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Development and Security

The Niger Delta Experience

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Contents

Chapter One:

Development and Security: Concept and Relationship

Chapter Two

Overview of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

Chapter Three

Development Problems in the Niger Delta

Chapter Four

Human Rights Violation in the Niger Delta

Chapter Five

Environmental Problems and Insecurity in the Niger Delta

Chapter Six

Corruption and Underdevelopment in the Niger Delta

Chapter Seven

Oil Production and Disasters in the Niger Delta

Chapter Eight

Intervention Agencies and the Management of Development Problems

Chapter Nine

The Struggle for Positive Change

Chapter Ten

Strategies for Managing the Development Quagmire in the Niger Delta

Chapter One

Development and Security: Concept and Relationship

The problems of development and security have historically formed distinct discourses. They have been inextricably linked both in discourse and in much policy, thus creating the so-called development—security nexus that pervades much of today’s international development assistance (Hettne, 2010: 31-52). Development is a multifaceted concept. It can be seen from economic, social, cultural, political and technological perspectives. Todaro and Smith (2006) opined that development is “the process of improving the quality of all human lives. Development entails raising people’s living condition, their income their consumption levels of food, medical services, education and so on”. Idode (1989) also defined development as “a change process characterized by increasing productivity, equalization in the distribution of social product and the emergence of indigenous institutions whose relations with the outside world and particularly with the developed centres of

international economy are characterized by equality rather than dependence and subordination”. The Ministry of National Planning (1980:20-21) also postulated a very detailed definition of development as follows:

True development must mean the development of man – the unfolding and realization of his creative potential, enabling him to improve his material conditions and living, through the use of resources available to him. It is a process by which man’s personality is enhanced; and it is that enhanced personality – creative, organized and disciplined - which is the moving force behind the socio-economic transformation of society. It is clear that development does not start with goods and things; it starts with people – their orientation, organization and discipline. When the accent on development is on things, all human resources remain latent, untapped potential and a society can be poor amidst the most opulent material resources. On the contrary, when a society is properly oriented, organized and disciplined, it can be prosperous on the scantiest basis of natural wealth.

Development can be seen as positive change in a society. It involves sustainable increase in per capita income coupled with factors such as equity in income distribution and availability of social and economic infrastructure. Countries are often classified

into developed countries and underdeveloped countries. The term developed country, or advanced country, is used to categorize countries with developed economies in which the tertiary and quaternary sectors of industry dominate. Countries not fitting this definition may be referred to as developing countries. Countries with high gross domestic product (GDP) per capita often fit the above description of a developed economy. However, anomalies exist when determining "developed" status by the factor GDP per capita alone. Modern terms synonymous with the term developed country or advanced country include industrialized country, more developed country (MDC), more economically developed country (MEDC), Global North country and post-industrial country (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2008).

Security has been defined in different ways by scholars. For example traditional security scholars define security with focus on the state. That is why Simpson (2008:67) argues; "for traditional security scholars the state or governing regime was perceived to be secured, provided that the state was able to preserve its territorial borders, its governing regimes and structures from attacks or any threat to its existence, and its economic relations with the

international community”. From the traditional perspective Waltz (1999:212) sees security as “the study of the threat, use and control of military force. It explores likely conditions that make the use of force more likely, the ways that the use of force affects individuals, states and societies, and the specific policies that states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent or engage in war”. In the same vein, Buzan (1998) and his co-authors restrict the security discourse to state security, with insecurity being equated with threats to the existence of a designated referent object, often the state, incorporating government, territory and society.

In the 1990’s the international community began to place emphasis on security matters in relation to issues of development. This resulted in a consensus on the need to broaden and deepen the concept of security, taking into consideration the political context at end of the Cold War. The concept of human security emerged from this process. According to Hussein, Gnisci and Wanjiru (2004) the ‘human security’ approach argues that;

threats and challenges to security transcend national defence, and law and order to encompass all political, economic

and social issues that guarantee a life free from risk and fear. The focus has shifted from the State to the security of persons; however, these are not mutually exclusive. Security can be thought of as a “public good”, responding to the strategic need to support sustainable human development at the same time as promoting national, regional and global peace and stability. The human security approach has also made it clear that any attempt to address security related matters needs to be based on consultation and collaboration with different sets of actors which frequently have different interests, e.g. civilian/military; governmental/non-governmental; local/national/ regional / international.

The term Human Security was first popularized by the United Nations Development Program in the early 1990s. It emerged in the post-Cold War era as a way to link various humanitarian, economic, and social issues in order to alleviate human suffering and assure security. According to Kofi Anan (2008:43-44):

Human security, in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring

that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment -- these are the interrelated building blocks of human – and therefore national – security.

The UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report's definition of human security argues that the scope of global security should be expanded to include threats in seven areas:

- **Economic security** — Economic security requires an assured basic income for individuals, usually from productive and remunerative work or, as a last resort, from a publicly financed safety net. In this sense, only about a quarter of the world's people are presently economically secure. While the economic security problem may be more serious in developing countries, concern also arises in developed countries as well. Unemployment problems constitute an important factor underlying political tensions and ethnic violence.

- **Food security** — Food security requires that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to basic food. According to the United Nations, the overall availability of food is not a problem; rather the problem often is the poor distribution of food and a lack of purchasing power. In the past, food security problems have been dealt with at both national and global levels. However, their impacts are limited. According to UN, the key is to tackle the problems relating to access to assets, work and assured income (related to economic security).
- **Health security** — Health Security aims to guarantee a minimum protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles. In developing countries, the major causes of death traditionally were infectious and parasitic diseases, whereas in industrialized countries, the major killers were diseases of the circulatory system. Today, lifestyle-related chronic diseases are leading killers worldwide, with 80 percent of deaths from chronic diseases occurring in low- and middle-income

countries. According to the United Nations, in both developing and industrial countries, threats to health security are usually greater for poor people in rural areas, particularly children. This is due to malnutrition and insufficient access to health services, clean water and other basic necessities.

- **Environmental security** — Environmental security aims to protect people from the short- and long-term ravages of nature, man-made threats in nature, and deterioration of the natural environment. In developing countries, lack of access to clean water resources is one of the greatest environmental threats. In industrial countries, one of the major threats is air pollution. Global warming, caused by the emission of greenhouse gases, is another environmental security issue.
- **Personal security** — Personal security aims to protect people from physical violence, whether from the state or external states, from violent individuals and sub-state actors, from domestic abuse, or from

predatory adults. For many people, the greatest source of anxiety is crime, particularly violent crime.

- **Community security** — Community security aims to protect people from the loss of traditional relationships and values and from sectarian and ethnic violence. Traditional communities, particularly minority ethnic groups are often threatened. About half of the world's states have experienced some inter-ethnic strife. The United Nations declared 1993 the Year of Indigenous People to highlight the continuing vulnerability of the 300 million aboriginal people in 70 countries as they face a widening spiral of violence.
- **Political security** — Political security is concerned with whether people live in a society that honors their basic human rights. According to a survey conducted by Amnesty International, political repression, systematic torture, ill treatment or disappearance was still practised in 110 countries. Human rights violations are most frequent during periods of political unrest. Along with repressing individuals and groups,

governments may try to exercise control over ideas and information.

Since the popularization of the concept several definitions have been put forward. The following are some of them:

1. "Human security relates to the protection of the individual's personal safety and freedom from direct and indirect threats of violence. The promotion of human development and good governance, and, when necessary, the collective use of sanctions and force are central to managing human security. States, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and other groups in civil society in combination are vital to the prospects of human security (Bajpai, 2000:1)."
2. "The term human security...focuses the concept of security on human survival, wellbeing and freedom."
"...we conceptualize human security as the objective – the ultimate ends – of all security concerns. In this schema, other forms of security, such as military

security, are not ultimate goals. Rather, these other forms of security are simply means for achieving the ultimate objectives of human security (Chen, 1995:39).” 17

3. “According to both ‘critical’ and ‘human’ security approaches, security is about attaining the social, political, environmental and economic conditions conducive to a life in freedom and dignity for the individual (Hammerstad, 2000).”
4. “Human security is an underlying condition for sustainable human development. It results from the social, psychological, economic, and political aspects of human life that in times of acute crisis or chronic deprivation protect the survival of individuals, support individual and group capacities to attain minimally adequate standards of living, and promote constructive group attachment and continuity through time. Its key measurable components can be summarized as: a sustainable sense of home; constructive social and family networks; and an acceptance of the past and a positive grasp of the future. It is suggested that these

components can be best measured by trends in their inverse indicators (social dislocation, dynamic inequality, and discount rate) according to metrics and units that will require further specification (Leaning and Arie, 2000:37).”

5. “In broad terms, human security shifts our focus from traditional territorial security to that of the person. Human security recognizes that an individual’s personal protection and preservation comes not just from the safeguarding of the state as a political unit, but also from access to individual welfare and quality of life. But human security does not merely "envelope" matters of individual benefit (such as education, health care, protection from crime, and the like); this is because these matters could be thought of as part of the objectives of sovereign states. Rather, human security also denotes protection from the *unstructured violence* that often accompanies many aspects of non-territorial security, such as violence emanating from environmental scarcity, or mass migration. Therefore, just as traditional notions of territorial security involve

the structured violence manifest in state warfare, human security also attends to the issue of unstructured violence. Human security, in short, involves the security of the individual in their personal surroundings, their community, and in their environment (MacLean, 2001).”

6. “Human security describes a condition of existence in which basic material needs are met, and in which human dignity, including meaningful participation in the life of the community, can be realized. Such human security is indivisible; it cannot be pursued by or for one group at the expense of another (Thomas, 2000:6).”

Efforts to implement human security agenda have led to the emergence of two major schools of thought namely; Freedom from Fear and Freedom from Want. The differences between traditional security and human security are summarized in the table below:

Traditional Security	Human Security
<p>Traditional security policies are designed to promote demands ascribed to the state. Other interests are subordinated to those of the state. Traditional security protects a state's boundaries, people, institutions and values.</p>	<p>Human security is people-centered. Its focus shifts to protecting individuals. The important dimensions are to entail the well-being of individuals and respond to ordinary people's needs in dealing with sources of threats.</p>
<p>Traditional security seeks to defend states from external aggression. <i>Walter Lippmann</i> explained that state security is about a state's ability to deter or defeat an attack. It makes uses of deterrence strategies to maintain the integrity of the state and protect the territory from external threats</p>	<p>In addition to protecting the state from external aggression, human security would expand the scope of protection to include a broader range of threats, including environmental pollution, infectious diseases, and economic deprivation.</p>
<p>The state is the sole actor, to ensure its own survival. Decision making power is centralized in the government, and the execution of strategies rarely involves the public. Traditional security assumes that a sovereign state is operating in an anarchical</p>	<p>The realization of human security involves not only governments, but a broader participation of different actors, viz. regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations and local communities.</p>

international environment, in which there is no world governing body to enforce international rules of conduct.	
Traditional security relies upon building up national power and military defense. The common forms it takes are armament races, alliances, strategic boundaries etc.	Human security not only protects, but also empowers people and societies as a means of security. People contribute by identifying and implementing solutions to insecurity.

Source: Wikipedia, 2011

Relationship between Development and Security

The relationship between development and security are usually summed up in the maxims ‘no security without development’, and ‘no development without security’. The popular belief that development and security are interdependent can be traced to negative experiences made in the mid-1990s i.e. the failures of UN missions in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia exposed the limitations of conventional military crisis management in a threat environment shaped by domestic conflicts and highlighted the necessity of a comprehensive approach to security. At

the same time, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda debunked the illusion that development was inherently neutral or conducive to conflict prevention. At the conceptual level, the first consequence of this insight was the integration of the security-development nexus into basic documents of security and development policy (Center for Security Studies, 2008). Stewart (2004) argues that development and security are deeply interconnected in the following ways:

- Human security forms an important part of people's well-being, and is therefore an objective of development i.e. an objective of development is "the enlargement of human choices". Insecurity cuts life short and thwarts the use of human potential, thereby affecting the reaching of this objective.
- Lack of human security has adverse consequences on economic growth, and therefore development. Some development costs are obvious. For example, in wars, people who join the army or flee can no longer work productively. Also, destroying infrastructure reduces the productive capacity of the economy.

- Imbalanced development that involves horizontal inequalities is an important source of conflict. Therefore, vicious cycles of lack of development which leads to conflict, then to lack of development, can readily emerge. Likewise, virtuous cycles are possible, with high levels of security leading to development, which further promotes security in return.

Chapter Two

Overview of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

The name, Niger Delta has become prominent in the global oil market. The Niger Delta is Nigeria's largest oil region and one of the highly productive oil exporting regions in the world (UNDP, 1999; Osuntokun, 2000; Nwachukwu, 2000). The region situated in the southern part of Nigeria and bordered to the south by the Atlantic Ocean and to the East by Cameroon, occupies a surface area of about 112,110 square kilometres. The mean annual rainfall in the Niger Delta region varies from 4,000 millimetres in the coastal towns of Bonny (Rivers State) and Brass (Bayelsa State), to about 3,000 millimetres in the central Niger Delta towns of Ahoada (Rivers), Yenagoa (Bayelsa) and Warri (Delta), and about 2,400 millimetres in the northern Abia and Imo states. In the more interior locations in the northern parts of Cross River and Ondo states, mean annual rainfall is much less, ranging from 2,000 millimetres nearer the coast to 1,500 millimetres farther inland. Temperatures are high and fairly constant throughout the year. Average monthly temperatures

for the warmest months (February to April) range from 28 degrees Celsius to 33 degrees Celsius, while the average monthly temperatures for the coolest months, June to September, range from 21 degrees Celsius to 23 degrees Celsius (UNDP, 2006:21).

The Niger Delta is home to over 25 million people and 40 different ethnic groups. The population density is also among the highest in the world with 265 people per kilometre-squared (Torulagha, 2007). The population is expanding at a rapid 3% per year and the oil capital, Port Harcourt, along with other large towns are growing quickly (Wikipedia, 2007). The Niger Delta has been defined for a variety of political, ecological and geological purposes, but the conventional geographical perimeter extends from the Benin River in the west to the Imo River in the east, and from the southernmost tip at Palm Point near Akassa to Aboh in the north where the Niger River bifurcates into its two main tributaries. This area represents roughly 25,900 square kilometers, about 2.8% of the Nigeria land area. It is a classic arcuate delta, typically below the meter contour across its entire extent. The Niger Delta is one of the world's largest

wetlands, and Africa's largest delta, covering some 70 000 km² (World Bank 1995). It lies within the Ibo Plateau and the Cross River Valley (Willinks Commission Report, 1957). The dominant view sees the constituent states of the region as Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers (Tamuno 2000:12). Osaghae, Ikelegbe, Olarimoye and Okhomina (2007) posit that two key factors influence the conception of Niger-delta within the context of Nigerian politics. The first is geography. The Niger-delta comprises the coastal low lands and waters-marshland, creeks, tributaries and lagoons-of the southernmost ends of Nigeria that drain the Niger River into the Atlantic at the Bight of Biafra (Ibeanu, 2000). At its core are the littoral states of Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers states of the south-south geopolitical zone of the country, and the riverine parts of Ondo state. It is home to over forty minority ethnic groups, including the Ijaws, Urhobo, Itshekiri, Efik, Ibibio, Ogoni, Ilaje, Kalabari, Ikwere, Isokos, Ndokwas. The second is political whose main indicator is the presence of Crude Oil. Crude oil "whose exploitation has multiplied the environmental and developmental problems of the various

Niger delta communities” has become the most critical factor in the definition of the Niger-delta. The tendency is now to regard the oil producing states, which mostly belong to the south-south (minorities) geopolitical zone as constituting the Niger-delta. The states are: Abia, Imo, Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Ondo.

