

**THE 11-DAY SIEGE:  
"GAINS AND CHALLENGES OF WOMEN'S NON  
VIOLENT STRUGGLES IN THE NIGER-DELTA"**

**BY**

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*Published by:*  
Women Advocates Research &  
Documentation Center (WARDC)



*With the Support of:*  
African Women Development  
Fund (AWDF)

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**A PUBLICATION OF WOMEN ADVOCATES  
RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION CENTER  
(WARDC)**

**DECEMBER 2005**

*SUPPORTED BY:*  
**AFRICA WOMEN DEVELOPMENT FUND (AWDF)**

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17/19, ALLEN AVENUE, OSHOPEY PLAZA  
2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, OSHOPEY PLAZA  
BY FORTUNE BANK ENTRANCE  
IKEJA, LAGOS - NIGERIA.

*PUBLISHED BY:*

**WOMEN ADVOCATES RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION  
CENTER (WARDC) DECEMBER 2005**

**ISBN 978 - 068 - 513 - 8**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Women Advocates Research and Documentation Center (WARDC) is greatly indebted to the African Women Development Fund (AWDF) without whose support this project would not have been successfully executed. Special thanks to the Lead researcher: Tony Iyare for being thorough, insightful, focused and professional in conducting the fieldwork and presenting the findings contained in this book.

Equally deserving of commendation are the WARDC Staffs in Lagos and Zaria who managed the logistics of the highly demanding project and exhibited good humour even while working tirelessly.

WARDC will always be grateful to Mr. Lanre Arogundade, press freedom advocate and socialist fighter whose editing skills have made its publications stand out.

Through these individuals and organizations and many others, WARDC is pleased to have the opportunity of contributing to the global discourse on non violent approach to conflict and bringing to fore the efforts of women in conflict situations through continuous collaboration with Africa Women Development Fund (AWDF) on building women's movement in Africa.



## CONCEPT NOTE

The conflicts recorded in the Niger Delta have both immediate and long-term implication for the women population because of there various complex dimensions. Among these conflicts are intra and inter ethnic communal conflicts, conflicts between multinational oil companies and the host communities; and other social conflicts.

But the roles played by each segment of the community i.e. male leaders, youths, women and children are defined by the socio-economic and cultural dimension and context in each community. In this context, this project seeks to critically examine and document the roles of women in conflict situations, with the aim of identifying and reflecting the pre-disposing factors that inform such roles and their effect on conflict resolution and transformation.

The roles played by individuals and groups in a conflict become very important if a meaningful resolution or transformation of the conflict is to be achieved. There has been sustained criticism of gender imbalance or insensitiveness of most intervention processes. The assumption that women are not involved in arms touting, violence or killing that feature in most communal and resource based violence can hardly be sustained. Yet, a lot still need to be done to ascertain the actual roles and activities of women in these conflicts in order to arrive at enduring intervention and post-conflict reconstruction.

In recent years, the dimension of violent conflicts and the inherent difficult nature of conflict management have necessitated better understanding of the roles of women as critical stakeholders in conflict situation. The situation in the Niger-Delta where there have been frequent reports of women involvement in the seizure

of flow stations as well as other violent protests calls for a research study. This is more so that "survival is no longer only a male concern". Since the majority of the internally displaced populations in the aftermath of violent conflicts comprise women and their children, the impacts of these conflicts on their lives deserve more than passing interest and commentary in the understanding of conflicts.

## SCOPE OF PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

Although the population in the Niger-Delta region is the subject of the study, the sample size will be limited to Warri environs in Delta State and the focus of the project is the non violent invasion of the women to the flow stations. The activities to be carried out include practical filed research in the conflict zones of Warri. The research study will rely on women population in the conflict zone in Warri, which is spread over three local government areas that have experienced violent conflicts in the last decades.

Practical assessment of locations of violent conflicts as well as interviews and questionnaires will be employed to obtain relevant information and data relating to the subject matter of the research.

## OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT

1. To identify the roles women play in conflicts in relation to the causes of such conflicts and the central issues involved in the disputes
2. To determine factors that predispose and precipitate women's role in conflict situation.
3. To evaluate the positive or contributive roles played by women in post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building efforts.
4. To critically analyze the overriding impact of conflicts on the social and economic livelihood of the women population in the Niger-Delta.



5. To comprehensively document useful information for the use of peace workers and for other relevant purposes.

### **RESEARCH OUTPUT**

Data and information will be recorded in visuals and tapes. The findings of the research study will be published and disseminated.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE**

This research offers a unique opportunity for the women's movements in particular and the global movement for non-violent approach to conflict to once again assess the extent to which non-violent actions can guarantee a lasting peace, its complications, gains and losses.

This research aspect was executed over a six-month period from June to December 2005 commencing with a brief meeting of the two researchers with clear terms of reference based on the general objective of the project as endorsed by the African Women Development Fund (AWDF), a Ghana based not-for-profit organization which supports women in Africa through groups. The second phase of the project which is the production of a documentary will commence in January and end in June 2006.

The study is an explanatory research focusing on literature assessment, in-depth interviews scheduled in Warri, Ugborodo and Gbaramatu. Oral interviews were conducted with representatives of the leadership of the women invasion of Chevron tank in July 2003, and other participants in the invasion. Others were youth associations, the traditional rulers of Ugborodo and Gbaramatu Communities and Chevron management at the Company's headquarters in Lagos.

Books, Journals, research materials relating to the subject matter were consulted to achieve the desired objectives.

Overall, WARDC is taking up the challenge of bringing to fore a comprehensive document, as part of the women's struggle for liberation in the Niger-Delta and their efforts towards using a non-violent approach to achieve there goals.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Universally, conflicts affect women more than the rest of the society. They therefore often have greater interest in preventing and resolving conflicts. Whether it is Bosnia where rape was used as a weapon of war or Rwanda where there was unparallel genocide and Nigeria and her low intensity conflicts, women always have a higher price to pay.

Oil rich Nigeria is a former colony of the British. It attained her independence in 1960, after Lord Lugard, one of the British colonial masters, had in 1914 amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates to create a diverse country now known as Nigeria.

Nigeria has been in existence for 90 years as a multi-cultural society with over 250 ethnic groups and as many languages, norms and values. The most populous country in Africa with a population of over 120 million and a land area of 923.8 thousand kilometers, it has deep religious consciousness and the people hold and exhibit strong opinions and passions that sometimes pose challenges to the fragile coexistence of the nationalities.

Like many other African countries, Nigeria was ruled for many years by undemocratic military regimes and despite the return of civil rule, is still bedeviled by political instability, corruption and insecurity of life and property.

With her large population and resources, Nigeria stands in a very significant situation in relation to Africa and to the rest of the world and any major conflict in the country may have far reaching consequences on the development of Africa and the whole world.



After independence Nigeria experienced a three-year civil war in which over a million lives were lost, the fourth highest war casualty rate in modern times. The last three decades in Nigeria have also witnessed further conflicts, though of low intensity compared to the previous civil war and wars in other parts of the world.

There have been conflicts in virtually all the country's six geopolitical zones. Some of the conflicts have religious, political, economic and ethnic basis. In the Niger-Delta Nigeria, for instance, which is also the focus of this project, the conflicts are as a result of protests against exploitation by the government and the oil companies working in the area and more specifically the destruction of the environment and non development of the oil producing areas.

Poverty is very endemic in Nigeria. Youths are unemployed, resources are inequitably distributed, large sections of the society are marginalized, social-welfare packages to improve the living conditions of the people are absent and there are other forms of injustices. Under such circumstances, many of the conflicts are violent and have led to loss of lives and properties.

Meanwhile the nature of the conflict is changing as the casualties are no longer only combatants, but increasingly include innocent women and children who face physical, psychological and material abuses.

The testimony of the Niger-Delta women of the Ogoni region at the Oputa Panel set up by the Government in 1999 to see to transitional justice in Nigeria gives a scary picture and provides a troubling example of the extent to which women suffer, being at the receiving end of the several conflicts that have bedeviled the country. Apart from the women becoming sudden widows, they

were reported to have been sexually assaulted and abused as rape became a weapon of conflict in the hands of Nigeria's ethnic militias and state security forces who though are supposed to protect the people also tortured women whose husbands they could not capture. These exposed the women to many life-threatening diseases including HIV/AIDS.

The Niger-Delta, the focus of this project in Nigeria is an oil rich region. The history of the area's current difficulties could be traced back to the discovery of petroleum in Nigeria in the 1960s. The development brought about the exploitation of the communities as it attracted multinational companies with poor oil filed practice to the region. The attendant spillages and blowouts rendered the land, rivers and creeks unproductive. Pollution caused crops and fish poisoning and left a large number of the farming and fishing population unemployed. While the oil companies enriched themselves, the populace in the region became poorer. This brought about the realization of the need to enforce corporate responsibility and led to agitations by the various groups in the communities against the multinational oil companies and the Nigerian State. This reached a climax with the presentation by the Ogoni people of the Ogoni Bill of Rights in which they demanded for social justice and development in the entire region and specific compensation for the destruction of land and rivers by the oil companies.

The violent reaction of the state and the oil companies to the otherwise peaceful demands culminated in the the death of four leaders of the Ogoni community who were thought to be government allies. Ken Saro Wiwa, leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), and eight others (the Ogoni 9) were subsequently framed for the killings and hanged by the military government of General Sani Abacha despite lack



of any evidence linking them to the deaths. There has been no peace in the region since these gruesome developments in 1995.

In terms of focus therefore, this book attempts to bring into historical perspective the role played by the Ugborodo and Gbaramatu women in the incessant conflicts in the Niger-Delta over the alleged illegal occupation of the oil rich area by the multinational companies. Research has shown that women in the Niger Delta at one time or the other have used a variety of individual and collective resistance forms such as dancing and singing, demonstrations and strikes, testimonies and silence. They have also used culturally specific responses such as stripping naked, refusing to change work routines and habits like opening market stalls, collecting water, participating in women's meetings and struggling to maintain their daily routines amidst the chaos and violence that surround them.

Whatever methods are used it is important to situate the analysis of women's resistance within a cultural as well as socio-economic and political context. To the extent that it is becoming obvious world wide that violence against women in conflict situations has been recognized as one of history's great silence, it then becomes important to understand that women cannot be seen as mere passive victims of conflicts, since "she who wears the shoe, knows where it hurts". The very people who are affected by conflicts or war must own the solution.

There are documented cases of various efforts by women around the world who have successfully taken up the challenges as fighters. The female fighters of Nicaragua and Eritrea are just two cases in point. In Kashmir, women organized into a united broad based peace platform to find solutions to the endemic conflict situation they found themselves in the country. In Afghanistan, women actively participated in peace efforts under

the Taliban rule. Even in Nigeria., post- conflict efforts by women support groups contributed significantly to the re-building of the conflict ridden communities of Ife and Modakeke in the South West.

This book has six major sections. The first section is a an overview of the conflict situations in the Niger-Delta, titled Women Demand Justice; the second is a detailed analysis of the 11-day siege: Women's invasion; the third, "Voices of the Women" is the testimonies of these women"; the fourth focused on the socio-economic impact of conflict on the Niger Delta women, the fifth section relates to the "echoes of a united struggle, while the last chapter translates the women's voices, needs and aspirations into recommendation. The book has two major annexure: the memorandum of understanding signed with Chevron and also the email sent to the Manager Chevron, Deji Haastrup with Questions from the Women Advocates Research and Documentation Center (WARDC) and his responses.

The women's non-violent technique, as documented in this book, has achieved in 11 days what the men and the youth in their communities have fought very hard to get for years. This documentation by WARDC's seeks to celebrate the achievement brought about by this unique method of engagement by women in the Niger Delta.



## CHAPTER 2

### WOMEN DEMAND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE NIGER-DELTA

The general stereotype image of women is that they are passive victims in war and conflict situations. This has overshadowed the immense contribution women make in peace building at national and community levels. Globally, with limited access and resources, women are being acknowledged to have at one time or the other participated actively in peace marches, reconciliation efforts, post conflict recovery and transformation.

In the world over, women's access to productive resources, especially farmland and capital, is dependent on their husbands and they are subordinate in decision-making, even on issues that directly affect them. The processes of socialization and differentiation from childhood also entrench female subordination.<sup>1</sup>

There are assumptions that women are non-political citizens and that their preoccupation is primarily with domestic issues. Thus, local and national politics are seen as too confrontational and turbulent for women to participate in effectively. The dominant regime of patriarchy prevents women from autonomous political expression outside the framework imposed by men.

Against this background the women's invasion of the Chevron/Texaco Escravos tank farm in July 2002 was historic in different ramifications. It seemed to have not only brought this sleepy community of Ugborodo, where living conditions still evoke the pristine state of the early man, to global prominence but stood the spate of violent protests in the oil rich Niger Delta region on its head.



atmosphere saturated and vapourised by poisonous gases like carbon monoxide, ammonia, carbon dioxide etc. It is clear that the inhabitants of the Niger Delta are inexorably gravitating towards holocaust.<sup>4</sup>

Added to this is the toxic nature of chemicals used by oil companies which has destroyed marine life, the destruction of vegetation through dredging of canals such that fresh water vegetation is exposed to salt water and vice versa; earth tremor through seismic activities and also the effects of acid rain and other forms of environmental degradation and pollution all of which in Akarueze's view clearly indicate a state of barbarism.<sup>5</sup> The attendant harrowing socio-economic conditions reinforced by unemployment, inability to meet the basic needs of survival and the massive degradation of their environment has stoked tension and anger amongst the people.

Although agitations against the harmful effects of explorations by oil multinationals and the collaborating federal government took roots in the late 60s when Major Isaac Jasper Adaka Boroh floated the Niger Delta Volunteer Force in an attempt to create an Ijaw Republic to protest the perceived rapacious abuse of his people and their environment, the spate of agitations by the people of Niger Delta took more violent turns in the 90s with the escalation of invasions and shutting down of oil terminals, abductions and hostage taking.

The Niger Delta in the view of Sokari Ekine is a "region of Nigeria that has been subjected to excessive militarization for the past 13 years, where violence is used as an instrument of governance to force the people into total submission. It is a region where by far the majority of the people live in abject poverty and where women are the poorest of the poor. The Niger Delta is a region that has no infrastructure, no services whatsoever, no electricity, no water,

no communications, no health facilities, little and poor education".<sup>6</sup>

The Niger Delta is a wilderness of violence unchecked. It is a region where life is surrounded by constant fear of state sponsored violence, fear of walking, and fear of travelling, fear of crossing the path of the armed forces and para-military police, fear of rape, beating and death.<sup>7</sup> The International Monetary Fund says this region generated \$350 billion between 1965 and 2001 without much to show in terms of socio-infrastructure.<sup>8</sup>

The multinational oil companies, mainly Shell, Chevron/Texaco, and Elf have treated both the people and the environment with total disdain and hostility. They have worked hand in hand with a succession of brutal and corrupt regimes to protect their exploitation of the land and people by providing the Nigerian military and police with weapons, transport, logistical support and financial payments. In return the Nigerian government has allowed the oil companies a free hand to do as they wish. The oil companies in the Niger Delta have in fact one of the worst environmental records in the world.<sup>9</sup>

The region covers some 20,000 sq kilometers with a highly complex ecosystem and a high level of biodiversity. It is a mix of dense rainforest crisscrossed by rivers with a delicate balance of salt and freshwater, creeks, ponds and mangrove swamps. (Ashton-Jones, 1998) However due to gas and oil exploration the Delta is in fact the "most endangered in the world" (Op Cit) It is also a densely populated (over 6,000,000 people) and largely rural area.<sup>10</sup>

According to Gordini Darah, "The struggles of the oppressed and exploited nations of the Niger Delta have also added a new dialectics to the methodology of popular uprising in post-colonial



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Africa. The images of a mass movement, martyrdom and guerrilla fighters which were hitherto strange in Nigeria have become familiar as a result of these experiences. Owing to the tenacity of the pursuit of their cause, the Niger Delta people have given a fresh salience to the terminology of resource control and environmental rights that were associated with liberation armies in Southern Africa".<sup>11</sup>

Ukeje notes that:

*The political consequences of the growth of oil production was a shift of emphasis from the regional (later state) governments to the federal government, raising competition for access to and control of the political and administrative infrastructure at the centre. The first manifestation of the "fight to finish" character of power and authority triggered the unsuccessful Biafran secession, which plunged the country into 3 years of civil war.*

*With hindsight, it is impossible to ignore the geopolitical and military calculations of the warring factions in relation to the control of the oil deposits in the Niger Delta. Since then, the assumption among political entrepreneurs across the federating units has been that whoever controls the oil-rich Niger Delta controls the proverbial honey pot. In the final analysis, rather than creating a basis for genuine and balanced growth and development, oil has blurred the vision of the national elite in coming to terms with the crisis facing the nation state project in Nigeria. This is a major tragedy given the manner in which clientelism bankrupts the country and stifles the ability to guarantee stability without official repression.<sup>12</sup>*

In order to hold down the increasing spate of agitations and protest from these oil producing communities, the state with the support

"Gains and Challenges of Women's Non Violent Struggles in the Niger-Delta"

of the oil multinationals resorted to intimidation, incarceration, repression, extra judicial killings and outright judicial murder.

