



**AFFLUENCE AND AFFLICTION**  
**The Niger Delta as a Critique of Political Science in Nigeria**

**Inaugural Lecture**

**Okechukwu Ibeanu**

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Preamble

**Mr. Vice-Chancellor, if the records of inaugural lectures of the university are correct, I should be the first serving Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences to give an inaugural lecture. That being the case, I think that I should preface this lecture with a few remarks about the Faculty. I am particularly persuaded to do so not only because an inaugural is normally given on behalf of a Faculty, but also because it would give me an opportunity to pay tribute to many fine minds who preceded me as Dean and many others who have passed through that Faculty as Professors and teachers and who I had the singular honour of knowing as I clawed up the ladder of my academic career these past twenty-five years. I also think that an inaugural lecture is necessarily autobiographical. Consequently, telling a bit of the story of the Faculty of the Social Sciences would enable me to contextualize my own career trajectory and progress.**

**Mr. Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, Faculty of the Social Sciences is one of the pioneer faculties of this university. In fact, I believe that the founding**

fathers of this university understood the centrality of the social sciences to “restoring the dignity of man”. This is understandable if situated in the context of the training, philosophy and politics of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. His pan-Africanist, anti-colonial and nationalist philosophies inevitably led him to see clearly the importance of disciplines like philosophy, anthropology, sociology, economics and above all, political science in building a renascent Africa liberated from the maelstrom of imperialism and colonialism. It is this tradition that drew many fine minds to social sciences at Nsukka.

Among many others, I wish to note particularly the following who have passed through the faculty and left indelible footprints: Professors Ikenna Nzimiro and Inya Eteng in sociology; Professors Okwudiba Nnoli, Elo Amucheazi, Eme Awa, Eze Ogueri, Godfrey Odenigwe and K. Mathews in political science; Professors Aluko, Okonjo and Kodjo in Economics; Professors Ilogu and Ogbu Kalu in Religion and Professor G.E.K. Ofomata in Geography. I also pay tribute to those who preceded me as Dean of Faculty and are no longer in the services of the University, particularly Professors Nnoli, Kodjo, Kalu, Nsugbe, Ofomata, Onyewuenyi, Eyo, Nwafor, Obikeze, and Okorafor. As Dean of Faculty, I always look to build on their legacies.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I have noted that an inaugural is necessarily autobiographical. Permit me to mention some of my own former teachers particularly Professor Elo Amucheazi, who practically raised me from a fledgling undergraduate to a robust political scientist, having supervised me for the Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees, and Professor K. Mathews who taught me faithfulness and accommodation. Above all I wish to pay a special tribute to Okwudiba Nnoli, Professor of Political Science, who was Dean of the Social Sciences from 1983 – 1985 and under whose tutelage I have framed my academic career. Professor Nnoli taught me early in my career the principles that should guide the conduct of a good academic, both intellectually and practically namely, collegiality, openness, integrity, simplicity and dedication. He taught me that a Dean of Faculty is first and foremost an academic, not an administrator, and once a Dean ceases to be a symbol of academic excellence, then that deanship becomes hollow. I must say that whatever success I have recorded as Dean of Faculty is mostly attributable to what I gleaned from him.

I count myself lucky to have been in the generation that came to the Faculty of the Social Sciences in an era of ferment and transformation. There are at least two principal distinguishing characteristics of that era, one related to research and pedagogical methods and the other, which is more fundamental, related to epistemology. Consequently, first, that era was one marked by unprecedented permeability of disciplinary boundaries, leading to the blossoming of interdisciplinary orientations. This is not to suggest that Social Sciences at Nsukka pioneered interdisciplinary research, instead it is to point out that the Faculty early on accepted it and raised us in that tradition. One of my strongest memories of that tradition was when D.S. Obikeze, Professor of Sociology, was named one of two principal assessors of my Ph.D. proposal. I still remember the debate we had over the utility of Rapid Rural Appraisal as a data gathering method. The coalescence of research and pedagogical methodologies in the Faculty at that time could be seen in the wide usage across the Faculty of Okwudiba Nnoli’s *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, Elo Amucheazi’s *Church and Politics in Eastern Nigeria*, Ogbu Kalu’s *Divided People of God*, Adiele Afigbo’s *Ropes of Sand* and D.S. Obikeze’s book on social statistical methods. One impetus to this tradition, I must say, was the existence of General Studies, particularly G.S. 103 (Social Sciences) which enabled collaboration among Faculty members in preparing materials for teaching that course. Professor Elo Amucheazi’s edited reader remains a fitting symbol to that era. Consequently, as a result of that tradition, although I trained as a political scientist, I can as Dean of Faculty comfortably attend a PhD viva in the Department of Geography in

one day and another in the Department of Psychology the next day and feel very much at home with the methods of inquiry in both cases.

The second distinguishing characteristic of that era is that it was a period of epistemological ferment during which received social science from the West was widely questioned. By the time I joined the Faculty as a student in the 1970s, the home of this ferment was the Department of Sociology and was driven at the time by Professor Ikenna Nzimiro, Dr. Balintulo, a fine South African academic who I again met many years later when he was the Vice Chancellor of the University of Durban, and of course Professor Inya Eteng. Like the Hegelian world spirit in search of actualisation, this ferment later moved to my Department, Political Science, in the 1980s. Professor Okwudiba Nnoli as Head of Department delivered this epistemological and pedagogical revolution. Within three years of his Headship, he overturned the twenty-year dominant epistemology on which the Department rested, working on the inside with then Dr. Assisi Asobie, Dr. Ugochukwu Uba, later a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and Dr. Ogban Ogban-Iyam. And on the outside, our external examiners became people like Professors Claude Ake, Adele Jinadu and Yusuf Bangura, while Professors Osita Eze and Ollawa became regular visitors.

What was this ferment that I speak about? Professor Nnoli summarized it in his valedictory lecture at the conference we organized to commemorate his voluntary retirement from the University in 1995. The event, I believe, came to set the framework for other retiring Professors of the University to be honoured by their students and colleagues. Among the participants were his close friends and renowned professors of political science – Claude Ake, Adele Jinadu and Sam Oyovbaire. In a nutshell, he summarised this ferment as a revolt against Western Social Science in Africa and the establishment of an authentic African Social Science. This was the commitment of his generation of political scientists, particularly people like Claude Ake, Yash Tandon, Dani Nabudere and Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja. They sought to demonstrate the irrelevance and subterfuge of Western social science, particularly political science, as was imposed on Africa, and called for both academic and practical political struggles against it. Among other things, these struggles must entail:

- Conducting a detailed and systematic critical review of the received social science and existing social science practice.
- Clarification of the idea of development and the invention of an appropriate model of development.
- Ensuring that the revolt against Western social science does not exhaust itself in national consciousness.
- Making adequate preparation for the onslaught of “delegitimation” against academics that participate in this revolt.

In summary, for them, first, Western social science in Africa is an extension of imperialism and so should be profoundly interrogated and transcended. Second, African social scientists must focus on developing an authentic African Social Science. Some of the principal characteristics of this science are the following:

- Reject orthodoxy;
- Depict profundity and originality of thinking;
- Be practical and socially relevant; and
- Be humanistic.

**Third, the objective of this social science is the democratic development of Africa namely, the economic, social and political empowerment of the African masses, while its methodology must constantly unify theory and practical social and political action.**

Political action and struggles were particularly emphasized in this revolt against Western social science in Africa because of the way political praxis has been

devalued and used to construct a social science that has only served the interest of the West and not that of ordinary Africans. To be sure, Western social science in Africa insists on the separation of theory from, privileging the former over the latter. This is part of its claim to objectivity and neutrality. We should understand that this is part and parcel of its role in elaborating the dominant class ideology. To fully understand this role, we must problematise the primary class functions of intellectuals. According to Gramsci, there are two categories of intellectuals – traditional and organic intellectuals.

Traditional intellectuals include the clergy, the bureaucracy and other custodians of the cultural heritage of a society. These are different from organic intellectuals. Every social force, principally social classes, constitutes its own ensemble of organic intellectuals, which elaborates an ideology corresponding to its interests. Consequently, in a capitalist society there are organic intellectuals of the working class and those of the bourgeoisie. As a class comes into a position of social dominance, it also assimilates some or all strata of traditional intellectuals into its organic intellectuals and collectively they become elaborators of the dominant ideology. According to Gramsci,

Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organisers of a new culture, of a new legal system.

The dominant scientific community of an epoch belong to the organic intellectual category of the dominant class. Still, the organic intellectuals of the subordinate classes constantly challenge this dominance at the intellectual level. Thus, in a capitalist society the organic intellectuals of the working classes are always opposed to those of the bourgeoisie. However, while the organic intellectuals of the dominant class can concentrate on intellectual elaboration leaving practice to the technical functionaries of the dominant class, especially in state institutions, the organic intellectuals of working people must directly integrate practice into their work. Consequently, we could say that generally separation of theory and practice is characteristic of dominant ideologies, while their unity is characteristic of the ideology of a subordinate class. This is understandable as the separation is necessary for the depoliticisation of the subordinate classes by eliminating practice and social activism from their education.

In claiming objectivity and neutrality, received Western social science, including political science, insists that ethical and ideological considerations must be eschewed for knowledge to be scientific. But I argue that insofar as the social sciences are ideological formations, they always mirror the character of social (principally class) relations and the architecture of power that these relations foster. Drawing from Marx's analysis in the *Grundrisse*, Hugo Radice criticises Western (bourgeois) social science in the following apt words:

It implicitly treats fundamental aspects of the status quo as eternal and natural, and falsely claims neutrality and objectivity for its views in consequence . . . . the social sciences as ideological formations are part of the development of society along with the economic and social formations to which they correspond, and [that] a truly scientific social science, equally product and agent of the transformation of society, must be critical, must seek to transcend these formations. Neutrality and objectivity as eternal criteria do not exist: the only real human knowledge or science is gained through

praxis, the unity of theory and practice in social action, not by detached observation, and the theoretical component of praxis is inseparable in the final analysis from 'political' practical activity.

This should not be interpreted as denying the existence of objective truth. Rather it is to recognize that the approximation of our knowledge to that truth is always socially and historically determined. In the final analysis, the test of any social knowledge lies in its correspondence to social progress. By social progress we mean improving the conditions under which human beings (all human beings) live. Consequently, social progress must be consistent with the interests of the vast majority of the populace (the popular masses), not those of a select few. In other words, the more our knowledge corresponds to the interests of the popular masses, the more socially progressive it is, and the test of this correspondence is only to be established through practical, social activism.

Having established that practice is part and parcel of science, in fact its test of validity, we should distinguish a number of forms of practice. First, we make a distinction between the practical theorist and the theoretical practitioner. While the former on the basis of an existing theory elaborates a scheme of practice that makes the theory more practical and real, the latter in the course of practice elaborates the theoretical underpinnings of practical actions. Gramsci's comments on this is very apposite:

. . . one can construct, on a specific practice, a theory which, by coinciding and identifying itself with the decisive elements of the practice itself, can accelerate the historical process that is going on, rendering practice more homogeneous, more coherent, more efficient in all its elements, and thus, in other words, developing its potentials to the maximum: or alternatively, given a certain theoretical position one can organise the practical element which is essential for the theory to be realised.

The second distinction is that between intellectual praxis and social praxis. The former refers to practice targeted at reproducing the organic intellectuals of the working people, through direct training, organization of academic networks and communities, as well as research. The latter, on the other hand, has to do with practical social activism such as becoming politically active in working people's movements and direct community work. I should note however, that these distinctions are more theoretical than practical because in reality, all forms of practice exist in their unity.

**Mr. Vice Chancellor, I have just laid out central aspects of the epistemology of the social science that I first encountered at Nsukka and which I have come to know and grow in. It is the social science I have professed and it is the social science that I have led as Professor and Dean, particularly in my own discipline of political science.**

### **Political Science: the science of managing affluence and affliction**

It is a testimony to the dynamism, currency and openness of our science that inaugural lectures are still asking the questions "what is politics and what is political science?" many centuries after Aristotle first broached them. The late Professor Billy Dudley, one of Nigeria's finest political scientists, in his widely cited inaugural lecture at the University of Ibadan correctly notes that to ask the question what is politics and political science? is like asking the question "what is carpentry?" He

concludes that such a question is not particularly useful and that what is needed is to describe the components of politics. My approach is to describe the things that preoccupy political scientists as members of a discipline. I think that four organically related things do:

1. Understanding what politics is, particularly by building and testing empirical theories about politics (empirical political science);
2. Suggesting what politics ought to be (normative political science)
3. Determining what should be done to make politics what it ought to be (policy prescriptions); and
4. Doing what should be done to make politics what it ought to be (political practice).

Put more ostentatiously, political science is an empirical science for it seeks to explain and understand *what is*. But it is also a normative science for it is concerned with *what ought to be* and how to attain it. Above all, it is a practical science for it works to transcend *what is* and to attain *what ought to be*. Indeed, its true test is praxis – the unity of theory and political action.

