electronics, Economics, Agriculture, etc should be studied and become proficient in it and the jobs that are associated with oil draining and refining activities will be taking over. Groups can form itself into cooperatives and be product specifics. Marketing linkages is other options for the people in the region; i.e. source products from the uplands and taking advantages of the water lands to engages in export opportunities

This is where the private sectors, developmental organizations, government and multinational oil companies come in with interventions. While the habitants of the Niger Delta people privileged to occupy upland areas engages in farm production and processing of produce and products, the habitants at the water lands engages in export

opportunities of the products.

For us in Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO) which is a non-governmental, not-for-profit community development organization, we have committed our resources to the empowerment of the poor and vulnerable people in the Niger Delta and across Nigeria through our social, health and livelihood programs. Our vision is “a healthy and informed society characterized by prosperity, justice and equity.”

LAPO has invested over 30 billion Naira in the Niger Delta in the areas of Microfinance, Health outreaches, Social Development Programs (such as: trainings in micro businesses, financial literacy, scholarship awards to deserving students up to post graduate studies and advocacy in facilitating developmental projects to communities), currently LAPO is facilitating the establishment of a Micro Rice Mill project in a Niger Delta community in Edo State and it is funded by the Embassy of Japan in Nigeria also we are working with CBOs to create awareness and

provide screenings for Cancer victims in six states of Nigeria including three states of the Niger Delta. LAPO will continue to support every measure at implementing intervention programs and projects as an option for development in the Niger Delta, programs geared towards ending poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all its forms.

The challenge(s) that can hamper the implementation of developments and its options includes; environment of strife, lack of market, funding, etc. In the Niger Delta case, the market exists for any business to thrive and lots of opportunities for funding avail however; the environment of strife has hindered potential supports from getting to the people.

We must make concise efforts to sensitize our people to allow useful and purposeful investments and investor's to remain.

5.0 Feedback from Technical Session by Panel of Discussant

A technical session and a panel of discussants were immediately constituted to discuss the way forward on the various development options for the region. The four member panelists spoke about the development options from different perspective as can be found below:

Dr. (Mrs) Eno Olele tcoordinated group one (1) in the technical session, she told the panel that youths involvement in policy and decision making is one way to influence the development of the region while advising that youths should be actively involved in politics which is the only vehicle that can empower youths to make positive impacts in governance and create a robust outcome of their community. Abolishment

of “deve” which is a local way of asking for bribe by youths and other individuals in the society is one of the options suggested by her. Development fees should be completely removed from all intended projects since the aim of such project is for the development of the Niger Delta and the issuance of development fee might discourage the contractor from using standard materials in the development of the community. Youths should also monitor the activities of the projects.

Another way to increase the development of a community is for proper information to be passed to the youths from the leaders and the youths should acquire skills. Contract should be given to qualified people not awarding contracts through nepotism.

Youths should be involved from the budget forming process. Her points are summarized below:

- v Youth involvement in policy formulation and decision making and young people should actively participate in politics,
- v Youth should be included in project monitoring from start till they are commissioned,
- v There should be information sharing among various stakeholders using a top down approach,



- v Government should stop using nepotism as factor in the development of the Niger Delta as well as in the Nigerian government. We should discourage the award of project execution to unqualified friends and/or families and encourage competence and performance,
- v Niger Deltans need regular sensitization and enlightenment programs to enhance their participatory abilities in project development plans,
- v Disorder in society value system should be discouraged.

Dr. Maurice Olory, National Secretary of Community Forest Watch, Calabar, in his feedback, informed participants that Programs and projects in the Niger Delta should be carried out after proper survey has been done and also there should be a

need for a rebuilding of the existing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulation and suggested also that there is a need to establish a proper storage facility. The entrepreneurial skills of Youths should develop while encouraging the establishment of facilities where youth can strengthen their acquired skills. His action points for the development of the Niger Delta are listed below:

His action points for the development of the Niger Delta are listed below:

- v Strengthening existing policies, laws and guidelines that will foster the development of the region,
- v Ensuring that projects and programs of the Niger Delta Institutions are implemented according to set rules, regulations and standards,
- v An all inclusive EIA where youths, women and men of the project host communities are involved as stakeholders,
- v Survey and community needs assessment should be carried out before a project is sited and this should be in the development master plan of the region
- v The agricultural sector, urban and rural areas of the region must be developed urgently before oil loses its value in the nearest future,
- v Remediation of all polluted sites in the region must be carried out to open doors to investors to invest more in the region. Measures should be put in place to ensure that no more spills occur in the Niger Delta.