For his effrontery, Boroh was condemned to death, pardoned, enlisted into the Army as a major, browbeaten and compelled to fight on the federal side, and later shot from behind and killed by his own troops.

Renowned play writer and environmental activist, Ken Saro Wiwa who also mobilized his people under the platform of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), culminating in a bill of rights was hanged in November 1995 along with eight others of his Ogoni kinsmen by the regime of late dictator, General Sani Abacha.

Way back in 1992, the people of Umuechem got a taste of the bile. For daring to raise a finger against the despoliation of their environment, their village was virtually flattened by anti riot policemen and soldiers who invaded, committing arson, looting, and destruction of properties, rape and murder. Hear Akarueze's chilling recollection:

"In October 1992, the people of Umuechem in Rivers state protested against the Shell Petroleum Development Company on the ground of discrimination in the employment of even non-skilled workers and lack of basic amenities in the community. The protest which was initially peaceful became violent when SPDC brought in the mobile police squad. The end result was tragic for the people of Umuechem when on November 1 the whole community was razed to the ground with their traditional ruler and many others gunned down while a hundred others were maimed, raped, or assaulted".<sup>13</sup>



But rather than ebbing and emasculating the agitations of these oil producing communities, this increasing attempt by the state to bear its fang has only stirred the people's nadir.

Like other communities in the Niger Delta, the people of Ugborodo and Gbaramatu kingdom also joined in these agitations against the oil multinationals, spearheaded by the elders and youth. The effects of these largely male-led protests were beginning to have its toll on these communities. As repression heightened leading to the harassment, brutalization, maiming and murder of the increasing number of the male population, a new thinking on how to check the premature death of their sons, husbands, fathers and bread winners became rife.

Like it was during the historic Aba women's riot of 1929 and the 1948 revolt of the Egba women in Abeokuta which saw the abdication of the town's traditional ruler, Alake Ademola, the women of this Itsekiri homestead of Ugborodo and Ijaw peopled Gbaramatu kingdom resolved they needed to be in the driver's seat of the agitations against Chevron.

The role of women in giving a peaceful face to a struggle that was now heavily mowed down by soldiers was very important. In an attempt to douse the spate of hostage takings that had now dominated the struggle against the activities of oil companies, the government deployed soldiers to Odi.

The town was virtually flattened with heavy artillery fire. This excessive use of force dictated that this agitation against the oil companies needed to be given a new non-violent face. By taking the mantle to organize peaceful protests and achieving results, the women proved that this approach was a more powerful method.

The role of women in mobilizing for social justice in the Niger Delta represents a significant development. In the past, young males have been the arrowheads of communal struggles against oil companies. These demonstrations often inevitably end in violent confrontations. After the tragedy of the Ogoni struggle, resistance strategy shifted from community demonstrations to taking foreign oil workers as hostages in order to force negotiations with their employers. This strategy proved very costly in terms of lives and property in the Niger Delta.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of the government's eagerness to use excessive force against communities once there is fear and evidence of violence, it is prudent to employ a different mode of engagement in order to avert excessive human tragedy in the struggle for social justice in the Niger Delta. The struggle for social justice and social and economic rights in the Niger Delta is now deploying the image of women as peacemakers and mothers who care for the future generation to force negotiation.<sup>15</sup>

So far, the records of military repression against women demonstrations on oil platforms show that the calculation that women might make more impact is not misplaced. It was hoped that the increasing role of the women in organizing peaceful protests would simmer hostage taking that was then on the rise.<sup>16</sup>

As argued by Sokari Ekine, women are the backbone of the rural economies in this region as it is they who farm, fish, produce, process and sell foodstuffs, care for livestock, collect water and firewood, as well as bear and raise children, care for the elderly and the sick and run the domestic household. It is because of their central role in community life that acts of violence impact on women both directly and indirectly.



For example, an effective way of undermining a community is to target women specifically through acts of rape, forced prostitution, beatings and sexual harassment. Likewise any act of violence against the community indirectly targets women and therefore again, undermines the community as a whole. As mothers, daughters, wives and sisters they are affected by violence inflicted on men such as beatings, murder and detention, and the community, such as whole scale destruction of villages, property and livestock.<sup>17</sup>

Initially the elders were in the forefront of agitation for reparations from the oil companies. But deep suspicions soon arose with the youth accusing the elders of keeping a large chunk of compensations meant for the communities to themselves. Thelma Ekiyor says the natural resources of the Niger Delta, against the backdrop of underdevelopment and poverty in the region, created a new brand of "youths" who woke up to a consciousness, which demanded that the Niger Delta people be aware of their human and material rights.

"The elders in the rural communities have always been the custodians of justice, stability and peace. The youths have, however, lost faith in their elders' ability to guide them and represent their needs. The result of this was that in most communities, there was an obvious overturn in the historical social fabric of the community",<sup>18</sup> he says.

"The youths are increasingly attempting to, and in some cases have succeeded in usurping the powers of the elders and have carved out roles for themselves, sometimes through manipulation and intimidation. The youths accuse the elders of complacency in what they call the "marginalization and exploitation of the people and environment of the Niger Delta by the oil companies". Other accusations have been more severe. The elders are considered to

be greedy about the accruals from the oil companies to the entire communities. Some of the elders are accused of collaborating with the oil companies to "defraud and deprive" communities of their rights".<sup>19</sup>

But as Ekiyor argued, the term "youths" became synonymous with violence, thuggery, and the kidnapping of oil company personnel and the sabotaging of oil pipeline and wells. A survey of all the conflicts in the Niger Delta registers youths as the foot soldiers and generals as well. Past conflicts had orders coming from much higher ranks such as chiefs and elders. In the Warri crisis in Delta state as well as in the conflict between Ogbolomabiri and Bassambiri in Bayelsa state, youths acted as soldiers and generals.<sup>20</sup>



**End Notes**

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7. Ibid.
8. See Iyare, Tony: *The Stiglitz Formular, The Gleaner news online* www.gleanernews online.com
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14. See *Perpetuating Poverty, Consolidating Powerlessness: Oil and the Niger Delta* (Lagos, SERAC, 2005) p 24
15. Ibid
16. Ibid
17. Ekine, Sokari Op. Cit.

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### CHAPTER 3

#### THE WOMEN'S INVASION.....

*"We decided to take up the struggle because we as mothers are the ones taking care of the children. With the recurring crises, most of our husbands are either dead or sick and we are the ones taking care of the children. If we allow the youths to continue with the struggle as they have always done, soldiers will shoot them in their prime. And that was why we decided that we'll take up the struggle ourselves and be ready to die"*

*Mrs. Emily Ajekerenbiaghan, 54.<sup>1</sup>*

The women of Ugborodo decided it was time to be the pivot of the struggle.

*"We cannot fish in the deep sea without big engine boat. We can no longer fish around the house as we used to do because the fishes and crayfish have gone into the deep sea as a result of oil explorations... I have seven children; one of them is a 28 year old graduate. The other children are in school". Ajekerenbiaghan who says her husband is sick and unable to help in taking care of the home says, "Even if a few of our sons are working there, their voices are drowned by other people as decisions are taken by the majority".*

Explaining the reasons that influenced their intervention, Mrs. Doris Ojuya, 48 says, "the youths have tried but Chevron decided to put a wedge on their struggle. The elders did the same thing and that was why we decided to take up things by ourselves".<sup>2</sup>

Leader of the women protest, Madam Mercy Olowu, 52 says that "As mothers and wives, we were pained that our children, husbands and fathers were not given jobs. We now decided to



gather ourselves and say we cannot continue to look. Some of the women wanted immediate action while others said we should first write them (Chevron) before knowing what to do.”<sup>3</sup>

“So we explained our plight to Chevron officials. They said they will get back and reply us in a week’s time. We waited through out the month without seeing anybody. We now told the elders about our disappointment with Chevron but the elders asked us to endure for another two weeks making five weeks. After five weeks we now decided to take over the tank farm and disrupt their operations”.<sup>4</sup>

Explaining further, Olowu says, “We now decided to go to Warri to plan the operation because we felt that some people may infiltrate our meetings if we had it in the village. It was from that meeting that we took a date on when to take over the tank farm”.<sup>5</sup>

According to Ukeje, the protests by the Itsekiri and Ijaw women benefited from the growing perception among oil communities in the 90s that their struggles cannot be isolated from the larger discourse embarked upon by indigenous and minority ethnic populations against the impact of international capital.

This protest was also enriched by the moving away by oil communities from previously isolated, informal and reactive forms of social protest to more structured, formalized and institutionalized interventions.<sup>6</sup>

Turner (2001) navigated the expediency of transnational alliances and networking through the encounter between the Ogbodo community and Shell Petroleum Development Company over a pipeline explosion that resulted in an 18-day oil spillage... In her words, Shell’s “extremely inadequate response left the community

with almost no drinking water, and nothing for cooking food, washing dishes, clothes or their bodies”.<sup>7</sup>

Thinking that the 150,000 peopled community would be pacified and sing hallelujah chorus with the \$100, 000 offered for compensation, the chiefs’ counter claim asking Shell for copies of the full agreements with the last five communities in Western Europe and North America into which the company had spilled oil must have sent jitters down the spine. By this they intended to seek comparable long term reparations.<sup>8</sup>

#### **A. Planning the Invasion**

The planning of the invasion took several fascinating forms. Apart from the fact that it was hidden from the men folk including fathers, husbands and sons, it involved a period of fasting, abstinence and prayers.

Explaining the brewing of the women’s historic action, which had its engine room in Ogidigben, Mrs. Victoria Eyinoloma Ibbunu, 52 says, “After morning service on Sunday in Ogidigben, we called a meeting and said what do we do. We did not initially involve those in Ode Ugborodo because we felt some of the people there were very close to Chevron. We decided to intimate the elders on what we wanted to do. We now told the pastors who said we needed to pray and fast for five days before embarking on the invasion”.<sup>9</sup>

Harriet Ododoh, 35 says “We decided to make our plan secret because we didn’t want it to leak. We didn’t even tell our husbands. If we did it would have leaked”.<sup>10</sup>

Explaining the secrecy further, Austin Ajurenmisan, 40, public relations officer of the youth association says, “Even my mum



and wife did not tell me they were planning to storm the tank farm. All attempts to pry into their action failed. Some of them only said they were going to the tank farm to discuss their contract jobs. We were completely taken by surprise. They only confided in some youth they felt could act as foot soldiers and help in ferrying them".<sup>11</sup>

According to Mrs. Emily Ajekerenbiaghan, 54, "Before we left for the tank farm, we fasted for five days, praying to God. We were asking for supplication from the Almighty God about the state of our children, husbands and fathers who had no jobs and us contractors who had nothing to do. We prayed that God should not allow hunger to kill us". "We were always singing choruses and praising God to support our struggle. We also took daily readings from the Bible".<sup>12</sup>

Mrs Victoria Eyinoloma Ebonu, 52 says, "Our struggle was the handiwork of God. We didn't go there to fight and that was why God supported us. We had a pastor from the Baptist Church and the Church of God Mission who were overseeing our prayer sessions".

## B. Storming the Tank Farm

On the appointed day the women from the six different hamlets of Ugborodo gathered in thousands in the dock of Madangho. In the wee hours of the morning without tipping off the men following the boat called Ginuwa which brought workers from the tank farm disembarked, the women pounced on the boat driver in the hundreds and ordered him to take them to the Escravos tank farm.

Other Ijaw women from Gbaramatu and Egbema kingdoms also mobilized themselves to take over Chevron flow stations in Dibi Olero, Abiteye, Makaraba- Utonana and Opuekeba as part of

grand design to completely paralyse the company's Western operations. Chevron claims that some of its oil facilities were vandalized in the process. Deji Haastrup, acting general manager, public affairs says, "Our facilities which were producing approximately 140,000 bpd before the incident are yet to be resuscitated as they have been severely vandalized during our absence. The latest estimate of the cost for reviving the facilities is more than half a billion US dollars".<sup>13</sup>

Another group of women drawn from the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Orhobo, the three major ethnic groups in the area staged a peaceful protest in front of the Shell Petroleum Development Company headquarters in Warri, singing, dancing, and preventing personnel and vehicular movements in and out of the complex. Although this protest was peaceful, the women were dispersed violently when mobile policemen swooped on them. Many were injured in the process.

The women say the invasion of the Chevron tank farm had the imprint of the Almighty God. "It was just the hand work of God. We overpowered the quartermaster with our wrappers and the boys inside the boat and ordered them to take us to the tank farm. We ensured that all the radio devices in the boat were disabled. Only God's support could have made that possible", says Mrs. Ebonu.<sup>14</sup>

Ajekerenbiaghan shares the same spiritual testimony. "We were inside the boat praying and marching along the dock at different intervals. The landing of our boat was the hand work of the Almighty because the dock is usually locked to prevent unwanted vessels from gaining access into it. It's only God that did the magic. The Chevron officials were dazed by the invasion that they started wondering how we were able to gain access to the dock and entered the tank farm".



Corroborating this narration Madam Olowu says, "That time there were boats called Ginuwa and Ozobo which usually convey workers stationed on the tank farm. We now waited for the boats. Just as the quartermaster was dropping the workers, we now pounced on him and asked him to take us across to Chevron tank farm. The quartermaster complained that we were too many and that it could affect the boat but we told him that him that the river was not rough, so he should continue to take us".

So he took us across. We trooped down immediately the boat stopped and headed straight to take over the tank farm. Some of the security men wanted to stop us but we resisted them. We now headed straight to their main office. When we got there, the workers were on the run... From there we took over the office with our mats. So their officials now came to discuss with us about our mission. We told them we were there because they refused to respond to our demands after several weeks. We now started the dialogue all over again".

"We were angry before we got to the tank farm but when we got there we became angrier", says, Mrs Doris Ojuwa, 48. The Chevron tank farm which is protected by barbed wire fence and a moat like water ways is estimated by *The New York Times* to be the equivalent of 583 football fields.<sup>15</sup>

"We saw real apartheid there. Everything there was like America. We saw light everywhere. In Ugborodo, there is no light. There were good roads everywhere, in Ugborodo we don't have. We saw water everywhere, in Ugborodo we don't have. We saw men and women who are not from our place working there. Chevron had earlier told us that women are not allowed in the premises but we saw women in the place... We saw an environment that looked like America in Ugborodo. We were surprised that a different city in America was in Ugborodo",<sup>16</sup> she observed.

Madam Olowu, a mother of nine, also gives an account: "When we got to the tank farm, we saw the white men, very good buildings, roads, light was on 24 hours. I saw America there. It was like being in London. You needed to see the runway of the airport. Everything was looking nice. If we can get this kind of development in our village, it would be very nice. I will be very happy if all the things we saw in the tank farm are available in our village".<sup>17</sup>

But the women were also enraged at what they saw. This wealth had been drawn, over four decades, from the land around them. Yet virtually none of it had benefited a community confined on the wrong side of the creek writes *The New York Times*.<sup>18</sup>

The paper's lucid narration in its over 5180 word story summarizes the people's deep frustration with Chevron.

