

FINAL REPORT

2016 NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT FORUM “TOWARDS SELF SUSTAINING DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA: NARRATING AND SHOWCASING A RE- IMAGINED NIGER DELTA.”



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FOUNDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES IN THE NIGER DELTA

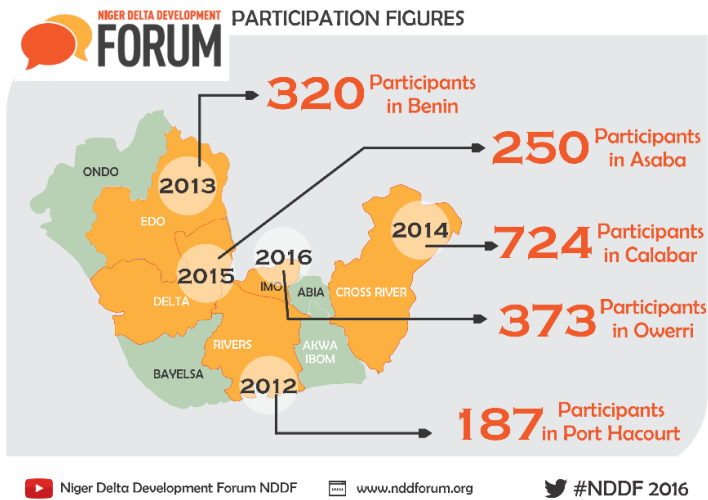


NIGER DELTA PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

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NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT FORUM



Niger Delta Development Forums envision a Niger Delta where all persons are able to live sustainable livelihoods, generate income and employment, and create economic opportunities unhindered by constraints from within and outside the market system in the region and beyond. The forums are catalytic information sharing and collaboration opportunities for government, private sector, and civil society organizations pursuing approaches for equitable and inclusive economic growth in the Niger Delta. NDDF also provides a platform to connect with other partners to collectively pursue improved development policies and practices in the Niger Delta. The Forum is rotated among the Niger Delta states. The 1st edition of NDDF was held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State in 2012; the 2nd in Benin City, Edo State in 2013; the 3rd in Calabar, Cross River State in 2014; the 4th in Asaba, Delta State in 2015 while the most recent edition was in Owerri, Imo State in 2016. Similar forums were held in Washington, DC (2014, 2015) and London (2015).

Over the years, partners have individually mainstreamed the policy recommendations and decisions reached at the NDDFs into their own respective work plans in order to achieve a combined bigger impact of work in the region.

- BRACED Commission has moved forward on some of the agriculture and investment policy recommendations from NDDF Calabar and Asaba respectively to work directly with the Commissioners of the 6 states they are mandated to work in;
- PIND's 2016 International Women's Day #PledgeForParity event was an opportunity to echo the challenges and issues women farmers face in their work that were articulated in the NDDF Calabar (2014) which included: access to finance, access to land, need for better information/knowledge sharing, and capacity building/empowerment for women farmers;
- Taking a cue from NDDF, Abia State organized their own Aba Urban Development Forum in January 2016 with a focus on developing and rebranding the city of Aba and from which came the #MadeInAba state-funded project;
- USAID/PIND SACE funded project picked up the mantle of accountability and good governance and started the #TALKNDIs initiative that tracked Niger Delta Institutions responsible for delivering services and produced a report titled Citizen Report Card on the Niger Delta Institutions. This report covered eight local government areas in Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo, and Ondo. The results of the findings, though not positive for the NDIs, have begun a general conversation online on accountability, good governance, and leadership in the region that can only result in eventual positive change for the region.
- USAID's MARKET II supplied equipment grants to women and youth on farming in Cross Rivers and Delta states addressing the constraint of access to finance for women and youth; and in terms of general access to information and knowledge sharing, USAID MARKETS II has begun exploring alternative ways of involving women in various agriculture value chains (cocoa, beekeeping) in Ondo and Cross Rivers.

NDDF OWERRI

NDDF 2016 was held in Owerri, Imo state with a theme of ***“Towards Self Sustaining Development in the Niger Delta: Narrating and Showcasing a Re-Imaged Niger Delta.”*** For 2016, the situation for the Niger Delta was quite dire; the region was in crisis – politically, economically, socially, and environmentally. The collapse of the global oil price has taken its toll the hardest on the nine states of the Niger Delta, resulting in a new emergence of violence by new militancy groups. Despite numerous efforts by either independent organizations or by the Federal Government in convening key stakeholders in the region to collectively explore the imperatives of inclusive economic growth in an environment of dwindling oil prices, little headway has been achieved or documented on a firm way forward for the region.