My own political science, political philosophy and political praxis have led me to the conclusion that all politics is about managing or reconciling affluence and affliction, principally though not exclusively, through the instrumentality of state power. As an empirical science, political science studies the different ways in which affluence and affliction have been reconciled through history and the consequences of each. As a normative science, the role of political science is to craft theories and models of politics that establish a stable inverse relation between affluence and affliction such that there is a steady increase in the numbers experiencing affluence and decrease in the numbers experiencing affliction. Finally, as members of a practical science, political scientists must engage in struggles that midwife this stable inverse relation between affluence and affliction. My studies also led me to the deduction that there are three dominant ways in which this reconciliation of affluence and affliction could occur:

- 1. Affluence could be used to eliminate affliction (Political development)**
- 2. Affluence could be used to perpetuate affliction (Political oppression)**
- 3. Affliction could be used to eliminate affluence (Political rebellion)**

**The first is the most desirable, the second is the most prevalent and the third becomes inevitable because of the second.**

From Political Science in Nigeria to Nigerian Political Science

**Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I have alluded to some of the flaws of political science in Nigeria as part of received Western social science. Let me now elaborate on these and demonstrate my own involvement in the struggle to create an authentic Nigerian political science. Indeed for twenty-five years, I have been a participant in the longstanding rebellion against Western political science in Nigeria. Our rebellion has drawn from the Left movement and the gamut of intellectual inspirations of that movement, particularly Marxism and its concerns with the character of state power, the class struggle and popular revolution. In this rebellion, I have followed the indelible footprints of Nigerian political scientists like Okwudiba Nnoli, Claude Ake and Adele Jinadu, who in various ways have directly influenced my work. I have been fascinated by the depth of their analysis, their commitment to the development of our discipline and their humanism epitomized by an unflinching belief in ordinary people, the masses.**

**Understandably then, my career as a political scientist has been devoted to the study of the relation between affluence and affliction in the context of state power. My commitment has been to study and work with oppressed and vulnerable groups. In the process, I have sought to understand their afflictions,**

their responses to their afflictions and how their afflictions could be redressed, or what is another way of saying the same thing, changing affliction into affluence in a broad sense. In my work these groups have included women, the poor, displaced populations, children, the peasantry and above all, oil producing communities of the Niger Delta.

It is in the context of studying the afflictions of these groups that I clearly saw the two principal weaknesses of political science in Nigeria at the levels of analysis and policy, as well as practice. Generally, political science in Nigeria is oriented towards the affluent and only pays lip service to the afflicted. First, at the level of analysis, political science in Nigeria is rooted in liberal-bourgeois traditions. Encapsulated in the modernization meta-narrative, politics is about creating affluence for a few, not about eliminating affliction for the many. At best, affluence “trickles down” to the afflicted. In any case, affliction, like affluence, is the result of choices made by rational, self-interested individuals and it is not the duty of the state to interfere in those choices, as that would create distortions in the allocation and use of resources. To support this narrative, political science in Nigeria readily cites the shining examples of Europe, North America and more recently the capitalist countries of Asia to show that affluence results from the rational activities of free, self-interested individuals operating under market relations. The role of the state in creating these affluent societies is only limited to underwriting the “enabling environment” for market forces to blossom. Subscribers to political science in Nigeria recommend the establishment of liberal democracy seen essentially in terms of periodic elections to produce governments that support private ownership of property, enable market forces and reduce the welfare role of the state, control labour restiveness and open up the rural areas for private investment in agriculture. In a nutshell, political development, for them, consists in creating a market society under a liberal-democratic political regime as you have in Western Europe, North America and the rim-States of Asia, such as Japan, South Korea and Singapore. At the level of practice, political science in Nigeria discourages direct political action by political scientists. To engage in political struggles is to be ideological and therefore unscientific. The role of the political scientist is to conduct objective, value-free research and advise politicians on the correct line of action

One of my earliest essays was a rebuttal of this perspective. I questioned this view of political development, arguing that political development is nothing packaged in Europe or America to be sold to people in the form of democratic reforms. Instead, political development is a process of using affluence to eliminate affliction through the instrumentality of state power. It is about the state using affluence to wipe out and redress affliction. In this regard, I argued that for Nigeria political development entails using state power and the affluence of society in three organically related areas:

- a) To achieve national economic self-reliance or autonomy by eliminating two related economic dependencies of Nigeria namely, dependence on global capital and dependence on crude oil exports.
- b) To politicise the populace, that is to raise political awareness and mobilize the population, enabling them to fully participate in the decisions that affect their lives locally and nationally.
- c) To achieve popular welfare by eliminating those social situations which alienate labour, particularly poverty and ignorance.

I called for practical struggles linking political scientists and popular organizations to achieve these three interrelated objectives.

**That my essay, which I wrote in 1988 and appeared in *Development and Peace*, marked my first attempt to join other co-labourers in the struggles to transcend political science in Nigeria and build an authentic Nigerian political science. When later that year I arrived at the Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University as a Fellow in Refugee Studies, leaving behind a Department of Political Science that had practically jettisoned its modernization credentials, I knew that the sociology of knowledge and social science epistemology that I subscribe to were bound to face their greatest challenge yet.**

### **Engaging the dominant epistemologies of refugee, peace and conflict studies**

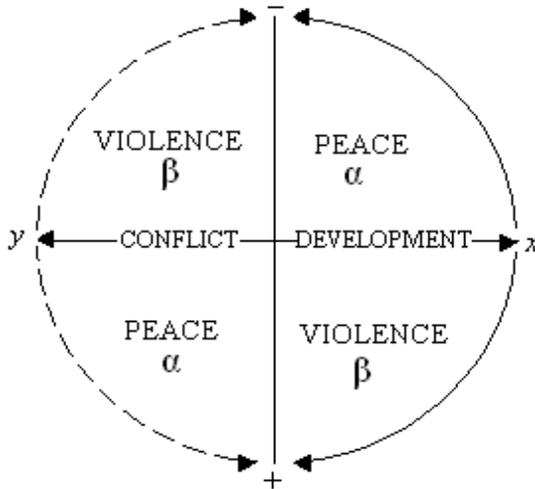
“Population displacement in Africa, including refugees flows, results from domestic and global class struggles, and not from any mythical overpopulation of Africa” was how I opened my intervention at a seminar during my fellowship at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University during 1988/89. The renowned Anthropologist, Elizabeth Colson, gave the seminar in which she suggested that the high incidence of refugee flow in Africa is somehow related to overpopulation. In the months that followed, I devoted my studies to challenging the dominant epistemology of refugee studies at Oxford. This culminated in my essay on apartheid and population displacement in Southern Africa, which has since become one of the top fifty most cited articles published in the Oxford Journal of Refugee Studies. In it, I set out a materialist interpretation of the problem of refugees in Africa, arguing the necessity of transcending the orthodox concept of refugee which links it to movement across international boundaries. Instead, my analysis broadens the concept by linking it to class contradictions and domination, irrespective of whether affected people cross an international boundary or not. Applying this to southern Africa, I concluded that the class-racist state in South Africa and the unequal relations established by global capital in southern Africa are at the heart of refugee crisis in the region. From that point, I published a series of essays addressing aspects of refugees and internal population displacement in African countries, exploring their links with Africa’s food crisis, globalisation, human rights and communal conflicts.

My interest in theoretical and methodological issues in our discipline did not stop with refugees and population displacement. I extended that interest to peace and conflict studies. For many years, I was concerned that peace studies have essentially taken conflict as the point of departure, rather than peace. In an ironic sense, peace studies have basically defined peace in terms of conflict, namely peace as the absence of conflict. Consequently, there has been little or no attempt to conceptualise peace as such. At best, peace is intuitively and idealistically portrayed as a pristine, perfect, ordered and tranquil state of existence, which remains an aspiration of all societies. I criticized these two dominant approaches to peace namely, peace as absence of conflict and peace as a tranquil state of nature. For one thing, there is no recorded human society corresponding to such a stylised state of tranquil existence. Even the earliest humans had to confront nature in its raw and brutal form, including dangers posed by wild animals. Another problem is that such an idealistic conception of peace creates the impression that we can find peace as an absolute, once-and-for-all condition. In conceptualising peace, I argued that it not a condition, but as a process. In other words, it is a dynamic socio-economic process, rather than a condition. Peace is a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community. In other words, peace is about reconciling affluence (development) and affliction (conflict) both locally and internationally. Seen in this way, peace:

- Relates to existing social conditions, rather than an ideal state or condition.
- Is a dynamic process (rather than a static condition) and it is possible to precisely identify and study the factors that drive it.
- Is not a finished condition, but always a “work in progress”. It is never finished because human societies continue to aspire to higher levels of development and lower levels of conflict.

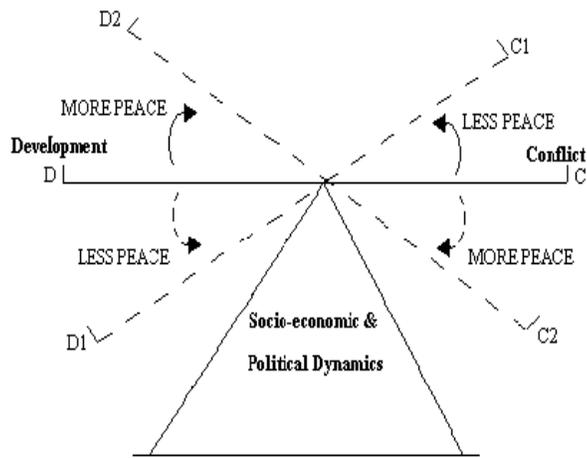
- Increases and decreases depending on objective socio-economic and political conditions. It is also reversible, that is, it is possible to move from higher levels of peace to lower levels.
- Can be measured with some precision as it increases and decreases.
- Is not a linear, unidirectional process, instead it is complex and multifaceted.

Fig. 1: The Development-Conflict Compass



In Fig. 1, I conceptualise peace in terms of a compass with the two counterbalancing pointers of development and conflict. The movement of the two pointers are driven by social, economic and political conditions within a given society and in the wider international community. As the development end of the pointer moves from  $x$  in the positive direction (+), the conflict end moves from  $y$  in the negative direction (-). This indicates that as development increases, conflict decreases. When this happens, the peace space ( $\alpha$ ) expands, while the violence space ( $\beta$ ) contracts. The converse of this dynamic is also true. Extending my concept of peace, Fig. 2 shows the interaction between development and conflict as a fulcrum. As conflict increases from  $C$  to  $C1$ , development decreases from  $D$  to  $D1$ . This leads to a contraction of peace. Conversely, as conflict decreases from  $C$  to  $C2$ , development increases from  $D$  to  $D2$ , leading to an expansion of peace. These shifts are in turn driven by social, economic political conditions of a society. As would become clear shortly, these ideas enabled me to better contextualize the problem in the Niger Delta.

Fig. 2: Fulcrum of Peace



### **Niger Delta: antinomies of affluence and affliction**

Let me now return to the Niger Delta which has loomed large in my research over the last fifteen years. But why the Niger Delta? For me, the Niger Delta is much more than a region with rich petroleum reserves. It has become in many senses a singular expression of my politics and political science. It is so for at least three reasons. First, I should note that Port Harcourt was my birthplace and I have always felt a deep connection with that city and the region far beyond academic engagement. Second, the Niger Delta remains absolutely central to the survival of Nigeria. In fact, I strongly believe that if you get the Niger Delta right, you get Nigeria right. In short, the Niger Delta has become emblematic of all that is wrong with Nigeria and yet remains indicative of the hopes of a better Nigeria. What is happening in the Niger Delta is a clear lesson of the dialectical relation between affluence and affliction and how different social forces try to reconcile the two. Thirdly, the Niger Delta is evocative of all that is wrong with political science in Nigeria. Consequently, it provides a platform for interrogating political science in Nigeria and for building a Nigerian political science.

Of all the soubriquets by which Nigeria's crude oil and *petropolec* (petroleum political economy) have been described such as "black gold", "oil boom to oil doom", "lifeblood of the economy", "Dutch disease", "rentier economy" and "curse of a nation", my favourite remains "the devil's excrement", which Terry Karl attributes to Juan Perez Alfonso, the Venezuelan founder of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Certainly, crude oil could only be the devil's excrement – dirty, sludgy and yet priceless. Aptly, the devil's excrement must be something made in hell, what with the constant gas flares (towers of fire), agony and massive destruction which are associated with it. For added measure, the worshippers of this devil – oil companies, stock brokers, government officials, criminal and cult groups, state security forces and private security agencies working for oil companies – practice idolatry and pyromancy through their insatiable quest for oil money and firepower (arms and ammunitions). It is not surprising that wherever we find the devil's excrement there is money, blood and fire. The devil's excrement has been a source of wealth and poverty, security and insecurity, and development and underdevelopment in equal measures. Ironically, those from whose land it is taken are always on the negative side of its inherent paradoxes – they are poor, insecure and underdeveloped. They only hear of its value in stories of big cities it has built, such as Abuja, its ever-soaring price in stock exchanges around the world, the millions of people it will keep alive next winter in distant lands of the Northern hemisphere and how it is transforming China into a gas guzzling Frankenstein's monster that constantly gives economic planners in Europe and America nightmares. Indeed, the paradoxes, ironies and antinomies of the devil's excrement are endless.

Surely, only something associated with the devil, particularly the waste from the devil's entrails can be so inherently contradictory and pathological in character. At one and the same time, it will pay for the next meal of millions of Nigerians and it will also orphan hundreds of Nigerian children who will lose their parents in the inferno taking place in the Niger Delta presently. Many Nigerian leaders will smile to the bank tomorrow because of their access to the devil's excreta, while millions of other ordinary Nigerians in the creeks of the Niger Delta will drown in it and have their livelihoods wiped out by oil spillage and reckless discharge of effluents of crude oil mining and refining into a fragile ecosystem. That is the character of the devil – he gives with one hand and takes with the other! The analysis of this inherently contradictory character of the politics of petroleum, particularly in Nigeria's Niger Delta stands out as one major plank of my scholarship in the last twenty-five years. And because of its continuing currency, it merits a special attention in chronicling what I have contributed to the discipline of political science.

