

**Walking  
on Caves  
of Fire**

**Saro Wiwa's  
Last Strike  
At The Hangmen**

**We Stand  
Before  
istory**

**The Role  
Of Water Abuse  
In Climate Chaos**



eco~Instigator is a quarterly publication of  
Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF)

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## Home Run: Until Victory

**A**s you read this, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) would have just marked her first anniversary. We kicked off formally at the end of March 2013 so 31st March is our anniversary. Thankfully we did not commence on April 1.

We enjoyed tremendous support in terms of goodwill and engagement throughout the year. The two issues of the Eco~Instigator we published in 2013 helped the public to get a good sense of who we are and what our vision is. We had two Sustainability Academies in 2013 with the first one focusing on "Climate Change and the Looming Food Crisis" and the second on the "The African Awakening and the Implications for the Environment." See reports on the second Academy in this issue.

The first year rolled by effortlessly because of your support and encouragement. HOMEF Board, staff and volunteers have been very focused and happily laboured to deliver on our milestones. It was so fitting that a member of our board, Pablo, was the first Instigator at our Sustainability Academy and became the first FELLOW of HOMEF in the process. Three other fellows swelled the ranks of this unique HOMEF corps of instigators. They were Dr Monika Griefhan, co-Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation, Prof. Joseph Ajenka, Vice-Chancellor of University of Port Harcourt and Noble Wadzah of Oilwatch Ghana.



In addition all members of the HOMEF Board are FELLOWS of HOMEF. This means that they are available to offer advice or to instigate us all in the onerous tasks of building peoples' power in every sphere of social and ecological struggles. One of the special milestones of our first year was the official inauguration of the University of Port Harcourt campus of the Right Livelihood College on 25th November 2013. We look forward to working very closely with postgraduate students and scholars at the highly respected university.

We are also very happy to announce that, starting this year your Eco~Instigator will become a quarterly publication thus you can look forward to reading four editions in hard copies and online at our website. In our bid to keep you abreast of happenings we commenced the publication of a monthly e-bulletin from November 2013. Do take out a free subscription to ensure you don't miss any of the rich information packages that we will be sharing.

And, if you watched closely you must have noticed that Firoze Manji of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, could not join us for HS02 in November last year. Well, he will be our instigator for HS03 coming up in Abuja, Port Harcourt and Lagos from 7 to 10 April 2014. He will also be presenting the two most awaited books on these shores: *Silence Would Be Treason – the Last Writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa* and *Claim No Easy Victories – The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral*, a book he co-edited. As is our tradition, this edition serves you a wide-ranging and thought-provoking menu. We have poetry, reports and articles. We bring you Patrick Naagbanton's sizzling review of *Silence Would Be Treason* and also call your attention to some books we feel you should have in your library. Our social media presence provides you with great information. I invite you to follow us on twitter, look up our videos and the other spaces.

As exciting as the year was, we also suffered loss. Two great supporters and illustrious justice advocates passed on in the course of 2013. I am referring to Professor Festus Iyayi and Madam Juliana Odey. Comrade Iyayi as he was fondly called in and outside the trenches of struggle was at our inaugural Sustainability Academy in August, while Madam Odey aka Madam cassava was with us at our Convention on Biological Diversity and Nutrition Workshop in October 2013. We pray for continual comfort and strength for their families and for all of us. HOMEF resolves that the best way to honour their memories is to keep the flag of struggle for justice flying and never flagging. You may also find the tributes on them inspiring.

Hasta la victoria siempre! Until Victory!

**Nnimmo Bassey**  
nnimmo@homef.org





## AIR OF DEATH

Would it help  
If they knew  
If I told them again  
If they were reminded  
That the air I breathe  
Is poison.

Would it hasten any action or inaction  
Continuous indifference or insensitivity  
That I walk towards death  
Death closer than life.

Is this my home?  
Where the skies are grey  
Or dark, not blue  
Where the clouds are thick  
Particles of dirt falling on my head  
Engulfed in pollution.

I long for bright blue skies  
And fresh air  
For the smell of flourishing flowers  
And clean clear waters  
For fresh vegetables  
And healthy skin

But for now, I watch  
As the gas flares into the skies  
And oil spills run through my land  
Wondering  
How do I remind them  
That I live in death!

By Jessie Fubara-Manuel

Eleme, Rivers State  
January 25, 2014

Mining always leaves its footprints in both the sands of time and on the lives of the people. You may think you have seen it all- especially if you have seen or lived in the horrors of oil activities in the Niger Delta. I thought so too, particularly because I have devoted at least two decades of my life in persistent pursuit of polluted lands (at home and abroad) searching for ways to comprehend the great harm generated by extractive activities.