Development is a complex and multi-disciplinary process, and perhaps the first step in articulating a way forward for the region is in re-imagining a possible future, beginning with changing the narrative of the Niger Delta. A Niger Delta that ranks high in inclusive citizen participation in governance; where state governments operate with the concepts of transparency, accountability, and effectiveness at the forefront; where diversity in economic pursuits are championed by state governments and executed openly; and a region that no longer grapples with violence but where peace reigns. What are the steps needed to move the region in this direction, towards action and accountability on the part of all stakeholders, not just governments?

NDDF Owerri tackled the broad issues of peace, regional cohesiveness, digital economy and climate change, leveraging the tradition of a value-added platform where interested and committed development actors - public, private sector, development practitioners, and international development actors alike - convened to take actions to promote growth, while seizing the huge opportunity to influence the development agenda for the region. This was done in four syndicate sessions:

- Session 1: Regional Cohesiveness: The role of Federal, Regional and State Government Institutions
- Session 2: Peace, Conflict Mitigation, Elections, and Development
- Session 3: Climate Change and the Green Economy
- Session 4: Economic Diversification and the Digital Economy

NDDF Owerri was organized by the Niger Delta Partnership Initiative (NDPI) Foundation, the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), Imo State Government, and members of the DEMAND ALLIANCE.

NDDF OWERRI OBJECTIVES

NDDF Owerri objectives were to:

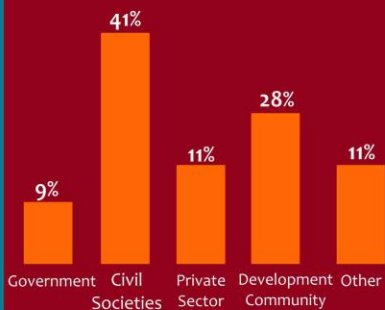
- Shape awareness and shared understanding among stakeholders on the critical steps needed to move the region towards a re-imaged Niger Delta.
- Increase actionable opportunities for sustainable development initiatives and activities in the Niger Delta region through evidence based policy influence at the state and federal levels.
- Facilitate commitment of key actors (government, private sector, civil society, donor community) through dialogue, collaboration with diverse stakeholders and ongoing engagement activities with DEMAND Alliance partners for more inclusive pro-poor development initiatives in the Niger Delta.
- Support achievement of the objectives of the overall global NDDF platform and the ongoing global and local economic growth initiatives by promoting multi-sector partnerships for development, investment and collaboration in the Niger Delta region, focusing on creation of national and regional platforms for reflection among development actors and interested stakeholders.

NDDF POST-FORUM SURVEY, KEY RESULTS

NDDF OWERRI 2016 POST SURVEY KEY RESULTS

373 Total # of Attendees at NDDF Owerri

41% Respondents work in civil societies



Male



61%

Female



39%



48%
Somewhat disagree that the socio economic development in the Niger Delta is improving



50%
Think unemployment is the most significant socio economic challenge in the Niger Delta



52%
Thinks trust between various sectors is the most significant factor in improving engagement that facilitates investment in the Niger Delta



66%
Think that agriculture is the most important investment opportunity in the Niger Delta

Plenary Session 1: Peace, Conflict Mitigation, Elections and Development



60%

State Policing will further curb criminal activities



58%

Disagreed with the approach made by agitators/militants to the Federal Government



49%

Arresting and prosecuting sponsors of violence will improve electoral process



89%

Believes increased economic activities and development/maintenance of infrastructure will lead to job creation

Plenary Session 2: Regional Cohesiveness: The Role of Federal, Regional and State Government Institutions



90%

Believes Development of a Long-term Regional Strategic and Activity Plan jointly implemented by the Nine State governments, Federal government Parastatals will trigger and sustain Federal, Regional and State cooperation and cohesiveness



90%

Indicated that they do not have access to state budget and project performance reports



63%

Does not know the total value of their state's 2016 Budget



100%

Believes Budget and project Performance reporting is a requirement for accountability and transparency

Plenary Session 3: Climate Change and the Green Economy



89%

Vows to be more responsive to climate change issues after watching the documentary *No Where To Run*

64%

Believes Oil spill/ bunkering is the most critical factor that impacts climate change in the region

Plenary Session 4: Economic Diversification and the Digital Economy



56%

Thinks agro allied business is the most viable non-oil sector/activity that will increase the GDP of the region



74%

Violence, conflict, kidnapping, militancy and other criminal activities is the key constraint/ concern for private sector investment

96% acquired new knowledge that they will share with their organization/network

COLLABORATION WITH ALL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MEASURE THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO STIMULATE INVESTMENT AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM POST FORUM SURVEY