Ibrahim Momoh, a social researcher and a policy analyst based in Benin City, reported that forming a road map for the Niger Delta people is the way out of the underdevelopment of the region.

He stressed that relevant stakeholders and government should involve community leaders and youths in the development processes of Niger Delta. There should be singleness of mind in the implementation of the Niger Delta projects.

The youth ambassador to the United Nations Envoy, Ambassador Uyero Erarawewho who also coordinates the West African Youth Conference, hinted that there is need for self discovery because the youths of the Niger Delta do not really know their worth. What each person is capable of doing and how far they can really go?

The youths should avoid all forms of corruption and should always work hard to empower themselves financially, by investing to better themselves instead of

wastefully spending money when they are suppose to use their finances to make way for better community and for a much better individual.





6.0 Feedback from participants and Evaluation

Generally the participants were satisfied with the entire makeup of the program. Some of them stated that the choice of resource persons and their various presentations were excellent. They however lamented the absence of policy makers. They also noted that the programme was too compacted to be handled for just a day, hence they advocated that the program should last for a minimum of two days.

Again the Niger Delta Youth Environmental Summit has not created room for the participation of a large delegation from the entire Niger Delta. In this vein, participants should be drawn accordingly from the nine States of the region in equal proportion. This all inclusive methodology

will help strengthen a network among the participants across the States in the region.

According to **Maurice Olory**, “the following deliverables has been achieved so far, shortly on our return, the Cross River state delegates carried out a courtesy and advocacy visit to the Cross River State house of Assembly ,where we were received by the Hon Chairman and Members of House Committee on Environment”. The trust of the meeting was to give a feedback on the outcome of the second Niger Delta Youth Environmental Summit by the delegates and the need for collaboration and the possibility for the state to host the event in the future. We congratulate CODAF for a successful hosting of the events even with the

challenge of inadequate funds and look forward to a more fruitful summit next year.

We are happy to note that some of the recommendations put forward during the summit are already being implemented by some states. Dr (Mrs) Eno Olele in her presentation on the development options for the Niger Delta she had recommended that there is high need to abolish “deve” which is a local way of asking for bribe by youths and other individuals in the society and development fees. She stressed this while noting that these tasking attitudes by communities discourage contractors and government from citing projects in some certain locations.

Barely a month after the summit this proposal came to effect in Delta State when the Government on August 24, 2018 signed into law a bill criminalizing the illegal and forceful collection of levies also known as 'deve' from public and private developers in the state. The Governor of Delta State during the signing of the bill stated that the new law would put to an end the incessant harassment of developers particularly by youths who often times chase away investors who are ready to do business in the state with illegal levies. He expressed confidence that with the signing into law of the bill prohibiting illegal and forceful entry into development sites, the state will witness speedy development¹. While we are happy that the state government took this bold step we are yet to understand the mechanism for the enforcement of this new law.

<https://punchng.com/okowa-signs-into-law-bill-criminalising-collection-of-deve-in-delta/>

A law seeking to established the Quarry Regulatory Agency in Cross River State have since pass its second reading and its awaiting further legislative action for on ward passage into law. Similarly the Carbon emission law is to be amended to capture some very sensitive areas which were part of the issues raise during our (Delegates from Cross River State) interface with the committee.



APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Foundation Tasks Government on Preservation of Resources *By Bertran Nwannekamma, The Guardian, Thursday, August 9, 2018*

To encourage and maximize local use of natural resources, Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF) has urged the Federal Government to discourage waste of natural resources by empowering Niger Delta communities. The foundation also wants government, through relevant institutions to make the establishment of data gathering and monitoring systems for natural resources as a priority.

“It is imperative that environmental data collected for decades by oil and gas industry with JVC funds be turned over to state and federal agencies immediately”. They also urged government competence and performance by discouraging award of project execution to unqualified friends and/or families. These were part of recommendations contained in a communiqué issued at the end of the second Niger Delta Youths Environmental Summit organized by CODAF for the development of the region in Oleh.