For practical purposes, the Niger Delta region is defined as comprising the area covered by the natural delta of the Niger River and the areas to the east and west, which also produce oil. The natural limits of the Niger River Delta can be defined by its geology and hydrology. Its approximate northern boundaries are located close to the bifurcation of the Niger River at Aboh, while the western and eastern boundaries are around the Benin River and the Imo River, respectively. The area covers approximately 25,900 square kilometres (ERML, 1997). The broader Niger Delta region, which includes all oil producing areas and others considered relevant for reasons of administrative convenience, political expedience and development objectives, extends the land area to 75,000 square kilometres. It is this definition that is used by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

Defined in this way, the Niger Delta consists of nine states (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers) and 185 local governments (UNDP, 2009:19).

The Niger Delta is sometimes divided into Western (or Northern) Niger Delta, Central Niger Delta and Eastern Niger Delta. Western Niger Delta consists of the western section of the coastal South-South Nigeria which includes Delta, and the southernmost parts of Edo, and Ondo States. The western (or Northern) Niger Delta is an heterogeneous society with several ethnic groups including the Urhobo, Igbo, Isoko, Itsekiri, Ijaw (or Ezon) and Ukwuani groups in Delta State, along with Ilaje and Ijaw Arogbo(Izon Arogbo) in Ondo State. Their livelihoods are primarily based on fishing and farming. History has it that the Western Niger was controlled by chiefs of the five primary ethnic groups the Itsekiri, Isoko, Ukwuani, Ijaw and Urhobo with whom the British government had to sign separate "Treaties of Protection" during the colonial period. Central Niger Delta consists of the central section of the coastal South-South Nigeria which includes Bayelsa and Rivers States. The

Central Niger Delta region has the Ijaw (including the Nembe-Brass, Ogbia, Kalabari, Ibanis (Opobo, Bonny, etc.), Okrika, and Andoni clans, the Ogoni and other groups which consist of the Ekpeye, Ndoni, Etche, Ikwerre and Ndoki in Rivers State. Eastern Niger Delta Section consists of the Eastern (or Atlantic) section of the coastal South-South Nigeria which includes Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. The Eastern Niger Delta region has the Efik, Ibibio, Annang, Oron, Ogoja (including Ekoi and Bekwara) people, who are all related with a common language and ancestor (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2011).

The people of the Niger Delta are known for their rich culture and heritage. There are about 40 different ethnic groups speaking 250 languages and dialects in the region. The ethnic groups include Ijaws, Ogonis, Ikwerres, Etches, Ekpeyes, Ogbas, Engennes, Obolos, Isoko, Nembes, Okrikans, Kalabaris, Urhobos, Itsekiris, Igbos, Ika-Igbos, Ndoni, Oron, Ibeno, and Yorubas, Ibibios, Annangs and Efiks. Other groups include Ibibios, Anang, Efiks, Bekwarras, Binis, etc. The heritage of the people is reflected in modes of dressing, marriages, traditional culture and festivals. The

traditional economic activities of the communities fall into two main categories:

1. Land based type on the drier parts at the northern end of the Delta, which includes farming, fishing, collecting and processing palm fruits, as well as hunting.
2. Water based type of economy at the southern parts of the Delta including fishing and trading, with a less diversified economy (NDDC, 2004).

Settlement patterns in the delta are influenced by topography and drainage. In the coastal beach ridge zone, dry land is readily available, though in narrow strips (UNDP, 2006). In total, there are 13,329 settlements in the Niger Delta Region. The average population of 13,231 of these (99% of the total) falls below 20,000 people. Settlements of fewer than 5,000 inhabitants constitute nearly 94% of the total number of settlements and only 98 settlements, that is less than 1% of the settlements, can be truly regarded as urban centres according to their population sizes. The main towns in this category include Port Harcourt, Warri, Asaba, Benin, Akure, Calabar, Uyo, Umuahia, Aba, Owerri and Yenagoa (NDDC, 2004).

Demographic Characteristics of the Niger Delta

Surveys carried out in the course of developing the Master Plan for the development of the Niger Delta revealed that the dominant feature of the structure of the population of the Niger Delta Region is its significant level of young people with over 62% of the population below the age of 30 years. Adults in the age group 30-69 years make up only 36% while those aged 70 years and above constitute just 2% of the population. It also shows that there are more males (54%) than females (46%) in the Region. Similarly, there are overwhelmingly more male (93%) heads of households than females (7%). The average household size is 6 persons with considerable variations among the individual States, Local Government Areas and senatorial districts. Generally, household sizes are larger in the rural communities (an average of 8 persons per household) (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004).

The Niger Delta and the Economy of Nigeria

Since pre-colonial days, the Niger Delta has played a crucial role in the Nigerian economy. Its ports and rivers

provided access for the British to penetrate the Nigerian hinterland; the gateway for the trade in slaves, and later export commodities such as palm produce, timber, rubber and even groundnut and cotton from the distant northern parts of Nigeria (Petters, 2011). During the colonial period the Niger Delta contributed to the growth of the economy through agricultural production and later crude oil. Presently, Nigeria could be described as an oil-based mono-cultural economy, and the country's fortunes often rise and fall with the price of oil (Onoh, 1993).

Fifty years after independence, Nigeria remains Africa's sleeping giant, mainly because of corruption and poor leadership. Since the artificial creation of Nigeria in 1914 by the colonial masters, the country has engaged itself in different activities aimed at generating revenue for the sustenance of the nation's economy. Presently, Nigeria could be described as an oil-based mono-cultural economy, and the country's fortunes often rise and fall with the price of oil (Onoh, 1993). The mono-cultural economy of Nigeria has been unstable for many years now basically because of reduction in crude oil production due to violent conflicts in the

Niger Delta. The Nigerian economy before independence was characterized by territorial division of labour. The North was known for agricultural products such as cotton and groundnut, the East for palm produce and the West for cocoa and the Niger Delta area for rubber, palm produce and crude oil. Palm oil became an export commodity for what is today known as Nigeria as far back as 1558 and by 1830, the Niger Delta which now produces crude oil had become a major source of palm oil which dominated Nigeria's export list for more than 50 years. Cotton joined the export list in 1856, while cocoa was an export crop since 1895. Together with rubber, groundnut, palm kernel and benniseed in later years, these cash crops formed the main source of revenue, export and foreign exchange for government to provide social and economic infrastructure (Ogunlowo, 2008:16-19). The dominant role of agriculture in the nation's fortune continued in 1960 when its contribution stood at 66 percent compared to 1.2 percent from minerals (Sawyer, 2008:10). Also at independence in 1960, more than 70 percent of exports came from agriculture while 95 percent of the nation's food needs were locally produced (Ake, 1985). The oil boom of

the 1970's led to the neglect of the agricultural sector which includes resources found in the Northern, Western and Eastern territories of Nigeria for the mineral resources in the Niger Delta. This made the bulk of wealth created in Nigeria to be limited to the Niger Delta territory. The Niger Delta produces the oil wealth that accounts for the bulk of Nigeria's foreign earnings. Between 2000 and 2004, oil accounted for about 79.5 per cent of total government revenues and about 97 per cent of foreign exchange revenues (UNDP, 2006:1).

Chapter Three

Development Problems in the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta has a long history of neglect and lack of sustainable human development. More recently, the United Nations popularized the multidimensional term sustainable human development which is defined as:

Development that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably; that regenerates the environment rather than destroys it; that empowers people rather than marginalizing them. It gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities, and provides for their participation in decisions affecting them. .sustainable human development is development that is pro-poor, pro-nature, pro-jobs, and pro-women. It stresses growth, but growth with employment, growth with environmental *friendliness*, growth with empowerment, and growth with equity (Speth cited in *Fukuda-Parr and Shiva Kumar 2003: vii*).

In spite of the efforts of the government to solve the development problems in the Niger Delta, the following key

objectives of a development programme have not been achieved:

1. Enable people to realize their potential, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment;
2. Free people from poverty, ignorance, filth, squalor, deprivation and exploitation, recognizing that underdevelopment has wider social consequences; and
3. Correct existing economic, social or political injustices and oppression (Chinsman 1995).

The Niger Delta is confronted with development problems such as non-availability of essential social amenities and services like electricity, hospitals, pipe borne water, quality education and environmental degradation, while billions of dollars generated on their door step go to the State and MNOCs (Sofori, 2007:3). The poor living conditions of the people of the Niger Delta can be inferred from the following findings of Ibeanu (2006:3):

...available figures show that there is one doctor per 82,000 people, rising to one doctor per 132,000 people in some areas, especially the rural areas, which is more than three times the national average of 40,000 people per doctor.

Only 27 percent of people in the Delta have access to safe drinking water and about 30 percent of household have access to electricity, both of which are below the national averages of 31.7% and 33.6%, respectively....Poverty remains widespread, worsened by an exceptionally high cost of living created by the petro-economy... At the same time, access to education, central to remedying some of these social conditions, lags abysmally when compared to other parts of the country. While 76 percent of Nigerian children attend primary school, in the Niger Delta the figure drops appalling to between 30 and 40 percent.

Outside the major urban areas, the level of infrastructural development and the provision of social amenities such as electricity, health care and education are very poor. The state of infrastructure in the Niger Delta made the World Bank to warn in 1995 that an urgent need exists to implement mechanism to protect the life and health of the region's inhabitants and its ecological systems from further deterioration (World Bank, 1995). Fourteen years after this warning the Niger Delta still suffers from infrastructural decay and underdevelopment (The News, July 6, 2009). Even though the activities of oil companies affect the health of the

people in the rural areas, health facilities and personnel are concentrated in the cities and the quality of health care delivery is poor because of inadequate facilities and personnel. The people of the Niger Delta still suffer from debilitating diseases such as malaria, diarrhea and yellow fever (Niger Delta Environmental Survey, 1995; UNDP, 2006).

The following are some specific development problems in the Niger Delta:

Poverty:

Pervasive poverty is a major problem in Nigeria including the Niger Delta. This assertion can be buttressed with the comments in the publication of the Federal Office of Statistics (1996) which reveals that poverty has been massive, pervasive, and engulfs a large proportion of the Nigerian society. It further states that about 15 percent of the population was poor in 1960; the figure rose to 28 percent in 1980 and, by 1996, the incidence of poverty in Nigeria was 66 percent or 76.6 million people. In the same vein, the United Nations Human Poverty Index in 1999 placed Nigeria

among the 25 poorest nations in the world. Additionally, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2010) reported that the population in poverty in 2004 was 68.7 million. It further stated that between 1980 and 1996, the percentage of the core poor rose from 6.2 percent to 29.3 percent, and declined to 22.0 percent in 2004. According to Omotola (2008), about 70% of the population now lives in abject poverty. Earth Trends (2003) also observed that 70.2 percent of the Nigerian population lives on less than \$1 a day, while 90.8 percent lives on less than \$2 a day. The total income earned by the richest 20 percent of the population is 55.7 percent, while the total income earned by the poorest 20 percent is 4.4 percent. This explains the alarming increase in poverty and the sharp inequality between the rich and the poor in spite of the presence of abundant natural resources.

These reports indicate that rising poverty is a major challenge in Nigeria. The situation in the Niger Delta is not different from the general situation in the country. For example the United Nations Development Programme in its 2006 Human development Report States:

The Niger Delta produces the oil wealth that accounts for the bulk of Nigeria's earnings. Paradoxically, however, these vast revenues from an international industry have barely touched the Niger Delta's own pervasive poverty ... For most people, progress and hope, much less prosperity, remain out of reach... if unaddressed, these do not bode well for the future of Nigeria or an oil hungry world.

There are different definitions of poverty. The World Bank (2006) conceptualized poverty as:

Poverty is hunger. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is about powerlessness, lack of representation in decision making in the society and lack of freedom to express oneself.

Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. Most often, poverty is a situation people want to escape. So poverty is a call to action - for

the poor and the wealthy alike - a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities.

In the Niger Delta the perception of what poverty involves is not different from the above description. In a focus group discussion conducted by UNDP (2005) it was observed that the people of the Niger Delta perceive poverty as:

(a) The poor person is one who cannot pay school fees for his children; cannot meet any needs, including food; has no farm land and cannot farm well; cannot take part in age-grade activities (responsibilities that are specifically designated to some age groups in communities); cannot afford to send his children to school; wears tattered clothes; is very lean; and has no house to live in. In short, a poor person is one who has nothing. Consequently, he has no voice in the community

(b) When you wake up hopeless as to where the next meal is coming from. When you cannot attend certain functions because you do not have clothes ... when your roof leaks and you cannot change it...when you cannot

travel because the transport fares are high...and when the school fees and allied demands are too much to bear.. Then poverty is the cause.

A critical issue in the delta is not only the increasing incidence of poverty, but also the intense feeling among people that they ought to do far better given the enormous resources flowing from their region (UNDP, 2006). The incidence of poverty in Nigeria has increased since 1980. According to the Federal Office of Statistics (1999), while poverty incidence was 28.1 per cent in 1980, it rose to 46.3 per cent in 1985. It declined slightly to 42.7 per cent in 1992, before soaring dramatically to 65.6 per cent in 1996. Estimates from the Central Bank of Nigeria (1999) were even higher, with the Bank putting the overall poverty rate for the country at 69 per cent in 1997. Aigbokhan (1998), using the food energy intake measure, determined the incidence of national poverty as 38 per cent in 1985, 43 per cent in 1992 and 47 per cent in 1996. Evidence from the National Bureau of Statistics suggests that using the food energy intake measure yields a figure of 34.9 per cent in 2004. The relative poverty trend reveals that the incidence rose from 28.1 per

cent in 1980 to 46.3 per cent in 1985, but declined to 42.7 per cent in 1992. It later rose to 65.6 per cent in 1996 before declining to 54.4 per cent in 2004 (National Bureau of Statistics 2005). Poverty has become a way of life due to economic stagnation, unemployment, poor quality of life due to shortages of essential goods and facilities, an unhealthy environment and government insensitivity (UNDP, 2006).

Poor Health Care:

Everyday people die in Nigerian public hospitals for reasons such as inadequate medical facilities and manpower. There have been several reports of deaths due to negligence on the part of health workers, poor management of time and lack of equipment. That is why a former Head of State of Nigeria described public hospitals as “mere consulting clinics”. Over the years health workers have lost a sense of service delivery. Patients who come with minor ailments often leave the hospitals with major ones after walking up and down trying to locate wards, doctor's rooms and waiting endlessly to be seen by the doctor. In some situations, emergency cases have been mishandled leading to death as a result of delay in giving medical attention. The

implications of this situation are enormous. Commenting on the state of health care in the Niger Delta, Ibeanu (2006:3) asserted:

...available figures show that there is one doctor per 82,000 people, rising to one doctor per 132,000 people in some areas, especially the rural areas, which is more than three times the national average of 40,000 people per doctor.