Many of the women are old enough to remember the Americans' arrival here in the 1960's. They watched the terminal grow over time, the giant red-and-white communications tower rise into the sky, and the first helicopters and planes land on the terminal airstrip. Meanwhile, on their side of the creek, life deteriorated. Ugborodo, a fishing village, is sinking into the water, a fact that villagers attribute to company actions to widen the creek and a nearby river. Oil wealth has brought few modern amenities. Outhouses made of corrugated zinc line the nearby shore; the villagers follow raised planks to them and defecate directly into the same water where they fish for crabs. Ugborodo may sit across from Chevron's largest terminal in the delta, but the village does not have a gas station. Villagers buy their gasoline upriver and have it shipped here, paying three times what the rest of Nigeria

the women invasion caught Chevron security staff napping. "The Chevron staff was taken aback. They could not believe that we could outsmart them and take over the tank farm. They thought



we had used some spiritual devises to enter the tank farm. It was just the hand work of God".<sup>20</sup>

Word of the invasion got to London where Chevron management had gathered for a meeting. They cut shut their meeting abruptly and headed back to Nigeria.

### C. The 11-Day Siege

After storming the oil terminal, the women under the direction of Madam Mercy Olowu were allotted specific areas, which were controlled by different leaders. Some handled the administrative block called Aso Rock, some were in charge of CC Camp, Some also worked in the airport while another group took over the dock

Madam Olowu took the steps to divide the women into different groups to take charge of the different areas of invasion. As soon as we got there, "I said you go to the airport, you go to cc camp you go to the control room, you go to the dock and that was how the groups were divided. But the groups decided to elect their own leaders",<sup>21</sup> she says.

According to Mrs. Emily Ajekerenbiaghan, 54, "the women were divided to groups to oversee different areas of the tank farm". This mother of seven who was the leader of the women numbering 60 who took charge of the dock explained their daily chores:

"Our responsibility was to ensure that no ship left or entered the dock. Any ship leaving or entering the dock had to do so with the permission of Madam Olowu, the general women leader. We were also asked to disallow any member of the youth groups from coming into the tank farm. It was a struggle being championed by the women and we didn't want the youth who could be more exuberant. Even the soldiers were more tempered with the women

than they would have been if the youths were there. Our mission was to dialogue and not to destroy".<sup>23</sup>

Their staying power according to Ajekerenbiaghan was prayers. "When it is morning we will pray, afternoon, we will pray, and night, we will pray so that God can help us in our struggle. We were also singing regular choruses to praise the Almighty". Leader of another group, Mrs Victoria Eyinoloma Ebunu, 52 says she was not afraid when the group made up of 170 women selected her as their leader. "I took up the mantle and decided on our course of action".

Ebunu who was in charge of an area called CC camp which is located beyond the dock says, "We told the workers not to be afraid because some of them almost wanted to take off when they saw us. We had to tell them that they were safe and that we only wanted Chevron to respond to our plight. When soldiers were deployed we approached them with our complaints, we asked them if they could take what Chevron was doing in our backyards in their communities back home. When the soldiers saw that we were very peaceful in our approach and reasonable with our demands, they decided to move quietly to a corner from where they were observing what we were doing".<sup>24</sup>

Apart from treating the women with kid gloves, they were fed twice a day throughout their 11-day siege. "We were usually fed after the workers have been taken care of. We were served food twice a day - 5am in the morning and 6pm in the evening. There was nothing like food in the afternoon", says, Ebunu, a mother of seven.

The plane that brought in Dick Filgate, Chevron's General Manager, Asset Management, who was directly involved in the negotiations from Lagos every morning, was the only one given



permission to land. "Once he disembarks from the plane, we will now go by boat to the town hall to have discussions. So we had discussions for eleven days before the MOU was endorsed", says Madam Olowu.

The women left the tank farm a day after successfully signing the MOU.

### Negotiations

The doggedness of the women to pursue their action in a long drawn struggle was unsettling for Chevron management which had to hurriedly end its meeting in London and head back to Nigeria for the negotiations.

Haastrup, Chevron's General Manager, Public Affairs who confirmed that the women wanted employment for their husbands and sons and more community development projects for their various communities says that "Following days of appeal to withdraw from these facilities, they (the women) determined not to leave until we enter into an MOU with them. Quite apart from the loss of production occasioned by the occupation, we were seriously concerned about the safety of the women and their children and we were eager for the occupation to end without any untoward incident".<sup>25</sup>

The process of negotiations with the Ugborodo community by Chevron management led by Filgate proved quite knotty. Held in its town hall, the negotiations covered the most salient issues bothering the community. The women did not end their invasion of the tank farm until they were sure that their demands were addressed by the MOU. Their leader, Madam Olowu not only participated in the negotiations but was one of those who endorsed the document.

### The MOU

The historic signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Ugborodo Community and Chevron-Texaco on July 17, 2002 marked a watershed in the agitation spearheaded by the women.

The MOU, which was jointly signed by the Eghare Aja, Wellington Ojogor, the women leader, Madam Mercy Olowu, the Olaja Orori, the Chairman, Ugborodo Manpower and Social Development Forum, Mr. Eric Igbon, Chairman and Managing Director, Chevron Nigeria Limited and the Governor of Delta State, Chief James Ibori imposed demands on the oil company and the Ugborodo community.<sup>26</sup>

In its preamble Chevron says it is "committed to building and sustaining a relationship with its host communities based on mutual respect and trust". In order to strengthen its relationship with the people of Ugborodo, its neighbours and hosts in the Eacravos area, "the company will continue to maintain open and continuous dialogue and consultations with accredited representations of the community, the local government and Delta State Government on matters affecting this relationship".<sup>27</sup>

The document also says "The Company's core values support sustainable community development, local business development, training and skills development activities to enable the community to take advantage of business and development opportunities. The company's employment/recruitment policy will deliberately ensure a fair and equitable representation of qualified community indigenes in the company's workforce. The company is committed to protecting the safety of people and the environment and will continue to uphold the principles of the rule of law".<sup>28</sup>



The Ugborodo community on the other hand also “undertakes to provide an enabling and secure environment for the company to carry on its business”. “The Community further undertakes to reciprocate the company’s commitment to a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship. Towards this, the community commits to a cordial and peaceful resolution of differences through dialogue and persuasion, and to eschew violence or acts of trespass as a means of expression. The rule of law and the maintenance of order will be respected at all times by all parties”.<sup>29</sup>

The MOU commits Chevron to the following obligations Ugborodo New Town

\* Re-sand filling of the site of the Ugborodo New Town to commence by September 1, 2002.

- 1 Building works on the Civic/Community Centre will commence by September 1, 2002.
- 2 Six contracts within the limits of approval of the company will be awarded before December 31, 2002.
- 3 These six contracts will be awarded using the open tendering and competitive bid process among community contractors.
- 4 As part of the company’s policy to promote local content and local business development, the six contracts will be awarded to contractors indigenous to the community that are competitive per our contracting process.
- 5 Without prejudice to the foregoing, whenever a contractor not indigenous to Ugborodo wins a contract on the New Town project, the selected contractor will be required to give substantial consideration to local community content.<sup>30</sup>

On Infrastructural Development,

1. The company will provide electricity to Ode-Ugborodo for residential and cottage industry use through a direct

connection to the company’s power system at the Escravos Terminal. Work on this project will commence by October 1, 2002.

2. The company will provide improved water supply system by extending the existing water connection from the Escravos Terminal to Ode Ugborodo up to Ugbolegin. Work on this project will commence by October 1, 2002.
3. The Company will construct teacher’s quarters for 4 primary schools in the community. Work on this project will commence by January 2003.
4. The company will construct a block of six classrooms and a teachers’ quarters at Ogidigben Grammar School. Work on this project will commence by January 2003.<sup>31</sup>

On Social and Economic Development

1. In order to promote sustainable development of the community, the company will engage a Non governmental Organization (NGO) with proven expertise in aquaculture to work with the women of the community, who will be formed into a cooperative for the purpose of fish farming, poultry farming, shrimp farming and other sustainable aquaculture enterprise.
2. Once the community aquaculture business enterprise is established and production commences, the company through its Escravos operations will provide a ready market at competitive pricing for the products of the community’s women’s cooperative. Work on sourcing a credible NGO for this business development initiative will commence immediately.
3. In support of the company’s policy of developing local human resources and business potential, the company will



register women contractors from the community and provide them with the opportunity to supply at competitive rates foodstuff (such as yams, palm oil, salt, pepper, etc) to the company's Escravos operations. These products will be supplied through the company's Warri office.

4. The company will supply 4 speed boats each powered by two 75 hp engines to ease transportation and enhance business opportunities for the community.

The company was also committed to raising bursary or grants for students in tertiary institutions from ₦50,000 to ₦75,000 per annum from 2002/2003 academic session while that for students in secondary schools will also be increased from ₦10,000 to ₦20,000.

The company was also expected to supply four speed boats with two 75 horse power engines and build official residences for the Eghare Aja and Olaja Orori.

The company in addition to building the agricultural capacity of the women in the area of fish, poultry and shrimp farming and other aquaculture enterprise was also expected to employ 15 persons by September 1, 2002 and another 25 persons in a period of five years while its contractors will employ 40 persons as community liaison officers. The Delta state government was also expected to construct housing units at the site of the New Ugborodo town project.<sup>32</sup>

A committee made up of all parties and which shall sit every six months was set up to monitor the implementation of the MOU which was expected to be in force for a period of five years from the date of its endorsement by the respective parties.

### Post-MOU Agitation

Three years after the signing of the MOU nothing seems to have happened in the area of implementation. In fact it appears the lot of the people of Ugborodo have not fared better. According to Mrs. Doris Ojuya, 48, since the signing of the MOU, "nothing has taken place, the women are not empowered, our children are not given jobs, our condition has gone worse. We don't even have a home. If they empower us, we will build our homes. If they empower us we'll take care of our children".

Mrs Felicia Atsepoyi also known as Mama Ayo says, "Since the MOU things have gone worse. All the things they promised apart from employing 40 community liaison officers were not fulfilled. And since the crisis of 2003, they drove all the CLO out. There's virtually no interaction now between the community and Chevron".

Continuing further, she says, "Before if you want to see them, you go through the public affairs department but because they don't want to see us they transferred the public affairs department to Warri. I feel frustrated by it all. If I come to you and you promise to give me something, at the end when nothing happens, you will feel frustrated. We have Chevron here but they have no impact on our lives. They will not give our children jobs, they will not listen to us. They've frustrated our families and our lives".

In fact the socio economic conditions of the people of Ugborodo community appear to have taken a deep for the worse. This is in spite of the provision that "this MOU shall be in force for a period of five years from the date of the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding".



Ugborodo was almost a shadow of itself when this writer visited recently. There was no sign of activity at the site of the proposed Ugborodo New Town. The people are regaled with stories of collapsed businesses and dilapidated living conditions.

Ojuya says, "We were very happy that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed. For the first time, we thought we were going to have a good home, our children are going to be empowered but we didn't know it was just a pat on the back".<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps it was the people's anxiety to redress their poor living conditions owing to the non implementation of the MOU that led to renewed agitations, which culminated in the protest of February 2005.

This time however the people were confronted and viciously resisted by the security forces on the tank farm. They were beaten, tortured and brutalized by the armed police men and soldiers. Unlike 2002 when the women were treated with kid gloves and fed throughout the 11 day siege, many of the people got a red eye from the beatings.

"The soldiers inflicted so much beating on us. It was as if we were armed robbers on our land", was how Rosemary Ofaramieyere, 28 described their sordid travails. "I didn't know that we could suffer so terribly in the hands of soldiers on our land. We only waived our protest flag, we were not armed but Chevron ordered their security forces to brutalize us. I want to appeal to Chevron that they should open the gate so that they do not kill us",<sup>34</sup> she says.

Almost akin to the rape and brutalization of the women of Choba, a community in Rivers state that was locked in disagreement with Wilbros, an oil services company, some of the soldiers were

alleged to have thrust the butt of the gun into the women's private parts while one of the youths who participated in the protest was killed. The body was still in the morgue pending negotiation with Chevron as at the time of this writer's visit to Ugborodo in September 2005. Austin Ajurenmisan, 40, Public Relations Officer of the youth association, says, "We are still asking for compensation for the guy who was killed. Without due compensation for the wife and the child he left behind, we cannot bury him".<sup>35</sup>

Narrating their ordeal, Mama Ayo says, "Since we could not enter through the gates, so we cut open the wires and entered from there. But we were immediately confronted by the security forces that started beating us. We were beaten and brutalized. One person was killed while some women had miscarriage". Harriet Ododoh, 35 who was also part of the February protest says "I was beaten to a state of stupor that I got miscarriage. The soldiers frisked our private parts with the butt of their guns".<sup>36</sup>

Ojuya says, "We decided to protest last February asking Chevron to abide by the terms of the MOU but they fired on us. Chevron ordered their security men to fire on us. Some of us were stripped naked by soldiers who pointed their guns at our private parts. Eight people including three women were tied backwards and guided by Alsatian dogs. They were detained in the tank farm from between 9am and 4pm before they were released. *We dey suffer for Chevron hand*. You can see the frustration all over me. We are virtually tired of it all".<sup>37</sup>

An agitated Ojuya, a mother of seven, cannot understand why the Americans who are loud on the campaign against terrorism in the world are endorsing same in their backyard. "George Bush is campaigning against terrorism everywhere; meanwhile Chevron an American company is here terrorizing us".<sup>38</sup>



Madam Olowu says, "We would have overlooked some of our demands if they (Chevron) implemented some of them. We are still looking at the situation of the area. The condition we are confronted with now is worse than 2002".<sup>39</sup>

Ofaramiyere, a mother of two, says the reason why Chevron has refused to implement the MOU is still something of an enigma. "Only God can say why this is happening. It's like they are taking advantage of our minority status. We will not leave this matter as it is. Anyone that is down need not be afraid of falling. A big fight may be looming".<sup>40</sup>

Like it happened with the invasion of July, 2003, the women prefer to keep their next line of action to their chest. "As at now we cannot say what our next line of action will be. We cannot reveal our secret moves to anybody." was how Madam Olowu who the women refer to as their president-general puts it.

Ajekerrenbiaghan says their next line of action will only be determined by God. "Only God can determine our next line of action. It is the Almighty that has been fighting for us and making our struggle possible. Only he can direct us on what we are going to do next".<sup>41</sup> Mama Ayo says "if it is the wish of God that we go there, we will do it. We cannot go there by our power". These views are re-echoed by Mrs Victoria Eyinoloma Ebunu, 52. "Only God will know what will happen. We do not reveal our strategies to anyone but to the Almighty God", she says.

Wellington Ojogor, 73, Ugborodo's traditional ruler who is known as the *Eghare Aja*, says, "Our patience is running out. When the time comes we will know what to do. I'm using this medium to tell Chevron that if they do not abide by the agreement of the MOU, we will not fold our hands. They have to try and do something. How many times have we sent emissaries? They just want to yorubalise the tank farm and leave our children dying

My people are not even allowed to speak Itsekiri on the tank farm. We cannot allow things to degenerate"

But Haastrup says in spite of the circumstances under which the MOUs were signed, "we were fully committed to carrying out our commitments which included several building projects in the communities and employment opportunities for the people". He reels out the strident effort by Chevron to keep the MOU on track.

- A new facilities engineering division was created in our Warri office called the community projects development group and headed by two of our senior expatriate engineers to facilitate this.

- Through many of our contractor companies, we immediately started to recruit youth from these communities, starting with Ugborodo and Ugboegungun around the Escravos terminal.

- We also completed the design of some of the buildings we committed to providing under the MOU and also completed the sand filling of the New Town site.

- All these ran into several million dollars and we were making steady progress with the implementation when, in March 2003, the ethnic violence that engulfed the entire area forced us to shut down our swamp facilities.

- We willingly offered to evacuate and indeed evacuated at our own cost the Ugborodo people who had sought refuge in our facilities when their villages were burnt and their people killed by rival groups.