In the communiqué, the group urged government to stop using nepotism as factor in the development of the Niger Delta as well as in the Nigerian government. Participants at the summit attended by over 200 participants drawn from the nine Niger Delta States, observed that the perceived and much publicized atmosphere of strife in the Niger Delta Region discourages investment flow to the region.

According to them, the Niger Delta should be aware of the activities of powerful individual, regional and political groups that stand to gain from perpetuating this myth of a nonexistent atmosphere of strife in order to divert investments from the resource rich Delta to their own regions.

They also noted that the current structure of the Nigerian state breeds powerful individuals that work against and suffocate the institutions dedicated to the development of the Niger Delta. According to them, most of the projects being awarded in the Niger Delta are mainly friends and family based, hence this results to the abandonment of projects, the use of substandard materials and overall low adherence to global engineering standard in engineering construction.



Communique

Appendix 2: Communiqué Issued at the End of the Second Niger Delta Youth Environment Summit

Preamble

Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF) organized the second edition of the Niger Delta Youths Environmental Summit on July 24, 2018 at Oleh, Delta State, which focused on the development options for the region. The Niger Delta Youths Environmental Summit was born out of the desire to enhance the capacity of the Niger Delta Youths to constructively question and analyze oil and environmental politics in the region. The objectives are to sensitize youths in the region and strengthen youth coalition for environmental defense through environmental education. The summit was well attended by over 200 participants drawn from the Nine (9) Delta States. Government officials also boycotted the second edition just like they did in the first edition even after much effort to engage them. Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO), Yasuni Association, Center for Research in Environmental Resource Management (CREMA), Ecoactors, Eco Assurance and Rural Transformation Centre (EcoTrace) and Development Initiative for Community Impact are some of the Civil Society groups who supported and participated in the summit. groups who supported and participated in the summit.

The summit took the form of paper presentations by resource persons drawn from diverse fields, particularly academicians, development workers, Civil Society, the Press, expert panel discussions and musical performance. A feedback mechanism in the form of comments, questions and answers as well as reports from breakout sessions were equally adopted as part of the summit.

In his opening speech, the Executive Director of CODAF, Benin Richard lamented that 70% of the population of the Niger Delta lives below the poverty line with limited amount of disposable income, access to healthcare, clean water, educational attainment, shelter and gainful employment despite the presence of institutions like NDDC, OPADECs and the ministry of Niger Delta Affairs created by government to tackle the needs of the region. The Keynote Speaker Professor Irwin Anthony Akpoborie, Director, CREMA noted that the Niger Delta is one of the most oil-impacted ecosystems in the world. He drew attention of participants to the ongoing debate about two contemporary and controversial Bills that are being considered at the National Assembly: Petroleum Industry Bill and the National Water Resources Bill. He identified contentious issues in both Bills and explained why the National Assembly should be urged to ensure that clauses that could have major negative impacts on the environment, welfare, livelihoods and well-being of the indigenous populations of the petroleum and water rich Niger Delta are excised from the Bills before passage.

There was consensus by discussants in two Panels drawn from opinion leaders, leaders in industry, academia, NGOs and Civil Society that despite the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Niger Delta Ministry and other previous development agencies in the region, the Delta has remained underdeveloped and local indigenous people have seen little if any improvement in their standards of living while suffering serious damage to their natural environment.

Positions articulated by the resource persons, actions and reactions from the representatives of Niger Delta Youths and CSO's, communities and individuals, during the incisive brainstorming sessions, formed the basis for observations which were made and articulated thus:

Observations

1. The perceived and much publicized atmosphere of strife in the Niger Delta Region discourages investment flows to the region. The Niger Delta should be aware of the activities of powerful individual, regional and political groups that stand to gain from perpetuating this myth of a nonexistent atmosphere of strife in order to divert investments from the resource rich Delta to their own regions.
2. The current structure of the Nigerian state breeds powerful individuals that work against and suffocate the institutions dedicated to the development of the Niger Delta,
3. Most of the projects being awarded in the Niger Delta are mainly friends and family based, hence this results to the abandonment of projects, the use of substandard materials and overall low adherence to global engineering standard in engineering construction given the unique terrain of the Niger Delta region;
4. Nepotism and cronyism dominate and negatively impact contract awards and project execution in Niger Delta associated federal projects.