Prevalence of HIV/AIDS

Nigeria's first case of HIV&AIDS was reported in 1986 with the diagnosis of a 13-year-old female hawker. Since then, the prevalence of HIV has increased from 1.8 per cent in 1990 to five per cent in 2003 (see chart 4.1). In 2001, a federal survey showed that 5.8 per cent of the population (or 7.5 million people) had tested positive for HIV (UNICEF 2003). Current UNAIDS estimates indicate that as many as 3.5 million Nigerians may be living with AIDS. The prevalence of HIV&AIDS in the Niger Delta is among the highest in the country, higher than the average for Nigeria as a whole. The 2003 sentinel survey rated the South-

South region as having the second highest prevalence (5.8 per cent), after the North Central zone with seven per cent. This result is alarming compared to the South-West at 2.3 per cent and the North-West at 4.2 per cent (see chart 4.3). The delta has an average prevalence rate of 5.3 per cent, compared to the national average of five per cent. Nearly half the delta states (Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta and Rivers) have either the same or higher prevalence rates as the national average (UNDP, 2006).

Land Scarcity

Land, in relation to the population, is relatively scarce in the Niger Delta Region and as population increases, the pressure on land for all purposes including agriculture increases accordingly. The highest pressure on land is in the coastal vegetation zone with a population density of 0.46 ha/person followed by the derived savannah zone with 0.49 ha/person (NDDC, 2004).

Chapter Four

Human Rights Violation in the Niger Delta

Human Rights abuse is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. Human rights refer to the "basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled" (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2008). Human rights are a set of universal claims to safeguard human dignity from illegitimate coercion, typically enacted by state agents (Sieghart 1985:3). These norms are codified in a widely endorsed set of international undertakings: the "International Bill of Human Rights" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and International Covenant on Social and Economic Rights); phenomenon-specific treaties on war crimes (Geneva Conventions), genocide, and torture; and protections for vulnerable groups such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. According to Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1945) "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They

are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood". This sentiment among other things is the raison d'être for the efforts of international nongovernmental organizations in ensuring human rights protection (Claude 1995:180). In Nigeria, emphasis is also placed on the importance of human rights. That is why it is entrenched in the 1999 constitution. The only problem is that these rights are not respected even by the government in spite of their presence in the constitution.

Cases of Human Rights Violation in the Niger Delta

1. **Human Rights Violation in Odi:** On November 4, 1999, an armed gang killed seven Nigerian policemen in the community of Odi, Bayelsa State, in the oil producing Niger Delta region in the far south east of the country. Five other police were killed in subsequent days. These murders were committed by a group with no apparent political agenda,

but took place against a rising clamor from those living in the oil producing areas for a greater share of the oil wealth. Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo wrote to the governor of Bayelsa, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, threatening to declare a state of emergency if those responsible for the murders were not apprehended within two weeks. Responsibility for policing is, however, a federal duty in Nigeria. Before the deadline could expire, soldiers from the Nigerian army moved into Odi, a community of perhaps 15,000 people, engaged in a brief exchange of fire with the young men alleged to be responsible for the deaths of the policemen, and proceeded to raze the town. The troops demolished every single building, barring the bank, the Anglican church and the health, and may have killed hundreds of unarmed civilians.

While the soldiers reportedly shot and killed some of the armed youths who brought trouble to the town, most of the gang is reported to have fled (Human Rights Watch, Dec 22, 1999, <http://www.bhrd.org/fe/view.php?id=123>).

2. **Rape in Choba:** The community of Choba, Rivers State, faced its own confrontation with soldiers. Choba is an Ikwerre community which is the site of the federal University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), though it is some half an hour's drive from the city of Port Harcourt itself. It is also the site of the Nigeria headquarters of Willbros Nigeria Ltd, a pipeline construction business which is a subsidiary of Willbros Group, Inc., an American company whose "administrative office" is in Oklahoma (though its headquarters is in Panama). For some years, there has been discontent among

the people of Choba with Willbros, which has acquired an unenviable reputation as an inconsiderate neighbor little interested in promoting good relations with the community. In particular, Choba representatives have been unhappy at the failure of Willbros to employ more than a handful of Choba indigenes. While it is clearly not possible for the company to employ all those in the community who seek work, Nigerian law does require transnational companies to employ local workers at lower skills levels, where they are suitably qualified. Choba residents allege that Nigerian managers at Willbros who are not from Choba have shown preference for members of their own communities over qualified local staff. There have been periodic demonstrations at the Willbros gates, in the heart of Choba, over the years. From mid-1999,

discontent among Choba residents with Willbros had reached the surface once again, and youth leaders staged several sit-ins to block the entrance to the compound. According to Willbros, Choba residents threatened both Nigerian and expatriate staff during this time, and the company received reports that some Nigerian staff were beaten. Willbros asserts that following a meeting with Choba community representatives on October 25, at which the community reverted to its original position before the agreement was concluded on September 17, youths "stormed through the gate at our yard" on October 27, and sabotaged marine equipment, including a dredge and tugboat. The company also alleges that further assaults on Willbros premises and staff took place on October 28 and 29, and that some of those involved were

armed with firearms. On October 28, a number of soldiers and mobile police came to Choba and dispersed the demonstrators at the Willbros gates. Community members reported that soldiers killed four people the next day, injured several others, of whom one had his arm amputated, and raped at least sixty-seven women. The soldiers also ransacked several stalls near to the Willbros gates, and reportedly detained twenty-one youths. On Sunday November 7, The *Punch* newspaper published an account of the military / police action, including graphic photographs of the rapes, which the paper reported had been taken by a student at UNIPORT. The photographs were so explicit, showing men in uniform forcing women to bend over or beating them, that many expressed their doubts as to whether they

could be authentic. The government immediately asserted that the photographs were staged, but also refused to undertake any investigation of the allegations. In his extraordinary letter of November 10, 1999, to Governor Alamiyeseigha of Bayelsa State, in which he mistakenly assumed that Choba was in Bayelsa and not Rivers State, President Obasanjo stated that : “I note with utter disgust and shock the reported incident of rape in your State by military personnel, which from investigation is said to have been stage-managed and orchestrated to malign and discredit the military, and I know that no soldier would be so beastly as to commit such a criminal act in the full glare of cameramen”. Human Rights Watch visited Choba and spoke to one victim and several eyewitness of the rapes. Most of the women were unwilling

to speak to outsiders, having faced extensive inquiries from journalists to whom some have told their stories, but Human Rights Watch also spoke to journalists who had conducted other interviews. Government spokespeople, including those from the police and army, have denied that soldiers were deployed to disperse the demonstrators, though townspeople were able to give Human Rights Watch details of military vehicles, including armored personnel carriers, that were used, as well as descriptions of those in uniform. While Human Rights Watch cannot verify the figure of sixty-seven rapes alleged by the community, it seems certain that soldiers did indeed rape quite a large number of women and killed several people (See "Crackdown in the Niger Delta," *A Human Rights Watch Short Report*, May 1999).

3. **“Operation Restore Hope”:** the raid on **Odioma:** On 19 February 2005, the JTF launched a raid on Odioma, a small village in Bayelsa State. The stated aim of the raid was to halt a communal conflict in Odioma and apprehend local militia wanted for their alleged killing of 12 people, two weeks earlier. Over a period of four days, the JTF razed 80% of the houses in the community using gun boats and machine guns. As documented by Amnesty International, 17 people were killed in the attack. A woman named Balasanyun Omieh, aged 105, and two year-old Inikio Omieye were burned to death along with 14 others. The JTF shot dead three people and a number of women and children drowned trying to escape. At least two women were raped by soldiers, and many more people were

injured and displaced (Amnesty International, 2005; Omeje, 2006).

4. **Security Forces and Human Rights**

Violation in Oporoza: The 14th May 2009 military bombardment of 'Camp 5' regarded as stronghold of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) at Oporoza in Gbaramatu Kingdom of Delta State was characterized by series of human rights violation. On May 14, 2009 at about noon, Gbaramatu Kingdom, Delta State, was in a festive mood. There had been an influx of guests into the community from far and near. They all came to witness the presentation of the Staff of Office to the Pere of Gbaramatu Kingdom, His Royal Majesty Ogie the third. The palace located in Oporoza was filled with well-wishers as the day also marked the King's one year

anniversary. Suddenly, three low flying helicopters were seen approaching the Kingdom. The community people initially thought they were flying dignitaries to the ceremony or that they were part of the glamour for the ceremony. They were wrong. The three choppers were actually gunships of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF), on a mission to mow down the Gbaramatu Kingdom. Suddenly the gunships started bombing everywhere, the King's palace inclusive. Many persons are rendered homeless. The Punch Newspaper of Monday, May 18, 2009 reported that about 20,000 people were trapped in these riverine communities because the waterways were blocked by the JTF. The displaced persons who took refuge in the Ogbe-Ijoh General Hospital were further made to flee the camp due to the invasion by soldiers from the Joint

Task Force. As at Tuesday, May 19, 2009, the soldiers proceeded to carry out a house to house gruesome burning of persons and properties. Thousands of harmless women and children were killed while some displaced. Schooling was disrupted for a great majority of children in the Gbaramatu kingdom of Niger Delta; having access to food and shelter has suddenly become a luxury; safety and security is far from the people; development has become a mockery; access to sanitary facilities for the women is out of the question (Worldpress.com, 2009).

5. **The Murder of Ken Saro Wiwa and Others:** On 10 November 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa, internationally respected human rights and environmental activist, and eight other Ogoni activists were executed in Port Harcourt, Nigeria,

following months of detention without charges and torture. These activists were sentenced to death by a 'Special Tribunal,' following their non-violent efforts to protect the indigenous Ogoni people from human rights and environmental abuses associated with the oil industry in the Niger Delta.

Chapter Five

Environmental Problems and Insecurity in the Niger Delta

The Webster's Universal College Dictionary (2000) defines the environment as 'the air, water, minerals, organisms, and all other external factors surrounding and affecting a given organism at any time'. According to Eugene (2004:18-19), 'the term environment is understood not as an area surrounding a small place but as one that affects the existence and survival of the organism it surrounds'.

Man cannot exist without environmental resources. Although man's environment can be seen from different perspectives such as physical, biological, economic, social, cultural and political, it is important to note that the physical and biological environments are fundamental to human existence. The importance of the environment to sustainable and meaningful human existence has long been recognized. Without the environment, humans could not exist. This is because humans take from the environment what he needs to survive such as food, water, shelter, and the very air he

breathes. Equal access to environmental resources could help to guarantee human security. Conversely, unequal access to environmental resources can bring about human security problems such as food insecurity, health insecurity, economic insecurity and other conflict accelerating factors. Environmental problems such as environmental inequality, degradation and scarcity have contributed significantly to the crisis in the Niger Delta.

The protracted crisis in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria is a threat to both domestic and international security. It is a crisis over control of natural resources, environmental degradation and scarcity. Homer-Dixon (1991:1-6) uses the term environmental scarcity to refer to scarcity of renewable resources and he identifies scarcity of agricultural land, forest, water and fish as the environmental problems that contribute most to violence. Stressing the relationship between environmental scarcity and conflict, Homer-Dixon (1996: 359) asserts:

Scarcities of environmental resources - in particular cropland, fresh water, and forest - are contributing to mass violence in several areas of the world. While these "environmental scarcities"

do not cause wars between countries, they do sometimes aggregate stresses within countries, helping stimulate ethnic clashes, urban unrest, and insurgencies.

Environmental scarcity in the Niger Delta can be associated with factors such as the population density of the area, deprivation of the inhabitants of the area of the use of their land because of petroleum exploitation and the degradation of the environment through the obnoxious activities of multinational oil corporations (Obi, 1999; Ukeje, 2001; Ibaba, 2008). Buttressing this view a delegation of chiefs from Rivers State described the Niger Delta to United Nations Commission on Environment and Development in 1992 as follows:

The Niger Delta is in Southern Nigeria and has a catchment area of over 20 river systems. Six million people depend on the Niger Delta's fertile fishing grounds and agricultural land. As only 30 per cent of the delta is unaffected by heavy flooding, the remaining land has to support a concentrated population. There is heavy competition for land in the Niger Delta that, unfortunately for the local community is rich in oil. The scarcity of land is due partly to the high population density of the area. More especially, it is the direct result of the

uncontrolled appropriation of land by the oil companies worsened by the continued degradation of existing land by the same oil multinationals. At the moment six oil fields, two large refineries, a huge fertilizer complex, an ocean port, a petrochemical complex and numerous pipelines crisscrossing farmlands and homes have been established in the delta area which symbolize the threat posed to the livelihoods of the local population. The gravity of the situation is underscored by the fact that the land and waters, as well as the plant and fauna of the Niger Delta are exposed to toxic waste and other harmful substances discharged by the oil industry. In fact, there is abundant empirical evidence to this effect even though Shell has continued to deny responsibility; its denials fly in the face of the facts (Obi, 1999:10).

Some research findings support the above description of the Niger. Rowell (1994: 12) opined that about 40 percent of Shell's oil spills world-wide were concentrated in the delta. Although Shell has blamed the high incidence on sabotage by aggrieved villagers (Obi, 1997: 14), a study by the Nigerian Ministry of Petroleum Resources puts "the largest cause of spill as equipment malfunction" (38 percent), and "corrosion of equipment" (21 per cent) (Oyekan, 1991; Obi, 1999). The World Bank (1995) in a study titled 'Defining an

Environmental Development Strategy for the Niger Delta' further argues that, "concentrations of dissolved petroleum hydrocarbons in bodies of water near oil terminals and refineries have been measured at levels ranging from 11.2 to 53.9 mg/litrc. These concentrations are up to fifty times greater than European and US standards tor safe drinking/domestic water". The report further states that as much as 76 per cent of all the natural gas from petroleum production in Nigeria is flared compared to 0.6 in the United States, 4.3 in the UK, 21 percent in Libya. The flaring is a serious hazard. At temperatures of 1,300 to 1,400 degrees centigrade, the multitude of flares heat up everything, causing noise pollution, and producing carbon monoxide (CO) and other dangerous substances. The emission of CO from gas flaring in Nigeria releases 35 million tons of CO, a year and 12 million tons of methane, which means that Nigerian oil fields contribute more to global warming than the rest of the world put together (World Bank Industry and Energy Operations, 1995). These facts indicate that environmental degradation and scarcity are serious problems in the Niger Delta.

Emphasizing the link between environmental problems and conflicts in the Niger Delta, Obi (1999:11) argued that:

The environmental conflicts in the oil-rich Niger Delta find expression at various levels: the struggles for "scarce land", those for profitable returns on investments and revenues for economic development and those for environmental and human rights. They take the form of the push and pull of social movements intent on blocking continued oil extraction (and degradation/pollution) and impoverishment of the environment, and those seeking to demobilize and suppress the forces of local resistance in order to ensure the uninterrupted exploitation of oil. As such wanton exploitation of the environment continues, backed by state repression, the conflict over oil resources and the land, (and waters) from which oil is mined is exacerbated and transformed into a struggle for power over oil production and the distribution of the benefits accruing from it. For the communities in the Niger Delta area, land is therefore very scarce; and the little that is arable or can be exploited for their livelihood is treasured. It forms the very basis - spiritual and material - of life in the peasant communities of the Niger Delta. Yet, land is scarce.