Some of the places that have left deep impressions on my heart are documented in my book *Oilwatching in South America – Or, GuanaGuara - Mudfish Out of Water, a Pollution Tour Of Venezuela, Curaçao, Peru & Ecuador*. This book is more or less the diary of a pollution tour of these countries carried out in 1997 under the auspices of Oilwatch International. Others can be found in *To Cook a Continent – Destructive Extraction and Climate Impacts on Africa*.

After many years of following the heavy pollution of communities in South West Durban in South Africa, and with kin ears for developments related to proposed fracking in the Karoo, I was still not prepared for the level of impacts from mining in Witbank, Old Coronation mine and other Highveld communities.



# WALKING ON CAVES OF FIRE

nnimmo bassey

This field trip was organised by groundWork (Friends of the Earth South Africa) as a prelude to Oilwatch Africa conference that was held in Midrand mid May 2013. On the group were activists from eleven African countries.

The field trip in Mpumalanga Province where mines literally turned to walking in minefields! No, we did not rush to the mines. Our first port of call was the offices of the South African Green Revolutionary Council (SAGRC) at Witbank. It was early in the morning, but the comrades were already waiting to receive us. Led by Matthews Hlabane, we were quickly given a short introduction to the Witbank.

Mining started here in 1896 and with it began a reign of land grabbing and pollutions. From the 1950s the environmental problems began to intensify and were glaring and undeniable. Acid mine drainage polluted the water and coal dusts took over the air. With these contaminants it was not a surprise that the locals began to suffer from headaches, dizziness, kidney failures and other diseases.

We were informed that there are eight (8) coal-fired plants in Witbank and up to seven hundred (700) mines from where coal and platinum are dug. But that is not all there is a pile of five thousand (5000) applications for mining permits, with many of them "linked to the ruling party," we were told. Overall, there are 6000 abandoned mines in the country and among these are the abandoned coalmines of the Highveld.

He regretted that there were no direct gains to the community even though so much "wealth" was being excavated from beneath their feet. The coal extracted here is used for electricity generation and for export. The level of contamination here is

so high that an estimated 30 billion Rand will be needed for environmental rehabilitation.

Although we were told of sinkholes, unstable grounds and impacts on entire biodiversity

Our visit took us to the abandoned Transvaal and Delagoa Bay Mine (TMDB). On arrival we were greeted by a mountain range of wastes and polluted water seeping from the tremendous pile. Walking in this field requires extreme caution. We had to go in a single file, trusting that our guide knew what spot to tread and which could be considered as safe ground. We were bemused and some thought it was preposterous for anyone to insist that we couldn't walk where we pleased. Soon enough we all saw why rebellion was not a good option here. There were cracks in the ground best picked out by trained eyes.

We soon knew we were on the devil's territory when we began to smell sulphur. And then we saw heat waves simmering from holes ahead of us. The smell got stronger as we moved nearer. We were walking over caves of fire. A once luscious land was now 880 hectares of hell!

We were told of, and shown sinkholes scattered in the fields. Anyplace could crack up and anytime and a yelp may be the only goodbye to be heard before the victims disappear into netherworld. These mines are located between two Townships and kids and others traverse these burning mines daily either to school or to work. Some kids are said to have fallen into these sinkholes. And someone hazarded that criminals may also have used these burning pits as convenient places to bury their crimes.



Spontaneous fires started in the mines in the 1930s and they were eventually closed in the 1950s. Interesting. It is said that the fires in the mines were burning both the roof supporting pillars and the roofs themselves. We guess that before the mines were closed, perhaps while one portion of the mine was burning, miners were pressed to keep digging at other parts. That can be understood in an apartheid context. But why are the flames not extinguished and the land remediated today?

Our friends told us that because of lack of adequate public response to their complaints about the air quality and other pollutants, they have had to train themselves on how to do that for themselves. In fact, we were told that of occasions when officials bring testing equipment and the community folks were the ones who showed the officials how the equipment were operated. Talk of community empowerment! Tests show that some of the water bodies here are either very acidic or highly alkaline.

Leaving the field of horror, we passed by the VANCHEM Ltd factory. Our comrades asked us to look up at the sky. Thick smoke bellowed from the stacks. That was not surprising. But they asked us to note that no birds were flying in the area. Well, that was true. "They simply die if they try," we were told. Okay. Get me out of here!

We were told that to keep healthy, workers in this factory are compelled to drink milk everyday. I could not laugh. I have personally heard at an environmental health workers

workshop of oil company workers (machine operators) in Nigeria who are urged to drink milk as a way of keeping their bodies purified of pollutants. This myth has also been heard of in India. Workers are kept in the dark hopes that milk eliminates the impacts of pollution. See my 2010 article titled 'The 'Milking' of Oil Workers' for more about this and the cynical actions of corporations.

Our next port of call was the Old Coronation Township sitting on Old Coronation coalmines. The ground here is very unstable. We were taken to a huge pit into which a preschool disappeared after the ground gave way in 2012. Sinkholes started happening here more than five decades ago.