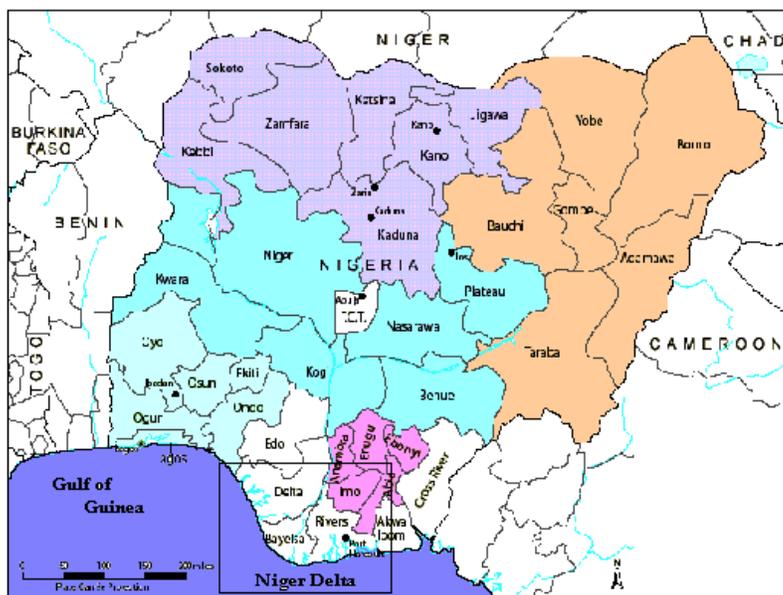
### Three theses on affluence and affliction

Let me state what that contribution is right away. My investigation led me finally to three paradoxes and, consequently, three theses on affluence and affliction in Nigeria, which I demonstrated through my studies of the Niger Delta as follows:

1. That wealth impoverishes Nigerians
2. That national security contradicts the security of nationals in Nigeria
3. That development underdevelops Nigeria

Applied to the Niger Delta, my theses on affluence and affliction demonstrate how wealth creates poverty in the Niger Delta, how national security makes nationals insecure in the Niger Delta and how development has underdeveloped the Niger Delta.

Fig. 3: Nigeria showing the Niger Delta



Thesis one: how wealth creates poverty in the Niger Delta

One of the most glaring contradictions in the Niger Delta is the glaring differences between the *petrobourgeoisie* and the *petroletariat*. Indeed, a lasting paradox of the petro-state in Nigeria is the level of poverty in the Niger Delta, which is the source of the country's oil wealth. Without doubt, Niger Delta's poverty is in part the consequence of oil production, especially its environmental consequences, which have destroyed livelihoods by destroying farmland and fishing waters. The numerous negative environmental impacts of crude oil mining and refining are well known.

Pollution arising from oil spillage destroys marine life and crops, makes water unsuitable for fishing and renders many hectares of farmland unusable. Brine from oil fields contaminates water formations and streams, making them unfit as sources of drinking water. At the same time, flaring gas in the vicinity of human dwellings and high pressure oil pipelines that form a mesh across farmlands are conducive to acid rains, deforestation and destruction of wildlife. In addition, dumping of toxic, non-biodegradable by products of oil refining is dangerous to both flora and fauna, including man. For instance, metals that at high concentrations are known to cause metabolic malfunctions in human beings, such as cadmium, chromium, mercury and lead, are contained in refinery effluents constantly discharged into fresh water and farmland. They enter the food chain both by direct intake via food and drinking water, and indirectly. For example, fish is known to be able to store mercury in its brain without metabolizing it. Man in turn could eat such contaminated fish. In the specific case of Ogoniland, it has been recorded that 30 million barrels of crude oil were spilled in the area in 1970.

According to Shell, this was because of sabotage by the Biafran Army after the civil war, a claim that many local environmental groups contest. Shell figures also say “in Ogoni from 1985 up to the beginning of 1993, when we withdrew our staff from the area, 5,352 barrels of oil were spilled in 87 incidents”. However, other independent sources give much higher figures. According to Earth Action, there had been more than 2,500 minor and major oil spills in Ogoniland between 1986 and 1991, including a major one in which Shell dallied for forty days before patching a ruptured pipeline. However, rather than take responsibility, state officials and oil companies are quick to blame oil spills on sabotage by local communities. For instance, Shell insists that out of 87 oil spill incidents in Ogoniland between 1985 and 1993, sixty (about 70%) were sabotage, 44 using hacksaws. This agrees with the position of government. According to the Rivers State government, out of 11 incidents in Ogoniland in 1990, 8 or 73% were sabotage.

Apart from oil spills, there have been other far-reaching environmental damages in the Niger Delta. For instance, Mitee reports that in the 1960s Shell constructed a narrow road through the town of Dere to link its oil wells. This destroyed the drainage system of the town leading to sever flooding. To date, the community is still seeking compensation for thirty-nine years of suffering. In Gbaran, Shell also constructed a road to link its installations with a major road from Yenagoa to Mbiana. Consequently, water flow to a large section of timberland was cut leading to the atrophy and death of 1,000 acres of forest. There is also the problem of gas flaring, which we have already alluded to. In November 1983 alone, Shell flared over 483 million cubic metres of gas from its oil wells. In these gas flares, temperatures reach as high as 1,400°C. Although there are existing attempts by oil companies to end flares, the situation is still one of the worst cases in the world. For instance, in 1991 Nigeria exceeded the world average for gas flares by 72%. In that year, Nigeria flared 76% of gas produced. Compare this with the world average of 4% and OPEC average of 18%.

Ecological damage has gone hand in hand with resource scarcity in the Niger Delta. Consequently, local communities have come to associate the two, sometimes unjustifiably. Under difficult economic regimes canvassed by International Financial Institutions, successive Nigerian governments have cut public spending, virtually frozen public sector employment and withdrawn state subsidies to mass consumption goods such as petrol. At the same time, most public enterprises have been sold to private interest and their workers disengaged, notwithstanding public outcry. The pump price of petrol, the major energy source, has risen from ₦0.75/litre in 1986 to ₦80 under the present government, an increase of over 10,500%, with recurrent periods of serious scarcity when one litre of petrol could cost as much as ₦300. All these have drastically affected living standards of ordinary people across the country, including oil-producing communities. However, because oil exploration by multi-

national oil corporations has dominated the lives and livelihoods of people in Niger Delta for four decades, and being increasingly aware of the contradiction of riches between themselves and *petrobusiness*, local communities are holding oil companies responsible for their deprivation and poverty. This is manifest in the demands that are being made on oil companies: roads, schools, hospitals, employment, support for farming, indeed everything to improve their livelihoods and everything that in fact should be the responsibility of government. Part of the problem is the strong affinity and cosiness between oil companies and governments, including the most oppressive ones. In any case, people in the Delta reason that if oil companies can easily call out military detachments to quell protests at their facilities, there is no reason to make a distinction between them and government.

### **Thesis two: how national security generates insecurity in the Niger Delta**

In the Niger Delta, national security contradicts the security of nationals because of the politics of oil. In my studies, I linked this to what I called the rule of a *militariat* and its attempts to maintain social dominance forcefully in the face of declining petroleum rents, pressure from international finance capital and domestic discontent over its activities. A major part of my work was devoted to studying the social origins of the *militariat* and its politics. By the *militariat* I designate a social category, which though related to the Nigerian military, is not coextensive with it. The contradiction between national security and security of nationals in the Niger Delta is the direct result of the oil politics of the *militariat*. The starting point in deciphering the *militariat* is the military's domination of the Nigerian state. Since its nascence in British colonial rule, the Nigeria military has undergone three main stages of transformation propelled essentially, but by no means exclusively, by politics. At its inception in the last years of colonial rule, the Nigerian army was a career for educationally under-achieving young men. Nevertheless, by the first five years of independence, a growing number of educated young officers had emerged. Mostly trained abroad, many of them had perceived the inevitability of an increased political role for the army. This role was itself fuelled by ethnic politicians whose calculation was to raise a crop of officers from their ethnic homeland who would be loyal to the ethnic group and, by extension, to them, the ethnic leaders. At this stage, the Nigerian military transformed from a mere career into a prop for ethno-political factions.

However, the strategy of the ethnic leaders soon backfired because of a sub-transformation that occurred in the military at this stage. From being initially a prop for ethno-political factions, the military quickly transformed itself into a contender for power. In doing this, soldiers adopted the ethnic calculus to which ethnic leaders had exposed them. Therefore, initially ethnic political factions enlisted the military, but subsequently military political factions enlisted ethnicity. This stage came to a head in the civil war (1967-1970), which pitted federal soldiers led by ethnic Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba against the secessionist army dominated by the Igbo. The military's "successful" prosecution of that war under its own political direction, rather than that of civil authorities, served to establish the army from 1970 onwards as a very important political force. Among other things, it further undermined civil-political control of the military. Huge personal wealth acquired by individual officers from war contracts and massive post-war reconstruction underscored the demise of civil control of the military. Officers began to feel that they were not only masters of violence, but also masters of politics and successful business entrepreneurs. A political future for the military became guaranteed.

The final transformation of the military occurred from around 1986. From being a political faction, the Nigerian military, particularly its upper echelons, became the core of an emerging social category. It was precisely the military's "specific and over-determining relation" to political structures, occasioned by its politicisation, which constituted it into a social category. However, the final impetus to this transformation came from the extensive economic and political reforms of the mid-1980s, mostly under the auspices of international financial institutions. The military by destiny or design led the technocracy that implemented those reforms. This period marked the

The *militariat* was inserted with pertinent effects at all the levels of structures - political, economic and ideological. Consequently, it became not only a political force but also a social force. It has a specific terrain of interests and draws its "membership" from various segments of society. This means that although the long period of military rule in Nigeria facilitated the emergence of this social category, it is not exclusively military. As a social category, the *militariat* has three component class backgrounds, consisting of both military and civilian agents. These are the comprador bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and international finance capital. For the first two, their strongest defining interest is the use of the state for private accumulation, through public works contracts and outright misappropriation of public funds. Consequently, they support the "strong" and economically interventionist state. The third stratum of the *militariat* is foreign capital, notably those investing in the petroleum sector. The bulk of foreign private investment in Nigeria is in that sector. The class rule of the *militariat* balances on three props namely, authoritarianism, communalism (especially in its ethnic form) and *petrobusiness*. These three props respectively capture the principal political, social and economic moments of the rule of the *militariat*. First, authoritarian rule involves limiting the democratic space, whether by military or civil government. This is achieved through the systematic use of state violence against individuals, communities and other targeted groups, which are defined as constituting a threat to "national security" (read: regime security). A necessary correlate of authoritarian rule is the diffusion of a culture of militarism. Derived from the military organisation, this culture favours violence and force over persuasion, order over discussion and bargaining, exclusion over inclusion and coercion over conviction.

Second, communalism, especially in its ethnic and religious forms, is also a defining moment of the rule of the *militariat* in Nigeria. To be sure, communalism, especially ethnicity, predates the coming into dominance of the *militariat*, being a constitutive element of the Nigerian state as it emerged from colonialism. However, the rule of the *militariat* adopted, maintained and deepened communalism. In the first place, in the absence of institutionalised means of political mobilisation under military dictatorships, communalism burgeoned as pan-ethnic organisations filled the space vacated by political parties and pressure groups. Furthermore, various factions of the military found in communalism a means of legitimising their seizure of power. Appeal to their co-ethnics for support against threats from other ethnic groups was a common strategy of successive military regimes. Civilians also found in communalism a means of pursuing their interest under military rule. For one thing, military regimes tended to give more access to economic resources to ethnic in-groups, that is, ethnic groups supporting or appearing to support the military regime. For another thing, ethnic out-groups found in ethnicity a means of counter-mobilizing the ethnic homeland against exclusion. Under civilian rule, given the tenuous ideological link between politicians, workers and the peasantry, a link that was provided previously by the anti-colonial ideology of nationalism, ethnicity has become a substitute for cross-class solidarity. Our present political parties, which should provide proper harnesses for anchoring democracy and promoting national integration, have not helped matters. Instead, they have encouraged voting behaviour along ethnic, religious and other communal cleavages.

Third, while authoritarian rule and communalism provide the political and social props of the rule of the *militariat*, foreign capital bankrolls it. The principal expression of the interest of foreign capital in the *militariat* is *petrobusiness*. Its subsidiary interest lies in Nigeria's huge foreign debt, which accumulated under the *militariat*. It stood at \$32.5 billion in 1996, with a repayment arrears of over \$15 billion. The rule of the *militariat* ensured that this debt, accumulated mostly in profligacy, will not be repudiated. By 1998, Nigeria was spending N44 billion (about \$500 million) annually in servicing her external debt.

The rule of the *militariat* and its tendency to give a privileged position to national security (read: regime security) remains the prime driver of the persistent conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta. The most fundamental basis for conflict between the Nigerian state and communities in the Delta is the contradictory conditions of security they project. For the forces that control the Nigerian state (state officials and *petrobusiness*) national security, which they say takes precedence over everything else, means an uninterrupted production of crude oil at “competitive” prices. This is their paramount concern irrespective of the impact on the local inhabitants and environment. On the part of local people in the Niger Delta and their organizations, the condition for security is the maintenance of the carrying capacity of the environment. Security for them is recognition that an unsustainable exploitation of crude oil, with its devastation of farmland and fishing waters, threatens resource flows and livelihoods. Therefore, protection of the environment is invariably linked to this perception of security. When livelihoods are threatened, a feeling of deprivation ensues. A people that feel deprived also feel anxious about their livelihoods. Such people are insecure. Consequently, a condition of security for the people is the elimination of deprivation through a just distribution of resources. This, for them, means that a good part of wealth generated from their land should return to them.