## THE 11-DAY SIEGE:

- The medical care provided to the people and the humanitarian evacuation of those in distress were part of the reasons cited by the US State Department for giving Chevron the Award for Corporate Excellence. The Ugborodo people also wrote us a letter of appreciation.
- During the ethnic violence, virtually all the community projects we had provided for the Ugborodo community were burnt, including the non-fee paying hospital that was equipped and provided with free drugs by Chevron. The community hospital has now been built twice by the company and burnt down twice by rival ethnic groups.
- Because of the security situation, it took nearly two years before the people could venture back into the communities.
- Our facilities which were producing approximately 140,000 bpd before the incident are yet to be resuscitated as they have been severely vandalized during our absence. The latest estimate of the cost for reviving the facilities is more than half a billion US dollars.
- Several projects had to be deferred and many contracts terminated, so that contractors had to lay off many of their employees, thereby further diminishing the limited employment opportunities.
- Under the 2002 MOU, Chevron agreed to provide certain projects while the communities agreed to provide a disruption-free environment for our operations.

Haastrup says during this difficult period, a complete review of the company's operations was necessitated by the severe impact of the ethnic crisis on its business.

## "Gains and Challenges of Women's Non Violent Struggles in the Niger-Delta"

"We needed to ask pertinent questions: How can we ensure the safety of our employees and those of the communities, and the survival of our business under the circumstances? Should we continue to build community projects as demanded of us only for them to be burned down? How can we ensure the community takes ownership of development projects and ensure their sustainability? Can development be considered to be sustainable when life of the people and their property are at constant risk of destruction? How best can we contribute to stability in the area? In essence, how can we, along with other stakeholders, engage in a partnership that can positively contribute to sustainable development while carrying on our own legitimate business in a safe and secure environment? We began to engage with other stakeholders to find genuine answers to these and similar questions. This process of listening, learning and analyzing has led us to evolve a new model of community engagement that would build on the moderate successes of the past. The new strategies have been widely communicated with stakeholders and have won endorsement by communities in our areas of operation and most of them have signed new Global Memorandums of Understanding (GMOU) based on the new community engagement model".<sup>42</sup>

The 2005 Global MOU, according to Haastrup is the result of the new thinking and the outcome of community engagement and stakeholder consultations. In his words, "The Global MOU is the administrative instrument or governance mechanism of our new direction in community engagement and sustainable development".

The new model is based on five key principles:

Participatory Partnership (all stakeholders come together to provide stability and development)



- Transparency and Accountability (all stakeholders to operate an open and accountable system)
- Stakeholder Engagement (All parties engage each other to strengthen and further relationships)
- Sustainable Development through Community Empowerment (Capacity of communities would be built so that they can be meaningfully involved in the planning, designing and execution of development projects to ensure community ownership and sustainability)
- Security and the rule of law (Government, community and all stakeholders to ensure security and adherence to the rule of law)

Instead of the previous bilateral relationships between the company and the communities, with Chevron doing things for the communities; this model requires all stakeholders to jointly do things with the communities (Participatory partnership) through a multi-lateral relationship.

Haastrup says, "In recognition of the merit of the new community engagement model, many communities, including the Gbaramatu and Egbema communities — which had occupied four of our facilities at the same time as the Ugborodo community occupied the terminal, and with whom we signed the 2002 MOU at the same time we signed with the Ugborodo people — have signed the new 2005 GMOU. The new GMOU model has won praise and endorsement from stakeholders, including NGOs, State governments, community representatives, NDDC and donor agencies".

The new GMOU also provides funding for community development in the company's areas of operations. A community elected Regional Development Council participates in making

the decision on what to use the funding for. "If the Ugborodo people still want to use their own funding under the new GMOU for the projects already listed, they can do so in accordance with the governance model of the new GMOUs", he explains.



End Notes

1. See Interview
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Ukeje, Charles: Op. Cit. p. 608.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

A

9. Ibid.
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. Ibid

B

13. See e-mail response to enquiries by Deji Haastrup in the annex
14. Ibid
15. Onishi, Norimitsu: As Oil Riches Flow, Poor Village Cries Out, *The New York Times*, December 22, 2002, Section 1, Column 2, p.1.
16. See Interview
17. Ibid
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid

C

21. Ibid
22. Ibid
23. Ibid
24. Ibid

25. See Deji Haastrup's e-mail response to enquiries
26. See Memorandum of Understanding Between Chevron Nigeria Limited and Ugborodo Community and the Delta State Government of Nigeria.
27. Op cit. p 2.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Op. Cit. p 3-4.
31. Ibid.
32. Op. Cit p4-6.
33. See Interview
34. Ibid
35. Ibid
36. Ibid
37. Ibid
38. Ibid
39. Ibid
40. Ibid
41. Ibid
42. See Deji Haastrup Op. Cit.



## CHAPTER 4

### THE WOMEN'S VOICES (herstory)

#### **Madam Mercy Olowu, 52, Leader of the Women Group**

Since we started with Gulf oil, the community has lost its occupation - fishing and farming. After oil exploration, no crayfish; we farm, no good results. The oil company does not employ our children; they only bring Yoruba people from Lagos. We were having dialogue but to no avail. As mothers and wives, we were pained that our children and husbands are not given jobs. We now decided to gather ourselves and say we cannot continue to look. Some of the women wanted immediate action while others said we should write them before knowing what to do. So we the women came together and asked them to give us a date for discussion. The time they gave us was 12 noon but it was 4pm before we saw them at our town hall. We explained things to them. Before Gulf oil, we used fishing and farming occupation to train our children. But after they started oil exploration you have to go into the sea to get fish. Before, your father will be fishing close to the house, now you have to go deep into the sea. To have a boat that can go deep into the sea, you need at least a 40 hp engine which cost about N500,000. The 75 hp engine cost about N800,000. So we explained our plight to Chevron officials. They said they will go back and reply us. They promised to come back and see us in a week's time. We waited throughout the month without seeing anybody. We now told the elders about our disappointment with Chevron but the elders asked us to endure for another two weeks, making five weeks. After five weeks, we decided to take over the tank farm and disrupt their operations. Getting into the compound was a problem because everyday, they were fencing the compound and extending the wall. We now decided to go to Warri to plan the operation because we felt that some people may infiltrate our meeting if we had it in the village.



It was from that meeting that we took a date to take over the tank farm. That time there were boats called Ginuwa and Ozobo which were conveying Chevron workers to the villages. We now waited for the boats. Just as the quartermaster was dropping the workers, we now asked him to take us across to Chevron tank farm. The quartermaster complained that the number of women numbering 500 was too many and that it could affect the boat. But we told him that the river was not rough, so he could continue to take us. So he took us across. We trooped down immediately the boat stopped and headed straight for their offices. Some of the security officials wanted to stop us but we resisted them. We now headed straight to their main office. When we got there the workers were on the run. From there we took over the offices with our mats. So their officials now came to discuss with us about our mission. We told them we were there because they refused to respond to our demands after several weeks. We now started the dialogue all over again that they should employ our husbands, children and develop our area. We took over the tank farm for 11 days. After this we entered into an MOU on what they will do for us. They said they will employ 40 youth as community liaison officers - CLO. After the MOU was signed, we had a total of 18 people in the monitoring group for the MOU. (9 women, 9 men). We didn't say we will dominate the monitoring group because our struggle was a product of a joint effort by the elders and youth. For instance, our children acted as interpreters during the discussions each time the American officials start speaking in their usual slang. The youth organization was heavily behind us. At the meeting of the committee, they brought pictures showing how Ugborodo will be in future. Nothing has happened ever since. They lay off our children and have refused to employ them ever since. We would have overlooked some of our demands if they implemented some of them. We are still looking at the situation of the area. The condition we were before 2002 is now worse. We no longer have a home. For instance my house in the village was like a mini

London but now I have no place to stay. I was one of those who refused to leave the village in spite of the crisis, preferring even to drink from the well. Thank God I didn't die of Guinea worm. The February crisis was a response by the youth to get Chevron to get back to the MOU. We Itsekiri are not a troublesome people, we will still write them before we will meet and decide on what line of action. It is the elders who have been holding us from embarking on another line of action; else we would have gone back. As at now we cannot say definitely what our line of action will be. We cannot reveal that to anybody. I was a contractor to Chevron. I was given the contract for bush clearing once in 2002. I now gather firewood and sell to Ilaje people who smoke fish. I have 9 children. Some are married, others are in tertiary institutions. My husband died in 2001. He was working with one of the oil services company. What I earn from the firewood business is barely enough to keep body and soul together. When we entered the tank farm one of the women was beaten to a state of coma that Chevron had to rush her to the clinic with an ambulance. When we got to the tank farm, we saw the white men, very good buildings, roads, light was on 24 hours. I saw America there. It was like what we see in London. We saw the road to the airport, everything was looking very nice. If we can get this kind of development in our village, it would be very nice. I will be very happy if all the things we saw in the tank farm-good roads, constant electricity, water etc are also available in our village. When we got to the tank farm, we took over different sections in groups. I said you go to the airport, you go to CC camp, you go to control room, you go to the dock and that was how the groups were divided. But the groups decided to elect their own leaders. The struggle was planned by women in Ogidigben who reached out to women in other areas. The plane carrying Filgate was the only one allowed to land and take off because he came on a daily basis from Lagos. Once he disembarks from the plane, we will now go by boat to the town hall to have



discussions. So we had discussions for 11 days before the MOU was endorsed. We left the tank farm a day after successfully signing the MOU.

**Mrs. Doris Ojuya, 48**

We have no water, no hospital, nothing is in place. One of our sons who was killed since February is still in the mortuary. In June 2002, the women demonstrated because of marginalization, our sons, fathers and husbands are not employed. The traditional economic mode of fishing and farming has been destroyed. I have four graduates in my house. Chevron refused to employ them. We can't do our traditional fishing because of oil exploration for over three decades that Chevron has been exploiting oil in the area. We women went into the tank farm in peaceful demonstration so that they can employ our people, develop our community and give it all the good things of life. The youths have tried, Chevron refused to answer, they even put a wedge on their struggle, the elders, the same thing and that was why we decided to take things by ourselves. We were more than 500 women who took over the tank farm. Before we got to the tank farm, we were already angry but when we got there, we got angrier. No Ugborodo son was working as cooks or even cleaners, we saw real apartheid, there is light, in Ugborodo, we don't have; there are good roads, in Ugborodo, we don't have: we saw water, in Ugborodo, we don't have. We saw men and women working there who were not from our area.

Chevron had earlier told us that women are not allowed into the premises but we saw women in the place. We decided not to leave; we went there with placards and our complaints and requested that they acted immediately. We saw an environment that looked like America in Ugborodo. We were surprised that a different city in America was in Ugborodo. We were very happy that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed. For the first time,

we thought that we were going to have a good home, our children are going to be empowered but we didn't know it was just a pat on the back. After signing MOU on July 17, Chevron colluded with Ijaw people to attack us. When they attacked Madangho, the soldiers who were in Ugborodo disappeared into Chevron tank farm as if the soldiers are only to protect the tank farm. Madangho was left invulnerable. That was what took place. Chevron can only take oil but cannot protect us. Even since the MOU, nothing has taken place, the women are not empowered, the children are not given jobs, and in fact situation has gone worse. Our condition has gone worse; we don't even have a home. If they empower us, we'll build our homes. If they empower us, we'll take care of our children. After MOU, 40 of our children were laid off. Chevron refused to give us contract. Some of us decided to protest on February 4 asking the company to go back to MOU but they fired on us. Chevron ordered the security men to fire on us. The soldiers pointed their guns at our private parts. The women were stripped naked while guns were pointed into their private parts. Eight people including three women were tied behind their backs and guided by Alsatian dogs. They were detained in the tank farm between 9am and 4pm before they were released. We *dey* suffer from Chevron hand. You can see the frustration all over me. We are virtually tired of it all. We women are thinking of seizing the tank farm again, the way we did in 2002. George Bush is campaigning against terrorism everywhere, meanwhile Chevron, an American company is here terrorizing us. Ugborodo has no future. With what is happening, Ugborodo has no future. The government - federal or state are doing nothing. Our Children have no jobs, we have no contracts. We are just like beggars on the street. I was a contractor to Chevron. I used to do some supplies for Chevron but since 2002, we have not got anything to do. We all now survive by the mercy of the Almighty God. We are just begging and begging to survive. I have 8 children -3 boys and 5 girls. Four of them - 2 boys and 2 girls are graduates. I started



having children at age 18. The eldest of my children is 28. My husband is equally a contractor, no job to do. We formed ourselves into cooperatives and we've been supplying some oil service companies drinks, wine, soaps, beverages, clearing materials etc. But the companies refused to give us in full, we are just doing it, we don't realize much from it. Halliburton has not given us any contract. About a tenth of ESS Nig Ltd supplies is what we get.

We will share the proceeds either at the end of the year or a given time amongst the 10 members. My children are graduates of Production Engineering, Food and Science Technology, Business Administration and Banking and Finance. All their courses are relevant to the oil industry. Our children are versatile in all fields. In spite of that we have no jobs. We have our children specializing in diverse fields relating to oil. We have Engineers, Doctors etc. So Chevron has no excuse.

**Mrs. Emily Ajekerenbiaghan, 54**

I was one of the leaders of the invasion. I was the leader of the group that took over the dock because the women were divided into groups to oversee different areas of the tank farm. Our responsibility was to ensure that no ship left or entered the dock. Any ship leaving or entering had to do so with the permission of madam Mercy Olowu, the general women leader. We were also asked to disallow any member of the youth groups from coming into the compound. It was a struggle being championed by women and we didn't want the youth who could be more exuberant. Even the soldiers are more tempered with the women than they would have been if the youths were there. Our mission was to dialogue and not to destroy. The group that took over the dock was more than 60. We were served with food usually served the workers when we left Madangho and took over the tank farm. Before we left for the tank farm we fasted five days, praying to God. We were asking for support from the Almighty God about the state of

our children, husbands who had no jobs and me, a contractor who had nothing to do. We prayed that God should not allow hunger to kill us. We all walked from Ogidigben to Ajudaigbo and then to Madangho where we were joined by other women. We saw water, light, road, air conditioners; it was like overseas unlike our community in Ogidigben where our people are suffering. When we got there we saw that people of other tribes - Yoruba, Igbo, Urhobos were the ones working in the tank farm. Our children were not there. Even if we had a few of our sons there, decisions are taken by the majority which is made up largely of people from other areas. When it is morning, we will pray, afternoon and night, we will pray so that God can help us in our struggle. We were also singing regular choruses to praise the Almighty. We were just inside the boat, praying and marching along the dock at different intervals. The landing of our boat was the handwork of the Almighty because the dock is usually locked to prevent unwanted vessels from gaining access into the dock. It's only God that did the magic.

The Chevron officials were dazed by the invasion that they started wondering how we were able to gain access to the dock and entered the tank farm. We were very happy to be informed later that an MOU was signed between the community and Chevron. Since they signed MOU some three years ago we've not seen or heard anything. In fact things have gone very bad for us. Our children still have no jobs; our husbands have nothing to do. We also have nothing to do. Since the crisis there is nothing. We only survive on little catches and selling of firewood to Ilaje people who come to fish in the deep sea. We cannot fish in the deep sea without big canoe and an engine boat because the fish and crayfish have gone into the deep sea as a result of oil exploration. I have seven children, one of them is a 28year old graduate. The other children are in school. My husband is sick and unable to help with taking care of the home in anyway. If there's contract I can trade and



take care of myself so that I can bring up other children. Only God can determine our next line of action. It was the Almighty that has been fighting for us and making our struggle possible. Only He can direct us on what we are going to do next. Last February, the women and youth decided to go to the tank farm. The women were stripped naked, the butts of the guns were pointed into their private parts, and they were beaten and brutalized. I was supposed to join this action but I could not join the boat on time. We just started the cooperative to make supplies for some of the service companies. We cannot live on that because what we were given to supply is so small that the profit margin is not enough to take care of us. The cooperative started some four months ago, we've started benefiting from its effect. We are hopeful that Chevron will respect the terms of the MOU but what we see is that they locked their gates and we seem hopeless.

We decided to take up the struggle because we are mothers taking care of the children. With the crisis, most of our husbands are either dead or sick and we are the one taking care of the children. If we allow the youths, soldiers will shoot then in their prime and that's why we decided that we'll take up the struggle ourselves and be ready to die. On the first day we refused to eat anything till evening.