Many resident of this Township 'mine' coal in huge waste heaps in the neighbourhood. Stories abound of kids and women who met their death here when the pile of waste collapsed on them as they dug for the carbon needed for cooking and for heating their shacks.

It was one story of woe after another. We saw women and kids digging for occasional lump of coal. We heard of resource and job opportunities conflicts with migrant workers from the SADC region. We saw extensive acid/water ponds. Devoid of life as expected.

"The graves in Highveld are full," one comrade tells us. "if you live here and drink the water, there is a 70 per cent chance you will end up with liver problems." Sadly, kids sometimes swim in the warm ponds and there is a chance that they gulp in the lethal water. There is a high incidence of sinuses, asthma, tuberculosis and others. "



"The doctors work with the mines and the mines work with the government. The people are left to fall through the cracks. The Highveld is a compost," another comrade insists without elaborating.

We were thoroughly depressed at this point. Getting to watch a youth drama perform was hopefully going to be a relief. Soon we were gathered in a community hall built and donated by a mining company! Speeches and tales of woes from various cities, townships and communities over, the Mpumalanga Youth Against Climate Change drama group took centre stage.

The acting was excellent and the storyline and message was clear and direct. Global warming was better termed "global burning" and humans were shown as anointed to be the most foolish specie on earth. The youngsters declared, "our governments have failed us, but we will not fail ourselves."

As we left these heavily polluted communities, Comrade Matthew declared that the Witbank is the most polluted city in the world. A Nigerian comrade retorted that the Niger Delta was the most polluted region on earth. An argument ensued but was happily settled that one was a city and the other a region. But best of all, we ought to be arguing about which is the cleanest and safest, not which is most debased by capital. Would either of these places ever return to health?🌱



## AFTER SCHOOL(for Niger Delta)

They taught us to bury our heroes,  
And live with the belief that everyone will die a hero.  
They taught us draw our swords,  
And not consider what we kill,  
But what we allow to live.  
They taught us to find a dark place in our heart,  
To forget the world we come from.

A world of tears and despair.  
Of lack and dotting hunger.  
Of polluted rivers and poisoned creeks.  
Of oil spillages and degraded ecosystem.

Our world where the brave die,  
And the poets hide themselves in bloodied lines.

They taught us to remember the muted silence of the  
graveyard.  
To write the history of our people with the sword.

They taught us to escape death by dying for our fatherland.  
To buy freedom with our life and it's line.  
To fight for the belief that everyday we live can be better.  
THE OIL MULTINATIONALS!  
...they taught us too much.

- KenechukwuObiechinalloduba Jnr





# HOMEF To Hosts First Rights

The Health of Mother Earth (HOMEF), University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) and the Right Livelihood Award Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to co-host the Right Livelihood College (RLU) at the Faculty of Social Science on Monday 25th November, 2013.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Joseph Ajienka ably represented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof Ethelbert Chinaka Nduka, expressed his delight at the honour of his school being the first Nigerian university to host such a laudable initiative which will immensely benefit the students and young researchers in the university and increase the quality of education, while opening them to more international learning opportunities.

The event which was also the second edition of HOMEF's Sustainable Academy (HOME School #02) had Comrade Noble Wadzah of Oilwatch Ghana as the lead Instigator for the session. The Right Livelihood College is an international capacity building initiative of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation to generate knowledge and communication values for a peaceful and sustainable world.

The college aims to harness and promote ideas and knowledge of laureates through research and the University of Port Harcourt is the fifth of the campuses in the world.

The former Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences and chairman of the occasion, Prof Willy Okowa welcomed the guests, staff and the participating students to the event and implored them to take full advantage of the resources available. In his opening remark, Prof Alapiki, Dean of the faculty highlighted ways the young scholars can access the learning platform provided by the Right Livelihood College.

According to Nnimmo Bassey, 2010 Right Livelihood Laureate and Director of HOMEF, "living in the Niger Delta can be equated to living in a laboratory of contestations and experimentations birthed by failed promises, dashed hopes, brutalised lives and a thoroughly polluted environment". He continued, "We pay keen attention to the line of our national anthem that warns that "the labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain.

It is this stubborn struggle for dignity and justice that has empowered the oppressed to stand on the ruins of our homesteads and shattered lives and proclaim we shall overcome, we shall rebuild, we shall not be buried in the dust." He expressed his hope that "through this partnership with UNIPORT, doors of scholarship, exchanges and deep examination of our environment in all ramifications will be opened."





# Partners with UNIPORT: Livelihood Campus in Nigeria

Report by Zaid Shopeju.