Hitherto, the almost automatic response of state officials to this contradiction of securities is not to seek consensus and negotiate common grounds. Instead, it is to unleash state violence through militarism. State violence clearly illustrates the continuing tendency of people in power to privatize the instrumentalities of the state, in this case using them to pursue the private interests of state officials and *petrobusiness*. In effect, although conflicts in the Delta involve social groups, this is only an illusion because actually it is the violence unleashed by a privatized state that is the cause of conflicts. Ake *et al* (nd) therefore argue that what is happening for the most part is violent aggression by the state rather than conflict. This is because:

Those who are aggressed, communities, ethnic groups, minorities, religious groups, peasants, the poor, counter elites, are often not in any dispute or even systematic interaction with the people who aggress them. The aggression often occurs in the routine business of projecting power, carrying out policies without consultation or negotiation with other parties or spreading terror to sustain domination.

State aggression against the people of the Niger Delta has taken four main forms namely, constant harassment of the leaders of popular movements and organizations, instigating inter-communal conflicts, especially along ethnic, religious and clan lines, instigating internal division of popular organizations and direct repression using the army and police. In response, communities in the Delta mobilize to engage the alliance of state and *petrobusiness* for improved livelihoods and a clean environment. Often, in the violence that ensues, as in the case of the Ogoni, women are the prime victims. Other cases include the running war between government forces and Ijaw communities in Bayelsa State, which began with the *Egbesu* uprising and Odi killings in 1998 and 1999. The tendency of government to criminalize every opposition in the Niger Delta has served to drive genuine discontent underground, leaving the stage for criminal gangs, as we see presently. Often, in the violence that ensues, as in the case of Ogoni and Warri, women and children are the prime victims.

*A good case study of the aggression of the Nigerian state in the Niger Delta is the experience of the Ijaw ethnic minority in Bayelsa state between 1998 and 1999. This was particularly illustrated by the Egbesu wars and Odi massacre. From the time of its creation in 1996, Bayelsa State, the heartland of the Ijaw ethnic group, was like a simmering earthquake waiting to erupt. The repression of the Niger Delta by the military had left the region highly charged and mobilized and it was only a question of time before the situation exploded. In August 1997, over 10,000 youths from across the Delta demonstrated at Aleibiri in Ekeremor Local Area of the State to demand an end to all Shell activities in the Niger Delta. Aleibiri was chosen as the focus of the*

*demonstration because, according to the youths, Shell had refused to clean an oil spill that occurred there on 18 March 1997. Even at the time, evidence clearly pointed to more conflicts between the state, oil companies and Ijaw youths, in spite of repeated claims by government that peace had returned to the area. Speaking at the Aleibiri gathering, a community leader and retired Navy Lieutenant, Chief Augustine Anthony, clearly stated that Ijaw youths would fight until there is freedom in the Niger Delta because “we have been exploited for so long”*

Within one year, Ijawland exploded in what became known as the *Egbesu* wars. It began in early 1998 when an Ijaw youth leader was arrested and detained by the military Governor of the State during the rule of General Abacha. He was held without trial in the Government House (the military Governor’s official residence) for distributing “seditious” documents questioning the financial probity of the Governor Navy Captain Olu Bolade. In reaction, a group of youths believed to be members of the *Egbesu* cult, stormed the Government House in Yenagoa the State capital city, disarmed the military guards and released their leader. Many residents of Yenagoa that we spoke to, including policemen and soldiers, believe that members of the cult were able to break into the well-guarded Government House because they wore charms that made them impervious to bullets. The success of the first *Egbesu* war obviously enhanced the profile of the youths and the cult, and encouraged more young people, many of whom were unemployed (youth unemployment in Bayelsa State is very high), to join the cult and the ensuing protests. In a matter of weeks, the invincibility of the *Egbesu* had spread throughout Ijawland and beyond. The success of the *Egbesu* youth in the “first war” also fed into wider demands by the Ijaw for more petroleum revenues. Prior to the *Egbesu* action, the Ijaw National Council and the Movement for the Survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSIEN) had made vociferous demands for more petroleum revenues to be allocated to the Ijaw.

The death of the dictator Abacha in June 1998 and improvements in human rights and expansion of the political space made it possible for Ijaw demands to become more openly articulated and pursued. The first *Egbesu* war had guaranteed a central role for the youth in this new dispensation. This became clear in late 1998 following a spate of hijacks of oil installations by Ijaw youths. This phase of Ijaw resistance, as they called it, culminated in a grand Convention of Ijaw youths in Kaiama town. The meeting issued a document addressed to the government and oil companies requesting more local control of oil revenues and better environmental practices. The *Kaiama Declaration* also gave the government until 31<sup>st</sup> December 1998 to respond positively to their demands. The government upped the ante with a spate of condemnations and threats to use force against the youths. In his new year/budget broadcast on 01 January 1999, the Head of State General Abubakar, gave indications of a military action against the youths. Since early December 1998, there had been massive military build-up in Bayelsa State by the government, including the positioning of frigates in the Gulf of Guinea.

Throughout December 1998 and early January 1999, Bayelsa State was virtually under siege and the atmosphere was tense. The second *Egbesu* war was imminent. It started when military men in Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State, confronted Ijaw youths participating in a cultural festival. In the ensuing violence, which lasted for over one week, many Ijaw youths lost their lives in Yenagoa and Kaiama, property worth millions of Naira was destroyed and scores of people were displaced.

**The military invasion of the town of Odi in Kolokuma-Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State in 1999 by the new civilian government seemed to confirm the fears of the human rights community that it will take some time before the vestiges of the rule of the *militariat* are eliminated. Odi is the second largest town in Bayelsa State, after the capital Yenagoa. Trouble began in mid-November 1999 when a criminal youth gang took some policemen hostage and later tortured them to death. The team of policemen had gone to the**

town to investigate rumours of renewed *Egbesu* mobilisation, this time to storm Lagos. This was thought to be a reprisal for attacks a month earlier on Ijaws in Lagos by the ethnic Yoruba youth group called the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC). It was widely believed that the OPC attacks on Ijaw residents of the Lagos suburb of Ajegunle was a carryover from the conflicts in the State of Ondo between the Ijaw and Ilaje, a Yoruba clan. The government interpreted the killing of the policemen as renewed *Egbesu* challenge to the state. However, it is known that one leader of the gang that murdered the policemen at Odi was in fact a member of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the party of both President Obasanjo and Governor Diepreye Alamiyeseigha of Bayelsa State. This youth leader is known to be very influential among Ijaw youths and mobilised them to support the PDP in the Gubernatorial elections of January 1999. In response to the death of the policemen, President Obasanjo ordered Governor Alamiyeseigha to produce the culprits. When this failed, he ordered in the army.

*The consequences were chilling – over two thousand deaths, many more missing, thousands forced to flee and virtually no house left standing in Odi. As if this was not enough, the President in a televised interview ordered security forces to shoot rioters at sight. These draconian measures have been widely criticized in Nigeria, but the government continues to defend its actions. The excessive display of military force at Odi against a civilian population is unprecedented for a democratic government. A very useful reflection of the psychology of the soldiers that led the invasion are captured in the graffiti they left behind. Scratched on walls with charcoal and hard objects, many of them give an insight into the rules of engagement given to the soldiers by their political and military superiors.*

Thesis three: how development underdevelops the Niger Delta

Any hope of crude oil becoming the engine of development in the Niger Delta has now been completely dashed. In the first place, the pattern of exploitation of crude oil in the region is patently unsustainable. It is instructive that many renewable resources like land and underground aquifers are being destroyed in the process of extracting a finite, non-renewable resource like crude oil. The destruction of the Niger Delta environment as a result of the petroleum extraction industry not only destroys local livelihoods now, but also undermines their future prospect. One of the consequences of the rule of the *militariat* in the Niger Delta is the prevalent unsustainable use of petroleum resources in Nigeria.

Second, the level of infrastructural development in the Niger Delta is generally poor. To be sure, the terrain of the Delta is harsh, but generally inadequate attention has been paid to the provision of facilities like education, health, roads, electricity and potable water by both government and oil companies. Yet, these facilities are readily available at oil installations dotting the Delta, making these installations islands of affluence in a sea of deprivation. This has heightened the sense of relative deprivation in communities and made oil installations ready targets of their anger. Oil companies will readily point to the huge investments they are making in community development. For instance, Shell says that it spends about \$60 million annually in community projects like water, agriculture and health. However, activists in the Niger Delta dispute these figures. They claim that a great deal of the money goes to political payments by Shell and for establishing infrastructure for its activities such as construction of roads to its installations and dredging canals to facilitate its activities. They insist that local communities are not part of decisions on projects to be established and they call for structures for monitoring funds that are supposedly spent on development projects in Niger Delta communities.

In recognition of the poor state of infrastructure and the harsh terrain of the Niger Delta, successive governments since independence have established special development agencies for the region. First, there was the Niger Delta Development

Board in the 1960s, which was recommended by the Willink Commission. The Commission had found that the harsh terrain of the Niger Delta necessitated a special development Board for the area. Second, in the 1970s when the military government used River Basin Commissions as the principal tool of rural development, the Niger Delta River Basin Development Authority was established as one of 11 River Basin Commissions across the country. Since then, other efforts have included the Special Fund created by the 1981 Revenue Act for Oil Producing Areas and the Special Presidential Task Force for the Development of the Oil Producing Areas, which administered the special fund amounting to 1.5% of the federation accounts, created in 1989. However, the principal intervention of this sort began in July 1992, when the military government of General Babangida by Decree No. 23 of that year, established the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) and committed 3% of oil revenues to it.

There were high hopes at its inception that OMPADEC will become the driving force behind the regeneration of the Niger Delta. The huge financial resources that ostensibly were available to the Commission bolstered this goodwill. Based on the 3% commitment, it was expected that the Commission would be receiving about one billion Naira (\$50 million) every month from the federation account. This however did not materialize due to inter-ministerial intrigues and diverse political calculations in government. For instance, according to A.K. Horsfall, who chaired the inaugural Board of the Commission from its inception until it was dissolved in January 1996, “governments – civil or military – never stopped eyeing our funds with a view to either poaching them or indirectly controlling or sharing in them.” Still, as Table 2.8 shows OMPADEC received very substantial funding for the five years it was operational. In 1993 alone, it received about \$250 million for its activities, and by December 1997 had expended some \$870 million.

Table 1 : OMPADEC monthly financial receipts, 1993-1997 (Millions of Naira)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
January	316.0	225.0	318.0	275.5	355.2
February	2,680.1	216.0	270.3	233.1	388.8
March	0.0	243.6	327.6	288.5	231.7
April	227.4	243.6	211.4	299.9	140.5
May	0.0	172.9	206.2	286.0	279.1
June	243.4	191.5	322.4	312.3	274.2
July	239.5	197.2	309.2	310.8	278.9
August	230.1	198.9	188.4	146.9	287.0
September	450.5	237.4	315.7	246.7	248.1
October	193.1	260.8	195.2	152.0	293.2
November	0.0	165.1	254.2	207.7	275.9
December	398.8	184.0	239.2	471.3	470.3
Total	4978.9	2536.0	3157.8	3230.7	3522.9

Source: A.K. Horsfall (1999) *The OMPADEC Dream*, London: Imprint Publishers. p. 127

Unfortunately, OMPADEC became in the popular consciousness of the people of the Niger Delta another ruse designed to enrich the families and friends of the military government, while pretending to be investing in the Delta. OMPADEC was often accused of mismanagement of its resources if not outright corruption. Incidentally, there seems to be some truth in the public perception of OMPADEC. By his own account, Horsfall accepts that there were shortcomings in the management of its finances. For instance, in March 1993, two billion Naira was taken from OMPADEC account by the Federal Ministry of Works for projects, which according to Horsfall “never ever took place”. In addition, the management of OMPADEC made advance payments to contractors, sometimes amounting to over 50% of project cost, even

before projects were executed. In one instance in 1993, this led to the loss of 275 million Naira over a disputed water project. It is not surprising that when OMPADEC was finally scrapped, it owed billions of Naira to its contractors and had hundreds of projects abandoned. In 1999, the military government requested the National Economic Intelligence Committee to evaluate OMPADEC debts to its contractors by assessing the extent of work on abandoned projects. In Bayelsa State alone, the Intelligence Committee found over 300 abandoned projects, the extent of work on many of them intentionally overestimated by OMPADEC staff and in others contractors had received huge sums of money for work they did not carry out. In addition, in many communities projects were unnecessarily duplicated. For instance, in one community there were three jetties, two by oil companies and one by OMPADEC. The OMPADEC jetty was about 70% complete, while the other two were already operational. Yet, this community lacked many other basic facilities like schools, healthcare and clean water.

The latest special development intervention by government in the Niger Delta is through the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The Commission took off in January 2001, with a revenue profile as good as its predecessor, OMPADEC, projected to be at least 40 billion Naira annually. The NDDC is to be funded from the following major sources:

- 15% of federal allocation to the nine states of the Niger Delta
- 50% of ecological fund due to the nine states
- 3% of annual budget of oil companies.