**Mrs. Victoria Eyinoloma Eburu, 52**

Our struggle was the handwork of God. We didn't go there to fight and that was why God supported us. We had a pastor from the Baptist Church and another from the Church of God Mission who were overseeing our prayer sessions. I was the leader of an area called cc camp, which is just beyond the dock area. We told the workers not to be afraid because some of them almost wanted to take off when they saw us. We had to tell them that they were safe and that we only wanted Chevron to respond to our plight. When soldiers were deployed, we approached them with our

complaints. We asked them if they thought they could take what Chevron was doing in our backyards in their communities back home. When the soldiers saw we were peaceful in our approach and demands, they decided to move quietly to a corner from where they were observing what we were doing. I had over 170 people in my own command. We were always singing choruses and praising God to support our struggle. We also took daily readings from the Bible. When we got to the tank farm, we divided ourselves to take over different parts of the tank farm. I was not afraid when the group selected me as their leader. I took up the mantle and decided on our course of action. We were usually fed after workers have been taken care of. We were served food twice a day - 5am in the morning and 6pm in the evening. There was nothing like food in the afternoon. After morning service on Sunday in Ogidighen, we called a meeting and said what do we do?. We did not initially involve those in Ode Ugborodo because we felt some of their people were very close to Chevron. We decided to intimidate the elders on what we wanted to do. We now told the pastors who said we needed to pray and fast for five days before embarking on the invasion. The Chevron staffs were taken aback.

They could not believe that we could outsmart them and take over the tank farm. They thought we had used some spiritual devices to enter the tank farm. It was just the handiwork of god. We overpowered the quartermaster with our wrappers and the boys inside the boat and ordered them to take us to the tank farm. We ensured that all the radio devices in the boat were disabled. Only God's support could have made that possible. I have a total of 7 children. My husband is late. He died in 2000. When the MOU was signed, we were elated that God has answered to our pains. I'm not too happy that Chevron had not reciprocated our gestures by respecting the terms of the MOU. Only God will know what will happen. We do not reveal our strategies to anyone but the Almighty God. Before the takeover of Chevron, we



prepared ourselves spiritually by secluding ourselves from our husbands and even our children so that we can have enough time to fast, pray and exhort the Almighty God so that he can give us blessing. I do not regret the action because we know that something positive will happen and the people will smile against. The Almighty God will make something to happen that will bring happiness and joy to Ugborodo people.

**Mrs. Felicia Atsepoyi (Mama Ayo)**

In February we didn't fight them. We only asked them to respond to the demands of the MOU. Chevron is supposed to be our friend but they are behaving as if we are enemies. Even look at the electricity, conditions have gone worse than they were before the MOU. I have decided that I will leave for Warri and look for something to do. I said before that I will not leave because it is my father's place but now I'm fed up. I have to leave. Even the tenants have no jobs, they can't pay their rents. I cannot drive them away because they've been very dutiful. I cannot drive them away. They have to stay until they have jobs. The room is N500 per month. Here are 11 rooms. I do not use the rents for myself because I have junior ones who are in school. My seven children are living in Warri. Two of them are graduates, the rest are still in school. Since the MOU, things have gone worse. All the things they promised apart from employing 40 community liaison officers were not fulfilled. And since the crisis of 2003, they drove all of them out. There's virtually no interaction between the community and Chevron. Before if you want to see them, you go through the Public Affairs but because they don't want to see us they transferred the Public Affairs to Warri. I feel frustrated by it. If I come to you and you promise to give something, at the end of the day when nothing happens, you feel frustrated... We see Chevron here but they have no impact on our lives... They will not give our children jobs; they will not listen to us. They've frustrated our families and our lives. I was part of the February crisis. We went

to Chevron and asked them to open the gates. When the youth tried to ask them to open the gates, they refused. Since we couldn't enter from the gates, we cut open one of the wires and entered through there. We were immediately confronted by soldiers and mobile policemen. At least one of the boys was shot dead. We were beaten and brutalized. Perhaps they heard we were going to invade the compound. They asked for reinforcement. They swooped on us as we cut open the fence and started beating us. Even the last contract I had in 2002 before the crisis, I lost money when I was asked to mow the lawn. I lost money and have not been able to recoup since I was not given another contract. Nobody is allowed to enter the gate unless with permission. Even if you try to move close to the gate, nobody will open the gates for you.

It has also affected my shop because nobody was buying since the people have no jobs. On a good day before I could make between N15,000 - N20,000 but now the shop is closed. It has also affected business at the back of the fence which depended largely on the Chevron workers and the contractors. The condition at the back of fence is worse. Nothing is happening at back of fence. If one of the big men from Chevron should come here, they will have mercy on us. As we gave them land, they ought to reciprocate by ensuring that they give us the good things of life so that we can live like human beings. Everything you think about they have it there, so why not here? They have everything to live a sweet life. They should not treat us like slaves. I thought we were friends and that was why we gave them land. But they are treating us as slaves as if we are enemies. If it is the wish of God that we go there, we will do it. We cannot go there by our power. You know Chevron now considers all the leaders of the women group as their enemy but we don't want them to see us as enemies. The last time we had the benefit of using the Ginuwa for our action but now we do not have that opportunity anymore. In the morning you will see Chevron boat with security patrolling



the river and they will be moving up and down. Sometimes they will tell the poor fishermen to leave the river. I really don't know what they want us to do to keep body and soul together. I really do not know how they want us to survive. I don't have any cause to suspect the youths and elders as we thought before. The elders and youths have made demands on Chevron and nothing came out of it. We took up the mantle as women to also make demands from the company. We have been met with a brick wall. Taking care of my children who are in Warri is through the grace of God. My son who is working is supportive. We have been surviving through the grace of God. This is my father's land. I can't leave my father's land just like that. No matter the situation, home is home. This is our home. I cannot abandon it just like that. Most of our husbands are late because of the problems. Perhaps the men think that the condition under which they are living is not conducive and that's why they gave up. But for me my husband died from illness after which I came back here. I cannot abandon my hometown.

**Mrs. Harriet Ododoh, 35**

I joined the February protest because my brothers and husbands have no work and there are no good schools here. And that the MOU, which we signed, which we thought would have given some hope, nothing has come out of it. And all their promises have not been fulfilled. Some of our brothers were dropped from their jobs. We were told that every year there will be recruitment and that was why we went there. While our people are jobless, people from other tribes are given jobs. Now there is no work. The handcraft they said we will be thought has not materialized. The last time we were beaten up, brutalized and guns were pointed into our private parts by soldiers. I was beaten to a state that I got miscarriage. The lack of school and jobs and the absence of development are the source of our pains. They have not developed this community. We decided to make our plan secret in 200

because we didn't want it to leak. We didn't even tell our husbands. If we did it would have leaked.

**Mrs. Rosemary Ofaramiye, 28**

The MOU they signed they've not implemented. Our fathers, husbands and brothers have no jobs and that's why we joined the protests. The soldiers inflicted so much beating on us. It was as if we were armed robbers on our land. They promised doing embankment and piling our shores against erosion but nothing has not been done. Our brothers that were dropped from work have not been recalled. The locking of the gates does not allow our market to flourish. Worse, they give jobs daily to people outside from here. They are always bringing other people to work here but have no accommodation for our people. We are asking that the MOU should be implemented. These gates that look like London where you need visa to go should be opened. When Gulf oil was here, we were always going into the compound to eat. I didn't know that we could suffer so terribly in the hands of soldiers on our land. We only waived our protest flag, we were not armed but Chevron ordered their security forces to brutalize us. I want to appeal to Chevron that they should open the gate so that they do not kill us. For now we only smoke fish, sell tomatoes and bread to keep body and soul together. I've not eaten up till now (10.30am). Before now they always had meetings with us, they have resorted to divide and rule tactics. The more we fight the more they benefit. The 2002 protest was peaceful, we divided ourselves into different areas including Aso Rock (the administrative building). We were not brutalized. They even fed us and we achieved what we went for and got the MOU. We were very happy that our effort was fruitful since we got Chevron to sign the MOU which committed them to implement some projects in our community. We cannot say why they have refused to implement the MOU. Only God can say why this is happening. It's like they are taking advantage of our minority status. We will



not leave this matter as it is. Anyone that is down need not be afraid of falling. A big fight may be looming.

**Chief Wellington Ojogor, 73 (the Eghare Aja, traditional head of Ugborodo)**

We are not hostile, we signed an MOU but they have not done anything for the community and that's why the boys have been restive and we have been cooling them down. When Gulf was here they had a friendly relationship with us. Now see how they've barred us from the compound. They keep flying other people to come and work. You can see the people roaming about, graduates not having anything to do. The women intervened because they felt their children will be killed. Before they said we had no skilled people but we now have graduates all over. We are just giving them time. And we are going to tell them enough is enough. Time is fast running out. Before the crisis, I used to go through the tank farm to enter plane to Warri. But now, I can't even get near the gate talk less of my children. I'm supposed to be the next to the Olu of Warri, look at where I'm staying. Just look at where there labourers stay in Lekki and there's no oil in Lagos. I feel pained and frustrated. See even the land they took about 40 years ago, they've not paid compensation. The town has been eroded by their operations.

After the refusal to implement the MOU signed in July 2002, our people protested in February 2005 but they brutalized the women and some of them had their pregnancies aborted. Our patience is running out. When the time comes, we will know what to do. I'm using this medium to ask Chevron that if they do not abide by the agreement of the MOU, we will not fold our hands. They have to try and do something. How many times have we sent emissaries? They just want to yorubalise the tank farm and leave our children dying. Even the few of my people who work there are not allowed to speak Itsekiri language on the compound. They

just packed there with the Yoruba. We cannot fold our arms and allow things to degenerate.

**Augustine Oritsejeminone, 35 (Unemployed Accounting Graduate)**

Condition of living here is simply terrible. We believe that one day there will be hope. The company that we have on our home ground that we thought we could benefit from, nothing is happening. After the MOU, I have not seen anything that is on ground. But when I came back from Yobe state where I did my youth service, I shed tears. Chevron brings their boat ambulance every Tuesday to treat people. Are you saying that that is the only day that people get sick?. There is no school in the community, there's no road, nothing is happening here. No hospitals. We need development. The nation should hear our cry. We are underdeveloped. The government and Chevron should come to our aid. We need road to link our villages. They should come to our aid. The children growing up here have no hope. At the end they will become slaves in their own land if nothing is done to restore the poor condition of living here. Even the community is sinking and the entire population is gradually dying off. What kind of hope can we then have? I got married at the age of 32. Life in Port Harcourt is not easy. My wife, Elizabeth, 31 also read French in University of Port Harcourt. If the youths don't have something doing, they will become a nuisance to the society. The youths are supposed to be leaders of tomorrow. The government should try and ensure that they engage the youths because they are the leaders of tomorrow. Our grand parents home in Koko were destroyed as a result of the crisis. Most of us do not have homes any more. We lost them to the crises. As you can see, all you have here are thatched houses. We do not have homes here. I sometimes come here, stay for three weeks and go back to Port Harcourt. I don't have to put all my eggs in one basket. I try to look for jobs in other states. It is unfortunate that since the February crisis, Chevron has been talking of Global MOU.



**Mr. Austine Ajurenmisan, 40 (Public Relations Officer, Community Youth Association)**

The state government's signature is on the MOU but they seem to be doing nothing. At least if the state government tells them to implement something they cannot throw it aside. I will say there has been no achievement since the new executive was elected last year. I was one of the beneficiaries of the MOU having been employed as CLO with Parker Drilling, one of the contractors to Chevron. To complement the effort of the women, when we came we decided to protest in February. What we got was worse than what we expected. Many people were beaten and brutalized; at least one person lost his life. The condition was terrible. Even the corpse of the young man killed is still in the mortuary. We are defenseless, we want for a peaceful protest and Chevron asked their security to shoot. We are still asking for compensation. Without due compensation for the wife and child he left behind, we cannot bury the body. Chevron is just engaging in palliatives. That is why they brought somebody to repair the generator and gave us 30 slots - five skilled and 25 unskilled workers. We sent names to them, they tested them but they've not started the job. Chevron says they will be given daily pay of N2000 - 14 days on, 14 days off. But they will not earn any pay when they are off. GIK (Gladwyn Investment Limited) and Astra are the two major employment companies for Chevron. As GIL staff, you get housing, car loan, hospital allowance etc. But they just want the unskilled to work like those cutting grasses that will collect just N2000 a day. We are asking GIL to give them their conditions of service but they have not bulged. Chevron dictates to the contractors on what to do. They instruct the contractor companies not to deal with the communities. We have told them that there's no way they will want to do exploration here without dealing with the community. You can't do exploration without destroying the natural resources or disturb the ecosystem. The local fishermen that you will displace, how will they feed? It was to prepare me

for work in the oil industry that I did a two-year course in production engineering but my father who is a fisher man could not carry the burden. I'm married with three children. Supporting my home is not easy.

The future of the youth in Ugborodo is not bright. The youth are virtually dying off. If Chevron does not come to the aid of the community, the youth will die off. This is because the youth association manages employment while the management committee and elders are concerned with spillages, compensation, development, capacity building, contracts, scholarships etc. Without employment, the youth association is virtually paralyzed. It is gone. So the youth has no future for now. With Global MOU, Chevron says it wants to discuss with only the management committee. This is likely to instigate greater restiveness. My father used to have 9 speed boats but most of them were lost to the crises. Our family of eight is just managing only one to survive. The crises have had a great toll here. The Sailors Inn at Madangho is now a shadow of itself. Chevron willfully brings people from Lagos and other places to come and work but we the indigenes that are here cannot get anything. They seem to be operating a close camp policy. Ogidigben Grammar School and Ekpere primary school has not resumed normal life since the escalation of the communal crisis. Since 1999, normal classes have not resumed at the schools since the teachers scampered and ran away. People in the community have to send their kids to as far as Warri, about 2hrs by the double engine speed boat. The local boats which are usually cheaper, take bigger goods and spend between 8 - 9 hours to get to Warri. They had to be phased out because of incessant attacks by the Ijaw. On several occasions, many of the passengers were trapped and the boat sank. The villagers are further incensed by the revving of the engines of the planes and helicopters each time they land and take off. You can see them flying people from Lagos to come and work while we that are



close to them cannot even get access to the compound. We've been calling on the federal and state governments to intervene on this matter. A National Assembly team visited this year. They interviewed the women and youth and implored us to be patient but you know that our patience is fast running out. When the women invaded the tank farm they took everybody by surprise. They kept their plan away from us. Even my mum and wife did not tell me anything. All attempts to pry into their action failed. Some of them only said they were going to the tank farm to discuss their contract jobs. We were completely taken by surprise. They only confided in some youth they felt could serve as foot soldiers and help in ferrying the women.

## CHAPTER 5

### Social and Economic Impact of Conflicts

On this wet and breezy Monday evening, Felicia Atsepoyi, 51, wears a morose and mournful look. Her decrepit courtyard is submerged in a flood from the mid afternoon heavy down pour. She was cold and barely exchanged pleasantries with some of her town folk who just arrived from Warri in two 75 horse power engine speed boats that waded strenuously through the rainstorm on the Escravos River. Her thriving shop in the front corner of the house, formerly the cynosure of community discourse now looks dingy, dark, empty and a complete shadow of its former self.

Survival has been top on the lips of this woman leader since the American oil company, Chevron-Texaco banned its staff on its plum tank farm from having any interaction with this Itsekiri homestead located on the Escravos River in 2003. Her moving story: "Our living conditions have gone worse and awry. Since Chevron closed their gates and asked people not to have anything to do with us, it has not been easy. Nobody is allowed to enter the gate unless with permission. Even if you try to move close to the gate, nobody will open the gate for you. It has also affected my shop because nobody was buying since the people have no jobs".