Poor and deteriorating economic circumstances due to worsening land shortages, few opportunities off the farm, and

declining agricultural productivity produces alarming conflict accelerating factors such as unemployment and rising poverty. With a large and dense population dependent for its livelihood on land, water and other natural resources from a deteriorating resource base, the Niger Delta clearly exhibits both demand- and supply-induced environmental scarcity (Barbier, 1991). Supply-induced scarcity results from falling levels of soil fertility, degradation of watersheds, and depletion of forests. Demand-induced scarcity is caused by too many people relying on low supply of land, fuel wood, and water resources as a result of the effects of oil production such as oil spillage on land (Homer-Dixon, 1996; Naanen 1995; Ukeje, 2001). The dominant view blames oil production and its attendant consequences on the environment for the declining productivity of local economies that are mainly based on fisheries and other forms of agriculture (Aaron, 2006, Salau, 1993, Okoko, 1998, Ibeanu, 2002). Recently (July 5, 2010), the Federal High Court Asaba awarded 15.4 billion Naira (about \$10.4 million) as special and punitive damages against Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in favor of Ejama-Ebubu community of

Rivers State for an oil spill that occurred in 1970. The spill affected an area of about 255.369 hectares (Eyoboka and Idonor, 2010:1). The effect of the oil spillage on the community can be inferred from the following words of the Judge:

I therefore enter for the plaintiffs against the defendants in the following terms: judgment be and is hereby entered for the plaintiffs against the defendants jointly and severally. I make the following order: the defendants shall pay the plaintiffs, special damages in the sum of N1.7772 billion allowing for interest for delayed payment for five years from 1996 at a modest mean Central Bank of Nigeria deregulated rate for that volume at 25 per cent per annum, totaling N5.4 billion made up as follows; direct value of annual renewable crops/amenities, loss of income, N14.5 million, injurious affection, N613.7 million; forestry N115.5 million; hunting income N236.2 million, animal traps N4.9 million, water supply, 80 million and health hazards N100 million and desecration of shrines, N1.8 million... I also award the plaintiffs claim against the defendants in punitive terms of general damages in the sum of 10 billion for general inconveniences, acid rain, pollution of underground water and hardship to the population who have been deprived of their right

to self sustenance education and good life.

The comments above indicate that oil spillage has adverse effects on the environment and the means of livelihood for the people.

In a study conducted by Osaghae, Ikelegbe, Olarinmoye and Okhonmina (2007) environmental degradation and scarcity were identified as the major sources of the conflict in the Niger Delta. The study reveals the depth of the oil based environmental crises and its linkage to land/water depletion, scarcity, unemployment, poverty and dislocated livelihoods in the region. Oil production has precipitated scarcity of agricultural land, forests, water and fish. Scarcity of agricultural land arises because land formerly used by individuals and communities for agricultural purposes is now used for petroleum production. Oil spillage and gas flaring has also contributed to the degradation of the environment resulting in the scarcity of agricultural land, water and fish. When petroleum production began in the Niger Delta, petroleum operations technically involved the leasing of land from communities and families (Akpan, 2008). At that time communities and families

typically own land in the rural areas (Uchendu, 1979; Ebeku, 2001). Land usage by oil companies at the early stage of petroleum production was accompanied with the payment of compensation. Before payments were made the oil companies carried out land ownership verification process. The verification process would be followed by a validation of the 'surface rights' (to determine 'the market value' of manmade structures, crops, fishing ponds). Compensation would thereafter be paid for these items and the land leased. Following the enactment of the Petroleum Act of 1969 and the Land Use Act of 1978, rent payment to land lords stopped completely. When the petroleum Act was enacted in 1969, local residents of oil producing communities were not aware of the financial implications of the Petroleum Act for their status as land lords since the leases were decennial. Residents began to be aware of the implications when the leases were due for renewal in the 1970's but were not renewed and yet petroleum activities continued on the land (Akpan, 2008:6-13). Buttressing this contention Human Rights Watch (1997) asserts that the Land Use Act, Petroleum Act, onshore/offshore laws and others allow the

government to expropriate land for the oil industry without effective due process protections for those whose livelihood may be destroyed by the confiscation of their land. The problem of land scarcity created following the implementation of these policies increased conflict accelerating factors such as rising cases of unemployment and poverty. Presently, the Niger Delta which is the geographical heart of oil production in Nigeria has become a breeding ground for militants and “impoverished ethnic groups”. This is because the discovery of oil and its exploitation has ushered in a miserable, undisciplined, decrepit, and corrupt form of ‘petro-capitalism’ which produces conflict accelerating factors. Ravaged by the ecological costs of oil spillage and the highest gas flaring rates in the world, the Niger Delta has become a centre of violence.

The Nigerian government like a doctor has over 50 years tried to solve the problem in the region. During the colonial era the Willinks Commission was set up following the agitation by the minorities over what they saw as imbalance in the political and economic structure of Nigeria. In 1962, the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was set up to serve

in advisory capacity and provide government with information that would lead to the alleviation of the plight of the area in conjunction with the Development Act of 1961. The NDDB's reports were never made public; they died with the first republic when the military took over power in 1966. Between 1960's and late 1980's, nothing significant was done to solve the environmental and developmental problems of the Niger Delta. In 1989, the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida, in an attempt to assuage the people of the Niger Delta, set up the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) but failed to actualize its objectives due to wastefulness and corruption . During the Obasanjo's administration the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established in 2000 with the sole mandate of developing the oil-rich Niger-Delta region of southern Nigeria. Like OMPADEC a magnifying lens is required to see its performance. This has made the Federal Government to create a new ministry called Ministry of Niger Delta in 2008, to address the Niger Delta issue. In spite of the presence of these institutions, militant activities, violence and rebellion which portray a looming civil war have been the

order of the day in the region. This has resulted in the military approach to ensuring peace in the area using the Joint Task Force. The military approach has not been successful in bringing peace to the area.

In pursuit of the Seven Point Agenda, the Federal Government inaugurated a technical committee headed by Ledum Mitee on September 8, 2008 to distill the various reports, suggestions and recommendations on the Niger Delta from the Willinks Commission Report of 1958 to the present and give a summary of the recommendations necessary for government action. The committee was also expected to present a detailed short, medium and long term solution to the problems in the Niger Delta and make any other recommendations that will help to achieve sustainable development, peace, human and environmental security in the Niger Delta region. On December 1, 2008, the report was submitted to President Yar'Adua and he assured that the crisis in the littoral region of Nigeria would have a final resolution (Adegbamigbe, 2009:16-19). Following the report of this committee, the Federal Government is presently pursuing the policy of amnesty to militants as the solution to

the Niger Delta Crisis. Since the efforts of the federal government and multinational corporations to get the Niger Delta out of the shackles of underdevelopment, violence and rebellion have been a mirage it becomes pertinent that a closer attention be given to the root causes of the problem. This paper takes a critical look at the amnesty programme and argues that the solution to the root causes of the Niger Delta problem goes beyond amnesty.

Theoretical Framework

The frustration-aggression theory has been adopted as the framework for this study. Proponents of the frustration-aggression theory include John Dollard and Neal E. Miller (1939), Miller and Roger Barker (1941) and Leonard Berkowitz (1969). The theory states that when people perceive that they are being prevented from achieving a goal, their frustration is likely to turn to aggression. Frustration develops when an individual is unable to attain a goal. Aggression is usually directed towards the cause of the frustration, but if this is not possible, the aggression may be displaced onto another person or object. The original form of the frustration-aggression hypothesis that frustration always

leads to aggression is not generally accepted. A revised version includes elements of social learning theory. It suggests that frustration increases arousal and anger, but this leads to aggression only if the individual has learned to be aggressive in the particular situation. Scholars such as Ukeje (2001) and Faleti (2008) support the contention that the frustration aggression theory can be used to explain the Niger Delta condition where frustration has led to youth militancy and violence. Alienation caused by the environmental consequence of the oil industry has been exacerbated by political domination, inequality and the failure of the government to respond sincerely to the plight of the people of the Niger Delta. Naanen (1995), Okoko and Nna (1997), Joab-Peterside (2005) and Orobator (2005) see the ethicized Nigerian State and its disabled federal system as fundamental causes of the development impotence in the Niger Delta. This results in the use of political power for the promotion of sectional interests rather than the general interest. The effect is that majority of people living in the Niger Delta are unable to live meaningfully and sustainably.

The plight of the impoverished Niger Delta people is

exacerbated by increase in environmental cum human insecurity. The failure of the government and multinational corporations to keep to promises of emancipating the condition of the people and curbing environmental degradation has built up feelings of frustration in the minds of the people. The people especially the youths are disappointed with the elite and elders who employed methods (accommodation and incorporation) that failed to yield quick and concrete results. In effect, the elders are perceived to be unwilling to fight the cause. They are seen as weak, docile, corrupt and betrayers of the cause of the struggle. This made youths to come into the scene. The role of the youths in the Niger Delta uprising can be captured in the words of Osaghae, Ikelegbe, Olarinmoye and Okhonmina (2007:11) as follows:

They forced their way into the whole situation when they discovered that the future appeared bleak: “They could not allow their tomorrow to be completely destroyed before they take over tomorrow”. “They had to act, take over the struggle, forcefully and claim rights that have been denied them for years”. “They had to pick up arms and fight for their rights”. And “they emerged at the time we needed them to come

to our aid because they are the ones that are able to face the military men". The glory of the youth is in their strength. "Since our representative leaders were being silenced in one way or the other, the suffering youths had to emerge"

In a nutshell, the frustration aggression theory helps to clarify the link between environmental scarcity and violent conflict in the Niger Delta. The degradation of the environment and the scarcity of resources such as agricultural land, forest, water and fish breeds conflict accelerating factors such as rising cases of unemployment and poverty. The perception of insincerity on the part of the government and multinational corporations to curb the problem breeds frustration which has produced aggressive behaviour (violence) in the Niger Delta especially among the youths.

Environmental Scarcity/Degradation and Conflict Accelerating Factors in the Niger Delta

Since the end of the cold war, there has been an impressive growth in the scope of scholarly research and literature on the causes of intra-state armed conflicts. These researches on internal conflicts focus particularly on ethnic,

environmental, political and economic factors. For example Gurr (1995) focused on the relative deprivation theory which offers an explanation that is based on the contrast between groups' expected and actual access to prosperity and power. This approach is closely related to group entitlement theory (Horowitz, 1985), which places more explicit emphasis on ethnic factors which accompany the economic and political (Gurr, 1995). However, ethnic diversity does not in itself seem to be a cause of war (Smith, 1997). Homer-Dixon (1994) researched on the links between environmental degradation and conflict and explores the varying (sometimes catastrophically low) capacity of states and societies to adapt to changing environmental conditions without resorting to violence. The contention now is simply that there are some armed conflicts, such as those in Haiti and the Philippines, whose causes cannot be understood without reference to environmental degradation (Homer-Dixon 1999; Smith, 2002). After a careful study of these theoretical explanations of the causes of intra-state conflicts, Smith (2002) arrived at the following general conclusions:

- Poor economic conditions are the most important long-term

causes of intra-state armed conflicts today;

- Repressive political systems are also war-prone, especially in periods of transition;
- Degradation of renewable resources (specifically soil erosion, deforestation and water scarcity) can also contribute significantly to the likelihood of violent conflict, but are in general not as central to the problem as political and economic determinants;
- Ethnic diversity alone is not a cause of armed conflict, but parties to a conflict are often defined by their ethnic identities.

According to UNDP (2006), more than 60 per cent of the people in the Niger Delta region depend on the natural environment for their livelihood. The negative impacts of the activities of multinational oil corporations affect the environmental resource base of the people. These include; agricultural land, water for fishing and forest for hunting. Pollution and environmental damage therefore affects the existence of the people. Another negative impact of oil spillage and other forms of degradation activities is the effect on tens of thousands of families in the Niger Delta who rely on fishing – in inland rivers as well as offshore – for both

income and food. Damage to fisheries is widely acknowledged by governmental and non-governmental sources as one of the major impacts of the oil industry (Amnesty International, 2009). Commenting on this problem the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (2008) states:

“For brackish-water resources, the state of the resources is deplorable. Fishing pressure is very high, arising from the lack of alternative employment for estuarine communities. Oil pollution further complicates the scenario, with the devastation of aquatic life in the area.” With regards to oil spillage, oil spill figures vary considerably depending on sources, and figures are contested (Amnesty International, 2009). Only SPDC reports publicly, from year to year, on the number of spills in its operations (SPDC Annual Reports 2000 – 2006). Between 1989 and 1994 the company reported an average of 221 spills per year involving some 7,350 barrels of oil per year (SPDC, 1995). The Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) has reported that 4,835 oil spill incidents were recorded between 1976 and 1996, with a loss of 1.8 million barrels of oil to the environment (Orubu,

Odusola and Ehwarieme, 2004). According to UNDP (2006), more than 6,800 spills were recorded between 1976 and 2001, with a loss of approximately 3 million barrels of oil. Both local and international environmental experts claim that the system for reporting of oil spills in the Niger Delta has been completely dysfunctional for decades, and that the figures provided by the companies and reported by DPR do not reflect the full scale of oil spillage. Petroleum, pollution and poverty in the Niger Delta. Drawing on available data, a group of independent environmental and oil experts visiting the Niger Delta in 2006 put the figure for oil spilt, onshore and offshore, at 9 to 13 million barrels of oil over the past 50 years (Amnesty International, 2009:16).

For many people, the loss of environmental resources due to environmental degradation has been a direct route into poverty, as natural resources have traditionally been primary sources of sustenance. Based on the above theoretical background a proper diagnosis of the causes of conflict in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria requires a tripartite dissection of conflict. These are: structural background conditions of conflict, conflict accelerating factors and the

triggers (Adekanye, 1999). The structural background conditions of conflict at best only point to the existence of conflict potential but cannot explain the actual occurrence of a given conflict. They include; differences in ethnic groups, languages, religion and culture. They require other factors or force to activate them in order for an actual conflict to break out. These factors are the conflict accelerating factors. They include rising cases of unemployment, rising poverty, marginalization (perceived or actual), the demands for empowerment, stress and strains of environmental cum human insecurity. The combined effects of the structural background conditions of conflict and the conflict accelerating factors produce alarming social and ethnic tensions and conflicts. Wealth creation in a monocultural manner without development has made the Niger Delta a harbor of conflict accelerating factors which are igniting from time to time.

However, between 1996 and 2004, population in the core poor category rose from 6.2 to 29.3 per cent before declining to 22.0 per cent in 2004'. The report also shows that over 50 per cent of the total population is officially poor.