NDDC has completed a Master Plan for the development of the Niger Delta, expected to cost trillions of Naira. The Plan was developed by the German agency, GTZ. Many observers have praised the Plan, though there are concerns as to whether it will be implemented.

In recent times, civil society organizations in the Niger Delta have been expressing unease about the Commission. The feeling is that it is another patronage system, an avenue for enriching party loyalists. They point to the fact that already a director in the Commission has been removed from office for financial malpractices. As a matter of fact, the NDDC was nearly stillborn. Soon after his inauguration, President Obasanjo toured the Niger Delta and promised a major government intervention in the region. The President followed this with consultations with representatives of communities and other stakeholders in the petroleum industry, consultations that did not always end on an amicable note. Later in 1999, he finally sent a bill to the National Assembly to create the NDDC. However, from start the bill was mired in controversies involving the people of the Niger Delta, the National Assembly and the Presidency over the definition of the Niger Delta, the funding of the Commission, location of its headquarters and staffing. These controversies continue to date. Other observers also think that the structures of decision making in the NDDC are not participatory enough and that direct consultation with communities are either not conducted or where they are conducted are farcical. Even the oil companies have been critical of the NDDC and threatened to withhold their remittances until the Commission shows what it has done with the monies already paid to it. These concerns point to the repeated failure of development in the Niger Delta – the tendency for development to underdevelop the Niger Delta. In the end, in spite of all these attempts to develop the Niger Delta and after billions of Naira have been pumped into the region by government, aid and donor communities, it seems that the development of the Niger Delta has in fact reversed rather than improved. In fact, it seems that every development strategy that has been developed for the Niger Delta has paradoxically underdeveloped the region. It is not surprising that a recent study of oil revenue governance in the Niger Delta that I did with a number of other colleagues showed that on all counts, development has failed in the Niger Delta. First, there is no accountability, transparency and public participation in development programmes and spending. Secondly, development projects have been patently exclusionary of vulnerable groups like women, children and the disabled. Thirdly,

development projects have been unsustainable, particularly in creating alternatives to the petroleum industry and in environmental protection and remediation.

Table 2: Estimated investments of agencies and donors in the Niger Delta, 2003/04

CATEGORY OF DONOR	NAME	AVERAGE ANNUAL SPENDING (\$ millions)	PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES FUNDED	CATEGORY OF RECIPIENTS
PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS	MacArthur Foundation	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget tracking</li> <li>• Sustainable development</li> <li>• Research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• Universities</li> </ul>
	Ford Foundation, Nigeria	0.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Conflict management</li> <li>• Human rights</li> <li>• Research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• Research centres</li> </ul>
	OSIWA (Soros)	0.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good governance</li> <li>• Monitoring resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs</li> </ul>
GOVERNMENTAL & INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	NDDC	348.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community projects</li> <li>• Master plan</li> <li>• NGO capacity building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities</li> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• Government agencies</li> </ul>
	European Union	11.60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democracy</li> <li>• Economic reforms</li> <li>• Good governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• Government agencies</li> </ul>
	USAID	0.33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic reforms</li> <li>• Good governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs</li> </ul>
	World Bank	9.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty reduction</li> <li>• HIV/AIDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government agencies</li> <li>• NGOs</li> </ul>
OIL AND GAS COMPANIES	Shell	69.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities</li> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• Individuals</li> </ul>
	Chevron-Texaco	27.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities</li> <li>• NGOs</li> </ul>

				• Individuals
	AGIP	5.60	• Community development	• Communities • NGOs • Individuals
	Total/Fina/Elf	25.30	• Community development	• Communities • NGOs • Individuals
	Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Co. (NLNG)	1.50	• Community development	• Communities • NGOs • Individuals
TOTAL ANNUAL SPENDING (ALL CATEGORIES)		499.98	-	-

### *The rhetoric of rights*

In the post-military era, which began with the return to civilian rule in 1999, these three paradoxes of affluence and affliction in the Niger Delta have persisted in spite of declarations of politicians to the contrary. Instead, what they have introduced is yet another paradox in which the rights of the people have become mere rhetoric. Although they profess the pursuit of the rights of ordinary people, the purpose is actually to exploit them. The rhetoric of rights has therefore become a central component of the politics of oil revenue governance (derivation, allocation and use), which has been raging in the aftermath of military rule. In this politics, which is played by government officials, oil companies and other notables in society, the interest of ordinary people of the Niger Delta has suffered. All their hopes of reaping the ‘democratic dividend’, as it was called in 1999, have all but vanished. What is left is rhetoric of rights expounded by sections of the ruling class that took power from the military in 1999. Indeed, the last days of the military regime saw the emergence of a coalition of motley factions of the ruling class, many of them arising out of the overdetermining effect of military rule on society. It was this coalition that inherited power in 1999 and, expectedly, the politics of control of oil revenues for which the military era stood out has remained the cornerstone of the politics of this coalition. The rhetoric of rights is the idiom of that politics. These factions of the ruling class (erroneously called the political class) orchestrate two distinct forms of rhetoric of rights in the Niger Delta as they angle for control of the vast petroleum and gas revenues from the Region. In other words, they polarize along two opposing lines, each articulating a separate rhetoric of rights. First, there is the rhetoric of resource control, which is put forward by the ruling groups of the Niger Delta.

In reaction, opponents of resource control put forward the rhetoric of transparency and accountability. Thus, the Federal Government consistently accuses State governments of the Niger Delta of financial profligacy and corruption. In fact, not long ago the Federal Minister of State for Finance, Mrs. Nenadi Usman, accused State Governors of using financial allocations to their States to buy foreign exchange, which they then take outside the country. The Federal government also insists that Niger Delta governments have generally misused the huge revenues they have been getting as a result of the 13% derivation. Consequently, it has embarked on a campaign of transparency using the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, which recently led to the impeachment and arrest of the Bayelsa State Governor,

The second dimension of the rhetoric of rights is the rhetoric of the right of people of the Niger Delta to better living conditions. It is well known that poverty levels in the Niger Delta remains very high, particularly because of the high cost of living created by the petro-economy. However, in response the Federal government counterpoises the rhetoric of peace and security, arguing that the main factor militating against the enjoyment of the right to development in the Niger Delta is violence perpetrated by people in the Delta against themselves, oil companies and the Nigerian state. Repeatedly, examples of vandalization of oil installations, kidnapping of oil workers and communal conflicts are cited as antinomies of development. For instance, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) reports that between 1993 and 2003 there were 1,298 seizure/piracy targeted at oil facilities in the Niger Delta. In addition, in March 2004, Shell, Chevron and Elf were forced into production deferments of 155 million barrels of crude oil per day, which amounts to \$1.7billion in lost revenues as a result of crude oil theft, community disturbances and destruction of oil facilities. This year, 2006, there has been a spate of kidnappings of foreign oil sector workers in the Niger Delta, ostensibly in reprisal for the arrest of Asari Dokubo, a leader of an armed group opposed to government and oil companies.

A major challenge facing the intellectuals of the masses of the Niger Delta, particularly Nigerian political science, is to work to transcend the rhetoric of rights and to concretize the rights of ordinary people in the region. Ironically, the real objective of the rhetoric of rights is to variously denude the rights of people, even as it mouths support for those rights. In the first place, by privileging discussions oil resources and how they are shared, the rhetoric of rights diverts attention away from the widespread poverty and egregious human rights violations taking place in the region. Secondly, by creating a distinction between human rights and resource allocation and use, the rhetoric of rights undermines the unity of those rights. Finally, the two sides of the rhetoric of rights try to appropriate the long struggle of the peoples of the Niger Delta to overcome poverty, exploitation and exclusion. The need to transcend the prevalent rhetoric of rights has led me to think even more seriously about policy options for the development of the Niger Delta.

From affliction to affluence: towards a strategy for developing the Niger Delta

I have already pointed out that political scientists are not only preoccupied with building and testing theories, but also with policy, that is developing strategies for transcending present conditions. As such, I have spent a good part of my recent work thinking through solutions to the problem of the Niger Delta. I should mention that I was recently invited to give a paper on the Niger Delta at a Summit to discuss the actualisation of President Yar'Adua's seven-point programme. Initially, I was not sure if I should be part of yet another government talk shop on the development of the Niger Delta, which often is designed to legitimise the use of development to underdevelop the Niger Delta. However, experience has taught me that every occasion should be used to wage the struggle for redressing the paradox of affluence and affliction in the Niger Delta. It was an opportunity to put some of my thinking on solutions to the developmental quagmire of the Niger Delta directly into the national policy agenda, hopefully.

#### **Outline of a strategy for Niger Delta Development**

My approach would be to proceed along two lines. First, I suggest that NDDC should remain for at least the next 30 years the principal development vehicle in the Niger

Delta. However, it must be completely overhauled to reposition it to implement the Master Plan, which I think is strong on economic and physical aspects of development and environmental remediation, but not so strong on socio-political issues. Second, given that NDDC will be reorganized and repositioned, the second line of my approach is to articulate other important areas that government at all levels, aid agencies and donor community should focus on and develop strategic synergies with the work of the NDDC. Expectedly, these other areas would focus mostly on socio-political issues.

### 1. Strategic Objectives

The following are the objectives that my strategy of Niger Delta development seeks to achieve:

- (a) Deepening democracy;
- (b) Restructuring resource access and control;
- (c) Alleviation of poverty and improvement of infrastructure;
- (d) Mainstreaming gender equity;
- (e) Reducing intra-Delta conflict; and
- (f) Environmental remediation and protection.

### 2. **Democratic resource management: Trust Funds and the NDDC**

The appropriate institutional framework for distributing oil revenues in the Niger Delta has over the years been a hotly contested question. It is this debate that has informed the series of experimentation with different specialized development agencies for the region such as the Niger Delta Development Board, the Niger Delta River Basin Development Authority, the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission and, presently, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The high stake contestation over how to return oil revenues to communities came to a head in the so-call resource control suit in which the federal government took the oil-producing states of Nigeria to the Supreme Court asking for clarification of sections of the constitution dealing with control of revenues derived from petroleum produced in Nigeria's territorial waters. In all the disputes, however, one thing on which all sides seem to agree is that there is need for more revenues from oil and gas to return to local communities from which they are derived, not only to ensure equity, but also because of the need to redress the negative social and environmental consequences of *petrobusiness* in those communities. Putatively, oil revenues reach oil-producing communities through a number of tracks including federal, state and local government finances, the NDDC and other specialized organs like the Education Tax Fund, as well as oil companies. In reality, however, there is a broad acceptance that many leakages occur en route and these have hardly worked.

Existing frameworks for returning revenues from oil and gas to local communities (including allocations from the federal distributable pool, allocations to the NDDC, monies raised by state and local governments and community development budgets of oil companies) have been widely appraised to be too top-down, unrepresentative, lacking in accountability, and fraught with leakages. Some observers, particularly the communities themselves, have been clamouring for a different framework, which can increase effective participation of communities in decisions concerning revenue allocation and expenditure. Community-based trust funds hold great prospects of meeting this felt need. Community-based trust funds refer to funds that are held in trust for all community members. They are built around local institutions and are managed by local people, who are directly selected by communities, but in close consultation with or oversight of government and oil companies, depending on the agreed model. Expenditures are planned collectively using existing local structures and accounts are also rendered directly to stakeholders through these structures. The appeal of community trust funds lies in the fact that they are bottom-up in organization, participatory in decision making and goal-setting, transparent and accountable, as well as very reflexive (in terms of the rapidity of response to local needs). Also, community trust funds do not preclude the existence of other tracks of

revenue allocation. Instead, it could be integrated into the governmental and corporate (oil companies) mechanisms as the primary structure. For instance, the budgeting process of a local government council could begin by requesting community trust funds to make inputs on the needs of communities, the NDDC and oil companies could execute local projects through trust fund mechanisms and state governments could give matching grants to effective community trust funds.

### **History of trust funds in Nigeria**

Community trust funds are by no means recent inventions in local communities in Nigeria. Historically in the coastal zones of Nigeria, the monetisation of the economy via trade between pre-colonial Nigerian communities and European traders led to economic instabilities and dysfunctions in these communities. Of particular note is the instability associated with pre-colonial stores of value such as livestock, which resulted from their rapid devaluation due to the introduction of modern money and a non-barter system of exchange. One response to this widespread economic instability was the development of traditional trust funds to cushion the impact of devaluation and massive loss of exchange entitlements.

Among early mechanisms developed was the periodic contribution of money into a centrally held fund, particularly by women and young men's groups. The funds were used either for specific collective purposes such as investment in farming implements, or to support individuals, for instance by providing them soft loans. A later version of traditional trust fund, which has survived till today and is widely practiced even among the educated urban population, is the *Esusu*. In its simplest form, the *Esusu* involves monthly or weekly contributions by members of a specified amount of money. The pooled contributions are then awarded to one member and this is done for every member based on a pre-agreed rotational formula. Its more advanced form entails a complex system of calculation of weighted benefits paid out according to each member's net contribution over a period of time.

Perhaps the most extensive use of community trust fund in Nigeria is to be found during colonial rule. Characterized by scarcity, poor welfare conditions, exclusion of the 'native' population, colonialism catalysed a culture of self-help across many communities in Nigeria. In the face of pervasive neglect by the colonial regime, community trust funds became the basis for providing education, water, housing, and loans for businesses in communities defined variously as the village, the town, and clan or ethnic group. In fact, it is not surprising that many of the early nationalists in Nigeria were educated through one community trust fund or another. Endowment of trust funds became a central function of town and ethnic unions in Nigeria, and through such funds they played a pivotal role in the politics and economy of both the colonial and immediate post-independence history of Nigeria.

