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## RESOURCES USE AND HUMAN SECURITY IN THE NIGER DELTA: THE CHALLENGE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The Niger Delta, located in the Southern Coast of Nigeria, is a region of vast resources of inestimable value. One of the important resources of the region is petroleum, which currently provides up to 70% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earning. The exploration of petroleum resources in the Niger delta has impacted adversely on the environment and subsequently threatened human security. This paper reports on the environmental consequences of petroleum resource exploitation, human insecurity occasioned therefrom, and the strategies to ensure human security and thus sustainable development of the region.*

### INTRODUCTION

The Niger Delta, comprising Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers State, located in the Southern Coast of Nigeria, is a region of vast resources of inestimable value. Its mangrove swamp, the largest in Africa, and third largest in the world (NDES, 1997; Ikporukpo, 1998) is wetlands of vast ecological diversity and rich natural resources which have been exploited for centuries for social and economic advancement. One of the important resources of the Niger Delta region is petroleum, which currently provides up to 70% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings.

Petroleum exploration in the region dates back to 1903 with the setting up, by the colonial government, of the Mineral Survey Corporation. Organized marketing and distribution started around 1907 by a German Company, Nigerian Bitumen Corporation (Ibeanu, 2001). Shell d'arcy, an Anglo-dutch group was granted an exploration licence covering the entire Nigeria. The company discovered oil in commercial quantity in Olobiri I, a town in the Niger delta, in 1956. By February 1958, Nigeria became an oil exporter with a production level of 6,000 barrels per day. Today, besides Shell, some of the oil multinationals operating in the Niger Delta include Mobil, Agip, Ashland, Elf, Allied Energy, Dublin/Philips, Pan Ocean, Texaco,

Statoil, Tenneco and Canoxy. They operate in not less than 159 oil fields and produce in over 1481 oil wells. Of Africa's proven crude oil reserves of some 66 billion barrels, Nigeria accounts for 25 billion barrels, more than 35% of total.

Generally, the exploitation and use of the resources of the Niger Delta, particularly, petroleum resource, have generated considerable environmental, national and international concern. This is due to the adverse impacts which petroleum exploitation have on the entire Niger delta environment. These impacts do not end on the biophysical environment but transcend other facets including the well being of the delatans including their security. The objectives of this paper are to discuss the environmental consequences of petroleum resource exploitation, the human (in) security occasioned therefrom, and the strategies to ensure human security in the region.

The paper is divided into sections. The next section presents the concept of human security

Section III discusses the environmental consequences of petroleum exploration and human security in the Niger delta. The fourth and concluding section proffers strategies for

human security, which will ultimately lead to sustainable development in the region.

### THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN SECURITY

Traditionally, human security have been conceived primarily in terms of neutralizing military threats to the territorial integrity and political independence of the state. The universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 states that 'everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person'. However, in contemporary paradigm, security is understood to include economic, health and environmental concerns as well. It is an integrative rather than defensive concept. The UN identified two components of human security – freedom from fear and freedom from want. The UNDP (1994) noted that human security implied safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and oppression and protection from the sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of everyday life. In furtherance of the conceptualization of human security, GECHS (2000) maintained that human security is achieved when and where individuals and communities

- Have the options necessary to end, mitigate, or adapt to threats to their human environmental and social options; and
- actively participate in attaining these options

Attaining human security also implies challenging the structures and processes that contribute to insecurities. Lonergan et al (2000) have constructed human security around four variables namely; environment, economy, society and institutions (Table 1). Even though it may be difficult to measure human insecurity in countries with data problem like Nigeria, the index nevertheless provides a framework for considering the interlinking dimensions, the alteration of which can either result in human

security or insecurity.

Ibeanu (2000) identified two principal dimension of human security which are very relevant to the Nigerian situation. The first dimension has to do with how members of a society relate with the natural environment in which they live. In this sense human security refers to the carrying capacity of the biophysical environment. Two issues stand out in measuring human security in this sense. First, is the extent to which members of a society understand the laws of nature (science) and use this knowledge to create tools (technology), thus, enhancing their capacity to derive their physical needs from nature. Next to this is the extent to which members of a society efficiently and sustainably exploit nature. This involves striking a balance between exploitation of nature for man's immediate physical needs on one hand and its protection for his future needs on the other. This is particularly relevant to the Nigerian Niger Delta given the extent of oil exploitation and subsequent environmental degradation in the region.