This indicates that the Niger Delta region is suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructure and services, social deprivation, abject poverty, filth and squalor and contributes to endemic conflict (UNDP, 2006). Secondly environmental degradation cum human insecurity is another conflict accelerating factor in the area that requires careful attention. The problem of environmental cum human insecurity is basically due to the activities of multinational oil companies. The exploration, refining and transportation of petroleum result in social and ecological disturbance. These include explosions from seismic surveys, pollution from pipeline leaks, blowouts, drilling fluids and refinery effluents as well as land alienation and widespread destruction of the natural terrain from construction activities (Hutchful, 1985). The activities of oil companies have contributed to the marginalization of the peasantry in oil producing areas and threaten its conditions and existence. Oil exploration and exploitation have permanently alienated large tracts of land and accentuated land insecurity (Aluko, 1999). Pollution of terrestrial, atmospheric and marine environments is another aspect of environmental degradation. The dangers of

pollution in this area is accentuated by three factors; an extensive coastline dominated by mangrove swamps, large numbers of offshore rigs and oil port facilities. These offshore activities pose particular danger to the sensitive mangrove ecology (Ake, 1985; Agbese, 1993; Human Rights Watch, 2002; Ojo, 2002; Uduaghan, 2008). Oil industry pollution arises from variety of sources. The first is crude oil from pipeline leaks, failure of equipment or tank overflow from excessive pressure, failure along pump manifolds, blow out of oil wells and sabotage to well heads and flow lines (Awobayo, 1981). Additionally, drilling mud and cuttings and gas flaring operations are also sources of environmental pollution (Hutchful, 1985). Undoubtedly, these conditions are causes for concern to the people of the Niger Delta area. Their aspiration is to have these problems ameliorated. That is why the people continually make claims on the government and oil companies. Such claims have been in the form of demands for compensations, increased revenue allocation to oil producing states, provision of adequate social and economic infrastructure, creating more job opportunities for the youths and the demand for resource

control (Onduku, 2001; Saro-wiwa, 1993). The slow response of the political system to meet most of the demands of the people can be related to the contradictions of the country's corrupt economy. The problems of rising poverty, unemployment and environmental decay with no real solution in sight have sown the seed of frustration in the minds of many. This makes them susceptible to aggression and militant activities. The quest for political redeemers or messiahs is also related to the ubiquity of violence during periods of election.

In a nutshell, it is generally comprehended that the recurring crisis in the Niger Delta region is the product of the deep-seated sense of neglect and marginalization by the government and oil companies in supporting critical human development and provision of basic social amenities. The situation in the Niger Delta is indeed a paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. In spite of the oil wealth, the Niger Delta still remains one of the least developed parts of Nigeria. Outside the major urban areas, the level of infrastructural development and the provision of social amenities such as electricity, health care and education are very poor. The state

of infrastructure in the Niger Delta made the World Bank to warn in 1995 that 'an urgent need exists to implement mechanism to protect the life and health of the region's inhabitants and its ecological systems from further deterioration' (World Bank, 1995). Fourteen years after this warning the Niger Delta still suffers from infrastructural decay and underdevelopment (The News, July 6, 2009). Even though the activities of oil companies affect the health of the people in the rural areas, health facilities and personnel are concentrated in the cities and the quality of health care delivery is poor because of inadequate facilities and personnel. The people of the Niger Delta still suffer from debilitating diseases such as malaria, diarrhea and yellow fever (NDES, 1995). As a result of oil activities and migration, infrastructure has come under pressure in the cities, impacting heavily on the quality of life. Electricity supply has degenerated to the lowest ebb. In an attempt to solve these problems series of reports and recommendations have been made by different committees, commissions and conferences. Huge financial resources have also been wasted in handling the Niger Delta problem without

significant achievement basically because of corruption. In recent times especially before the amnesty program too much emphasis has been placed on coercive force with which to cow the militants in search for peace. This did not yield positive results.

Chapter Six

Corruption and Underdevelopment in the Niger Delta

Corruption is a major problem in Nigeria. It negatively affects the ability of the government to ensure efficient services delivery for national development. The failure of the government to use public funds for development purposes in the Niger Delta is one of the major reasons used to justify violent conflicts and militant activities in the Niger Delta. Violent conflicts and militant activities affect the ability of the Nigerian state to create wealth. The pioneer chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission, Justice Mustapha Akanbi (Rtd) disclosed that Nigeria has lost about N400 billion to corrupt practices in the last few years. He admitted that the nation's war against corruption has not been successful as the efforts made by the anti-corruption agencies have not yielded the desired result (Ochayi, 2009:1-5). In the Niger Delta, where the goose that lays the golden egg resides, the people have

become the living dead because of poverty and environmental degradation (Agbo, 2008:48-49). This has resulted in struggle between the people of the Niger Delta who claim ownership over the territory where the bulk of the nation's wealth is generated and the Federal Government. Corruption which perpetuates underdevelopment in the Niger Delta manifests in different ways such as corruption on the part of government officials and community leaders who fail to use public funds judiciously and militant groups who enrich themselves under the guise of fighting for the benefit of the people. Conflicts perpetuated by militant groups are often directed towards vestiges of multinational oil producing and servicing companies and sometimes against other communities. For example between 1988 and 1997 alone, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) recorded 180 cases of conflicts within its sphere of operation. Between March and October 1997 aggrieved youths took 19 hostages in Delta State (Ukaogo, 1999). Since 1999 hundreds of oil company workers have been taken hostage by militants while some lost their lives. The proliferation of violent conflicts in the area has brought about new developments in

oil company community relations. This is done inter alia through the appointment of community liaison officers and community liaison committees. This is complemented by the devotion of huge amount of financial resources to community development. Such resources are often hijacked by greedy community and youth leaders. For example, SPDC claimed to have increased its expenditure on community development from about 2 million dollars a year before 1997 to about 32 million dollars a year since then. Mobil claims to spend an average of about 8 million dollars on community development project between 1994 and 1997. Elf for its part, budgets about 5 million dollars a year on community development, while Chevron also claims to have spent about 28 million dollars between 1990 and 1997 on community development (Ojo, 2002:3-4). In spite of the huge expenditure on community development, the Niger Delta area of Nigeria remains highly underdeveloped basically because of corruption and insincerity on the part of the government, multinational oil corporations, community leaders and militant groups.

The Concept of Corruption

Corruption has been defined as the abuse of public trust for private gain; it is a form of stealing (Todaro and Smith, 2006). The Federal Government of Nigeria's Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Act (2000) states that corruption includes bribery, fraud and other related offences. Osoba (1996:372) also argued that corruption is a form of antisocial behavior by an individual or a social group which fixate unjust or fraudulent benefits on its perpetrators against established legal norms and agreed moral ethos of the society. The absence of corruption encourages investment and efforts to expand the pie rather than fight over its distribution and thus encourages growth; to this extent, improvements in governance in general and reduction of corruption in particular could be means to accelerate the process of development (Todaro and Smith, 2006). Nigeria is ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Daily, low-level corruption is visible on the street; policemen extorting money from motorists to supplement their meager wages. In Nigeria financial gain derived from corrupt activities is often called *awuf*. Nigerians

have different attitudes towards corruption. Although they vaguely believe that corruption is not in the best interest of the nation many hold the view that life is a grim battle for survival. To those who have this believe it is a waste of time to talk about corruption, they only smile when they come across opportunities to be corrupt (Amadi, 1982). For decades the government has accrued huge oil revenues, yet the country suffers from a lack of basic infrastructure, and tens of millions live in poverty due to corruption. In recognition of the harm corruption has been doing to the nation, several policies and institutions have been established to fight it. These include; War Against Indiscipline and Corruption and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC). Presently, the fight against corruption in Nigeria is carried out mainly by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC).

Effect of Corruption on Development in the Niger Delta

It has been argued that if government officials in the Niger Delta region have utilized judiciously their monthly allocations, to better the lots of the ordinary people, through

the creation of jobs, and embark on infrastructural development of the region, the situation would have been better than this current sorry state. For example the Rivers State government had a budget of \$1.3 billion in 2006 which includes transportation fees of \$65,000 a day for the governor's office; \$10 million for catering, gifts and souvenirs; \$38 million for two helicopters (Ejibunu, 2007:18). Health services received \$22 million. Another example is the former Governor of the oil rich Bayelsa State, DSP Alameiyeseqha, who stashed hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign bank accounts to buy mansions in the United States and send his children to private schools in London. (Usman, 2007; Ejibunu, 2007:18). These examples show that most of the state governors spend their monthly allocations on frivolous things that have no corresponding value on teeming and suffering population. The wastefulness of some States and Local Governments especially those in the oil region made the then Minister of State for Finance, who later became the substantive Minister, Esther Nenadi Usman, to asked for greater scrutiny of the activities of governors, particularly

those receiving huge sum from derivation each month. In her words:

States have been a source of worry to us, lately. If you look at the way money is shared at the Federal Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC) meeting, Federal Government gets about 48 per cent, while state and Local Governments take the remaining 52 per cent..... Three to four days after the FAAC meeting, exchange rate rates jump up, which means they are using them to buy foreign exchange. If you look at the States, the States that get so much, you can hardly see anything to show for it". Continuing, she said "make telephone calls to any of the States and ask after the governor and you will be told that he has gone abroad. Not Only the governors, even the commissioner for finance" (Ejibunu, 2007:18).

Although the blame for the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta is often heaped on the federal government, the reality that is that the Federal Government alone is not responsible. Corruption on the part of state governors contributes significantly to the underdevelopment of the area because funds set aside for development purposes are often embezzled. This assertion can be buttressed with the

observations of the former Special Adviser during the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo on Project Monitoring and Evaluation, Professor Julius Ihonvbere that the Niger Delta governors (1999-2007) did not manage the resources that accrued to them for the overall benefit of the people of their states. The following are his words:

If you go to the Niger Delta, some states that collected over N600 billion (about 34 billion euro) since 1999, have nothing to show for the huge money. He therefore called on the new administrations in the states of the Niger Delta to put in structures at the local government levels if the problem of militancy in the region and abject poverty must be resolved (Vanguard Newspaper July 7, 2007:6).

Commenting on the extent in which public funds were mismanaged, the former head of the Nigerian Anti-Corruption Agency, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu, estimated that in 2003, 70 per cent of oil revenues, more than \$14 billion was stolen or wasted (Usman, 2007). The situation in which earnings on crude oil sales continues to sustain a class of corrupt people, with essentially none of it reaching the ordinary people, has

created condition for insurrection. Confirming why the militants were fighting against the system and bad governance to Jeff Koinage of CNN, a leader of the foremost militant group operating in the region, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), General God'sWill said, "we are in the middle of a struggle for the liberation of the Niger Delta, the most devastated and the most threatened region in the world" (CNN, 2007). The former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, also decried the situation in the Niger Delta despite the 13 per cent of revenues from onshore and offshore oil fields without much impact on the ordinary people. In his words, " so far not much impact has been made on the lives and living standards of most ordinary people of the Niger Delta" (Thisday Newspaper July 1, 2007:1).

The crisis in the Niger Delta has at times forced oil production shutdowns of up to 800,000 barrels per day, threatening Nigerian government plans to nearly double production to four million barrels a day by 2010. The crisis is said to have cost the country an annual loss of 4.4 billion dollars (Tell Magazine, November 2, 2009). The campaign of

the foremost militant group, MEND, has heightened tension in the area and is threatening to cripple Nigeria's crude oil export. Experts predict that if the violence continues, oil companies operating in the area will be forced to leave, sending Nigeria's economy in to a nose dive. Should it happen and it is beginning to look possible with increased kidnappings and pipeline bombings in the area, MEND, would have succeeded in their campaign to bring Nigeria's oil dependent to its knees. The amnesty program seems to have a temporary effect on the crisis. The Niger Delta crisis since it began has rippled across energy markets, contributing to higher prices and tighter supplies. Attacks on oil platforms in the region usually push oil prices up. According to a report by International Herald Tribune (2007), an attack by gunmen on a boat carrying oil workers to an offshore rig in the Delta on Friday, 8th June, 2007, pushed up oil prices by more than \$1.50, to \$63.38 a barrel. The crisis has brought about serious security implication for the country (Amaize, 2007). The Nigerian Military, under the aegis of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF), have been fighting with the militants since 2006 when the Movement for

the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) started its violent activities. MEND and other militia groups have been able to withstand the military in several clashes they have had. They have been able to do this because of their access to sophisticated weapons which they use in attacking oil platforms and facilities. According to a security expert, 'the type of weapons available to the different militia groups in the Delta area are so overwhelming, that something should be done, to arrest the situation, before it turns to a high level civil war'. She further said that Nigeria's security is being undermined by the militia groups, for the military to have not been able to tame them. In her words, "the militants appear to be operating with almost impunity. To make matters worse, the militant's tactics and weaponry are increasingly sophisticated" (Whelan, 2007).

Chapter Seven

Oil Production and Disasters in the Niger Delta

The United Nations Development Programme (2005) defines disaster as an occurrence that seriously disrupts the normal functioning of a society, causing widespread human, material and environmental losses, exceeding the ability of the affected society or country to cope using its own resources. It is also defined as a social crisis situation occurring when a physical phenomenon of natural, socio-natural or anthropogenic origin negatively impacts vulnerable populations ... causing intense, serious and widespread disruption of the normal functioning of the affected social unit (Wisner, Blaikie, Cannon, and Davis, 2004; Wikibooks, 2007). Disasters only occur when extreme events exceed the normal capacity of the human system to reflect, absorb or buffer (Adeniyi 2006:3). Disasters typically follow a prolonged phase of inappropriate action or inaction, often due to lack of awareness of the underlining drivers of the problem that spirals towards its ultimate disastrous conclusion. Secondly it is rarely the result of a single management failure of an

environmental change, but rather a synergistic interaction of the two; and thirdly, the victims of disaster frequently lack capacity or options for responding to the situation (UNEP/GRID-Arendal, 2005).

Disasters can be classified into:

- a. Natural Disasters: these are disasters associated with natural events such as climate change and those of tectonic origin. Natural disasters can also be grouped according to the domain of the geosphere where they occur (Adeniyi, 2003:3). In this case, there is the :
 - i. Geotectonic; which are of tectonic origin (i.e. from the earth crust) such as earthquake, volcanoes, mass wasting (land slide) and drifting of ice sheet.
 - ii. Land; which occurs on land such as deforestation, drought, desertification, forest fires, flooding and erosion.
 - iii. Oceanic; which originates from the ocean and high seas e.g. tsunamis/ hurricanes and tropical cyclones.

- iv. Atmospheric; thunderstorm, line squalls and global warming. (Fasona and Omojola, 2005).
- b. Human-made Disasters: These are induced purely by humans. They are caused by human activities such as industrial activities, energy production, transportation and war.

Disaster management is a continuous process by which all individuals, groups and communities manage hazards in an effort to avoid or ameliorate the impact of disasters resulting from such hazards (Lindell, Prater, and Perry, 2006).). It also involves planning, preparing, supporting and saving lives including rebuilding society when natural or human-made disasters occur (Haddow and Bullock, 2004). Disaster management is a continuous process by which all individuals, groups, and communities manage hazards in an effort to avoid or ameliorate the impact of disasters resulting from the hazards.

Since 1958, when the first oil well was drilled at Oloibiri, over 1,481 oil wells have sprung up, producing from

about 159 oilfields. There are more than 7,000 kilometres of pipelines and flow lines, and 275 flow stations operated by 13 oil companies (NNPC and AAPW 2004). With the expansion of oil production, the incidence of oil spills has increased considerably in the region. Spills occur accidentally and through the deliberate actions of the local people, who sabotage pipelines in protest against the operations of the Federal Government and oil companies. Available records show that a total of 6,817 oil spills occurred between 1976 and 2001, with a loss of approximately three million barrels of oil. More than 70 per cent was not recovered. Approximately six per cent spilled on land, 25 per cent in swamps and 69 per cent in offshore environments (UNDP, 2006).