When business was good, Atsepoyi, popularly known here as Mama Ayo makes between ₦150,000 and N200,000 daily. Even with a tumble in sales arising from the series of communal crises that dogged the relocation of the headquarters of Warri South West Local Government from 1999, the shop still rakes in between ₦15,000 and N20,000."But now you will be lucky if you make ₦1,000", <sup>1</sup> she says



*Mama Ayo who earlier said she would not leave Ugborodo in spite of the problems confronting the community, now says she will seek refuge in Warri where her seven children now reside. "I have decided that I will leave for Warri and look for something else to do. I said before that I will not leave because this is my father's land but now I'm fed up. There's nothing happening here. I have to leave".*

Even the rents she collects from hiring 11 rooms to tenants at ₦500 per month in a house inherited from her late father, have been paid in the breach. "The tenants can't pay their rents because they have no jobs. I cannot drive them away because they've been so good. They have to stay until they have jobs".

She is not alone in this harrowing fate of Ugborodo, renowned as the first Itsekiri homestead. The story of collapsed businesses is written all over different sections of the community. The Sailor's Inn, a popular bar and guest house bordering the water front in Madangho which served as a relaxation center for many oil workers and visitors has been razed.

Worse is Ugbolegin. Popularly known as '*back of fence*', where staffs of Chevron-Texaco and other services companies usually hang out every evening in the numerous thriving bars, joints and homes of their female acquaintances between 6 - 10 pm, it is now almost a ghost town. Many inhabitants of Ugbolegin, gleaned by other sections of Ugborodo community with envy because of its paved road and 24 hours electricity supply from the oil terminal have now relocated to Warri.

Alice Olowu, 52, leader of the 2002 women protest says she now makes ends meet by selling fire wood to some neighbouring Ilaje people who are engaged in deep sea fishing..

Rosemary Ofaramieyere, 28 also says the locking of the company's gates does not allow "our market to flourish". "This gate that looks like London where you need visa to go should be opened" A mother of two, Ofaramieyere who's afraid of having a third child because of her poor living condition says she keeps body and soul together by selling smoked fish, tomatoes and bread.

In general, it has not been smooth sail for this small Itsekiri community, a two-hour journey by double-engine speed boat from Warri, since the historic signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the management of Chevron-Texaco after the women led protest of July 2002. "No jobs for our husband and children. No contracts for us" is how Mama Ayo, also a registered contractor with the oil company summarizes the community's sorry state. Indeed the 40 Community Liaison Officers (CLO) employed as part of the terms of the MOU were dropped after the communal crisis in April 2003.

As the revving of the engines of the planes and helicopters flying in workers from Lagos and Port Harcourt to the tank farm daily resonate in the thatched homes of this poor Niger Delta community, the anger of the people grows. "They keep flying people from other places to come and work but my people can't even go near the gates. You can see the people roaming about, graduates not having anything to do... We cannot fold our arms and allow things to degenerate", <sup>2</sup> says Wellington Ojogor, 73, *Eghare Aja* and traditional ruler of Ugborodo community.

Incensed by the dilapidating nature of his home, Ojogor, a surveyor and member of the defunct political organization, Action Group, says, "Among the Itsekiri, I'm the second to the Olu of Warri but look at where I'm staying. Just look at where Labourers stay in Lekki and there's no oil in Lagos". "They have not even paid compensation for the land they took more than 40 years ago. This



town has been totally eroded by their exploration... Before the crisis, I used to go to the tank farm to board planes to Warri. But now I can't even get near the gates, talk less of my people", <sup>3</sup> the *Eghare Aja* fumes

"We had meeting with (Obafemi) Awolowo (late elder statesman, then leader of the Action group) here. Zik (Nnamdi Azikiwe, former Nigeria's president then leader of the National Council of Nigeria Citizens NCNC) was also here for a meeting. But now, the town is sinking terribly".

He says the peace loving nature of his people is not being reciprocated. "We are not hostile, we signed an MOU but they have not done anything for the community and that's why the boys have been restive and we've been trying to cool them down. When Gulf oil (the forerunner to Chevron) was here, they had a friendly relationship with us. Now see how they've barred us from their compound".

But Haastrup says, "The gates to our Escravos terminal had been locked before the communal crises. The crises only made it more important to keep the gates locked. The terminal is an industrial facility and not a public area. The safety of our employees and those of the communities in the areas of our employment is paramount to us and locking the gates will ensure that all unauthorized persons without any legitimate business in the terminal are not exposed to unnecessary hazards"

He explains that it is absolutely untrue that the company discriminates against the people of Ugborodo in its employment policy.. "Chevron is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of ethnic affiliations, religion or gender. Especially since the inter-ethnic violence, it has been difficult for

other ethnic groups who are not from the area to work in Escravos. In Escravos, there are more Itsekiri employees from Ugborodo than any other ethnic group. It is important to note that the oil industry is a capital and technology intensive business; it is not that reliant on a large labor force. With the events of 2003 and the down-turn of our activities in the swamp, our employment needs have further reduced and many of our contractors have had to lay off their employees. As activities ramp up again, it is expected that new opportunities for employment will emerge", Haastrup says.

There is no functional hospital in the town. The 18 bed hospital built in 1992 by Chevron at Madangho was shut after it was razed several times as a result of inter communal brawl with the Ijaw. The only clinical service is that offered by Chevron every Tuesday from their houseboats. It is a common sight to see gun throttling mobile policemen and soldiers in strategic places in the town every Tuesday when the Chevron medical staffs are around. All the schools including the Ogidigben Grammar School which is the only secondary school in the community are shut.

Normal classes have not resumed since 1999 when inter communal strife between the Ijaw and Itsekiri over the location of the headquarters of Warri South local government was ignited. As the fighting raged the teachers and students scampered for safety. Many parents had to send their children to Warri for school. Some of the teachers managed to offer skeletal services by teaching the students once in a while at the Ekpere primary school in Ode Ugborodo.

The people can no longer engage in their traditional occupation of farming and fishing because of the pollution of the environment arising from oil exploration. It is a common feature to see



fishermen toiling in the rivers for 24 hours and catching fishes not worth than N250. The option is to engage in deep sea fishing which can only be done with big boats and trawlers which requires a lot of money to acquire. The engines of the boats alone cost between N800,000 and N1.6 million which the people can hardly afford.

The people allege that Chevron security officials regularly chase them away from the rivers. "In the morning you will see Chevron security officials patrolling the river and they will be moving up and down. Sometimes they will tell the poor fishermen to leave the river", alleges Mama Ayo who says, "I really don't know what they want us to do to keep body and soul together. I really do not know how they want us to survive. The elders and youth have made demands on Chevron, nothing came out of it. We took up the mantle as women to also make demands from the company, we have been met by a brick wall"<sup>4</sup>

Transportation is very costly particularly with the phasing out of the big boats that usually take between 8 to 9 hours to get to Warri from Ugborodo. Augustine Oritsejeminone, 33, an unemployed Accounting graduate from the University of Port Harcourt says "the local boats had to be phased out because of incessant attacks from the Ijaw which led to many passengers being trapped. Sometimes the boats are sunk in the process". The big boats which are vital for transportation because of the capacity to carry a lot of load usually charge N400 per trip to Warri. The faster two 75 horse power speed boats now charges N1,200 for the same trip.

Oritsejeminone says, "It is simply terrible. We believe that one day there will be hope. Nothing is happening though we have a company on our home soil that we thought that we could benefit from"

"There's no school in the community, there's no road, nothing is happening here. No hospitals. We need development. The nation should hear our cry. We are underdeveloped. The government and Chevron should come to our aid. The children growing up here have no hope. At the end they will become slaves on their own land if nothing is done to restore the poor condition of living here. Even the community is sinking and the population gradually dying off. What kind of hope can we then have", he queries

Oritsejeminone whose wife Elizabeth, 31 is also a graduate of French from the same university, says, "If the youth do not have something to do they will become a nuisance to society. The youth are supposed to be leaders of tomorrow. The government should try and ensure that they engage the youth because they are the leaders of tomorrow. My grand parent's home in Koko was destroyed as a result of the crisis. Most of us do not have homes any more, we lost them to the crises. As you can see all you have here are thatched houses, we do not have homes any more". He is particularly piqued that since the February 2005 crisis, Chevron has been talking of a global MOU which was recently signed by the Gbaramatu community.

The cooperative society conceived in the MOU signed in July, 2002 as part of the process to empower the women started only four months ago. But the women say this is hardly enough to meet their needs. "We just started the cooperative to make supplies for some of the service companies. We cannot live on that because what we are given to supply is so small that the profit margin is not enough to take care of us. The cooperative started some four months ago. We've not started benefiting from its effect".

Haastrup says that the panacea for peaceful engagement in the oil communities includes the following:



- The different ethnic groups need to commit themselves to peaceful co-existence and pursue dialogue instead of violence as a means of resolving disputes and disagreements.
- There is a need for the Nigerian economy to be diversified so that the current focus on the oil industry for employment is drastically reduced as the oil industry can only employ a fraction of those who are unemployed.
- There is a need for all stakeholders to contribute to the development of the communities in the Niger Delta, especially those in the remote areas of production which have been neglected for many years.
- There is a need to encourage and promote the spirit of self help in many communities, so that communities can strive to do more for themselves.
- There is a need to ensure transparency and accountability among all stakeholders so that the enormous contributions to development in the area can be more apparent.
- There is a need to provide a more stable environment as it is only when business thrives that revenues can be generated to contribute to further development.
- It is important for all parties to respect the rule of law rather than taking unilateral decisions and actions that can cause a breach of the peace.

### End Notes

1. See Interview
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Ibid



## CHAPTER 6

### ECHOES OF A UNITED STRUGGLE...

The women protest reverberated throughout the region with other women groups taking a cue from the Ugborodo action, which compelled Chevron to the dialogue table and led to the signing of the MOU. The women of Gbaramatu also occupied the Chevron facility on their territory. On August 8, 2002, Ilaje, Ijaw and Itsekiri jointly occupied the operational headquarters of Chevron and Shell Petroleum Development Company in Warri. This time however the companies bared their fangs allowing their security forces to brutalize the women.

The voices of the women speak of their coming together and their grievances:

Mrs. Bimpe Ebi, an Ilaje says, "the rivers they are polluting is our life and death. We depend on it for everything...when this situation is unbearable, we decided to come together to protest. Ijaw, Itsekiri and Ilaje we are one, we are brothers and sisters, it is only people who do not understand that think we are fighting ourselves. Our common enemies are the oil companies and their backers".

"We don't want Shell, Chevron, Texaco or any other oil companies again. They should leave us alone. We don't have guns, and we don't have any weapon to fight them. Since they have treated us like this. We are prepared to die", says Mrs. Rose Miebi, an Ijaw.

The reasons behind the occupations and demonstrations were not new. Again the words of the women explain it best:

"Chevron has not conducted EIA. They send effluent into the creeks. The fish from this river when eaten smell and taste of crude oil"<sup>1</sup> claims Mrs. Funke Tunjor.



The response of the people of the Niger Delta to 40 years of oil exploration and exploitation has been to organize across ethnic nationalities. Beginning with the Ogoni Bill of Rights in 1990, each nationality has issued its own declaration (Kaiama Declaration of the Ijaw, the Aklaka Declaration of the Egi people, the Resolutions of the First Economic Summit, the Oron Bill of Rights, the Warri Accord, and the Ikwerre Charter) stating their intention and determination to reclaim control over their land and resources and their commitment to a pan-Delta alliance.

Historically, the Niger Delta is regarded as one of the major sites of African resistance to colonial rule. The most significant strategies adopted included crop delays, tax evasion and boycotts, industrial action, workers' demonstration, the establishment of independent African churches as well as cultural/welfare organizations. Others include breaking the monopoly of European businesses, sporadic revolts and protests, and sustained armed struggles. Even though significant protests by women were rare in those times, they did exist. (Mba, 1982; Alder, 1999). However the Aba women's riot of 1929 arising from the anticipated taxation of women was a significant step. (Afigbo, 1966, *Journal of African Society*, 1930, pp. 542-543.

This was preceded by a detailed assessment of people's wealth as well as a census of population, livestock and economic trees. For a long time, it was believed that taxation alone triggered the protests. However, there was a litany of other complaints: persecution, extortion and corruption among native court members, the high-handedness of appointed warrant chiefs, illegal and oppressive sanitary fines, continuance and enforcement of unpaid labour on civil constructions, unfair/excessive imprisonment, low prices of farm products (especially palm oil and palm kernel) and high prices for imported goods, especially tobacco and spirits.

Elsewhere, the protest of the Egba women in 1948 led by Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti that resulted in the abdication of the throne by Alake Ademola was a culmination of the anger against an oppressive tax regime.

Just like it happened in the case of the women of Aba and Abeokuta who had to bear the can when the agitations by the men folk failed to bear fruits, the women of Ugborodo and Gbaramatu took on the struggle and achieved significant results after the protracted protests by the elders and youth met a deaf hear.

#### End Notes

1. Ekine, Sokari: Op. Cit.



## CHAPTER 7

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Enthroning Good Governance and Social Justice**

Governments at all levels must be responsible in promoting the good of the people. The irresponsibility at the level of governance is responsible for the high level of neglect of this oil producing areas. A situation where the oil rich Niger Delta is bereft of sociainfrastructure such as roads, electricity, water, hospitals and congenial housing is deplorable and flies in the face of the huge budgets that the three tiers of government declare every year.

In the first four years (1999-2003), the Obasanjo government budgeted N350 billion for road construction, N220 billion for NEPA and an equally staggering amount for poverty alleviation.<sup>1</sup> There is no indication that these huge amounts have percolated in any way as far as these communities are concerned.

The roads are still filled with craters; electricity is still epileptic while poverty walks tall on the streets. More than 70 per cent of the country's 120 million people are said to live below one dollar a day.<sup>2</sup> Even at a time when the price of oil has jumped up in the international market, the regime has increased the price of petroleum products more than eight times since it assumed power in May, 1999 to rein in the pauperization of the people.<sup>3</sup>

The other levels of government have not fared better. The 36 governors also have little to show for the huge allocations from the federation account in the last five years. In fact it is said that most of these allocations end up in foreign accounts of the governors and their cronies. Governors of the South-south comprising the Niger Delta region need to also justify their huge



allocations including the 13 per cent earned from the derivation formula.

The local governments also got a total of ₦700 billion between May 1999 and May 2002 without the people benefiting from any democracy dividend. The high rate of corruption and capital flight in Nigeria also negates the commitment of government to social welfare programmes or laying the basis for sound socio-infrastructure.

The audit report released by the acting Auditor General, Vincent Azie says that more than N23 billion was lost in 10 ministries in 2001 casting a slur on the anti-corruption stance of the regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo. <sup>4</sup>

The amount represents financial frauds ranging from embezzlement, payment for jobs not done, over invoicing, double debiting, and inflation of contract figures to release of money without the consent of the approving authority. This is said to be the biggest rip off in the nation's history. *This Day* newspapers had earlier reported that Nigeria lost N8.379billion to corruption in six months. <sup>5</sup>

Nigeria is also said to have lost \$42billion to capital flight between 1971 and 2001. The information is contained in a comprehensive study on Capital Flight and Macroeconomic Growth in Four African Countries - Nigeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco and Ghana by the Debt Management Office (DMO).

According to the report, the highest level of capital flight occurred in 2000 when \$11.84billion was repatriated from the country. The highest level of average capital flight of \$4.663billion also took place under the Obasanjo regime from 1999 to 2001.

The Babangida period of 1985 to 1993 recorded \$2.287billion, that of Buhari who was in charge between 1984 to 1985 was \$1.978billion while Obasanjo's first coming as a military leader, between 1976 and 1979 recorded the least amount of capital flight - \$926million. <sup>6</sup>

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) also estimates that past rulers in Nigeria stole and misused 220 billion Pounds in the last four decades. This amount is said to equal all western aid to Africa in four decades. *The Telegraph* of London says, "The looting of Africa's most populous country amounted to a sum equivalent to 300 years of British aid to the continent". <sup>7</sup> If this process of corruption is unchecked, the country may soon go to the dogs and acquire the status of a banana island.

Although the Obasanjo government has instituted the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) as part of its intervention schemes in addressing the infrastructural neglect of the Niger Delta, it is feared that this may just end up as "job for the boys", the same way the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) and Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) were conceived.

#### MOU

There is the need to abide by the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding MOU which was jointly signed in July 2002 by the Ugborodo Community, Chevron and the Delta State Government. Unlike some other MOUs that were faulted on the ground of forced endorsement, this MOU was freely entered into after a process of negotiation between the community and Chevron.