- There's a strong need for increased investment in the Niger Delta region.
- State governments should provide an enabling environment that requires renewable sources of energy and improved infrastructure and security.
- Federal and State Governments need to deal with the issue of security and provide critical infrastructure.
- Private sector needs to invest in businesses that will create jobs.
- CSOs need to focus programming on conflict prevention, peace-building and institutional strengthening.
- Donor organizations need to support the work of CSOs in a more streamlined and collaborative manner.
- There is a need for proper linkage of riverine communities with upland communities. This will help erase the notion of exclusion of these communities where militancy is festered and thriving.
- There should be continuity in governance, transparency, accountability and commitment from all stakeholders by always doing what is right at the right time.
- Incentives should not be given for citizen participation. Every citizen needs to willfully get involved in order to demand accountability from public office holders.
- There should be a review of the policies that guide financial institutions. These institutions should build capacity to meet the needs of the populace.
- Increased partnerships, clarity of purpose and proper definition of roles of every category of stakeholder in the region should be properly articulated.
- Stakeholder groups should organize as many ICT intervention programmes in as many sectors as possible including; ICT4Ag, Financial Technologies and Education Technologies.
- Strategically implementing a marshal plan based on commitment of all involved, shared vision and complementarity of states and institutions.
- Some suggestions for possible themes/topics to discuss at next year's NDDF include:
 - Conflict resolution in the Niger Delta – A Way Forward for Peace
 - Impact of CSOs on development initiatives in the Niger Delta
 - Leadership and Development in the Niger Delta – Can the two go together?
 - Investment opportunities for youth of the Niger Delta

SESSION 1 – REGIONAL COHESIVENESS: THE ROLE OF FEDERAL, REGIONAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS



“There is a lie we have been told and we have believed to our detriment – that the private sector would drive the engine of development.” Dr. Otive Igbuzor, Center LSD.

Moderator: Charles Abani, Chief of Party, USAID/PIND SACE Project

Lead Discussants

- Dr. Ogaga Ifowodo, BoT, NDDC
- Nkoyo Toyo, SA on SDGs, Cross Rivers State Government

Panelist

- Chuks Ofulue, BRACED Commission
- Dr. Otive Igbuzor, Center LSD
- Lawrence Okezie Odoemelem, Abia State Government
- Barister Chigoziri Ojiaka, Gender and Child Protection Initiative/ Imo State University
- Daudu Garuba, Natural Resource Governance Institution

Background:

This breakout session aimed to highlight the key achievements, challenges, constraints and opportunities for increasing regional cohesiveness and the role of Federal and State institutions in galvanizing action towards inclusive economic growth in the Niger Delta. Panelists were expected to address the crosscutting issues of governance, potential public-private partnerships, economic diversification and social inclusion. In addition, citizen engagement, inclusion and monitoring of development progress were also brought to the front burner of the discussion. Preliminary discussions focused on the factors that have thus far prevented regional cohesiveness and what different stakeholders can do to put proper processes in place.

There are a myriad of issues that faces today’s Niger Delta and on the top of these issues are poor governance, dysfunctional government institutions and practices, and environmental degradation. One of the most critical but subtle challenges that face the region is the issue of ‘lack of cohesiveness’. This is largely because there has not been a clear

definition of the areas that constitute the Niger Delta both geographically and politically. One of the region's biggest challenges is not oil spill, gas flaring, militancy or lack of infrastructural development -- it is actually the competition amongst states in the region defined as the 'SOUTH SOUTH', a geopolitical zone made up of six states within the Niger Delta enclave as against the nine states in region. Ability to merge these two 'geographical expressions', map out proper representations and clearly articulate and tackle collaboratively the rising issues has been the biggest cause of disintegration of other sectors and lack of sustainable development in the region. Individualism and states self-interest has stalled the 'big picture' development in the region.

Overriding moderator questions:

- *How can we achieve a joint vision and coordination across Federal and State institutional frameworks?*
- *What key reforms may be necessary to improve the effectiveness of institutions?*
- *What opportunities/low-hanging fruit are there to galvanize cohesiveness?*
- *How to achieve social development as well as inclusive economic growth?*
- *How to ensure greater citizen engagement, inclusion, and participation in defining priorities and monitoring progress?*
- *What are the divergence factors that mitigate regional cohesiveness and what measures can stakeholders, especially state and local governments, put in place to strengthen inter and intra community/states cohesiveness?*
- *There is a popular view that there is weak coordination among Federal, regional, state and local government in the implementation of developmental programmes in the region. How can we ensure synergy and coordination, in the conception, execution and evaluation of developmental programmes for maximum impact and sustainable development of the region?*

Key Issues:

1. Role of NDDC and MNDA in regional development

- These federal institutions were said to be duplicating the efforts of state government. This is largely because there are no visible cross cutting themes for collaboration hence duplicity in budgets for same projects many of which are not completed at the end of a governance tenure.
- NDDC was described as a contract bazaar as statistics presented showed that with 8,600 contracts awarded, only 12% (1,032) of them have been completed. Dr. Ifowodo of NDDC presented the top priorities of the incoming Board of Trustees for NDDC as the following:
 - Energy – to boost economic activity.
 - Youth unemployment – in promoting economic activity and advancing peace in the region.
 - Young girls and women – often marginalized despite the huge role they play in local economies.
 - Health – to deal with the increasing health crisis brought on by environmental damage to the land.
 - Non-oil sectors – the Niger Delta must move away from oil and focus on alternative, renewable energy sources.
 - A shift to refocus the organization on its original mandate to be a catalyst for human and infrastructure development in the region.
 - Stressed that collaboration on behalf of all stakeholders working in the regional is essential for any forward moving initiative of activities on development for the region, particularly the state governments on projects like joint port authority and inter-state light rail.
- A strong debate around whether to keep these regional institutions ensued because their mandated impacts across the region has not been felt or seen by citizens.