The second principal dimension to human security concerns the relation among members of a society as they jointly produce and distribute their means of livelihood. Security has to do with protection from poverty, exploitation, deprivation, exclusion, disease and injustice. The main issue here is the control of resource flows and livelihoods.

Given that the bulk of Nigeria's revenue resource is derived from the Niger Delta region, is the resource used in such a way as to ensure human security. This important question is germane at this time as Nigeria strives to reconstruct her system for sustainable development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Table 1: Selected Indicators of Human Insecurity****Environment:**

- Net energy imports (% of commercial energy use)
- Soil degradation (tones/year)
- Safe water (% of population with access)
- Arable land (hectares per person)

**Economy:**

- Real GDP per capita (US\$)
- GNP per capita growth (annual %)
- Adult illiteracy rate (% of population 15+)
- Value of imports and exports of goods and services (% of GDP)

**Society:**

- Urban population growth (annual)
- Young male population (% aged 0-14 of total population)
- Maternal mortality ratio (per 100, 000 live births)
- Life expectancy (years)

**Institutions:**

- Public expenditures on defence versus education, primary and secondary (% of GDP)
- Gross domestic fixed investment (% of GDP)
- Degree of democratization (on a scale of 1-7)
- Human freedom index (on a scale of 01-40)

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF RESOURCE USE IN THE NIGER DELTA**

The exploration and subsequent production of petroleum resource in the Niger Delta have brought about several serious environmental changes in the region. Table 2, contains some of the environmental problems associated with these activities. Ranking by the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES) indicates that land degradation/soil fertility loss, loss of mangrove, biodiversity depletion decline in agricultural output and fisheries are high. Although gas flaring and oil spillage are rated moderate, the situation may not be as mild as presented. Table 3 reveal the enormous amount of gas that was flared between 1982 and 1993. The impact of this can be discerned by noting that all processes happen in the vicinity of human dwellings. Ibeanu (2000) reported that

in one case alone in the town of Sapele, Shell burnt over 944 million cubic metres of gas. Apart from the huge green house gases that gas flaring releases into the atmosphere, constant flares affect both wildlife and human beings negatively. Resulting from the direct environmental consequences are such development related issues as high level of poverty, unemployment, among others. Added to the problem of environmental degradation is the despair arising from the fact that, the revenue that accrue from the oil wealth are not sufficiently enjoyed by the Delta people. For instance, while the oil contributed over 60% of Federal Government Revenue from 1991 to 1998, (Table 4), allocation to most Niger Delta states remained small compared to other states (Table 5). A combination of all environmental change and oil resource share led to restiveness in the Niger Delta Region.

**Table 2: Ranking of major Environmental Problems Associated with Oil Production**

Problem Type	Priority Ranking
Hard degradation/soil fertility loss	High
Agricultural decline/shorten fallow	High
Delta forest loss (mangroves)	High
Biodiversity depletion	High
Fisheries decline	High
Oil spillage	Moderate
Gas flaring	Moderate
Sewage/Waste water	High
Other chemicals	Moderate
Community-oil company	
Conflicts	High
Unemployment	High
Poverty	High
Conflicts over land	High

Source: NDES 1997 (cited in Maduka, 1998: 887)

**Table 3: Gas flaring in Nigeria by company (1982-83)**

Company	Gas produced	Gas flared	Flares as % total	Gas produced	Gas flared	Flared as % total
Shell	7,367,789,877	6,932,385,329	94.09	8,148,964,094	5,413,250,218	66.43
Gulf (cheveron)	2,120,140,478	2,096,585,478	98.88	1,824,902,000	1,800,971,000	98.69
Mobil	983,743,700	673,759,700	68.49	1,272,157,000	900,286,000	70.77
Agip	2,699,179,721	2,382,145,001	88.25	2,192,274,700	2,102,150,861	95.89
Texaco	375,931,000	368,279,000	97.96	436,157,000	430,988,000	98.81
Pan ocean	85,815,232	79,787,789	92.98	128,410,203	122,307,350	95.25
Ashland	224,416,103	223,232,456	99.47	435,503,850	430,560,153	98.86
Philips	28,885,150	28,434,153	98.44	26,217,125	25,779,720	98.33
Tenneco	26,263,565	26,175,613	99.66	31,145,189	31,145,189	100.00
Elf	559,405,267	550,999,332	98.50	696,543,040	690,734,090	99.16
Total	14,471,570,093	13,361,783,851	92.33	15,192,274,201	10,618,229,855	69.89