Apart from traditional, community based trust funds, there are at least two other types namely, private trust funds and government trust funds. As the name implies, individuals and private enterprises establish private trust funds for various charitable purposes. On the other hand, government has in recent times tended to create trust funds for special developmental purposes. Usually, resources for government trust funds come from special funds set aside by government, levies imposed on the private sector or other forms of public contributions. For instance, in 1994 following the removal of subsidies from petroleum products, government established the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) to use monies accruing to government from this source for special projects such as construction of roads, building and equipping schools and hospitals and other sundry purposes. Again in 1999, in the aftermath of public outcry over the poor state of education, especially the universities, government established an Education Tax Fund to serve as a trust fund for education. This fund draws resources from government and private enterprises.

### Existing trust funds in Nigeria

Trust funds of different sorts exist in Nigeria. Examples of government trust funds include the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (established via Decree 73 of 1993), Educational Tax Fund (ETF), (established by Decree 7 of January 1993 and (Amendment) Decree 40 of November, 1993) and the UNDP's Poverty Alleviation Trust Fund (PATF). More closely related to oil and ecological issues, there are the Ecological Fund (backed in Rivers State by the Ecological Endowment Fund Law enacted in 2002) and the defunct Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund. In the private arena, there is the Fund for Integrated Rural Development and Traditional Medicine (FIRD-TM) inaugurated in Abuja on September 30, 1997.

At the community level, practically all communities in Nigeria have had at one time or another functioning trust funds. In the immediate post-independence era, government recognized and encouraged these community funds by giving them matching grants and interest-free loans. The period of military rule and particularly the windfall of petrodollars, discouraged the development of community trust funds. For one thing, government suddenly had enough money to embark on massive development projects down to the grassroots. For another thing, the nouveaux riches, especially those who have had close relationships with government, took on the task of providing the needs of their communities such as drinking water, scholarships, and construction of roads. In the Niger Delta, the added involvement of oil companies in community projects further made community trust funds superfluous. However, following the recent economic crisis in Nigeria, the weak performance of government as an agent of development and the continuing dispute between communities, oil companies and government over resource allocation in the Niger Delta, there have been attempts to re-invent community trust fund in a more formal way.

In the present incarnation of community trust funds in the Niger Delta, the Akassa model stands out. Akassa is a coastal community in Bayelsa State and its development trust fund was established in 1997 at the height of military repression and community restiveness in the Niger Delta. Statoil-BP a joint venture of the Norwegian and British petroleum companies was prospecting for offshore oil around Akassa and decided to set up a model community development project in Akassa. Among the partner organizations that set up the Akassa model was Niger Delta Wetlands Centre. What became the Akassa development project is based on a trust fund administered by the Akassa Community Development Council. It gets its resources principally from Statoil-BP, but also from a traditional institution in Akassa known as the *Ogbo*, which is the centrepiece of the project. The *ogbo* is a traditional federation of organized interest groups. The members of each *ogbo* put their savings in a common fund and collectively decide what to do with it. This system was adopted by the Akassa development project. By October 1998, the capital in the system was about \$15,000, which was in excess of 1.5 million Naira with 196 outstanding loans to members of the community each valued at about \$35. To date, the Fund has been used to support numerous projects in Akassa determined by the community in close consultation with Statoil-BP and project advisors.

### Repositioning the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

The NDDC should function exclusively as an overarching Trust Fund for the Niger Delta. To achieve this the NDDC must be reorganized in the following ways, the details of which should be worked out by a Presidential Commission on NDDC Reform/Reorganization:

#### a) Governing Board

- Establishment of a new Governing Board to be elected from oil-producing and allied communities (not States) on **no party basis**.
- Candidates for NDDC Board apply as

individuals nominated by a certain number of people from their community.

- Their names are published in newspapers for objections, and if twice the numbers of their nominees sign an objection, they are dropped.

- Every elected Board member has a term, a consolidated remuneration and is liable to be removed only by recall.

b) Management

- The Governing Board appoints the various executive functionaries (Managers) of the Commission. These should be experts in investment, project design, execution and evaluation, mass participation techniques, and poverty alleviation. Again, they have tenure and can only be removed by the Board under certain stringent circumstances.

- Management will seek approval from the Board for investments locally and abroad, choice of projects (in conjunction with communities), hiring of staff, etc.

- Finally, 60% of all resources of NDDC must be spent in the so-called core Niger Delta. This is the way to depoliticize NDDC, strengthen its technocracy and make it more participatory.

The sole task of the NDDC will be to implement the Master Plan it has already developed.

3. Confidence Building and Capacity Building

The rest of our strategic objectives will be the responsibility of governments at all levels, aid agencies and donor communities. They could be reduced to two concerns namely, confidence building and capacity building.

Confidence building

If conflicts begin in the minds of people, it is in the minds of people that the construction of peace must begin. A major problem in the Niger Delta today is that a conflict and animosity mindset is still prevalent. The three main stakeholders in the region *to wit*, civil society, government and oil companies still view each other with suspicion. Table 2 presents aspects of this mindset of suspicion and animosity. State officials often accuse civil society organizations of instigating vandalism, impatience, sensationalism and undue interference in politics and the work of oil companies. Officials also charge oil companies of lacking in social commitment to local communities, inaccessibility and secretive operations. On their part, civil society organizations accuse state officials of pandering to oil companies, unaccountable and non-responsive to the needs of the people they represent. They also charge oil companies of insensitivity to the environmental and social consequences of their operations, of excessive secrecy and pernicious motives, such as setting communities against one another. Finally, oil companies reproach state officials for lacking the political will to push through innovative policies, posturing and lacking transparency. They feel that civil society organizations are ignorant of the business conditions of oil companies, propagate mindless violence and intimidation, and make unrealistic demands, such as asking for a certain percentage of the income of oil companies.

Table 3: Mutual Perception of Stakeholders in the Niger Delta

	State Officials	Civil Society Organizations	Oil Companies
State Officials		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vandalism</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of social</li> </ul>

	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impatience</li> <li>Sensationalism</li> <li>Politically meddlesome</li> <li>Excessive combativeness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commitment</li> <li>Secretive</li> </ul>
Civil Society Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corruption</li> <li>Unaccountable</li> <li>Non-responsive</li> </ul>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unfeeling &amp; insensitive</li> <li>Secretive</li> <li>Sinister motive</li> </ul>
Oil Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of political will</li> <li>Posturing</li> <li>Corruption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making excessive demands</li> <li>Intimidation</li> <li>Ignorance</li> <li>Vandalism</li> </ul>	-

What all sides often miss are the great opportunities for consensus building in the Niger Delta. They fail to appreciate the changes that each side is assiduously making and the challenges that each faces in the process. For instance, the oil companies have greatly increased their commitment to community development in last few years. The elected government is making efforts to put in place a comprehensive framework for development through the NDDC. On their part, civil society organizations are redefining their role in the aftermath of military rule and there is increased willingness to work cooperatively with government and oil companies. What is required is mutual understanding and building of bridges among potential allies who have for long viewed each other with suspicion. This work plan hopes to catalyze this bridge building.

#### Box 1: Confidence Building

<p>Broad goal of Confidence Building:  <b>To catalyze and foster consensus and mutual trust among principal stakeholders as a basis for securing and optimizing material and human resources for socioeconomic and environmental transformation of the Niger Delta.</b></p>
<p>Specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage greater transparency in the use of resources through broad-based participation in resource monitoring, continuous evaluation of goals and goal attainment, and making information on resource flows widely available to the public.</li> <li>To strengthen communication and information flow between civil society, government and oil companies by supporting structures that increase dialogue and availability of credible, objective information.</li> <li>To improve the knowledge base of policy and other forms of intervention in the Delta through research and dissemination of objective and credible information.</li> </ul>

#### A. Monitoring the flow and use of resources

A common charge of civil society organizations against state officials and oil companies is the misapplication or misdirection of resources. Oil companies are accused of using slush funds to buy the silence of communities and government officials. Indeed, oil companies often claim that they have made heavy social investments in the Niger Delta without creating satisfactory impact. On the other hand, government officials are accused of corrupt use of resources and lack of accountability. Their response is usually that there are enormous developmental challenges in the Niger Delta competing for scarce resources and communities and NGOs are either ignorant of this or too impatient. The purpose of monitoring and publicizing the flow and use of financial and other resources is to help ease the tension created by mistrust and to uphold transparency and accountability among stakeholders in the Niger Delta. The aim is not simply to audit the application of resources. Perhaps more fundamentally, transparency entails evaluating goals of projects for which expenditures were made and the extent to which such goals were attained.

The bulk of Nigeria's financial wealth comes from the production and sale of crude oil. By law, the ownership of all mineral resources in Nigeria, including petroleum belongs to the state. The federal government is the sole collector of revenues from petroleum and sets up the formula for distributing them among the three tiers of government namely, federal, state and local (municipal). Since May 2002, the formula has been 56% (federal), 24% (state) and 20% (local). Each level of government is assigned specific social-developmental functions by the constitution. Most of these functions are specified in the concurrent legislative list assigned to both the federal and state governments, and include education, public works, health, environmental protection and employment. The local councils have more minor functions like local road maintenance, recreation, markets and local education. In the present democratic dispensation, each of the three tiers of government has legislative, executive and judicial arms, as well as a bureaucracy. There are also some quasi-governmental agencies (parastatals) established by each of the three tiers of government. Some of these are created by the constitution, while others are *ad hoc* or established for specific purposes. Thus, the NDDC was established as a quasi-governmental body by an Act of the National Assembly to be the main development agency in the Niger Delta. Table 3 shows the agencies of government that are of principal importance to the implementation of the work plan.

Table 4: Important government agencies in the development of the Niger Delta

	GOVERNMENTAL	BUREAUCRATIC	QUASI-GOVERNMENTAL (PARASTATALS)
FEDERAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Assembly</li> <li>• The Presidency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of environment</li> <li>• Ministry of finance</li> <li>• Ministry of Justice</li> <li>• Nigeria Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)</li> <li>• Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)</li> </ul>
STATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Assemblies</li> <li>• Governor's office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Finance</li> <li>• Ministry of Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment/sanitation Boards</li> </ul>
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LG legislative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment/sanitation</li> </ul>

	council • LG Chairman and supervisory councilors	Department • Public works Department	n Boards
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Section 162 (2) of the 1999 constitution provides for at least 13% of crude oil revenues to be returned to the oil-producing states by derivation. State governments enact laws to guide the distribution of state resources between the state and local governments and among local governments in a state. In addition, states and local governments generate revenues internally principally through collection of taxes and rates, although these have been consistently low. For the foreseeable future, the NDDC will be the principal government actor in the Niger Delta. In fact, the Commission was established expressly to consolidate all government interventions under one agency. Certainly, other agencies of federal, state and local governments will remain involved, particularly state legislative assemblies and local councils. However, although the principal vehicle of government intervention is the NDDC, there is need to monitor allocation and use of resources in the Niger Delta by all agencies of government at the three tiers. Finally, it will also be useful to monitor other general resource flows not specifically earmarked for the Niger Delta. For instance, other federal ministries such as works, education and health have expenditure responsibilities in the Niger Delta. Also, the National Universities Commission (NUC) funds federal universities, including the University of Port Harcourt. It is important to emphasize that the object of this part of the work plan is to generate useful information based on good analysis, which could be placed in the public domain to support interventions in the Niger Delta.

This aspect of the strategy aims to support local NGOs to engage in monitoring, documenting and disseminating credible information about the inflow of resources and the uses to which they are put, especially regarding community development projects.

The following areas stand out for monitoring and reporting:

- (a) Financial receipts and internally generated revenues of state governments, local councils, *parastatals* like the NDDC, and community development associations.
- (b) Revenues of oil companies and payments they make to governments at all levels – federal, state and municipal.
- (c) Development financing from multilateral and bilateral sources.
- (d) Budgets and their application, especially at the state and local government levels. What are the financial projections? What is budgeted and what is released? How do budgets address various segments of society, especially women, children and youth?
- (e) Community development investments of oil companies: What projects are chosen and how? What is the process of choosing those to execute them? Is the process transparent?
- (f) Comparison of declared financial expenditures and statutory responsibilities of the three tiers of government.
- (g) Project expenditure of NGOs, especially those that implement diverse initiatives supported by external grants.
- (h) Monitoring the financial and administrative processes in the implementation of the Niger Delta Master Plan being prepared by the NDDC.

The five NGOs will monitor the following groups, agencies and organizations:

- One NGO will focus on the Federal government and its agencies.
- One will focus on the Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta state governments and their agencies.
- One will focus on local government, non-governmental organizations, communities and community-based organizations.
- One will focus on funding agencies – oil companies, multilateral and bilateral sources of funding.

It is important to identify and involve organizations that have the capacity to place information on the Niger Delta at the disposal of an international audience such as International Alert, which has a strong program on corporate responsibility.

We expect that at least five activities will be involved in monitoring and reporting resource flow in the Niger Delta. They include the following:

1. Collection and analysis of information using diverse research techniques such as surveys, interviews, questionnaires and observation, as well as tapping secondary sources such as government documents, newspapers and reports of oil companies.
2. Organization of dissemination and publicity forums that encourage public participation. These will include media events, workshops and community-level meetings. As part of this process, media work in support of public hearings on budgets by state legislatures and local councils will be conducted.
3. Enlightenment workshops and meetings with state Houses of Assembly and local councils.
4. Publication of periodic reports in newsletters, monographs and websites.
5. Establishment of databases.