2. Coalition of Niger Delta State Governors

- It was recommended that state governors regularly occasionally convene to discuss regional development and design their individual state development plans to bring about long term development and not short term or tenure based projects was promoted, including the strong need for state

governments to work more collaboratively with NDDC and MNDAs to facilitate inter-state development activities.

- However, this lack of coordination amongst state governors rested on a pervasive negative mindset that refuses to take individual ownership and responsibility for solving the issues of the region. How can we take responsibility of solving these chronic issues rather than finger-pointing?

Recommendations:

- The Niger Delta needs more of a bottom-up approach with strong linkages with community benefits systems of governance that empowers them and assists them in evolving [to the changing times]. Such a model will depend on shared opportunities and inclusive growth that materially improves the livelihoods of the people [of the Niger Delta].
- The factors that prohibit cohesiveness of the Niger Delta are not different from the factors that affect Nigeria as a nation – competition amongst the member states and unaligned interventionist agencies seems to be the order of the day instead of collaboration.
 - Role of the regional intervention bodies should focus on how to escalate the work of member states, instead of simply replicating them. The failure of these regional intervention bodies, like the Presidential Amnesty Program, is in their continuous provision of palliatives and poor conceptualization.
 - The region must begin to look inward to build its own resources rather than look elsewhere for its resources, and in looking inwards, we must begin to build local and regional accountability frameworks as part of the process.
 - The Sustainable Development Goals must be looked at as a model to follow in developing the region because it provides an avenue for the measurement of progress, transparency and accountability.
 - Appraise any actions or activities on how they have affected women, youth and people with disabilities for greater transparency and accountability.
- Lack of infrastructure is key to unlocking the problem of lack of investment opportunities in the region; current trading routes and complex trading zones limit trade within and outside the region.
 - There are low hanging fruits to make existing infrastructure operational, such as unbundling state owned assets (breweries, oil palm estates, processing clusters) and get them privatized and operated commercially by investors who can turn them into profitable businesses.
- Increased domestic security would create an economy of its own, but the main challenge is implementing security initiatives in an economic and political environment that thrives on instability and insecurity.
 - A more conflict sensitive development plan is needed for the Niger Delta.
- A clearer definition of what constitutes the Niger Delta is needed – is it the original oil producing states of Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta, or the six states that the BRACED Commission is mandated to provide services for, or what is known as the South-South region? The creation of the context of what we now know as the Niger Delta states was created by NDDC and this context has given rise to different perceptions and interpretations of the region that has added to the divisiveness that we are currently experiencing.
- Perhaps the Niger Delta needs a strengthened Marshall Plan that includes enforcement for policies and actions agreed upon by all stakeholders.
 - Corruption and resistance to change are key hurdles to effective development in the region.
 - Oftentimes, the dreams and aspirations of citizens of the region are not reflected in any stated or public plans leading to eventual ineffectiveness of proposed plans.

- Beyond oil – “We ate our future yesterday; we did not save when oil prices were high and foreign reserves huge. Oil alone cannot deliver the dream of Nigeria, let alone the dream of the Niger Delta.” Daudu Garabu, National Resource Governance Institute.

SESSION 2 – PEACE, CONFLICT MITIGATION, ELECTIONS, AND DEVELOPMENT

“In designing programs for violent youths, a special focus on the rehabilitation of women must be given priority too... involvement of women in the rehabilitation process will help speed up the healing process.” Emem Okon, Kebekatche Women Development Foundation



Moderators:

- Dr. Austine Onuoha
- Dr. David Udofia, IPDU

Lead Discussant

- Professor Ibaba Samuel Ibaba, Niger Delta University

Panelist

- Dr. Otive Igbuzor, Center LSD
- Emem Okon, Kebekatche Women Development Foundation
- Joel Bisina, LITE Africa

Background:

A significant amount of resources from both the Federal government and international organizations has thus far been directed to the Niger Delta. Despite these efforts, it seems not enough has not been done in curtailing violence and limiting militancy and the big question now is “What else?” According to security and conflict trackers of PIND’s IDPU unit, violence, and especially election related violence and militancy activities, has been on the rise in the last 18 months.