Source: Ibeanu, O. (2000) *Environmental Change and Human Security in Coastal Zones Perspectives from Developing Nation*

**Table 4: Federal Government Revenue (Oil and Non-oil) (1991-1998) (N million)**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Oil Revenue	82666.4	164078.1	162102.4	160192.4	279902.3	369190.0	416811.1	289533.3
% of total	81.85	86.15	84.09	79.34	70.79	70.97	71.52	62.45
Non-oil Revenue	18325.2	26375.1	30667.0	41718.4	151000.0	151000.0	166000.0	174076.5
% of total	19.15	13.85	15.91	20.66	29.03	29.03	28.48	37.55
Total Federally Collected Revenue	100991.6	190453.2	192769.4	201910.8	520190.0	520190.0	582811.1	463609.8

Source: Umoh, G. S. (2001) *the Oil Wealth and the Rural Poor: Who is to blame?*

**Table 5: Net Statutory Allocation of Revenue to States in Nigeria (Nm) (1995-1996)**

States	Year				
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Abia	672.1	855.4	975.6	997.8	1282.2
Adamawa	837.4	1056.0	1150.9	1303.9	1651.7
<b>Akwa Ibom+</b>	<b>909.7</b>	<b>1131.9</b>	<b>1147.1</b>	<b>1487.1</b>	<b>1851.1</b>
Anambra	614.5	771.1	1073.6	1324.5	1575.0
<b>Bayelsa*+</b>	-	-	<b>272.4</b>	<b>1308.1</b>	<b>1569.8</b>
Bauchi	830.7	1104.1	1462.8	1134.2	1391.2
Benue	816.3	1022.8	1213.7	1421.2	1873.0
Borno	823.3	1066.8	1382.2	1523.5	1965.1
<b>Cross River+</b>	<b>730.4</b>	<b>953.6</b>	<b>1120.1</b>	<b>1218.2</b>	<b>1573.3</b>
<b>Delta+</b>	<b>749.9</b>	<b>926.1</b>	<b>1073.4</b>	<b>1604.8</b>	<b>1229.4</b>
Ebonyi*	-	-	315.3	985.0	1144.4
Edo	625.0	1125.4	1064.3	1235.8	1621.6
Ekiti*	-	-	302.4	940.0	1418.6
Enugu	714.7	901.4	1108.3	946.9	1290.2
Gombe*	-	-	335.0	985.7	1489.9
Imo	801.2	1001.7	1038.9	1145.9	1512.4
Jigawa	770.9	1028.5	1356.6	1339.6	1895.3
Kaduna	694.9	938.5	1410.5	1530.3	1893.3
Kano	939.6	1250.6	15,556.6	1905.9	1943.5
Katsina	771.4	1103.0	1235.1	1405.4	2048.8
Kebbi	733.3	896.1	1074.5	1217.7	1578.9
Kogi	786.6	922.9	1038.6	1176.2	1467.4
Kwara	656.1	823.9	1058.2	1219.9	1543.2
Lagos	686.0	824.2	1445.9	1640.9	2143.3
Nassaeawa*	-	-	322.4	1054.5	1569.9
Niger	614.3	829.8	1379.0	1439.1	1876.1
Ogun	768.7	991.9	1091.0	1194.7	1693.5
Ondo	856.4	1106.0	1106.0	1194.4	1458.8
Osun	820.6	1055.4	959.1	1087.1	1408.7
Oyo	684.0	990.4	1247.5	1300.5	1684.9
Plateau	819.0	1169.8	1260.8	1175.4	1299.0
<b>Rivers+</b>	<b>908.8</b>	<b>1019.6</b>	<b>1066.2</b>	<b>1252.5</b>	<b>1934.1</b>
Sokoto	902.4	1224.5	1380.2	1256.0	1215.8
Taraba	685.2	837.2	1129.8	1170.7	1509.5
Yobe	808.6	992.4	1152.2	1208.6	1417.7
Zamfara	-	-	358.5	1,111.4	1799.2
FCT, Abuja	1146.7	1375.8	1019.5	1805.7	7211.5
Total Allocation to Niger Delta State	3298.8	4031.2	4679.2	6870.7	8157.7
%	13.64	12.88	8.88	14.54	12.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,178.7</b>	<b>31,296.8</b>	<b>52,684.8</b>	<b>47,249.1</b>	<b>65,091.1</b>