5. Youths are constantly being excluded from participating in the monitoring and assessment of ongoing development projects. This exclusion of youths negatively impacts project outcomes as well as encourages environmental degradation as illustrated by the controversial deep well disposal of so called and disputed oil field waste in Ozoro community in Delta State.
6. The Niger Delta environment is bewildered and her resources are controlled by only a few individuals in government who uses resources from the region to develop other parts of the country and leave the people in abject poverty, ecological abuse, social frustration and thereby incriminating the people and make them look as if they are their own problems.
7. Federal agencies appear to be interested only in resource extraction from the Delta as exemplified by the sorry record of environmental management and degradation of the Ogoni and other parts of the Delta in the presence of the Department of Petroleum Resources and the Federal Ministry of Environment. The Federal Ministry of Mines and Solid Minerals is now emulating these agencies by insisting on licensing sand dredging operations in the Niger Delta without attendant environmental and associated responsibility in environmental management.
8. Government appears to be introducing more legislation that strips the Niger Delta indigenous populations of their rights to ownership of their God given natural resources and in the process creating avenues for strife.

Recommendations

1. Federal government should encourage and fund local markets so as to use our natural resources to the fullest and therefore discouraging the waste of resources and promote empowerment in the Niger Delta communities,
2. STOP using nepotism as factor in the development of the Niger Delta as well as in the Nigerian government. We should discourage the award of project execution to unqualified friends and/or families and encourage competence and performance.
3. Youths should have a role in projects carried out in their communities; this would lead to the circulation of both financial and natural resources within the communities. It is completely selfish to exclude indigenes from their heritage, from their rights. Such exclusion is rightly perceived as GREED and creates tensions in the Delta,
4. The capacity of Youths must continue to be strengthened to enhance their understanding of the PIB, gas policy, various environmental policies, national water resource bill for effective engagement with relevant stakeholders.
5. The ecosystem is our life, destroying it is absolutely nothing less than destroying ourselves and our future generations. Pressure groups and clubs should be formed among the youths to make certain that every natural resource is evaluated, conserved and well fought for.
6. Government through relevant institutions should make the establishment of data gathering and monitoring systems for natural resources a priority. It is imperative that environmental data collected for decades by oil and gas industry with JVC funds be turned over to state and federal agencies immediately.
7. Remove unfair, inequitable contentious clauses including those that strip the indigenous peoples of the Niger Delta of their natural ownership of resources,

especially water, from any new legislation.

8. States in the Niger Delta region should enact laws to discourage/stop forthwith the collection of unauthorized development fees (popularly known as “DEVE”) by youths in rural and urban areas.



Appendix 3: News Report

How Ijaw, Itsekiri squabble aborted EPZ project — CODAF
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/07/how-ijaw-itsekiri-squabble-aborted-epz-project-codaf/>

CODAF blames slow devt in N-Delta on Nigeria's structure
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/08/codaf-blames-slow-devt-in-n-delta-on-nigerias-structure/>

Niger Delta Youths want FG to stop using nepotism as a factor for development
<http://newsroom247.com.ng/?p=19813>





COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVOCACY FOUNDATION

Who we are

Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF) is a non-governmental organization that is registered in Nigeria with focus on environmental advocacy work in Nigeria to bridge the communication gap between policy makers and the grassroots. CODAF is working towards the attainment of sustainable rural development with rural community people to defend their rights to development, and the environment. Our aim is to embark on community development advocacy work, carrying out research and assessment on the environment, livelihood of the Rural people and embark on direct intervention projects, initiate capacity building among rural people to influence government policies, act as a voice for Rural people especially women and children at local, national and international level and raise the level of awareness on issues of community health, environmental governance and human rights.

Activities

COMMUNITY ACTION

- v Community Health Advocacy
- v Education Right Advocacy
- v Community Development Advocacy
- v Conflict management
- v Participatory Budgeting

ENVIRONMENT

- v Environmental Governance
- v Energy Democracy & Governance
- v Oil and Gas
- v Climate Change
- v Waste management
- v Land Degradation

AGRICULTURE

- v Land grabbing
- v Deforestation
- v Sustainable/Organic Farming
- v Persistent Chemicals

GENDER AND YOUTH ACTION

CODAF PARTNERS



crema
Centre For Research In
Environmental Resource
Management