This session set out to look at the following issues:

- The Niger Delta region has witnessed an upsurge in militant activities that have resulted to Federal government military action in some communities of the Niger Delta. As a region, what innovative approaches can state and non-state actors in the region use to ensure that the development needs of the region are addressed, without resulting to violence?
- In addition to militant activities in the region, most states in the region are witnessing an increase in the number and activities of street gangs, resulting in internal displacement of persons and reduced economic activities. Rivers State has inaugurated a state amnesty committee to disarm and rehabilitate cultists in the state. How best can state governments check and reduce activities of street gangs?

Overriding moderator questions:

- *Different scenario building exercises conducted ahead of the 2015 general elections anticipated high levels of violence ahead, during and after the elections in the Niger Delta, North East and South West region, which proved to be accurate in some states of the Niger Delta region and inaccurate in others. Looking back at the 2015*

general elections and the governorship elections conducted in Bayelsa and Edo states, what will you say stakeholders got right and what aspects do you feel need to be addressed ahead of the 2019 general elections?

- *Environmental degradation is a widespread problem in the Niger Delta region. However, in June 2016, the Federal government launched the Ogoni cleanup and restoration programme and in August, inaugurated the Governing Council and Board of Trustees for the HYPREP. Following the launch of the Ogoni cleanup exercise, other ethno-cultural groups have called on the Federal government to extend the clean-up exercise to their communities. How best can government manage expectations concerning the cleanup exercise and the people on one hand while ensuring that communities develop a greater sense of responsibility to their environment on the other hand?*
- *With the renewed plans to introduce state police service, what are the risk and opportunities in the implementation for the Niger Delta state in the spate of recent economic downturn in the region?*
- *Information gathering is critical to crime control and conflict mitigation. What are the key factors mitigating the development of intelligent information gathering platform in the region and what are the collaborative effort of stakeholders to improve on the existing structures and equip the security agencies to mitigate and respond to situations?*
- *Of recent most electoral processes have been linked to violent conflicts, insecurity, destruction of lives and property that further militate against development of the region, in the scope of re-imagined Niger Delta, how could the electoral processes be managed to advance the development of the region?*
- *Some of the key demands of the militants have been applauded by some inhabitants of the region, and might be viewed as part of the features of the re-imaged Niger Delta. However, their approach have generated another form of insecurity and underdevelopment of the region. What are the alternative approaches for the actualization of the re-imagined Niger Delta?*
- *How can transparency, accountability and efficiency in service delivery in governance be improved upon in the region?*

In the course of the discussion, the scope expanded to include:

1. Conflict Mitigation in the Niger Delta:
 - The role of the Presidential Amnesty Program in promoting peace in the region
 - Instead of rewarding violence, what can be done to provide justice for citizens and communities that are victims of militancy?
 - Has the Presidential Amnesty Program brought peace to the region?
 - Understanding and supporting the role of women in conflict mitigation and resolution.
 - How can the Amnesty program include non-violent youth and women in its implementation?
 - Rehabilitation processes must involve faith based organizations and traditionalist in the Amnesty reconciliation and reintegration activities.
2. The election processes:
 - Activities of INEC in recent elections have put its reputation in question. How can INEC work with local political parties and communities to ensure smoother and violent-free elections?
 - How can credible elections be conducted given the disunity and collapsed operational structures in the political parties?
 - How can we ensure proper civic education to the general public regarding voting rights and responsibilities?
3. Transparency and Accountability in governance:
 - How can democratic governance address the issues of conflict in the Niger Delta?
 - How can citizens demand transparency and accountability of public office holders?

Recommendations:

- The Federal government needs to tackle the issue of lack of sustained development and continuation of militancy in the Niger Delta from its root causes, and the issue of the region is an issue of development.

- Deepening the practice of democratic governance, which involves organizing and implementing credible elections, is one of the fundamental solutions to the challenges of the Niger Delta (and Nigeria as a whole).
- The Presidential Amnesty Program should focus on effective reintegration of the youths and women as a key strategy in curbing restiveness.
 - The program was meant to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate violent youths, however, the program has only been successful in the disarmament and demobilization components of its mandate. The most critical part, reintegration, has not been carried out.
 - Addressing the socioeconomic issues will create the enabling environment to fast tracking reintegration. The Federal government should also start designing programs targeted at nonviolent youth.
 - We have overlooked victims of violence during the reintegration process and peace cannot be achieved without proper justice.
 - Reintegration should start at family levels. Communities where militants hail from should be sensitized on how to deal with related issues to enable them accept and reincorporate them back into society. Ex-militants are sometimes stigmatized. Faith based organizations and traditional institutions should be incorporated into the reintegration process.
- There is a need to understand the changing role of political actors when it comes to elections in the region; voters/civic education should be done early and often and not in the current “rush hour” method it is currently done to ensure that all stakeholders are properly educated in a transparent and cohesive manner.
 - The electorate to aid in accountability should fund election financing.
 - Voting power and development of democratic institution and detribalized party systems are the best protection against governmental neglect or discrimination.
- Issues of the Niger Delta are not general and should not be treated as such. Attention should be paid to the hotspots. Issues should be dealt with based on the peculiarity of the geographical locations.
- Ending corruption is a fundamental step to ending the crisis in the Niger Delta and it can only be possible through democratic processes.
- INEC needs to recognize the community development councils and incorporate them in their electoral processes.
- Communities needs to cost share in electioneering expense, to place them in the position to demand accountability from candidates who they have supported as against citizens receiving financial incentives from political candidates to vote them into office. Without this, citizens are unable to demand accountability from public office holders.
- We cannot continue to disconnect the issues of peace, conflict mitigation, elections and development in the Niger Delta from the practice of democratic governance.
- The issue of high exposure of children to extreme violence in the Niger Delta is not being tackled seriously enough by responsible government agencies and CSOs working in the region. There is a strong link between the exposure of children to violence at a young age and youth-caused violence in societies.
 - People with psychopathy and sociopathy, which is characterized by people exposed to deprivation at all levels, exhibit traits of greed, selfishness, and cunningness and it is a strong trait in many Niger Delta leaders.