+ States in the Niger delta

\* States created in October 1996

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria (1998) Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, CBN, Lagos, p. 76

## HUMAN INSECURITY IN THE NIGER DELTA

As enumerated earlier, human security encompasses economy, environment, society and institutions. It is obvious from the discussion thus far that if the Index of Human Insecurity (IHI) for the Niger Delta were to be constructed in the four constructs, it would be very high. Deliberations in the preceding sections of this paper, and other documented evidence (Okoh and Egbon, 1998; CRP, 1999; Ibeanu 1999; IHRHL, 2000) put bare the facts that there is human insecurity in the Niger Delta. Even if two, of the four components are used, human security in the region can hardly pass the litmus test. A very strong indicator of insecurity in the Niger Delta is excessive state violence and spiralling conflict. This state violence take several forms:

- Harassment, arrests and detention of community leaders.
- Encouragement of conflicts among communities
- Direct repression using armed forces and police.

State violence was not only perpetrated by the military government, the destruction of Odi, Bayelsa State, by the order of President Obasanjo has been a chilling clear case of state violence in the Niger Delta. This is an integral parts of a wider counter-insurgency operation in the Niger Delta Code – named “Hakuri II” (Ibeanu, 2000).

Another indicator of insecurity - poverty also put the situation under question. Poverty headcount indicate that over 58% of the population in the South-south zone, mainly made up of Delta people (Table 6) are poor. Although as the table shows, the region is not necessarily the poorest, the figures should be interpreted in the context of the region contributing over 70% of government revenues. On state basis, however, Akwa Ibom, a Niger Delta State and, of course the second largest oil producer, has 72.3% of its population in poverty. This is higher than the Nigerian average of 70.7%.

**Table 6: Headcount (in %) (1996)**

Zone	Non poor	Moderately poor	Core poor	Total poor
South-south*	41.8	34.8	23.4	58.2
South-west	38.1	33.4	27.5	60.9
South-east	46.5	35.3	18.2	53.5
Central	35.4	36.7	28.0	64.7
North West	22.8	39.9	37.3	77.2
North East	29.9	35.7	34.4	70.1
<b>Akwa Ibom</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>72.3</b>
All Nigeria	29.3	36.3	34.4	70.7

*Source: Federal Office of Statistics (cited in Umoh, 2001)*

## THE CHALLENGE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This paper has brought to the fore the environmental degradation and inequity in petroleum use which have culminated in poverty, restiveness and human insecurity, in the Niger Delta. Restoring the environment, reducing poverty and ensuring human security in the region is a big challenge to the overall development of Nigeria. It must be noted that oil production stoppages arising from either inter/intra-community oil companies conflicts and loss of life and properties and the reconstruction of destroyed communities are inimical to sustainable development of the Niger Delta and Nigeria at large.

In order to achieve security and indeed development in the Niger delta and Nigeria, there is the need to protect the region from poverty. In the short run, focused envelopment

efforts are required. The setting up of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and other such commissions (e.g Niger Delta Development Board, Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission) are but starting point. But the factors which constrained the performance of the commissions e.g poor funding, political intrigues in project contract awards and execution, and appointment of officials must be removed. There has to be sincerity in policy formulation and implementation.

In the long run, there has to be justice and equity in the national resource share. This requires policy and constitutional reforms. In this way the pitfall and set back experienced in the past can be avoided. This is the way to achieve sustainable development in the Niger Delta and indeed Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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