Cases of Oil Spillage and other Disasters in the Niger Delta

Several cases of oil spillage and other disasters have ravaged many areas in the Niger Delta. Oil spill incidents have occurred in various parts and at different times along our coast. Some major spills in the coastal zone are the

GOCON's Escravos spill in 1978 of about 300,000 barrels, SPDC's Forcados Terminal tank failure in 1978 of about 580,000 barrels and Texaco Funiwa-5 blow out in 1980 of about 400,000 barrels. Other oil spill incidents are those of the Abudu pipe line in 1982 of about 18,818 barrels, The Jesse Fire Incident which claimed about a thousand lives and the Idoho Oil Spill of January 1998, of about 40,000 barrels. The most publicised of all oil spills in Nigeria occurred on January 17 1980 when a total of 37.0 million litres of crude oil got spilled into the environment. This spill occurred as a result of a blow out at Funiwa 5 offshore station. Nigeria's largest spill was an offshore well-blow out in January 1980 when an estimated 200,000 barrels of oil (8.4million US gallons) spilled into the Atlantic Ocean from an oil industry facility and that damaged 340 hectares of mangrove

(Nwilo and Badejo 2005). According to the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) in Nigeria, between 1976 and 1996 a total of 4647 incidents resulted in the spill of approximately 2,369,470 barrels of oil into the environment. Of this quantity, an estimated 1,820,410.5 barrels (77%)

were lost to the environment. A total of 549,060 barrels of oil representing 23.17% of the total oil spilt into the environment was recovered. The heaviest recorded spill so far occurred in 1979 and 1980 with a net volume of 694,117.13 barrels and 600,511.02 barrels respectively (Egberongbe, Nwilo and Badejo, 2006).

Summary of Some Oil Spills in the Niger Delta

Date	Episode	State	Quantity in barrels
July,1979	Forcados terminal oil spillage	Rivers	570,000
Jan,1980	Funiwa No. 5 well blowout	Rivers	400,000
August,1983	Oshika oil spill	Rivers	10,000
Jan,1998	Idoho oil spill	Akwa Ibom	40,000
Jan, 1998	Jones Creek	Delta	21,548
Oct,1998	Jesse oil spill	Delta	10,000
May,2000	Etiama oil spill	Bayelsa	11,000
Dec,2003	Aghada oil spill	Rivers	Unknown
August,2004	Ewan oil	Ondo	Unknown

	spill		
August,2005	Ughelli oil spill	Delta	10,000

Source: Nwankwo and Ifeadi (1988); Eka and Udoyong (2003);several newspaper reports

Jesse Pipeline explosion

On October 18, 1998 a pipeline explosion occurred in Jesse community. The cause of the explosion has been debated. The Nigerian government stated the explosion took place after scavengers intentionally ruptured the pipeline with their tools and ignited the blaze; however, others have stated the pipeline ruptured due to a lack of maintenance and neglect with a cigarette igniting the fire. In spite of different perspectives to the cause of the explosion, the fact remains that the fire disaster was caused by ruptured pipeline owned by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), which served as a link between an oil refinery in Warri, and Kaduna, 610 kilometers (380 mi) miles north of Warri. With a total of 1,082 deaths attributed to the blast, the 1998 Jesse explosion has the distinction of being the most deadly pipeline explosion to have occurred in Nigeria (Wikipedia

2008). After igniting on October 18, the fire burned until a firefighting company from the United States was able to extinguish the blaze on October 23 with nitrogen-rich foam (Orr, 1998:14). During a visit on October 19, Nigerian President Abdulsalami Abubakar promised to provide the necessary support to give aid in addition to develop solutions to prevent these types of tragedies from occurring again. Weeks after the explosion, the death toll continued to rise as many of those with injuries died while in hospitals, while others denied themselves care in Hospitals as a result of fearing arrest by the Nigerian government on suspicion of igniting the blaze. Due to the intensity of the blaze, many victims were too badly burned to be identified, and as a result over 300 bodies were buried in mass graves.

Ekakpamre's Fire Disaster

Ekakpamre is an Urhobo community located in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta State. It consists of five (5) clans: Ekrusierho, Ekenewharem, Ekroghen, Ekrezeghe and Ekrata. There are 12 oil wells located in the community. SHELL has been operating in these communities since 1960. On the 18 September 23, 1999 there was a fire

outbreak which affected several communities in Ughelli by burning their forests, boats, nets and even the river which has a thick layer of still spreading crude. Investigations carried out revealed that the fire emanated from a ruptured ancient pipeline belonging to Shell which spewed oil into the communities (ERA, 1999).

The Egorode Fire Disaster

In June 2000, a pipeline near Egorode village in Okpe Local Government Area of Delta State ruptured. Petroleum products from the pipeline kept spewing into the nearby Omugba River. The river transported the petroleum products through villages, farmlands and forests. The affected area stretched over 30 kilometres from Okpe Local Government Area to Sapele Local Government Area from where the river heads out for the sea. Authorities of the Okpe Local Government made a report about the leakage to the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, (NNPC), the government agency that owns the pipeline. The corporation took no action until the leaking petroleum products exploded causing a huge fire on July 10, 2000. The fire spread through the River Omugba causing havoc to the villages, farmlands and

forests through which it passes. More than 3000 people were burnt to death (Environment Rights Action Report, 2000, Urhobo Historical society, 2000).

Adeje Fire Disaster

Adeje petroleum fire broke out on Monday, 10 July, 2000, from pipelines owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria. It burned for days. In two separate reports several months previously, on 11 January 2000 and on 14 February 2000 , Environmental Rights Action, Nigeria's premier environmental advocacy group, had warned about these impending dangers from troubled oil pipelines. No adequate action was taken to prevent the disaster. The troubled pipelines were laid near communities about twenty-five years ago. Apart from ageing from lack of proper maintenance, the pipes have been subjected to vandalization by sophisticated thieves who use equipment that are only available to insiders who have worked in the industry. The victims are the local communities which lie near the areas where Nigeria's Federal Government laid these pipes without consultation or any risk assessment (BBC, 2000).

Strategies for Disaster Management

Disaster management has been an age long problem in the Niger Delta. This has made disasters a human security and development issue. Inadequate disaster preparedness and prevention create far reaching devastation on lives and properties of communities (Cuny, 1983). Disasters affect socio-economic progress negatively and accelerate poverty and misery. Also, unmitigated disasters cause mass death, a very real and direct threat to human security and the creation of a context to achieve sustainable development. Effective disaster management therefore entails various processes and strategies for preparing for emergencies and disasters through prevention, reducing the risk of loss, mitigating the impacts, responding to them when they occur and helping people and institutions recover from them (Quarantelli, 1998). Given the importance of effective disaster management it becomes imperative that effective institutional and legal framework be created for the management of disasters in order to ensure sustainable development (Barton, 1969). By this very fact, this paper considers

disaster management practices in Nigeria and the implication on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Chapter Eight

Intervention Agencies and the Management of Development Problems

The problems of poverty, underdevelopment, environmental degradation and utter neglect as well as the resulting unrest facing the Niger Delta people are well known (Urhobonaton, 2006). After the attainment of political independence by Nigeria in 1960 several interventionist agencies have tried with little success to change the fortunes of the region. The first agency was the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) set up in 1961. Since then, many other agencies have been created by successive

federal governments in an effort to develop and make peace with the people of the area. The following are the major intervention agencies created by the federal government of Nigeria:

1. Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB)
2. Niger Delta Basin Development Authority
3. Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)
4. Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)
5. Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs.

The Niger Delta Development Board

This was the first intervention agency to make major attempt at redressing the problems created by oil production in the Niger Delta. It was established through the Niger-Delta Development Board Act of 1961. The Board was established in response to the Sir Henry Willink's Commission (1958) recommendation that the area deserved special developmental attention by the Federal Government of Nigeria. This was even before crude oil became a critical

factor in Nigeria's development (NDDC, 2001). The major responsibilities of the Board were:

1. Advising the government with respect to the physical development of the Niger-Delta.
2. Carrying out of a comprehensive survey of the development potential of region.

The major achievements of the Board include the initiating of the clearing of creeks and the provision of wide-ranging planning information. Such information, in certain cases, formed the basis of the various projects initiated by the body. Although the NDDP made some achievements, the direct impact on the development of the Niger Delta has been described as very minimal (Aghalino, 2004). Although the NDDP made some achievements, the direct impact on the development of the Niger Delta has been described as very minimal. In its seven years of existence, however, the NDDB achieved little before it faded away following the military coup in 1966 and the outbreak of civil war in 1967. After the civil war, the NDDB was not revived and the Government showed no interest in addressing the

developmental needs of the region. Rather, it decided to use the substantial revenue accruing from oil production in the region to fund a massive rehabilitation and reconstruction program in various parts of the country. Even with the quadrupling of oil prices in 1973 and the subsequent oil windfall, there was no deliberate attempt to use part of the oil wealth to address the issue of poverty and the developmental needs of the region (NDDC, 2001).

Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA)

The failure of the NDDB to ensure the development of the Niger contributed to the establishment of the Niger Delta Basin Development authority, along with other Basin authorities through decree; No.37 of 1976. Commenting on the failure of NDBDA, the 2006 Niger Delta Human Development Report asserts:

...organizational problems bedeviled it from inception. None of the board members appointed by the Federal Government to run the Authority came from the Niger Delta. During the civilian administration of Shehu Shagari, 11 river basin development authorities were created; several now have

jurisdiction in the delta, including the Niger River Basin Development Authority, the Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority, the Benin-Owena River Basin Development Authority, the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority and the Cross River Basin Development Authority. But these authorities also have had very little impact. For one thing, their boards often comprise politicians who have regarded their tenures as opportunities to reap the “dividends of democracy”. They have often been viewed as drains on the nation’s finances.

Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission

The Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) was established through Decree No. 23 of 1992. The objectives for establishing OMPADEC were spelt out in Section 11 of the Decree includes receiving and administering the monthly sums from the allocation of the Federal Government Account in accordance with confirmed ratio of oil production in each State for the rehabilitation and development of oil mineral producing areas and for the tackling of ecological problems that have arisen from the exploration of oil minerals.

By 1993, barely a year after its inauguration, OMPADEC published a list of 78 projects embarked upon as part of phase one of its activities. The list included: 63 projects in Rivers state, 13 for Delta and one each for Akwa-lbom and Abia states. By 1996, the list had risen to 1,182, covering a wide range of activities such as provision of pipe borne water, roads, electrification and hospitals.

Between 1993 and 1997, OMPADEC collected about N17.42 billion, a little over US \$135 million. At first, OMPADEC was allocated three per cent of the Federation Account, but this was raised to 6 per cent in 1995 (UNDP, 2006). The performance of OMPADEC is a subject of heated debate. According to Aghalino (2004) "it would appear that those who benefited from the Commission lauded its activities, while communities that failed to realize anything substantial from it poured a lot of vituperation on it. One area that drew the ire of some critics was the way contracts were indiscriminately awarded. It was alleged that contracts awarded by the Commission failed to satisfy the conditions laid down by government". In a study conducted by the UNDP (2006) it was observed that the Commission did not make any

meaningful impact on the lives and environment of the Niger Delta people. It was noted for its profligacy and extravagance. Contracts were awarded in anticipation of funds, with the result that contracts worth billions of naira were awarded that were not eventually backed with cash. At the time it folded, the Commission owed its contractors billions of naira and left the Niger Delta with numerous abandoned projects. Obvious cases of fraud and mismanagement of funds led to the perpetuation of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta and the death of OMPADEC.

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

The Niger Delta Development Commission was established in the year 2000 with the sole responsibility of developing the oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria. At the inauguration of its pioneer board, in December 2000, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo noted that the NDDC has the potential to offer a lasting solution to the socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta, which successive governments have grappled with even before independence. The Commission was expected

to facilitate the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful. The following are the specific mandate of NDDC:

THE NDDC MANDATE

- Formulation of policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger Delta area.
- Conception, planning and implementation, in accordance with set rules and regulations, of projects and programs for sustainable development of the Niger Delta area in the field of transportation including roads, jetties and waterways, health, employment, industrialization, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications.
- Surveying the Niger Delta in order to ascertain measures necessary to promote its physical and socio-economic development.
- Preparing master plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger Delta

region and the estimation of the member states of the Commission.

- Implementation of all the measures approved for the development of the Niger Delta region by the Federal Government and the states of the Commission.
- Identify factors inhibiting the development of the Niger Delta region and assisting the member states in the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger Delta region.
- Assessing and reporting on any project being funded or carried out in the region by oil and gas companies and any other company, including non-governmental organizations, as well as ensuring that funds released for such projects are properly utilized.
- Tackling ecological and environmental problems that arise from the exploration of oil mineral in the Niger Delta region and advising the Federal Government and the member states on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring and environmental pollution.

- Liaising with the various oil mineral and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution, prevention and control.
- Executing such other works and performing such other functions, which in the option of the Commission are required for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta region and its people

The NDDC funding structure includes contributions from the Federal Government, the oil companies operating in the region, the Ecological Fund and member states in the Niger Delta (UNDP, 2006).

According to the Financial Provisions in the NDDC Act, 2000:

(1) The Commission shall establish and maintain a fund from which shall be defrayed all expenditure incurred by the Commission.

(2) There shall be paid and credited to the fund established pursuant to subsection (1) of this section.

a. From the Federal Government, the equivalent of 15 per cent of the total monthly statutory allocations due to member States of the Commission from the Federation Account; this

being the contribution of the Federal Government to the Commission;

b. 3 per cent of the total annual budget of any oil-producing company operating, on shore and off shore, in the Niger-Delta area; including gas-processing companies;

c. 50 per cent of monies due to member States of the Commission from the Ecological Fund;

d. Such monies as may, from time to time, be granted or lent to or deposited with the Commission by the Federal or a State Government, any other body or institution whether local or foreign;

e. All moneys raised for the purposes of the Commission by way of gifts, loans, grants-in-aid, testamentary disposition or otherwise; and

f. Proceeds from all other assets that may, from time to time, accrue to the Commission.

(3) The fund shall be managed in accordance with the rules made by the Board, and without prejudice to the generality of the power to make rules under this subsection, the rules shall in particular contain provisions.

- a. Specifying the manner in which the assets or the funds of the Commission are to be held, and regulating the making of payments into and out of the fund; and
- b. Requiring the keeping of proper accounts and records for the purpose of the fund in such form as may be specified in the rules.

As a development agency, the NDDC quickly identified the need for a master plan as part of its overall strategy, which has now been completed.