SESSION 3 – CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE GREEN ECONOMY



“Environmental issues do not have boundaries...it is not limited to the Niger Delta. Climate change is not an emerging threat; it is already here with us.” Dr. Peter Idabor, DG, NOSRA representing the Minister of Environment, Amina Mohamed.

Moderator: Innocent Azih, Carbon Exchange Trade

Lead Discussants

- Surveyor Efik, Climate Change Network Nigeria
- Dr. Iniobong Essien, Honourable Co

Panelist

- Odigha Odigha, Cross River State Forest Commission
- Professor Mrs. Akpezi Ogbuigwe, Advancement and Linkages Centre (Rivers State University of Science and Technology)
- Dr. Mrs. Elsie I. Hamadina, Department of Crop & Soil Science (University of Port Harcourt)
- Sir Peter Idabor, DG, NOSDRA
- Simon Gusah, Urban Base Consulting

Background:

It is a known fact that with the constant gas flaring, excessive dependence on fossil fuels, pipeline vandalism, deforestation, etc., have all contributed to global warming which is affecting all sectors of the economy. Changes in weather patterns, severity of storms, increased or decreased rain is impacting agriculture. Flooding and sea level rise also affect health - lack of clean water in riverine communities, open defecation, water table contamination all are consequences of climate change in our communities. The major environmental issues in the Niger Delta are from oil spills and gas flaring. Other issues that has not attracted as much attention but are also of dire effect to the environment include depletion of fish population, invasion of water hyacinth, loss of mangrove, and effects of uncoordinated agricultural practices. In the Niger Delta, besides Cross Rivers State government, development organizations working in environmental issues have taken a lead in protecting the environment of the region and dealing with issue of climate change. As defined, ‘green economy’ refers to an economy which maximizes profit while at the same time reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities without degrading the environment.

Overriding moderator questions:

- *The Federal Government proposal to global financiers was not well received because of its lack of ‘green’ content. Do you think that disparate policy thought was responsible? If so, how do you think Nigerian economic managers ought to craft policy mixes to benefit from global dynamics such as the Paris Agreement, particularly for an economy under recession?*

- *Agriculture and Forestry are major frontiers of the campaign on climate change globally. However, occasionally climate smart agriculture becomes attacked by actors in agricultural intensification. What should we be doing to optimize the goals of food self-sufficiency or food security without compromising the 'green' balance in the agro-ecosystem?*
- *What are specific climate change challenges and impacts on the economy of the Niger Delta that we ought to watch out for their adaptation and/or mitigation?*
- *Given the conflict usually generated by development, for instance, felling of trees versus road/infrastructure deployment, how should states approach the holistic management and optimization of resources in the region?*
- *Mitigation and adaptation measures are critical in the beneficiation from globally recommended solutions in climate change. How could critical actors including governments, non-state groups and communities be coordinated to bring adaptable solutions to mitigated observed impacts in the region?*
- *The Niger Delta region is a peculiar terrain naturally. What green projects currently exist, and which others to be promoted, to enhance resilience against potential shocks from natural and man-made vulnerabilities?*
- *What should be the role of business, civil society and traditional institutions in hedging against continued impact of climate change on the Niger Delta economy?*
- *Specific projects that will benefit from global green fund are critical mitigation approaches that also benefit from global Carbon Fund under the Kyoto Protocol and now the UNFCCC's Paris Agreement. Linking the carbon offset mechanisms in respect of green growth, what should be the project approach to attract carbon funds from the global carbon market to boost the economy of the Niger Delta?*
- *How are actors in the agro-allied sectors currently coping with the effect of climate change?*

Key issues:

1. What are the potential and actual impacts of climate change on the economy of the Niger Delta? What are the consequences of culprits who deliberately carry out actions to degrade the environment?
2. What policies have been put in place to manage economic interactions with the environment?
3. What are the best ways to achieve resilience against shocks and other forms of vulnerability associated with the combined forces of climate change and economic recession?
4. How could these impacts be mitigated? How best could we promote a green economy in a way that advances sustainable development efforts for greater gain?