It is unfortunate that no significant development seems to have occurred since the signing of the MOU. In spite of the stipulation



## THE 11-DAY SIEGE:

that the MOU would be in force for five years, the attempt by Chevron to substitute it with what is called a global MOU may not be in the interest of peace and concord in the area. It is important that Chevron should seek to dialogue with the people of Ugborodo if there is a problem in the process of implementation of the MOU. The implementation would also serve as a lesson that non-violent approach to conflict could yield better result...

### **Environment**

The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) should be conducted in order to determine the extent of the adverse effects of oil exploration activities and how to ensure that the host communities are not severely affected. Environmental agencies should ensure that oil companies do not unduly pollute the environment of their host communities with impunity.

A situation where the oil companies are not held accountable for their actions in this area impairs the process of peace. In the specific case of Ugborodo and Gbaramatu communities, there is the need to restore the environment so that the people can resume their traditional mode of fishing and farming. In the meantime, Chevron should support the community with boats that can make deep sea fishing possible and also take care of gender needs of the women in the region.

### **Employment**

The government and the oil companies should introduce direct and indirect employment policy to be targeted at taking the youth population of these communities off the streets. A situation where a large number of unemployed youths roam the communities without anything to do is not healthy. The oil companies and its contractor firms should endeavour to employ citizens of Ugborodo and Gbaramatu kingdom. The oil companies should also spearhead the training of the people in individual trades like fashion and

design, hair dressing etc so that the people can fend for themselves. The people should also be organized into cooperatives.

### **Infrastructure**

The provision of social infrastructure like water, electricity, roads that will engender the sustenance of socio-economic life should be accorded high priority.

### **Promoting Inter and Intra-Communal Relations**

The promotion of healthy inter-communal relationship between the Itsekiri and Ijaw so that the process of development will not be affected by persistent bickering, antagonism, skirmishes and destruction of properties is of utmost necessity.

### **Communication**

There should be regular communication between the oil companies and their host communities and also transparency. The absence of interaction between the Ugborodo community and Chevron staff reinforced by the locking of the gates is counter productive and has virtually killed businesses and further strangled the people's economic life.

Social and economic interactions should be encouraged because of the attendant trickle down effect on the community. Thus, ventures like recreational centres in the frame of the senatorial accountability forum introduced by Senator Martins Yellowe in Ogoniland where explanations, feedbacks and feed-forwards were always offered his constituents to recreate the mind of the youth in order to nip in the bud the propensity for negative, reactionary and nefarious tendencies should be introduced.

The Federal and state governments must also ensure that oil companies conduct their activities in such a way that they are in harmony with the interests of their host communities...



Government should ensure that the oil companies pay adequate compensation to their host communities.

### **Human Rights Violations**

There is a need for civil society organizations to ensure that they monitor and report human rights violations in these communities. A situation where defenseless people are shot and soldiers frisk the private parts of protesting women like it happened in February 2005 is deplorable.

As noted in *Perpetuating Poverty, consolidating Powerlessness: Oil and the Niger Delta*, a publication of Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC), "The infringement of these rights arise largely from the neglect of the basic needs of the indigenes, their determination to assert their rights and failure of government to adequately fashion out policies that can ameliorate the situation and assuage their feelings. If the development needs of these people were seriously addressed, the conditions that lead to these human rights violations would have been substantially addressed".

### **Promoting Peace and Security**

Promoting peace and security is in the collective interest of the oil multinationals, their host communities and the nation. Peace building has to do with efforts directed at creating conditions, which may remove causes of conflict. In concrete terms, government has to take particular actions to eradicate poverty, starvation and disease, reverse the trend of environmental destruction etc. Peace making on the other hand involves helping parties involved in a conflict to reach lasting harmony. This is often referred to as "conflict resolution".<sup>8</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In their preface to *Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation*, Onigu Otite and Isaac Olawale

Albert argue that although conflict is perceived in most parts of the world, including Nigeria as something abnormal, dysfunctional and therefore detestable, it is a fact of life and could be a precursor of some positive change. They contend that every plural society is bound to experience one form of conflict or the other.

"What makes a society an ideal polity is the extent to which the conflicting interests and needs in a society are constructively managed so that violence does not threaten its continued existence. Conflict challenges the rational man/woman to think of alternative ways of meeting contending human needs and interests. What is to be emphasized therefore is not conflict per se but the ways man responds to it. Conflict needs not follow a negative course. If constructively handled, it can become an agent of growth and development for all parties. To this extent, conflict is not to be demonized but confronted with efficient procedures for cooperative problem-solving"<sup>9</sup>

What is important is not the absence of conflict but how it is managed for positive impact. Nigeria's social structure is inherently prone to conflicts generated from diverse ethnic-cultural interests and goals, and from the political and economic necessities of survival as individuals and as identifiable autonomous social groups struggle for advantages. Crucial in this respect, especially amongst rural people, is the world of work to achieve subsistence in the economic order and the sphere of material and physical resources.<sup>10</sup>

The study of the oil communities reveal that the sore point relates to ecological degradation, which has affected its traditional occupation - fishing and farming. The grievances also include lack of employment as the oil companies are accused of preferring non-natives.



Other grievances according to Ukeje include lack of basic social-infrastructure and economic development opportunities at the grassroots, non-compensation for land use and degradation, corporate insensitivity and/or neglect on the part of the multinational oil companies, divide and rule tactics employed by oil companies, sexual harassment of local women by oil workers, as well as epidemics related to oil exploration.

Thus the wave of protests by oil communities is underscored by the "decision of a hitherto voiceless, subordinate and underprivileged minority groups to take up the gauntlet and challenge state structures and institutions controlled by majority groups who have been grossly unjust over time in the distribution of national resources". (Ojo, 2002, p.8).<sup>11</sup>

Amnesty International in a recent report says, the Delta's marginalized peoples vigorously pursue the campaign for their rights. Yet their ability to claim their economic and social rights is impeded by continued threats to civil and political freedoms. Human rights defenders and journalists, including foreign television crews, have been harassed, detained and sometimes beaten for investigating oil spills or security forces violations. The inhabitants of communities suspected of obstructing oil production or harbouring criminals are at risk of collective punishment by the security forces. The federal government has rejected calls for independent and impartial inquiries into abuses by these forces, which operate under its direct control. A military and police Joint Task Force that was set up in 2004 to restore order in the region and which guards oil personnel and facilities, has been no more accountable for its use of excessive and lethal force than its predecessor under a military government.<sup>12</sup>

Protests put down with excessive force arise from government failures to respect, protect and fulfill economic and social rights. No effective recourse exists for harm resulting from excessive use of force or from the proximity of pipelines, oil spills and gas flaring to homes, farms and waterways. Few of the region's inhabitants have the resources to seek compensation through protracted, prohibitively expensive and uncertain legal action against powerful oil companies, and through a legal system widely perceived as corrupt. In spite of windfall gains for the Nigerian government as global oil prices have more than doubled in the last two years, the inhabitants of the Niger Delta remain among the most deprived oil communities in the world - 70 per cent live on less than US\$1 a day, the standard economic measure of absolute poverty.<sup>13</sup>

What has emerged from the intervention of the women therefore is the possibility of not only giving a peaceful face to the protests but the potency of extracting more concessions from the oil companies in the process. This implies the need for realism and a re-appraisal of strategies by the oil communities to reinforce their agitations. And most importantly it shows that women are assets for a national development and thus should be included in decision making and peace processes.



## End Notes

1. Iyare, Tony: *A General Overview of Political Parties in Nigeria*, a contribution to Odion-Akhaine, Sylvester (ed), *Governance, Nigeria and the World* (Lagos, CENCOD, 2004). P.93-94
2. See Human Development Reports (New York, UN, 2003, 2004, 2005)
3. Iyare, Tony Op. Cit.
4. *Newswatch*, February 24, 2003 p.21-27
5. *This Day*, Saturday, February 10, 2001 p.1-2
6. *The Punch*, February 19, 2003 p.1-2
7. *The Telegraph of London*, June 25, 2005.
8. See Okoye, Festus (ed): *Ethnic and Religious Rights in Nigeria* (Kaduna, Human Rights Monitor, 1998) p. 65
9. Otite, Onigu and Albert, Isaac Olawale (ed): *Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation* (Ibadan, Spectrum, 2001) p. ix
10. Otite Onigu, *On Conflicts, Their Resolution, Transformation, and management, a contribution to Op Cit.* p.19
11. See Ukeje, Charles: Op. Cit. p. 606.
12. Amnesty International: *Claiming rights and resources injustice, oil and violence in Nigeria*, November 3, 2005.
13. Ibid.

## Appendix 1

### E-mail Response to WARDC Enquiries by Mr. Deji Haastrup, Acting General Manager, Chevron-Textaco

#### Q1:

**The MOU entered into with the Ugborodo community seem to have staved off the women invasion of July 2002 and doused their anger but exactly three years after nothing seem to be happening. Has the MOU been discarded or what actually is happening?**

#### A:

- The July, 2002 MOU was signed with several communities, not just Ugborodo.
- Let me provide you with a detailed background on this matter. Women and children from several communities (Ugborodo included) had occupied our facilities in Escravos, Dibi, Olero, Abiteye, Makaraba, Utonana and Opuekeba in our Western operations area. In the main, they wanted employment for their husbands and sons and more community development projects for their various communities. Following days of appeal to withdraw from these facilities, they determined not to leave until we enter into an MOU with them. Quite apart from the loss of production occasioned by the occupation, we were seriously concerned about the safety of the women and their children and we were eager for the occupation to end without any untoward incident.
- Despite the nature of the circumstances under which the MOUs were signed, we were fully committed to carrying out our commitments which included several building



projects in the communities and employment opportunities for the people.

- To facilitate this, a new Facilities Engineering division was created in our Warri office called the Community Projects Development group and headed by two of our senior expatriate engineers.
- Through many of our contractor companies, we immediately started to recruit youth from these communities, starting with Ugborodo and Ugboegungun around the Escravos terminal.
- We also completed the design of some of the buildings we committed to providing under the MOU and also completed the sand filling of the New Town site.
- All these ran into several million dollars and we were making steady progress with the implementation when, in March 2003, the ethnic violence that engulfed the entire area forced us to shut down our swamp facilities.
- We willingly offered to evacuate and indeed evacuated at our own cost the Ugborodo people who had sought refuge in our facilities when their villages were burnt and their people killed by rival groups.
- The medical care provided to the people and the humanitarian evacuation of those in distress were part of the reasons cited by the US State Department for giving Chevron the Award for Corporate Excellence. The Ugborodo people also wrote us a letter of appreciation.
- During the ethnic violence, virtually all the community projects we had provided for the Ugborodo community were burned, including the non-fee paying hospital that was equipped and provided with free drugs by Chevron. The community hospital has now been built twice by the company and burnt down twice by rival ethnic groups.
- Because of the security situation, it took nearly two years before the people could venture back into the communities.

- Our facilities which were producing approximately 140,000 bpd before the incident are yet to be resuscitated as they have been severely vandalized during our absence. The latest estimate of the cost for reviving the facilities is more than half a billion US dollars.
- Several projects had to be differed and many contracts terminated, so that contractors had to lay off many of their employees, thereby further diminishing the limited employment opportunities.
- Under the 2002 MOU, Chevron agreed to provide certain projects while the communities agreed to provide a disruption-free environment for our operations.
- During this difficult period, a complete review of our operations was necessitated by the severe impact of the ethnic crisis on our business. We needed to ask pertinent questions: How can we ensure the safety of our employees and those of the communities, and the survival of our business under the circumstances? Should we continue to build community projects as demanded of us only for them to be burned down? How can we ensure the community takes ownership of development projects and ensure their sustainability? Can development be considered to be sustainable when life of the people and their property are at constant risk of destruction? How best can we contribute to stability in the area? In essence, how can we, along with other stakeholders, engage in a partnership that can positively contribute to sustainable development while carrying on our own legitimate business in a safe and secure environment? We began to engage with other stakeholders to find genuine answers to these and similar questions. This process of listening, learning and analyzing has led us to evolve a new model of community engagement that would build on the moderate successes of the past. The new strategies has been widely communicated with stakeholders



and has won endorsement by communities in our areas of operation and most of them have signed new Global Memorandums of Understanding (GMOU) based on the new community engagement model.

**Q2:**

**Shortly after signing the MOU, Chevron spoke to the New York Times both in Lagos and from its headquarters in San Francisco about increasing its fund for support to its host communities in the Niger Delta. How far has that been done?**

**A:**

- Please see my comments in the first question regarding how much we had committed to the MOU implementation before the enormously destructive ethnic violence of March 2003.

**Q3:**

**Chevron has been talking recently of Global MOU and has even signed an agreement on its implementation with the Gbaramatu Community. What really is the Global MOU about? Does that mean the MOU with the Ugborodo community endorsed three years ago has been discarded?**

**A:**

- As stated in the answer to the first question, the 2005 Global MOU is the result of the new thinking and the outcome of community engagement and stakeholder consultations.
- The Global MOU is the administrative instrument or governance mechanism of our new direction in community engagement and sustainable development.
- The new model is based on five key principles:
  - Participatory Partnership (all stakeholders come together to provide stability and development)

- Transparency and Accountability (all stakeholders to operate an open and accountable system)
  - Stakeholder Engagement (All parties engage each other to strengthen and further relationships)
  - Sustainable Development through Community Empowerment (Capacity of communities would be built so that they can be meaningfully involved in the planning, designing and execution of development projects to ensure community ownership and sustainability)
  - Security and the rule of law (Government, community and all stakeholders to ensure security and adherence to the rule of law)
- Instead of the previous bilateral relationships between company and the communities, with Chevron doing things for the communities; this model requires all stakeholders to jointly do things with the communities (Participatory partnership) through a multi-lateral relationship
  - In recognition of the merit of the new community engagement model, many communities, including the Gbaramatu and Egbema communities — which had occupied four of our facilities at the same time as the Ugborodo community occupied the terminal, and with whom we signed the 2002 MOU at the same time we signed with the Ugborodo people — have signed the new 2005 GMOU
  - The new GMOU model has won praise and endorsement from stakeholders, including NGOs, State governments, community representatives, and NDDC and donor agencies.



Q4:

**The Ugborodo community complains about the locking of the Chevron gates since the communal crisis of 2003 to prevent interaction between the people and Chevron workers and its contractors which has affected businesses in places like Ugbolegin (back of fence), Mandangho, Ode Ugborodo and other areas. The people believe this is an attempt to strangulate them economically. How do you react to this?**

A:

The gates to our Escravos terminal had been locked before the communal crises. The crises only made it more important to keep the gates locked. The terminal is an industrial facility and not a public area. The safety of our employees and those of the communities in the areas of our employment is paramount to us and locking the gates will ensure that all unauthorized persons without any legitimate business in the terminal are not exposed to unnecessary hazards.

Q5:

**All the proposed projects like the building of a new town, the provision of water, electricity and the building of palaces for the two chiefs have not taken off as planned. What is responsible for the delay?**

A:

The new GMOU provides funding for community development in areas of our operation. A community elected Regional Development Council participates in making the decision on what to use the funding for. If the Ugborodo people still want to use their own funding under the new GMOU for those projects you have named, they can do so in accordance with the governance model of the new GMOUs.

Q6:

**The community complains about discrimination in employment and that Chevron policy appears to favour the employment of people who are non natives of the area. Even the 40 CLO that were employed on account of the MOU were disengaged after the crisis of 2003. Why is this so?**

A:

This is absolutely untrue. Chevron is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of ethnic affiliations, religion or gender. Especially since the inter-ethnic violence, it has been difficult for other ethnic groups to work in Escravos who are not from the area. In Escravos, there are more Itsekiri employees from Ugborodo than any other ethnic group. It is important to note that the oil industry is a capital and technology intensive business; it is not that reliant on a large labor force. With the events of 2003 and the down-turn of our activities in the swamp, our employment needs have further reduced and many of our contractors have had to lay off their employees. As activities ramp up again, it is expected that new opportunities for employment will emerge.