### **Trust funds and Resource monitoring in the Niger Delta**

A trust fund, by definition and function, is inherently a monitoring mechanism. It is an institutional construct, operated by stakeholders (donors and recipients can both be part of the governance structure) that can monitor resource flows, identify key flows for incorporation into the Fund and/or solicit funds to “flow through” the fund mechanism to local projects. Since it is locally administered, a trust fund lends itself to immediate scrutiny by members of the community. The benefits of such an institutional arrangement that can identify and harness at least a portion of the resource flows into Delta communities are its ability to identify, account for, and monitor the success of allocations of resources to local groups/projects. The trust fund mechanism represents only one approach to monitoring resource flows and does not present itself as a comprehensive monitoring mechanism for the entire Niger Delta region. In the absence of strong public policies favouring freedom of information, tracking resources flow through government and oil companies is an arduous task. Contrariwise, community trust funds lend themselves to easy scrutiny. It is anticipated that the trust fund framework can build on present examples of such institutional arrangements, where allocation, management and monitoring of resources are fused, though tailored to the economic, social and cultural needs of the Niger Delta Communities. For example, under the Trust Fund established as a part of the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Project, some part of the oil revenues are placed in an escrow account dedicated, among other things, to the provision of social services. In addition, as part of the overall arrangement, there is an Oil Revenues Control and Monitoring Board charged with the responsibility for authorizing and monitoring disbursements from the escrow account. There is also an International Advisory Group, responsible for advising the World Bank and the government of Chad on the misallocation and misuse of public funds, involvement of civil society, institution building, and governance in a more general sense. The community trust fund mechanism has similar goals, though the specific operating features are likely to be different given the smaller size needed for operationalising the mechanism within local communities of the Delta.

Specifically, a trust fund can monitor oil revenues in the following ways:

1. By establishing an advisory board and governance structure comprised of a cross-section of local stakeholders, private/public donors, domestic NGOs, and technical experts, the Fund can work with public and private agencies and local community groups to more comprehensively identify resource flows and evaluate the effectiveness of programs currently funded by those flows. One task of the Fund can be to develop more flexible and effective management approaches for allocating and monitoring resource flows.

2. A trust fund mechanism could serve as a more transparent alternative or complement to existing approaches to resource allocation, and by that accomplish the primary objective of monitoring, which is transparency.

3. Communities need to set better goals and target resources at those goals. A carefully designed trust fund arrangements could facilitate this, as communities are enabled to play a greater role in the organization and management of the Fund and revenues that are channelled into it.

4. A key function of the Fund is to establish a credible internal accounting procedure that keeps track of all revenues received and how they are spent to ensure that flows into the Fund are monitored fully.

5. The Fund can also create, as some funds have done, a monitoring team to monitor disbursements from the Fund's accounts and evaluate the results of projects funded.

6. Through the incorporation of an oversight mechanism involving domestic and international NGOs and international financial and development institutions, the Fund can further ensure effective evaluation of potential, existing and future resource flows into the community, as well as to ensure the monitoring of resources that are eventually managed by the Fund.

7. By emphasizing community participation under which community members will be empowered to choose their representatives to the advisory board, the Fund can ensure greater transparency and accountability to the community through this advisory board, some of whose members would be elected by (and, therefore, more accountable to) the community.

Success will be characterized by increased density of information about resources flows in the Niger Delta, both domestically and internationally, and how such information is used to improve programming by government, oil companies and other agencies to improve the environmental and social conditions of communities in the Niger Delta. Specifically this will involve most or all of the following:

- Ready availability to the public of information on resource inflows and uses in the form of mass circulation publications like newsletters, newspapers, magazines, electronic documents, web postings, etc.
- Establishment of functional Community Trust Funds in most oil-producing communities.
- Regular participation of communities in public hearings, media events and workshops on budgets, project formulation and

implementation.

- Regular public hearings by the legislature and other government organs on financial matters.
- Improved knowledge of members of State Assemblies and local government councils on issues of budgets, projects and their monitoring.

Collectively, these will become the backbone of a framework of accountability and transparency in the use of oil resources.

## **B. Strengthening channels of communication and exchange of views among stakeholders**

One striking thing about the Niger Delta is a range of issues on which cooperation among communities, civil society, oil companies and government is possible, but which are not pursued. For instance, all stakeholders agree on the dire developmental situation and living conditions of the people of the Niger Delta and the need to increase the benefits accruing to local communities from the oil economy. As well, there is a broad agreement that there are legal, political and practical obstacles to the attainment of these ends, such as existing laws, high level of violence and insecurity, as well as corruption. Yet, little effort has been put into working together to overcome some of these obstacles. The reason for this is that stakeholders are talking at rather than to each other. There is a lot of talk going on in the Niger Delta, but very little communication. The consequence is the persistence of a conspiracy syndrome on the part of communities and civil society, and a siege mentality on the part of oil companies.

Thus, communities continue to feel that government officials have the ulterior motive of misappropriating funds and colluding with oil companies, who through political payments seek to perpetuate environmental degradation. On their part, oil companies continue to feel that restive communities maliciously target their installations and workers and that government is incapable of providing a secure environment for their operations.

The purpose of this part of the work plan is to create channels of communication and problem solving among stakeholders. We envisage that the channels will involve multiple processes. Initially, they will entail periodic (even informal) forums for exchange of views and discussion of issues among stakeholders. However, in time they should develop into more formal, stable structures for collectively identifying, analyzing and resolving problems by stakeholders. This gradual/sequenced approach is important because it will take some time to breakdown the barriers posed by years of suspicion and conflict in the relations among stakeholders. The underlying principle is to avoid attempting to do too much too soon.

Strong channels of communication should increase the level of understanding, consensus and cooperation among stakeholders, especially between oil companies, communities and NGOs. Generally, suspicion and conflicts have marked their relations in the recent past. The communication structures will build on some of the issues on which there is already a measure of consensus regarding their urgency. These include the need for more community-determined development projects, improvements in the laws guiding the petroleum industry, raising environmental standards in the petroleum industry, security of oil workers and installations and communal violence. Oil companies, like Shell and Chevron-Texaco, are already pioneering such forums. In the last three years, Shell has been organizing community development stakeholders' forum in Warri, Delta State. On its part, Chevron-Texaco following a recent face-off with local women at its production facilities around Escravos has entered into a series of dialogues and signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with communities in the area. Unfortunately, the parties often wait for crises to erupt before entering into dialogue. Sadly, discussions held under crisis conditions tend to be too reactive, characterized by trading of blames, damage

limitation and exaction of concessions, where normally dialogues should be proactive, characterized by consensus building, goal setting and exploration of mutual benefits. As a result of the crisis nature of extant discussions between oil companies and communities, civil society organizations that are considered to be too combative by government and oil companies are either excluded from the forums, or they boycott them. Grants that encourage inclusiveness of the process through organizations that command confidence on all sides will be useful in addressing this problem.

There are four key elements in achieving this:

(a) Stakeholder consultations: This entails the establishment of structures for regular exchange of views and setting of targets by a representative cross section of stakeholders. These structures could begin as periodic forums arranged by competent, independent civil society organizations working with experienced corps of mediators. The expectation is that with time the forums will mature into more stable, formal structures. One major issue that the stakeholders' consultation should be encouraged to address is legal reform of the petroleum industry. Communities often complain that the existing legal framework such as the Petroleum Act and the Pipelines Act are too favourable to oil companies and has encouraged them to evade their social and environmental responsibilities. The importance of legal reform in the petroleum industry has been echoed recently with the application by Shell for a renewal of its pipeline rights. A number of communities and NGOs in the Niger Delta have opposed renewal until a reform of the Pipelines Act is conducted. Government and oil companies on their part insist that legal reform is an arduous process and that too stringent legal requirements could make cost recovery and profitability difficult. Still, it is possible through frank discussions, which hopefully the stakeholders' consultations will foster, to arrive at a consensus on legal reform that satisfies all sides.

(b) Policy dialogues: Policy dialogues are useful means of periodically bringing together researchers, activists, policy makers and the private sector. If policy dialogues on varying concerns of the Niger Delta are well-organized and implemented, they could become invaluable to enhancing communication and bridge building among politicians, NGOs, academics and oil company executives. An institution such as the Centre for Advanced Social Sciences (CASS), which is widely known in the Niger Delta as a leading policy and research centre, could play a major role in organizing such dialogues. Organizers of the dialogues will have responsibility of choosing the central issues in each dialogue and for constituting panels and disseminating outcomes.

(c) Creating a second track advisory group for the NDDC: Currently, the Advisory Committee of the Niger Delta consists of the nine State governors of the NDDC States. No doubt, such a high profile political body will assist the NDDC enormously in its task. However, its high political character could also become a fetter. It seems that a second track advisory body consisting of non-governmental interests drawn from NGOs, oil companies, universities and communities will be beneficial to the NDDC. Such a body could enhance the professionalism and social responsibility of the NDDC without being obtrusive and politically charged. The advisory group could focus on strengthening accountability and institutionalization in NDDC through staff development, strengthening administrative/financial procedures, strategic planning, fundraising and co-operation between NDDC and other stakeholders.

(d) Support for community-oil company relations committees: In many communities across the Niger Delta, there have been different attempts by oil

companies and communities to establish committees to assist in fostering cooperation and the mutual interests of both sides. It will be useful to help build a few successful cases to serve as models for enhancing cooperation among oil companies and their hosts. Consequently, this aspect of the work plan envisages support for one NGO in each of the three states to organize committees in three communities. Grants will support NGOs to assist communities in conjunction with oil companies to develop memoranda of understanding and set up quick complaint-redress mechanisms. Grants will also support NGOs to work with communities to map other resources and sources of income besides crude oil, which may be available in the communities and work with oil companies, government and donors to develop them. This will help reduce the tension generated by an exclusive focus on oil.

The expected outcomes of strengthening communication among stakeholders include the following:

- Holding of periodic stakeholders' consultative forums and establishment of a coordinating centre.
- Establishment and proper functioning of track two, non-governmental advisory body for the NDDC.
- Establishment of nine oil company-host community relations committees.
- Holding of annual policy dialogues and briefings.
- Increased collaboration between NGOs, NDDC and oil companies through the annual stakeholders' forum, community relations committees and the advisory panel for the NDDC.

Consequently, success will be measured by the regularity of stakeholder dialogues, the degree to which such exchanges supports the solution of problems and the rapidity of information flow among stakeholders through the channels of communication established. Joint initiatives among stakeholders, for instance in addressing environmental problems, conflicts and insecurity, will constitute indicators of success. Also, the level of involvement of civil society in the activities of NDDC, facilitated by the advisory group, will be a good measure of success.

### **C. Improving knowledge production and dissemination**

The collapse of information management in the Niger Delta contributed a lot to the spiral of conflict that has bedeviled the region. During the period of military rule, information gave way to misinformation and education to propaganda. Often, various groups and organizations sought to use information not to improve the conditions of local people, but to sell their position and whitewash their image. In addition, a major problem that continues to confront policy, advocacy and research in the Niger Delta is a paucity of reliable, readily accessible baseline socio-environmental data. Support for independent civil society organizations to collect, analyze and make available information on different aspects of life in the Niger Delta, will improve the quality of intervention measures and serve as a reliability check on information produced by government and *petrobusiness*.

Furthermore, the tendency for oil companies and state agencies to be secretive about their work has been a major frustration for civil society organizations in the Niger Delta. Improved availability and better access to reliable information for journalists, academics and civil society organizations will go a long way in rebuilding confidence in the Niger Delta. Both oil companies and state agencies are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of better knowledge and information on crucial issues in the Niger Delta which affect businesses, communities and the environment. More information is getting into the websites of oil companies and the NDDC plans to set up a website where information about all its activities could be easily accessed.

Support for civil society organizations to develop *interactive online discussions* among the stakeholders will also be useful.

In a nutshell, the purpose of this element of the strategy is to support improved information gathering and, therefore, better knowledge production about environmental and social conditions of the Niger Delta. In spite of the visibility of the Niger Delta in political and academic discourses in Nigeria, there remain numerous knowledge gaps on social and environmental conditions. For instance, although the important role of NGOs in the Niger Delta is common knowledge, there is yet no serious study of their capacity, especially given far-reaching changes in the political and socioeconomic terrain of the Delta in the last three years. As a result of the highly partisan nature of knowledge production in the Niger Delta, we have often found ourselves where preconceptions lead rather than where evidence points. Debates have therefore generated more heat than light. Yet, because environmental and social conditions in the Delta are quite dynamic and fluid, there is need for constant monitoring and better diagnosis if interventions are to be decisive. Some of the specific areas that research needs to shed more light on include:

- Environmental and social impacts of the petroleum industry, especially measuring the vulnerability and adaptability of groups to those impacts.
- Role of indigenous knowledge in the conservation and remediation of the environment.
- Role of non-governmental organizations in the development of the Niger Delta.
- The rising profile of women and youths in the crisis in the Niger Delta.
- Backward and forward integration in the petroleum industry.
- Causes of conflict in the Niger Delta.