Recommendations:

- The challenges of the environmental damage to the region are multitude – challenges from continuous oil spills on land and water that destroy entire ecosystems, and illegal activities of saboteurs and oil pipeline vandals that only deepen the damage and lead to loss of investor confidence in the region.
- Advocacy efforts by CSOs should not only focus on the federal and state governments and IOCs, but on youths involved in destroying oil pipelines.
- The Ministry of Environment is currently working to change the narrative of how people perceive the environment through empowering local communities, and in regulating and managing the environmental issues such as erosion, desertification, climate change, oil spillage, and gas flaring. The Ministry is also devising strategies and frameworks and entering into partnerships with donors and CSOs alike to achieve its statutory mandate.
- The promise of a green economy is to 'decouple' economic growth from both greater use of natural resources and damage to the environment through the development of new products, processes, and services and a new way of life.
 - Achieving a green economy, however, will not be cheap. There are international funds that can be tapped into for projects if collaboration and partnership on all levels are leveraged.
 - Climate change curriculum should be introduced into Secondary schools and Universities to teach young people about the effects of environmental damage and the role they can play.
 - In financing the green economy, there must be a connection between the investors expectation with the need of the local economy. Investors' expectations should be reviewed to align with the need of the environment and the local economy.

- Youth unemployment can be tackled by harnessing the technology available through opportunities in the green economy.
- The past year has revealed the limitations of oil; we need re-imagine the Niger Delta beyond oil. The green economy is an emerging space for us to rewrite and create the rules of engagement that takes into consideration perspectives from all stakeholders – from local communities to private sector, from federal government to international bodies, and from CSOs to youths. But does the Niger Delta have the resilience to begin to move on from oil and focus on an economy beyond oil?
- Akwa Ibom is leading the way in the green economy challenge by promoting a clean city and driving low carbon emissions by setting up a low energy bulb factory to contribute to their quota of reducing emission/low carbons into the environment.
- Development actors in the region should latch on to the international basket of funds available to drive projects that can help in protecting the environment
- Alternative use of resources (waste materials) should be explored.
- Research should be done on how the local economy thrives on the environment and how this interaction can be managed with appropriate social justice components in place.
- Youth unemployment can be tackled by harnessing the technology available through green economy and in promoting [opportunities in the waste management sector](#).
- Mechanized farming should be promoted in the agricultural sector. The environmental needs of subsistence and commercial farming should be duly researched and interventions should be designed to meet these needs.
- Although the nation is clamoring for diversification into the agriculture sector, there should be policies in place to guide these practices to avoid abuse so as not to create additional hurdles and challenges.
- Gas flaring should STOP. Invest in systems that can enable the beneficial and profitable use of the gas flaring.

SESSION 4 – ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY



“The recent recession being experienced by the country as a result of the dwindling oil revenue is a pointer that the nation needs to diversify its economy. If we really want to grow and diversify the economy, as individuals, we need to first rely on technology.” Tosin Akingbade, Price Water House Cooper (PWC).

Moderator: Tunde Oderinde

Lead Discussant

- Tosin Akingbade, Price Water House Cooper (PWC)

Panelist

- Yerinlaimi Konboye, IBEZ Software House
- Fola Olatunji David, Ventures Platform
- Atim Uko, Sproxil Nigeria Ltd

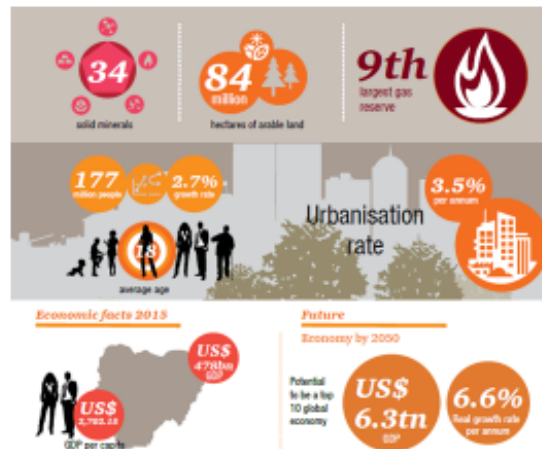
Background:

In the wake of dwindling oil prices and the instability in the oil sector, Nigeria is frantically revisiting other sectors of her economy which are ripe for investment in order to sustain her growing populace. PricewaterhouseCoopers prepared a report in December 2015 on "[Nigeria: Looking Beyond Oil](#)" in conjunction with the Lagos State Chambers of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), focusing on the ease of doing business in Nigeria and on the various value chains of potential sectors to be diversified. Analysis from the report identified Agriculture, Petroleum (Petrochemical and Refining), Retail, and ICT as priority sectors with the most dominant transmission links to the overall economy. These sectors in the medium-to-long term are key to boosting other sectors like manufacturing. Forward linkages to agro processing and other services such as logistics as well as backward integration to input supply sectors could improve farm incomes, increase employment and improve domestic food security. Nigeria has grown tremendously since the introduction of the Mobile Telecommunication technology. It is very imperative for the country to get the sector right otherwise it will impact on the quest of achieving a digital economy.