Niger Delta Development Master Plan

Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan is a blueprint for the sustainable development of the area. It is the first integrated development plan in Nigeria that is solely based on stakeholders' participatory inputs and experts' analytical guidance in 25 sectors, including health, education, transportation, and agriculture. Its objectives embrace economic growth, infrastructural development, communities' peculiar needs and environmental preservation for the developmental transformation of Nigeria's oil and gas-rich region. Details of the master plan are not available yet but

according to the report, it is based on “a comprehensive analysis of life, development imperatives, challenges and opportunities in the Niger Delta. Twenty-five sectors, including baseline and demography, education, health, environment and hydrology, biodiversity and natural resources and financial instruments, among others were subjected to detailed study by independent consultants. There were also topic specific studies into conflict impact assessment, poverty reduction, community development and governance, HIV/AIDS and youth unemployment (NDDC Website, 2011).

The Master Plan is basically conceived as a tool that the millions of people of the Niger Delta Region can use to actualize their common vision and build their future to the standard they desire. The Master Plan is designed to offer stakeholders at all levels (individual, group and community) the opportunity to participate fully in the planning and decision making process. Specifically, the coordinating consultants require the ideas and opinions of stakeholders as basis for defining focus areas for development and for producing a vivid picture of what the people want the Niger

Delta region to look like within 15 years of the master plan implementation.. This implies that the input of stakeholders today is what will determine the state of affairs (both for individuals and communities) in the region tomorrow. The Master Plan, for which satellite mapping had been completed and the resource consultants appointed, is expected to cover the following areas:

1. Demography
2. Environment and hydrology
3. Agriculture and aquaculture (with focus on economic activities)
4. Biodiversity
5. Transport (infrastructure)
6. Rural, urban, regional planning and housing
7. Community Development
8. Governance and capacity development
9. Health
10. Small and medium enterprises
11. Water supply
12. Energy (electricity)

13. Telecommunication
14. Vocational training (with focus on employment generation)
15. Waste management and sanitation
16. Large-scale industry
17. Solid minerals
18. Tourism
19. Social welfare
20. Arts, Sports and Culture,
21. Women and Youth employment
22. Conflict prevention
23. Financial instruments and access
24. Investment promotion

Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs

The Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs was created on 10 September 2008. The new ministry has a Minister in charge of development of Niger Delta area, and a Minister of State in charge of youth empowerment. The existing Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was to become a parastatal under the ministry. Yar'Adua said that the Ministry

would coordinate efforts to tackle the challenges of infrastructural development, environment protection and youth empowerment in the Niger Delta (Wikipedia, 2011). The Ministry was created to formulate and coordinate policies for the development and security of the Niger Delta region. Specifically, the Ministry is expected to formulate and execute plans, programmes and other initiatives as well as coordinate the activities of Agencies, Communities, donors and other stakeholders involved in the development of the Niger Delta region. Their specific functions include:

1. Oversee the implementation of Government policies on the development and security of the Niger Delta region.
2. Coordinate the formulation of the development plan for the region.
3. Formulate policies and programmes for youth mobilization in the Niger Delta region.
4. Advice Government on security issues concerning the region.

5. Liaise with relevant Government, non-government and private sector organizations.
6. Formulate and coordinate policies for environmental management.
7. Liaise with host communities for the enhancement of the welfare of the people and the development of the region.
8. Facilitate sector involvement in the region.
9. Plan and supervise programmes on public education/enlightenment.
10. Liaise with oil companies operating in the region to ensure environmental protection and pollution control.
11. Organize human capacity development as well as skills acquisition programmes for the youths.
12. Take adequate measures to ensure peace, stability, and security with a view to enhancing the economic potentials of the area.
13. Submit reports periodically to Mr. President on all matters concerning the region.

Chapter Nine

The Struggle for Positive Change

The struggle to make the Niger Delta a better place for both Nigerians and foreigners has taken a long time but without success. Most of those engaged in the struggle claim to be humanitarians and upright in their cause. Bloody agitations and insecurity in the Niger Delta as a result of underdevelopment and the need for local control over the natural resources in the Niger Delta territory has a very long history. On February 23, 1966, Isaac Adaka Boro, the general officer commanding the Niger Delta Volunteer Service, declared an independent Niger Delta Peoples Republic (NDPR) with the following words:

Today is a great day, not only in your lives, but also in the history of the Niger Delta. Perhaps, it will be the greatest day for a very long time. This is not because we are going to demonstrate to

the world what and how we feel about oppression... remember also your poverty-stricken people; remember too, your petroleum which is being pumped daily from your veins; and then fight for your freedom (Agbo, 2008).

Adaka Boro's call to Niger Deltans to fight for freedom is the result of perceived injustice against the Niger Delta people. One way in which this struggle is carried out is through the activities of militant groups. The activities of these groups negatively affect multinational oil corporations operating in the country. It also hampers economic growth and development. This is because sustainable development cannot be achieved in an environment characterized by corruption, rancor and violence. Corruption and militant activities have been a major impediment to the meaningful development of Nigeria including the Niger Delta area. This is because corruption reduces the money needed to provide social infrastructure and other development projects. Corruption which perpetuates underdevelopment in the Niger Delta manifests in different ways such as corruption on the part of government officials and community leaders who fail to use public funds judiciously and militant groups who enrich themselves under the guise of fighting for the benefit of the

people (Danjibo and Umukoro, 2009). Conflicts perpetuated by militant groups are often directed towards vestiges of multinational oil producing and servicing companies and sometimes against other communities. For example between 1988 and 1997 alone, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) recorded 180 cases of conflicts within its sphere of operation. Between March and October 1997 aggrieved youths took 19 hostages in Delta State (Ukaogo, 1999:18). Since 1999 hundreds of oil company workers have been taken hostage by militants while some lost their lives. The proliferation of violent conflicts in the area has brought about new developments in oil company community relations. This is done inter alia through the appointment of community liaison officers and community liaison committees. This is complemented by the devotion of huge amount of financial resources to community development. Such resources are often hijacked by greedy community and youth leaders. For example, SPDC claimed to have increased its expenditure on community development from about 2 million dollars a year before 1997 to about 32 million dollars a year since then. Mobil claims to spend an average

of about 8 million dollars on community development project between 1994 and 1997. Elf for its part, budgets about 5 million dollars a year on community development, while Chevron also claims to have spent about 28 million dollars between 1990 and 1997 on community development (Ojo, 2002). In spite of the huge expenditure on community development, the Niger Delta area of Nigeria remains highly underdeveloped basically because of corruption and insincerity on the part of the government, multinational oil corporations, community leaders and militant groups.

To some persons the basic reason for the activities of militant groups can be summed up with a Nigerian proverb which states: 'If a provoked houseboy cannot match his wicked master strength with strength, he maims the master's favorite goat'. This means that many people believe that the cause of militant activities in the Niger Delta is because the people are provoked over the slow response of the government towards the plight of people living in the area and the only way to publicize their plight is to cripple oil production. For example, the Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi stated that 'one cannot just talk about

violence without considering what created the violence'. He further postulated that 'the issue of violence did not just erupt; it was due to the long term neglect of the Niger Delta region beyond the level of human tolerance. The people have to fight back...' (Sunday Vanguard, June 15, 2008). While it is true that the problems in the Niger Delta and the slow response of the government to them is really a reason to be angry, the manner in which the anger is expressed calls for a critical observation and analysis of the problems taking place in the area. In other words one may be compelled to ask, why militant activities in the Niger Delta? Three explanations can be adduced. Firstly militants have decided to step up their attacks to keep the Niger Delta on the front burner so that the Nigerian government will not lose sight of the seriousness of the problem in the area. From the point of view of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and its supporters, the people of the Niger Delta have suffered an unprecedented degradation of their environment due to unchecked pollution produced by the multinational Oil Corporations operating in the area. As a result of this policy of dispossessing people of their lands in

favor of foreign oil interests, within a single generation, many now have no ability to fish or farm. People living in the Niger Delta have found themselves in a situation where their government and international oil companies own all the oil under their feet, the revenues of which are rarely seen by the people who are suffering from the consequences of it (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2008). It is pertinent to mention that the oil companies cannot pretend that they do not know what is happening to the environment in the Niger Delta. In an attempt to maintain peace in the area, the Nigerian government obviously has abused the rights of individuals and communities. Examples include the invading of Odi Community in Bayelsa state by the Obasanjo's administration and the killing of Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni activists by the Abacha military regime. But the oil companies are directly benefiting from these crude attempts to suppress dissent, and that means they have a duty to try and stop it. This is because multinational corporations can use their economic power to influence the government to solve the developmental problems in the Niger Delta. Secondly, it is argued that militant activities have intensified

in the Niger Delta because of the emergence of a splinter group from MEND as a result of disagreements over the sharing of ransom takings, a charge often denied by the group. This means that those who subscribe to this school of thought believe that corruption among militants is the basic reason for their actions. Thirdly militant activities are on the increase because of corruption on the part of the government, community leaders, and militant groups. This latter reason accounts for the rise in militant activities in the Niger Delta. Corruption and insincerity on the part of government officials and community leaders is the main reason why the Niger Delta area of Nigeria is not developed. Militants in the area therefore use their activities as a means of getting their share of the national cake as they continue sounding the alarm for the need to develop the Niger Delta (Danjibo and Umukoro, 2009).

Apart from the landmark movement by Adaka Boro many cases of direct confrontation against the federal government have been recorded in the Niger Delta. Landmark examples of such confrontations were spearheaded by the Movement for the survival of Ogoni

People (MOSOP) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta.

Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)

MOSOP) is an Ogoni-based non-governmental organization of the Ogoni ethnic minority people of South-Eastern Nigeria and was founded in 1990 with the mandate to campaign non- violently to:

- Promote democratic awareness;
- Protect the environment of the Ogoni People;
- Seek social, economic and physical development for the region;
- Protect the cultural rights and practices of the Ogoni people; and
- Seek appropriate rights of self-determination for the Ogoni people.

MOSOP has formulated two sets of demands: one directed to the Nigerian government, one to the Shell Corporation. The first of these were set out in the Ogoni Bill of Rights, drafted by MOSOP in 1990, which expressed Ogoni determination to secure their political, economic and

environmental rights. With regard to Shell, Saro-Wiwa demanded that the company bypass the central government, engage immediately in environmental impact assessments of its past activities and raise its standards to best practice. Shell's response in 1994 was to cease production in Ogoniland. In January 1993, to mark the start of the UN Year of Indigenous People, 300,000 Ogoni people demonstrated peacefully in favour of their demands, but the Nigerian government responded to the In January 1993, to mark the start of the UN Year of Indigenous People, 300,000 Ogoni people demonstrated peacefully in favour of their demands, but the Nigerian government responded to the Ogoni mobilization with brutal repression. In a military occupation that lasted more than four years, over 1,000 people were killed and many more were made homeless, refugees or were imprisoned without trial. Saro-Wiwa was arrested several times in 1993, when he was adopted by Amnesty International as a Prisoner of Conscience and became MOSOP President. In May 1994 he was arrested again. The pretext for his arrest was that Saro-Wiwa had incited youth to murder four Ogoni politicians. After a trial, which was

condemned by international observers, and described as judicial murder by the then British Prime Minister, Ken Saro Wiwa and eight of his colleagues were executed on November 10th 1995.

Ogoni Bill of Rights

The Ogoni Bill of Rights which was presented to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1990 called for, among other things, political autonomy to participate in the affairs of the Republic as a distinct and separate unit (by whatever name called), provided that this autonomy guarantees political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people; the right to control and use a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development; adequate representations, as of right, in all Nigerian national institutions, and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.

The bill of right states:

We, the people of Ogoni (Babbe, Gokana, Ken Khana, Nyo Khana and Tai) numbering about 500,000 being a separate

and distinct ethnic nationality within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, wish to draw the attention of the Governments and people of Nigeria to the undermentioned facts:

1. That the Ogoni people, before the advent of British colonialism, were not conquered or colonized by any other ethnic group in present-day Nigeria.
2. That British colonization forced us into the administrative division of Opobo from 1908 to 1947.
3. That we protested against this forced union until the Ogoni Native Authority was created in 1947 and placed under the then Rivers Province.
4. That in 1951 we were forcibly included in the Eastern Region of Nigeria where we suffered utter neglect.
5. That we protested against this neglect by voting against the party in power in the Region in 1957, and against the forced union by testimony before the Willink Commission of Inquiry into Minority Fears in 1958.
6. That this protest led to the inclusion of our nationality in Rivers State in 1967, which State consists of several ethnic nationalities with differing cultures, languages and aspirations.

7. That oil was struck and produced in commercial quantities on our land in 1958 at K. Dere (Bomu oilfield).

8. That oil has been mined on our land since 1958 to this day from the following oilfields: (i) Bomu (ii) Bodo West (iii) Tai (iv) Korokoro (v) Yorla (vi) Lubara Creek and (vii) Afam by Shell Petroleum Development Company (Nigeria) Limited.

9. That in over 30 years of oil mining, the Ogoni nationality have provided the Nigerian nation with a total revenue estimated at over 40 billion Naira (N40 billion) or 30 billion dollars.

10. That in return for the above contribution, the Ogoni people have received NOTHING.

11. That today, the Ogoni people have:

(i) No representation whatsoever in ALL institutions of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

(ii) No pipe-borne water.

(iii) No electricity.

(iv) No job opportunities for the citizens in Federal, State, public sector or private sector companies.

(v) No social or economic project of the Federal Government.

12. That the Ogoni languages of Gokana and Khana are underdeveloped and are about to disappear, whereas other Nigerian languages are being forced on us.

13. That the Ethnic policies of successive Federal and State Governments are gradually pushing the Ogoni people to slavery and possible extinction.

14. That the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited does not employ Ogoni people at a meaningful or any level at all, in defiance of the Federal government's regulations.

15. That the search for oil has caused severe land and food shortages in Ogoni one of the most densely populated areas of Africa (average: 1,500 per square mile; national average: 300 per square mile).

16. That neglectful environmental pollution laws and substandard inspection techniques of the Federal authorities have led to the complete degradation of the Ogoni environment, turning our homeland into an ecological disaster.

17. That the Ogoni people lack education, health and other social facilities.

18. That it is intolerable that one of the richest areas of Nigeria should wallow in abject poverty and destitution.

19. That successive Federal administrations have trampled on every minority right enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution to the detriment of the Ogoni and have by administrative structuring and other noxious acts transferred Ogoni wealth exclusively to other parts of the Republic.

20. That the Ogoni people wish to manage their own affairs.

NOW, therefore, while reaffirming our wish to remain a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we make demand upon the Republic as follows:

That the Ogoni people be granted POLITICAL AUTONOMY to participate in the affairs of the Republic as a distinct and separate unit by whatever name called, provided that this Autonomy guarantees the following:

- (i) Political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people.
- (ii) The right to the control and use of a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development.
- (iii) Adequate and direct representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions.

(iv) The use and development of Ogoni languages in all Nigerian territory.

(v) The full development of Ogoni culture.

(vi) The right to religious freedom.

(vii) The right to protect the OGONI environment and ecology from further degradation.

We make the above demand in the knowledge that it does not deny any other ethnic group in the Nigerian Federation of their rights and that it can only conduce to peace, justice and fairplay and hence stability and progress in the Nigerian nation.

We make the demand in the belief that, as Obafemi Awolowo has written: In a true federation, each ethnic group no matter how small, is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large.

We demand these rights as equal members of the Nigerian Federation who contribute and have contributed to the growth of the Federation and have a right to expect full returns from that Federation.