The strategy is to support NGOs, research centers and Universities that are capable of serving as nerve centers for information gathering, documentation and knowledge production in the Niger Delta. However, the emphasis will be on applied research and participatory knowledge production and use. The goal is to create knowledge centers that are accessible to stakeholders and also capable of contributing directly to the solution of environmental and social problems. To achieve these, this aspect of this plan seeks to encourage electronically based information systems capable of supporting easy connection by many users. Part of the task of the centers will be to generate policy-oriented discussions, preferably online. They will also regularly publish findings in multiple media such that research findings are widely available, especially in local languages. The result of research should also be relevant to and usable by local communities.

The expected outcomes of work in the area of knowledge production and dissemination are the following:

- Establishment of comprehensive Information and Documentation and linking them electronically.
- Establishment of a comprehensive Niger Delta website and interactive discussions online.
- Publications from research projects.

Deriving from these, success of this part of the work plan will be measured by the quantum of dependable data about social and economic conditions in the Niger Delta that become available as a result of the implementation of the work plan, the accessibility of the data and the extent to which they influence policy. More specifically, success will be measured by the number of researches that are successfully completed, establishment and efficient functioning of information and documentation centers, the frequency of on-line discussions, as well as coverage and usage of websites.

Capacity building

Capacity building has come to mean so many different things. Pejoratively, it has come to connote the unsupervised funding of NGOs for many nebulous activities, which often encourage mismanagement and misapplication of funds. It has also come to mean untied institutional funding for payment of salaries and other overheads. However, in a less deprecatory interpretation, capacity building should be an important concern of funding, as a means of building up local skills and efficacy for specific programs. This is necessary for creating autocentric energy necessary for sustaining their work when funding may have discontinued. The purpose of the capacity building component of this strategic plan is not to provide institutional funding for NGOs. Rather, it is targeted at enhancing local capacity for carrying out specific programs under the work plan. Its objective is to support the development and actualization of a comprehensive strategy for social change and environmental protection and remediation in the Niger Delta.

### **Box 2: Capacity Building**

Broad goal of Capacity Building:

**To increase the capacity of individuals and local communities to participate effectively in the development and implementation of a comprehensive framework for social change and environmental protection and remediation in the Niger Delta.**

Specific objectives:

- To encourage skills and creativity development capable of supporting self-employment and diffusion of technical knowledge at the community level.
- To improve the legal and policy framework on which oil extraction is based through the direct involvement of local communities.
  - To improve the quality of local leadership
  - To democratize access to finance at the community level
  - To enhance public participation in environmental monitoring and remediation

Capacity building in the Niger Delta should include the following:

#### **A. Creativity building**

One important challenge facing sustainable development in the Niger Delta is to rekindle the latent energy of people to solve their own problems by creatively seizing opportunities and transforming the biophysical and social environments in which they live. This calls for a reawakening of entrepreneurial culture and innovative use of indigenous knowledge to manage natural resources and create sustainable livelihoods. The objective of this aspect of the work plan is to support innovations capable of delivering new small-scale technology and essential services in local communities. Creativity building entails three fundable dimensions:

- Identifying and nurturing local entrepreneurs and talents in small-scale technology, service delivery, creative artistic work and cultural events. For instance, there are small projects to deliver natural gas directly to homes in Kwale, Delta State as a means of reducing dependence on fuel wood.
- Linking innovative talents with universities, research centers, oil companies and government agencies in order to leverage resources to further improve on them and transform them into usable products.

Activities aimed at salvaging, documenting and using indigenous knowledge, especially in the areas of environmental protection and remediation.

#### **B. Policy and legal reform**

This involves reforming, updating and implementing statutory and institutional frameworks for environmental management and social change. Uppermost in this

regard are the enforcement of international environmental standards and repeal of a number of legal instruments guiding the petroleum industry, which civil society considers detrimental to the communities and environment in the Niger Delta.

### **C. Leadership training**

As a result of the recent history of the Niger Delta, its next generation of leaders has been raised in an environment of conflict, suspicion and repression. Violence is now a constitutive element of the psyche of youths in the Niger Delta. Leadership training that emphasizes skills of bargaining, negotiation and consensus building is required to build the next generation of leaders. Such training must also include issues of mental health because many people in the Niger Delta suffer post-traumatic stress disorders and depression, which are either overlooked or “denied” traditionally.

### **D. Community Micro-finance**

This fits logically into the trust funds scheme. According Jinadu *et al* ,  
Bottom-to-top money flows are the key to the market and social inclusion of all groups and communities . . . in the Niger Delta. . . .  
And bottom-to-top money flows will emerge in Nigeria only when community-based and bicameral micro-finance banks are established at the instance and with the participation of the CBN . . . . It is these community-owned and bicameral micro-finance banks that should receive public sector oil-derived revenue allocations through the good offices of the Financial Market and Commodity Market Directorates of CBN.

### **E. Environmental monitoring and remediation**

Funding should also focus on enabling communities, NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to evolve standard mechanisms for continual monitoring of negative environmental change and developing ideas for remediation. there are three steps for a strategy to integrate environmental issues and democratic governance. First is the assessment of socio-environmental vulnerabilities of communities and provision of options for overcoming them. This assessment must address questions such as why are certain groups more vulnerable to environmental change than others? What coping strategies are available to what groups? Why do some groups cope better than others do? What type of intervention measures by the state is necessary to improve the capacity of people to overcome socio-environmental vulnerabilities?

Second is to increase the capacity and freedom of people to exercise the options necessary for them to overcome socio-environmental vulnerabilities. This must address issues such as striking the right balance between the role of the public and private sectors, as well as communities in resource use and management. This calls for the establishment of the right institutional framework for socio-environmental management. Finally, the third step involves the activation of popular participation in implementing these options.

### **Consequently, the challenge of environmental monitoring and remediation in the Niger Delta brings the following into focus (Table 5):**

- Assessing vulnerabilities of people to environmental change/degradation in the major geographic and ecological zones of the country, especially the Niger Delta.
- Developing and/or updating institutional frameworks for dealing with these vulnerabilities; these should focus on conflict resolution mechanisms, international agreements, domestic legislation and specialized environmental protection agencies down to the community level.
- Community participation in environmental monitoring and protection.

Table 5: Environmental monitoring and remediation

PRIVATE Strategic Issues	Proposed Actions
1. Assess vulnerability of people to environmental change and degradation in the major geographic and ecological zones of Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioned participatory research, surveys, workshops and publications</li> </ul>
2. Develop and/or update institutional frameworks for dealing with socio-environmental vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for the Ministry of Environment to establish independent and efficient regulatory processes</li> <li>• Accede to major international environmental Conventions and Protocols</li> <li>• Legislation by National Assembly, State Assemblies and Local Councils in compliance with major international environmental Conventions and Protocols</li> <li>• Formulate, update and implement national resource use policies, with an emphasis on food security, water, waste/pollution, disaster and coastal zone management, pristine sites, biodiversity, land-use and land-cover, energy and industrial transformation</li> <li>• Establish proactive environmental conflict management structures, linking the three tiers of government, civil society organisations and local communities</li> </ul>
3. Support community participation in environmental monitoring and protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish community-based resource management mechanisms</li> <li>• Develop guidelines on corporate community relations for major corporations, especially in the petroleum and mining industries, to cover community participation, re-investment and affirmative actions</li> <li>• Local training, publicity and capacity building in the area of environmental monitoring and protection</li> </ul>

The possible beneficiaries of capacity building are:

NDDC: Capacity building for NDDC is not meant for payment of salaries or running costs. Instead it is aimed at identifying one or two important department(s) showing innovative leadership and promise, particularly in working with civil society organizations and oil companies to build confidence, support local capacity in various areas and nurture local talent. Support for staff development and activities should be such that support such activities.

Universities: Support to enable universities serve as nodal points for bringing together civil society organizations, state agencies and oil companies by designing innovative seminars, workshops and short-term courses, especially in leadership

training. It could also be a means of encouraging their students, most of who are from the Niger Delta and who will become the next generation of leaders in their communities, to cultivate a spirit of dialogue by constructively engaging oil companies and state agencies.

Non-governmental organizations and Community-based organizations: These have emerged as the most efficacious spokespersons of communities in the Niger Delta. During military rule, they established themselves as the defenders of the rights of communities by seizing the mediatory space between an authoritarian state/oil companies and local communities. For two reasons, this role which they played so effectively under the military, continues to be important today and offers a means of rebuilding confidence between communities, government and oil companies. For one thing, government and oil companies are still viewed with a lot of suspicion and cynicism in local communities of the Niger Delta. Trusted gatekeepers like civil society organizations are necessary to begin to rebuild and reconnect government and oil companies with local communities. Secondly, there are lots of divisions within communities arising both from longstanding socio-cultural differences and from the policy of divide and rule pursued by the state and oil companies during military rule. Many NGOs and CBOs have shown themselves better able to transcend these differences and to unite communities than many traditional institutions like Chiefs, traditional councils and pan-ethnic organizations. It will be necessary to sustain their ability to continue to play the role of spokespersons for communities in their relations with government and oil companies. In this regard, capacity building will entail the identification of some NGOs and CBOs and providing them specialized training on the functioning of the petroleum industry and also facilitating and deepening their work in local communities. The Niger Delta is a very rugged terrain to work in. Many NGOs and CBOs have training, information/communication and networking needs in support of their community-based advocacy work. For instance, grants that enable them to gather useful social and environmental data, access the Internet and attend workshops will increase their capacity to work better with communities, government and oil companies. This capacity building is very important because much of the antagonism between communities/NGOs and oil companies arise out of lack of knowledge about the functioning of the oil industry. In addition, communities and NGOs consider many petroleum laws offensive. Capacity building could also support their work to have these laws either modified or abrogated.

### **Epilogue**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, what I have tried to do so far is to summarize my academic career in a few pages. As with any such autobiographical venture, I have struggled with deciding what should be ruled in and what should be ruled out, particularly to ensure that my lecture is principally academic and not over personalized with the risk of becoming self-justificatory. But permit me now to add a few less academic footnotes to this lecture. I did mention that one weakness of political science in Nigeria is its aversion for practical political engagements. At best, its practice is limited to advising government, which is consistent with its focus on the affluent in society. Expectedly, engaging in the struggles of the working masses (the afflicted) is banished and derided as ideological or utopia. Contrariwise, Nigerian political science to which I subscribe places working peoples struggle as the bedrock of our science. Consequently, my work in the Niger Delta and beyond has emphasized working with ordinary people and their organizations.

In 2001, the MacArthur Foundation of Chicago requested me to assist them to develop a framework for their work in the Niger Delta. Subsequently, I joined the Foundation for a three-year leave of absence during which I managed their Niger Delta and Human Rights grant making. It was a very illuminating personal experience for me, particularly because I suddenly moved from being a grant seeker to become a grant maker. I thank the Foundation immensely for that opportunity. In that time, I supported many change-generating activities of several popular organizations in Nigeria, Africa and the United States related to the environment and

human rights. Particularly in the Niger Delta, these organizations included the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (IHRHL), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Niger Delta Human and Environmental Rescue Organization (NDHERO) and Community Rights Initiative (CORI). I have kept in touch with many of them and I am very proud of the work they continue to do.

Just before I left the MacArthur Foundation in 2004, I was appointed the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Human Rights Commission (now Human Rights Council) on the adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights. This role has enabled me to take the practical aspects of my work to another level and to extend my interest in the links between politics, environment and human rights, which is a corollary of my work in the Niger Delta. In the last three years I have worked closely with local communities, governments and multilateral organizations in addressing extensive human rights violations arising from illegal movement of toxic and dangerous products and wastes, including the Yaqui, a minority ethnic group in Mexico, the governments of Cote D'Ivoire, Ecuador and the Ukraine. In the process, I have come to see the enormity of the problem of toxic products and wastes. In deed, it is a time bomb on which the world is presently sitting. From pesticides to fake drugs, from ship breaking to decommissioning of nuclear plants and from computers to cell phones, the world's affluence (industrialization/consumption) is becoming its affliction (dangerous products/wastes). However, it is worrisome that developing countries like Nigeria, which have become the main recipients of these wastes and products, both illegally and as aid, seem oblivious of the overwhelming dangers that they face. I have committed myself to help draw attention in the developing world to this problem during the rest of my term as Special Rapporteur.

In July 2006, my colleagues overwhelmingly elected me Dean of the Social Sciences. I want to use this opportunity to publicly acknowledge that I have been humbled by the confidence they expressed in my ability to lead the faculty and for the support they have so freely given to me since then. I want to say that they are partly the main reason I am giving this inaugural. It is my own way of not only showing appreciation for their support, but also demonstrating the kind of leadership they have come to expect from me. I hope that for the rest of my deanship our Faculty will continue to grow as a family of committed academic progress, not withstanding our travails. To my post-graduate students and weekly discussion group, particularly my doctoral students, Peter Mba and Ben Nwosu, I hope that this inaugural spurs you to continue pursuing the challenges of reconciling affluence and affliction.

Finally Mr. Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, as young secondary school students at the celebrated Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS), we were constantly admonished to "toil and not to seek for rest; to give and not to count the cost; and to labour and not to ask for any reward, except that of knowing that we are doing the will of God". Such precepts early on instilled in me a very profound sense of selfless service and a commitment to fighting affliction. While I do not believe that we can change the world exclusively by eleemosynary and moral concerns, it is clear to me that insofar as there remains a single afflicted person or community in this country, our affluence is meaningless. As such, I believe that it is by constantly challenging the persistence of affliction in the midst of affluence that our humanity makes sense. Indeed, unless such moral and ethical issues return to our national politics and political science, our putative affluence will remain at risk of decimation by the afflicted. This is a central lesson from the Niger Delta.

Thank you.

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