Key Issues:

1. What are the incentives that the different states in the Niger Delta that can encourage investment in agro-allied sectors?
2. How best can the economy of the Niger Delta be diversified from the oil sector of the regional economy?
3. How best can stakeholders expand opportunities for growing a digital economy for the Niger Delta?
4. What constraints/barriers to economic diversification are stakeholders in the Niger Delta experiencing and how could these constraints be addressed in a sustainable manner?

Nigeria's intrinsic economic potential lies beyond oil...



- Nigeria has a large abundance of metals and minerals.
- It has a bubbling retail sector
- It has a big domestic market for manufactured consumer goods.
- A young middle class that is starting to embrace e-commerce.
- Nigeria's population demographics are quite favourable with a young population driving the growth in the consumption of Consumer Packaged Goods (CPGs)
 - 67% below the age of 30
 - growing middle class estimated at 30% of the population

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Overriding moderator questions:

- *What are the key viable sectors the nation should intensify effort to develop?*
- *What is the size of the business opportunity of each sector in value terms?*
- *Is the country gravitating towards harnessing these opportunities and are there skilled personnel and interested investors prospecting to develop these sectors?*
- *What needs to change in the way we do business to attract huge investments into these sectors?*
- *What's the role for the private sector? What are the challenges limiting investments?*
- *What needs to change within the digital technology space that will make the private sector attain its maximum potential to trigger desired sustainable growth to the economy – job creation and sustained incomes?*
- *What are the incentives that the different states in the Niger Delta can provide to encourage investment in agro-allied sectors?*
- *What constraints/barriers to economic diversification are stakeholders in the Niger Delta experiencing and how could these constraints be addressed in a sustainable manner?*

Recommendations:

- The private sector can take the lead in initiating and using digital technology to promote 'start-ups' in the Niger Delta that use technology to solve many of societies challenges.
- Government and corporate institutions should partner with technology experts/hubs to develop systems that can support the collection of farmers' information for the purposes of proper tracking of the quantity and quality of produce, authentication of farmers and for planning /implementation of business development and support services.
 - The emergence of the digital economy in Nigeria is changing the way we live, interact and consume. Any business that wants to sell effectively must be able to sell digitally using social media platforms through mobile phones enabled with data.
 - In order to successfully diversify the Nigerian economy, four core actions must be taken:

- Efficiency in the system
 - Education and enlightenment of the general populace
 - Power (alternative sources of energy)
 - Trust (online payment systems)
- In thinking of diversification, the following sectors should be targeted:
 - Agriculture – how can we ensure viability of all value chains in this sector? Nigeria can no longer afford to import the majority of what we eat; we possess over 84 million acres of land with 60% currently not cultivated.
 - Private sector players in the agriculture sector should plug technology into the existing processes across the agricultural value chains within the region.
 - Nollywood – key lessons to be learned from the Nollywood industry is that i) they involved youths and created entry jobs for them, with ongoing leadership and mentorship, and ii) the use of technology has expanded the opportunities and possibilities for the industry, making it one of the fastest growing industries in Nigeria today.
 - Telecoms – Nigeria has grown tremendously since the introduction of mobile technology. The market was allowed to evolve organically with very limited rules in the beginning.
 - Stringent regulations, however, will cripple this industry if not challenged at every front.
 - Retail – the retail sector will thrive with the involvement of youth since Nigeria consumes a lot of packaged goods. Private sector can thrive on ICT initiatives to enhance delivery and boost exportation.
- Government should introduce policies that discourage importation but encourage local production of these commodities.
- Now that exchange rates of Dollar-to-Naira is high and the number of individuals who go abroad for medicals has reduced, we can pay more attention to developing our local health center to cater to the increasing need in the sector.
- Access to finance and availability of sources of capital is a critical enabler of socioeconomic development.
- Local manufacturing/ production outfits should be encouraged and promoted. Better branding of products can lead to greater recognition and awareness in the domestic and international markets
- The issue of security should be adequately dealt with to create the enabling environment to do business.
- Nigeria has over 40 minerals in over 500 locations across the country with over 90% of the mining being done by artisans alone. Nigeria's deposit of iron ore is the 12th largest in the world – why are we not taking advantage of this natural resource to boost our economy?