Chapter Ten

Strategies for Managing the Development Quagmire in the Niger Delta

The response of the state to solving the Niger Delta problem is over 50 years old. During the colonial era the Willinks Commission was set up following the agitation by the minorities over what they saw as imbalance in the political and economic structure of Nigeria. The commission was expected to assess the relevance of the minorities' agitation for equality, fairness and justice in the distribution of national resources. The Willinks Commission stated categorically that the Niger Delta is a poor, backward and neglected region and advocated that it should be made a special territory with special developmental strategies put in place to alleviate the problems. In 1962, the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was set up to serve in advisory capacity and provide government with information that would lead to the alleviation of the plight of the area in conjunction with the Development Act of 1961. It was to conduct a feasibility survey of the region with a view to determining measures necessary to promote its physical development, submit ideas of

development schemes for the area and to report annually on its mission to government. The NDDB's reports were never made public; they died with the first republic when the military took over power in 1966. Between 1960's and late 1980's, nothing significant was done to solve the infrastructural and developmental problems of the Niger Delta. In 1989, the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida, in an attempt to assuage the people of the Niger Delta, set up the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). It was given three percent of the federal allocations earmarked for the Niger Delta States, amounting to N13.6 billion or about \$180 million dollars at that time. In spite of the huge amount of financial resources invested in OMPADEC, it failed to actualize its objectives due to wastefulness and corruption (Vanguard Newspaper, July 20, 2008). During the Obasanjo's administration the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000 with the sole mandate of developing the oil-rich Niger-Delta region of southern Nigeria. Since its inauguration, the NDDC has focused on the development of social and physical infrastructures,

ecological/environmental remediation and human development. Like OMPADEC a magnifying lens is required to see its performance. This has made the Federal Government to create a new ministry called Niger Delta Ministry in 2008, to address the Niger Delta issue. In spite of the presence of these institutions militant activities and violence has been increasing in the region. This has resulted in the military approach to ensuring peace in the area using the Joint Task Force. The military approach has not been successful in bringing peace to the area. In pursuit of the seven point agenda Vice President Goodluck Jonathan inaugurated a technical committee headed by Ledum Mitee on September 8, 2008 to distill the various reports, suggestions and recommendations on the Niger Delta from the Wilinks Commission Report of 1958 to the present and give a summary or the recommendations necessary for government action. The committee was also expected to present a detailed short, medium and long term solution to the problems in the Niger Delta and make any other recommendations that will help to achieve sustainable development, peace, human and environmental security in

the Niger Delta region. That day the Vice President vowed that upon receipt of the committee's report, the Federal Government would, without undue delay, put in place an all embracing stakeholders framework to dialogue on the distilled recommendations raised by this Committee (The News Magazine, July 6, 2009). On December 1, 2008, the report was submitted to President Yar'Adua and he assured that the crisis in the littoral region of Nigeria would have a final resolution. The Committee made recommendations in the following areas:

1. Increased revenue allocation on the basis of derivation which should be dedicated largely to new infrastructure and sustainable development of the region.
2. Disarmament
3. Empowerment of youths through direct labour youths empowerment scheme
4. Road Infrastructure
5. Power supply
6. Environmental protection

7. Provision of health care facilities
8. Rehabilitating and equipping all existing public primary and secondary schools
9. Rehabilitating all internally displaced persons especially those displaced from Bakassi and forestall the ongoing dispersion and the eventual extinction of the Bakassi people as a collective entity.

Strategy 1: Diversification of the Economy

Nigeria was primarily an agricultural country after independence in 1960. This was so in two senses; firstly, about 80% of the country's labour force was engaged in agricultural activities. Secondly, agricultural products accounted for 85 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. The steady increase in the production and rise in the price of crude oil in the international market in the 1970's led to the neglect of the agricultural sector which provides employment for majority of the people. The proceeds from the sales of crude oil were not used to develop the various

sectors of the economy. Corrupt political leaders used the oil wealth for their selfish interest thus impoverishing those who own the areas where the wealth is generated (Eccker, 1981). The lack of diversification of the economy away from oil production is one of the main causes of the conflict in the Niger Delta. The domination of oil politics has resulted in a disproportional focus of efforts to gain employment and be associated with the oil industry. This has resulted in a mono-focus that fails to realize the potential for other economic activities based on local assets (Nkoro, 2005:7). Yet there is still enormous potential for diversification to be one of the main solutions to the mounting violence. The experiences of several countries that used oil wealth to develop their economy show that it is possible for the Nigerian government to use oil wealth to diversify the economy especially improving the agricultural and industrial sectors. Countries such as Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Libya, Iraq, Iran, Russia, Norway, Egypt, and Oman have used petrodollars to transform their economies to economic power houses and better the lot of their citizenry. Dubai is a great lesson in development. Dubai is currently ahead of most of

its fellow oil rich nations in the world. With a population of 1, 422,000 and gross domestic product of \$46 billion in 2006, Dubai has built a solid and fast growing economy on the back of its oil resources. Significantly today, revenues from oil and gas approximate to less than six per cent of its entire annual earnings (Adeyemo, 2008). Compared to major oil producing countries, the emirate would count as small fry in the cartel of oil producing nations. Another example is Indonesia. Indonesia capitalized on its oil fortune and fuelled its industrialization policy that saw manufacturing export rise by 40 percent, compared with less than one percent in Nigeria. Okonkwo cited in Tell (November 2, 2009) compared Nigeria to Indonesia. For instance he said "Indonesia had average gross domestic product, GDP, growth rate of 5.9 percent between 1965 and 2004 whereas Nigeria recorded 3.5 percent GDP growth. In Indonesia, Manufacturing value added increase from 8 percent in 1965 to 25 percent by 2000, but declined from 5 to 4 percent in Nigeria. Similarly, the share of manufactured exports increased from 4 percent to 57 percent in Indonesia, but declined from 2 percent to 1 percent in Nigeria". The poor management of oil revenues

during the boom and bust cycles has tended to create a highly volatile macroeconomic environment for Nigeria. Inadequate adjustment to oil price shocks during the downturn in oil prices in the 1970's and 1980's led to large fiscal deficits. The budget swung from a surplus of 11 percent of non oil GDP in 1974 to a deficit of 10 percent in 1978 with the oil boom starting in 1973, Nigeria seemed to have derailed (Usman 2007). Nigeria is also endowed with variety of solid minerals ranging from coal, cassiterite and columbite in the southern region to limestone, iron ore, tin and marble in the northern region. Solid minerals exploration in the country is highly below optimal, mostly undertaken unofficially. Official data show that coal exploration was at its peak in 1958 with nearly 1.0 million tonnes in production. Thereafter, it declined to 20,000 tonnes in the 1990s. Production of other minerals also followed the same pattern. It is therefore pertinent that the Nigerian government put adequate effort into sectorial balance in utilizing the various resources available in the country.

Strategy 2: Addressing the Reasons for the Formation of Militant Groups

One of the reasons for the formation of militant groups according to the respondents is the desire to improve the quality of life of people in the Niger Delta. This means that corruption on the part of political and a community leader which breeds underdevelopment of the Niger Delta is a major reason for militant activities. The result of the neglect of the Niger Delta is widespread poverty and penury in the area. This finding is corroborated by the view espoused by Aluko (1999) that poverty contributes to frequent cases of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta. This situation is aggravated by the perception of the people that the source of their problem is not the unavailability of resources to transform their lives from quantity to quality but the mismanagement of such resources. The absence of corruption encourages investment and efforts to expand the pie rather than fight over its distribution and thus encourages growth; to this extent, improvements in governance in general and reduction of corruption in particular could be means to accelerate the process of development (Todaro and Smith, 2006).

Nwachukwu (1999) posits that production and export of crude oil from the Niger Delta accounts for over 90 percent of Nigeria's total export earnings and about 80 percent of federal revenue. In spite of this, corruption has caused massive unemployment among the youths particularly university graduates. Additionally oil prospecting activities have caused environmental degradation in the area. This adversely affects the traditional occupation of farming and fishing in the region (Ojo, 2002). It also affects multinational firms and their workers. For example in 2006, militants kidnapped some expatriates and demanded the immediate payment of 1.5 billion dollars compensation by Shell Petroleum Development Corporation to some Ijaw communities who dragged the company to court over oil spillage which they refused to pay. The hostages were released after due negotiation between the government and the captors (Ojie, 2007). The respondents also indicated that the desire to make money is a reason for militant activities. This shows that the militants were fighting for different reasons. Most of the respondents believe that militancy is a means for getting some share of the national cake which the

Federal Government has refused to share equitably. This can be buttressed with some of the reported cases of militant activities. For example, in May, 2008, militants demanded N1 billion to release two kidnapped foreign nationals working for the Lone Star Drilling Company, a service contractor to Agip Oil company on May 9, 2008 (Ojie 2007:5). Corruption can therefore be said to be part of the reason for militant activities.

Militant activities affected Nigeria's ability to create wealth through petroleum production. The crisis has made illegal bunkering of oil to thrive, which is also the source of funds for the militants operating in the creeks of Niger Delta. According to a report of the Brussels based International Crisis Group (2006), Nigeria losses anywhere from 70,000 to 300,000 barrels per day to illegal bunkering, the equivalent output of a small oil producing country. The Washington based Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force calculated that a loss of just 70,000 barrels a day at a price of \$60 a barrel “would generate over \$1.5 billion per year-ample resources to fund arms trafficking, buy political influence, or both”. Put another way, “one day’s worth of

illegal oil bunkering in the Niger Delta (at 100,000 barrels and \$15bbl) will buy quality weapons for and sustain a group of 1,500 youths for two months”, according to a report by a consultancy group contracted to shell (Ejibunu, 2007:5). Illegal bunkering has been a key source of funds for anti-government militant groups. Several militant warlords have either publicly or privately admitted involvement and others said they consider the practice a defensible means of providing income for aggrieved and impoverished residents of oil producing communities (International Crisis Group, 2006). However, it must be noted that the activities of these bunkerers have become a serious threat to the security and well being of the Nigerian nation. The relative peace in the Niger Delta as a result of the amnesty programme has resulted in over 50 per cent increase in crude oil production in Nigeria.

Strategy 3: Empowerment

Curbing militancy in the Niger Delta is very important for the creation of wealth and ensuring sustainable peace in Nigeria. This requires empowerment. The word empowerment has been defined by different scholars.

Rappaport (1987) espoused the view that empowerment is related to the word power. Staples (1990) argued that the new meaning of the concept includes mainly references to power that develops and is acquired. Page and Czuka (1999:1) defines empowerment as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important. Empowerment means liberation of people from the oppression and deprivation they are subject to, and is oriented to populations which do not obtain social justice. Empowerment can be seen from three perspectives. They are individual empowerment—which focuses on what happens on the personal level in the individual's life; community empowerment—which emphasizes the collective processes and the social change; and empowerment as a professional practice—which sees empowerment as a means of professional intervention for the solution of social problems (Sadan, 1997:61, 101). Some preconditions are essential for empowerment. They include political preconditions, economic preconditions and social

preconditions. This entails encouraging citizens' participation in governance, reducing economic problems such as unemployment and promoting community awareness and positive interactions. The active participation of the citizens in political decision making reinforces a sense of personal and political ability, creates expectations for a successful solution of problems, and encourages civic commitment. People's participation in group and organizational frameworks promotes community empowerment as well as individual empowerment (Arenstein, 1969; Hanna and Robinson, 1994; Condeluci, 1995). Community awareness is an important part of the empowerment process because it helps to ensure community's rediscovery of its powerlessness and the recognition by people who have just achieved a degree of control over their lives and their future that there are limitations to their new ability (Couto, 1989; Sadan 1997:71-80).

The former minister of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, Obong Ufot Ekaette, stressed the need for empowerment when he stated that the solution to the problem of violence in the Niger Delta requires empowering

the youths through skills and capacity building as well as environmental remediation (Nwagu, 2010:1-2). It is important to note that effective youth empowerment strategies must be sustainable if they have to make significant impact on ensuring sustainable peace. The importance of empowerment to ensuring sustainable peace in the Niger Delta was also stressed by the former president of Nigeria as follows:

The Niger Delta crisis has been a long drawn one which started a few years ago as a legitimate agitation by the neglected people of the oil rich region for resource control and political empowerment. The struggle, however, took a dangerous dimension when criminal gangs, masquerading as freedom fighters, hijacked the process. Their nefarious activities have blurred the initial noble objectives of the struggle, brought incalculable disaster to the people of the region and economy of the nation while posing a potent threat to the sovereignty of Nigeria (Nwosu, 2009:1).

The political, economic and social empowerment of the people of the Niger Delta especially the youths can help to reduce conflict accelerating factors in the area and ensure sustainable peace (Watts, 2004). The energy that would

have been used for various social vices militancy, cultism and drug abuse will be used to ensure nation building. Empowering the youths requires identifying the reasons for youth restiveness in the area and how they can be controlled. In a study conducted by Ofem and Ajayi (2008:6) several factors were identified as causes of youths' restiveness in the Niger Delta. They include lack of humanitarian and social welfare program, problems of good governance in the Niger-Delta, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training program for youths, the urge to satisfy basic needs, the high cost of living, lack of self-esteem among the youths, lack of participation in community services and decision making. These factors can be controlled if corruption is eradicated and youths adequately empowered. Empowerment of youths in order to curb militant activities in the Niger Delta requires addressing the root causes of violent conflicts in the area. These include; rising poverty, unemployment and environmental cum human insecurity. Additionally, the blame for underdevelopment in the Niger Delta should not only be heaped on the Federal Government. Corrupt practices should be checked at the

state government level so as to ensure that the 13 per cent derivation revenue given to states from the Federation Account are judiciously utilized to develop the area and empower the youths. True democracy and the rule of law are also very important for ensuring empowerment. The importance of true democracy to empowerment can be inferred from the following views expressed by the Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (2010:1):

A true democracy therefore, cannot be restricted to its institutional framework alone. It also needs to be embodied in a culture, a state of mind that fosters tolerance and respect for other people, as well as pluralism, equilibrium and dialogue between the forces that make up a society. This concept requires all social, financial, governmental and non-governmental actors, as well as the relationship which links or separates them, to be taken into account. These basic democratic principles constitute a fundamental source of common values that can be described as the common heritage of humankind. Without those values there can be neither democracy nor sustainable development.

The solution to the problem of militancy and violent conflicts in the Niger Delta should begin with the eradication of problems associated with the underdevelopment of the area, such as poverty and inadequate infrastructure. Oil companies should be community friendly. They should employ unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labour from the communities in order to solve the unemployment problems in the area. This will make it difficult for any individual to justify the activities of militants with developmental crisis in the area. That is why the Governor of Delta State, Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan (2008) espoused the view that 'for us to have peace in the Niger Delta oil companies should ensure that their operations conform with necessary health, safety and environmental standards so that our environment are not polluted because when our environment get polluted communities become very angry and disturb the activities of oil companies'. Additionally, the country's economy should be diversified. Sincere effort is also required in the fight against corruption especially among state governments in the Niger Delta and intervention agencies that fail to utilize the 13 percent derivation fund for the benefit of the people.

Information on how funds are being disbursed, the amount, projects meant for and those entrusted with the funds should be adequately publicized.

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