Q7:

**Are there problems in abiding by the terms of the MOU which was supposed to be in force for five years?**

A:

Please refer to the answer to question #1

Q8:

**What in the company's view is the panacea to stave off restiveness in the oil communities with particular reference to Ugborodo, your host community?**



A:

There are several suggestions that could help the situation:

- The different ethnic groups need to commit to peaceful co-existence and pursue dialogue instead of violence as a means of resolving disputes and disagreements.
- There is a need for the Nigerian economy to be diversified so that the current focus on the oil industry for employment is drastically reduced as the oil industry can only employ a fraction of those who are unemployed.
- There is a need for all stakeholders to contribute to the development of the communities in the Niger Delta, especially those in the remote areas of production, which have been neglected for many years.
- There is a need to encourage and promote the spirit of self help in many communities, so that communities can strive to do more for themselves.
- There is a need to ensure transparency and accountability among all stakeholders so that the enormous contributions to development in the area can be more apparent
- There is a need to provide a more stable environment as it is only when business thrives that revenues can be generated to contribute to further development
- It is important for all parties to respect the rule of law rather than taking unilateral decisions and actions that can cause a breach of the peace.

Q9:

**Do you have any programme to arrest the degradation of the environment of the Ugborodo community?**

A:

There is a need to understand what is meant by “the degradation of the environment” of the community? If we know the specifics of your question we might be able to proffer suggestions.

## APPENDIX 2

### MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

**CHEVRON NIGERIA LIMITED**

AND

**UGBORODO COMMUNITY**

AND

**THE DELTA STATE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA.**

**This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered on  
this 17th day of July 2002**

Between

**Chevron Nigeria Limited, a company incorporated under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the operator of the NNPC/Chevron Joint Venture (hereinafter called “COMPANY”),**

And

**Ugborodo Community (hereinafter called COMMUNITY) and shall where the context admits include Ode Ugborodo, Ogidigben, Ajudaibo, Madangho, Ijaghala and Ugbolegin.**

And

**The Government of Delta State, Nigeria, (hereinafter called Government)**



## INTENT

The intent of this MOU is to guide and regulate the relationship between the COMPANY and the COMMUNITY in respect of the operations of the COMPANY, its Contractors, subcontractors and agents within the Escravos area. Nothing in this agreement is intended to supercede the laws of Nigeria and internationally accepted standards of business and civil conduct.

## PREAMBLE

The COMPANY is committed to building and sustaining a relationship with its host communities based on mutual respect and trust. In order to strengthen its relationship with the people of Ugborodo, its neighbors and hosts in the Escravos area, the COMPANY will continue to maintain open and continuous dialogue and consultations with accredited representative of the COMMUNITY, the local government and Delta State Government on matters affecting this relationship. The COMPANY's core values support sustainable community development, local business development, training and skills development activities to enable the COMMUNITY to take advantage of business and development opportunities. The COMPANY's employment/recruitment policy will deliberately ensure a fair and equitable representation of qualified COMMUNITY indigenes in the COMPANY's workforce. The COMPANY is committed to protecting the safety of people and the environment and will continue to uphold the principles of the rule of law. The COMMUNITY undertakes to provide an enabling and secure environment for the COMPANY to carry on its business. The COMMUNITY commits to a cordial and peaceful resolution of difference through dialogue and persuasion and to eschew violence or acts of trespass as a means of expression. The rule of law and the maintenance of order will be respected at all times by all parties.

The COMPANY will carry Government along in its dealings with the COMMUNITY.

## OBLIGATIONS

- 1.0 The COMPANY commits of the Following:
  - 1.1 UGBORODO NEW TOWN
    - 1) Re-sandfilling of the site of the Ugborodo New Town to commence by September 1, 2002
    - 2) 1.2 Building works on the Civic/Community Center will commence by September 1, 2002
    - 3) 1.3 Six contracts within the limits of approval of the COMPANY will be awarded before December 31, 2002
    - 4) 1.4 These six contracts will be awarded using the open tendering and competitive bid process among COMMUNITY that are competitive per contracting process
  - 1.5 As part of the COMPANY's policy to promote local content and local business development, the six contracts will be awarded to contractors indigenous to the COMMUNITY that are competitive per our contracting process
  - 1.6 Without prejudice to the foregoing, whenever a contractor not indigenous to Ugborodo wins a contract on the New Town Project, the selected contractor will be required to give substantial consideration to local community content



1.7 The COMPANY expect that local contractor will acquire relevant skills and develop business capacity through the execution of projects and supply of materials at price competitive with the COMPANY's estimates

1.8 The COMPANY agrees to train manpower from the COMMUNITY in various skills at the SPMG workshop in the Escravos Tank Farm.

## 2.0 EGP3/EGTL

2) 2.1 The COMPANY and the COMMUNITY as part of the on-going Community Communication Engagement process will discuss projects and other obligations of company to company to be developed for the benefits of the COMMUNITY as a result of the EGP3/EGTL projects when the project is final approved

## 3) 3.0 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

4) 3.1 The COMPANY will provide electricity to Ode-Ugborodo for residential and cottage industry use, through a direct connection to the COMPANY's power system at the Escravos Terminal. Work on this project will commence by October 1, 2002

5) 3.2 The COMPANY will provide improved water supply system by extending the existing water connection from the Escravos terminal to Ode Ugborodo up to Ugbolegin. Work on this project will commence by October 2002

6) 3.3 The COMPANY will construct teacher's quarters for 4 primary schools in the COMMUNITY. Work on this project will commence by January 2003.

7) 3.4 The COMPANY will construct a block of six classrooms and teachers' quarters at Ogidigben Grammar School. Work on this project will commence by January 2003

## 8) 4.0 SCHOLARSHIPS

9) 4.1 The COMPANY will process and pay the bursaries of COMMUNITY scholarship for the year 2000/2001, and 2002 at the existing rates.

10) 4.2 Effective from 2002/2003 academic session, bursaries for scholars in tertiary institutions will be increased from N50, 000 (Fifty thousand Naira) to N75, 000 (Seventy thousand Naira) only. Also effective from 2003, bursaries for COMMUNITY scholars in Secondary schools will be increased from N10, 000 (Ten thousand Naira) to N20, 000 (Twenty thousand Naira).

## 11) 5.0 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

12) 5.1 In order to promote sustainable development of the COMMUNITY, the COMPANY will engage a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with proven expertise in aquaculture to work with the women of the COMMUNITY, who will be formed into a cooperative for the purpose of fish farming, poultry farming, shrimp farming and other sustainable aquaculture enterprise.



- 13) 5.2 Once the COMMUNITY aquaculture business enterprise is established and production commences, the COMPANY through its Escravos operations will provide a ready market at competitive pricing for the products of the COMMUNITY women's cooperative. Work on sourcing a credible NGO for this business development initiative will commence immediately.
- 14) 5.3 In support of the COMPANY's policy of developing local human resources and business potential, the COMPANY will register women contractors from the COMMUNITY and provide them with the opportunity to supply at competitive rates foodstuff (such as yams, palm oil, salt, pepper, etc.) to the COMPANY's Escravos operations. These products will be supplied through the COMPANY's Warri office.
- 15) 5.4 The COMPANY will supply 4 speedboats each powered by two 75 H.P. engines to ease transportation and enhance business opportunities for the COMMUNITY.

## 6. EMPLOYMENT

### COMPANY

- 6.1 The COMPANY will employ 15(Fifteen) indigenes of the COMMUNITY through the COMPANY's established hiring process. This process includes aptitude testing, skills testing, and oral interview. The 15 referred to will emerge either solely from the COMMUNITY indigenes who are successful in the

testing process. The COMPANY intends to complete this hiring process by September 1, 2002. The employment by COMPANY will not prejudice any other employment that would otherwise have been done for COMMUNITY indigenes by COMPANY.

- 6.2 In addition to 6.1 above, the COMPANY will recruit a minimum of 5 persons every year for the next five years from the COMMUNITY. The first set of 5 persons will be employed by the end of 2002 and subsequently, on or before September 1, for the other 4 years. The process for employing these 25 persons is as in 6.1 above.

### CONTRACTOR

- 6.3 COMPANY and COMPANY contractors have agreed that contractors will employ a total additional 40 indigenes of COMMUNITY, who will also act as contractor/COMMUNITY liaison officers.
- 6.4 These contractor representatives when employed by contractors shall be fully answerable to contractors (i.e. to their respective employers) and shall work according to the direction and under the supervision of the contractor by which they are employed.
- 6.5 COMMUNITY accepts that the respective employers (COMPANY contractors) have the full power to discipline, including termination of employment of, any person so employed, provided that any person to be employed by the relevant contractor to replace the person whose employment has been terminated shall also be from the COMMUNITY.



- 6.6 COMPANY and COMPANY contractors have agreed that contractors will have contact men for all construction jobs
- 7.0 OFFICIAL RESIDENCES OF COMMUNITY LEADERS
- 7.1 The COMPANY will build the official residences of the Eghare Aja of Ugborodo and the Olaja Orori. All the parties understand that these residences are NOT the private property of the incumbent persons presently occupying these positions and will pass to the next Eghare Aja and the next Olaja Orori after the tenure of the incumbent Eghare Aja and Olaja Orori. Work on this project will start by January 2003.
- 8.0 The GOVERNMENT represented by the undersigned commits to the following;
- 8.1 As contribution to the development of the COMMUNITY, the GOVERNMENT will commence the construction of housing units on the site of the New Ugborodo Town as soon as the site is mad ready for the building projects
- 8.2 The GOVERNMENT insists on the establishment and maintenance of peace, order and good government with its territory. Its representatives are available to all parties for consultation and further dialogue in support of these principles and to ensure grievances are addressed through lawful means.
- 9.0 The COMMUNITY represented by the Undersigned commits to the following:
- 9.1 The COMMUNITY will provide a conducive and trouble free atmosphere for the COMPANY,

- COMPANY's contractors or their agents and sub contractors to work without delay or disruption
- 9.2 The COMMUNITY representatives will use all resources to ensure that no other party will interfere or restrict COMPANY personnel, COMPANY's contractors' employees or their agents or subcontractors from carrying out their contractual obligations to COMPANY.
- 9.3 The COMMUNITY representatives will ensure that details of this agreement are communicated to all interested parties within the COMMUNITY and ensure adherence to its provision
- 9.4 The COMMUNITY will submit a list of 18 names to COMPANY and COMPANY will issue Entry Passes to these people on the list submitted by COMMUNITY.
- 9.5 The COMMUNITY will ensure that in dealing with the COMPANY, its CONTRACTORS, agents and subcontractors, they follow the due processes in accordance with the rule-of-law and at all times avoid taking laws into their own hands.
- 9.6 The COMMUNITY commits to the use of dialogue and peaceful persuasion or other lawful means for the resolution of all disputes and commits to eschew violence and acts of trespass as a means of expressing their differences.



THE 11-DAY SIEGE:

10. MONITORING

A committee to be made up of all the parties shall be set up to monitor the implementation of this MOU and this committee shall meet every six months.

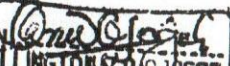
11. DURATION

This MOU shall be in force for a period of five years from the date of the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding.

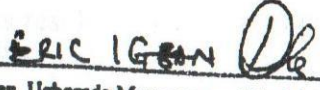
"Gains and Challenges of Women's Non Violent Struggles in the Niger-Delta"



SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE FOLLOWING PARTIES:

UGBORODO COMMUNITY

SIGN   
WELLINGTON OLRUN 17-07-2002  
THE CHAIRMAN OF  
UGBORODO COMMUNITY

  
17-7-2002  
UGBORODO COMMUNITY  
(Women Leader)

  
17-7-2002  
(Chairman, Ugorodo Manpower and Social Development Forum)

  
THE OLAJA-ORORI  
OF UGBORODO  
SIGN   
UGBORODO COMMUNITY  
ESCRAVOS 17/7/2002  
OLAJA ORORI OF UGBORODO

CHEVRON NIGERIA LIMITED

  
CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR  
CHEVRON NIGERIA LIMITED



DELTA STATE GOVERNMENT

*[Signature]*  
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR - DELTA STATE  
CHIEF JAMES IBORI 17/7/02

WITNESSED BY

NAME: A. D. MARTIN  
OCCUPATION: LEGAL PRACTITIONER  
SIGNATURE: *[Signature]*  
DATE: 17/7/02

NAME: NEAQITE ESIJEMIDE LUCKY  
OCCUPATION: LEGAL PRACTITIONER  
SIGNATURE: *[Signature]*  
DATE: 17/7/02

RESOLUTION 1325 (2000)

United Nations S/RES/1325 (2000)

Security Council Distr.: General

31 October 2000

00-72018 (E)

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Resolution 1325 (2000)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and recalling also the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

Recalling also the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,



*Expressing* concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and *recognizing* the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation, *Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

*Reaffirming* also the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

*Emphasizing* the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

*Recognizing* the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard *noting* the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

*Recognizing* also the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

*Recognizing* that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to

guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

*Noting* the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;
2. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decisionmaking levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;
3. *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;
4. *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;
5. *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and *urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;



6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures, *invites* Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;

7. *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;

8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;

9. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;

11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;

12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;



13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;
14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;
15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;
16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;
17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;
18. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

### The Researchers

#### TONY IYARE (Lead Researcher)

Tony Iyare, Journalist and Analyst on Conflict and Development issues in Africa is Editor-in-Chief, *The Gleaner News Online*, Nigeria's foremost online newspaper publication. His journalistic experience, which began during his undergraduate days, now spans more than 20 years during which he has edited two national newspapers. He is also a stringer for *The New York Times*, the highbrow and highly authoritative American newspaper.

Iyare, 45 is an Editor/Correspondent Consultant to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He has contributed stories on Nigeria to *Choices*, the UNDP quarterly magazine since 2001, edited the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) document for Nigeria and also anchored a special report on the country for *the Wall Street Journal* (Europe edition) in 2001.

His special interests include Conflicts, Development, and Environment, International Relations, Gender, Politics and other social issues. A Contributing Editor to *Nigerian Review*, this avid writer has delivered several papers on issues of the Media, Politics, Conflict, and Gender which have been published in journals and books.

A graduate of Political Science and International Relations from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ile-Ife, Iyare is a regular Guest Analyst on Conflict and Development Issues in Africa on Nigeria's biggest private TV, *African Independent Television*. He has also been very active in the pro-democracy movement in the country since his undergraduate days, 25 years ago.



**ABIOLA AKIYODE-AFOLABI (MS)**

**Ms Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, is the National Coordinator of Women Advocates Research and Documentation Center (WARDC), is a former student leader and dedicated human rights defender and, with specialization in gender and international human rights law. In recognition of her commitment and efforts on behalf of her fellow citizens, particularly the women's folk, the International League for Human Rights named her a recipient of the 1999 Defenders' Day Awards. Abiola, received the award at an impressive ceremony in New York City on December 9, 1999, the first anniversary of the United Nations Defenders Declaration.**

Abiola's accomplishments are numerous. As a student activist she was the first woman to hold the position of Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Student's Union at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and she led numerous students' civil actions nationwide to challenge military rule and promote democracy. She was highly regarded for her ability to build consensus among diverse constituencies and was successful at mediating between opposing groups to promote a unified front on several issues affect. She risked detention to identify the facilities where students were imprisoned illegally for their political views and protests, and on numerous occasions sought and obtained pro bono legal defence for the affected students while also raising and getting funds across to them in detention by all means necessary.

Abiola's work as a human rights attorney is equally noteworthy. She has taken up cases in Nigerian Courts on behalf of political prisoners and pro-democracy activists. She has also worked closely with a number of Nigerian NGOs, offering her skills as a legal advisor.

Abiola had her Masters of Law in International Human Rights Law from the University of Notre Dame Law School, Center for Civil and Human Rights, Indiana, USA. She attended the course on a full tuition scholarship, and was awarded a fellowship for her performance and professionalism.

Abiola has led several coalitions and has worked extensively on gender, human rights, law, democracy and peace building and has produced several research materials and publications on these areas. Abiola has worked as a consultant to local and international organizations on several projects. Abiola is happily married to a Medical Doctor, Kolawole Afolabi and blessed with a son, Mandela.