Monika Griefahn, Co-Chair of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation and a former Minister of Environment in the German State of Lower Saxony said that “the Right Livelihood College was inaugurated in 2009 to further the foundation's work through capacity building and increasing accessibility of past Right Livelihood Laureates accessible to people”. She also says “the foundation tries to recognise the work of people who are working to promote peaceful and sustainable world and hope that by recognising the exceptional work, they can help put their cause on global discourse and protect them from persecution.” She cited some of the work of the past laureates such as Wangari Maathai of Kenya who won the award in 1984, and later won the Nobel Peace Prize 20years later.

According to her, this shows the foresightedness of the foundation in its selection of winners.

The Instigator for the HOME School #02, Comrade Noble Wadzah of Oilwatch Ghana in his paper titled 'African Awakening and Implication for the Environment' says “civil society cannot stand alone in the struggle against the polluters, multinational corporations and insensitive governments but the academic should be involved.”

He says “The Arab spring only tells one side of the story; the political story and how the people responded to issues they were not

comfortable with. But we have another dimension to the story; the environmental struggle for justice that we are confronted with.

As Africans we are all connected to one rural area or another.” “We therefore need to challenge institutions, develop new thinking that takes into account our shared values of communal well being.”

In his closing remark Dr. Eme Ekekwe admonished that “what we have done here today is a wakeup call on two levels; academic and personal. We are to supply the intellectual needs for the practical struggle that is taking place out there. Sometimes in this country, it is not the academics and intellectuals who should be leading; it is the artisans, farmers, fishermen. It is those people whose fishing waters are being polluted, those people whose lands are been grabbed and appropriated not only by the multinationals but by our own people.”

HOMEF's work tracks ecological and political education aimed at examining the roots of exploration of resources, labour, peoples and entire regions. It hopes this will contribute to the rebuilding of our national resources and the restoration of dignity and harmonious living with full respect of to natural cycles of Mother Earth. ♦





## Meet **HS#03** Instigator

### **FIROZE MANJI**

Head, Documentation and Information Centre,  
CODESRIA

Firoze Manji is the head of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa's (CODESRIA) Documentation and Information Centre. He is the founder of Fahamu Press and founding editor in chief of Pambazuka News.

Pambazuka Press and Fahamu Books blazed the trail in publishing key works on the contemporary socio-political situation of Africa and generally encouraged scholarship and popular discourse on the weekly electronic newsletter, Pambazuka News.

One of the books published by the Pambazuka Press, *African Awakenings: The Emerging Revolutions*, inspired the focus of this

Sustainability Academy. SokariEkine and our Instigator, Firoze Manji edited the book which is a collection of essays on the subject. His other books include *China's New Role in Africa and the South: A Search for a New Perspective* (2008) and *From the Slave Trade to 'Free' Trade: How Trade Undermines Democracy and Justice in Africa* (with Patrick Burnett)

Firoze is Kenyan and holds a PhD in dental surgery. He has worked extensively on developmental matters in Africa and has served as Africa director for Amnesty International as well as being a former CEO of the Aga Khan Foundation in the UK. At CODESRIA he has midwived the publication of the book *Silence Would Be Treason - Last Writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa* and another titled *Claim No Easy Victories - Essays on the legacy of Amilcar Cabral* 🌀



**F**irst of all I would like to thank you for introducing me to this great and very informative journal. I must confess that as I was reading the journal I had a sense of pride and hope for our collective African future.

As members of the higher echelons in our social hierarchy who are determined to define their roles as activists in the continuing struggle to achieve the health of mother earth and the fact that you focus on a platform to share information, interrogate ideas and help mobilise action for positive change to help change our societies and Africa for the better is motivating and courageous.

**Austin Gege**  
Student at Thabo Mbeki  
African Leadership Institute,  
South Africa  
\*\*\*

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*Spread the word... Join the cause.*

*Solidarity & Dignity.*

### **F**ascinated by the Instigating Perspective

One of the best decisions I made in 2013 was subscribing to Eco-Instigator. In spite of the fact that it was a new magazine on environmental issues, the contents brought forth a profoundly instigating perspective on the issues discussed. The magazine is undeniably a compelling read, is impeccably crafted, and, generally, superbly published."

—**Adesuwa Uwagie-Ero**, Environmental Justice/Youth campaigner

**T**he Eco-Instigator serves as a torch, providing a guide into human's activities as regards the environment and its sustainability. It is richly informative, enlightening and has the ability to help us in our struggle for environmental sanity and sanctity which should be the foremost goal of any nation willing to succeed.

I enjoy the fact that the Eco-Instigator gives us useful information at a glance, it is concise, straight to the point and easy to comprehend. It is a must read for all age-groups as we all are stakeholders in preserving Mother-earth for our generation and generations yet to come.

**\*IDEA** - I think essay and quiz competitions should be organized frequently on topics concerning environmental sustainability and protection at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This would boost awareness and thereby raise our consciousness on issues concerning our relationship with the environment.

**Rashidah Omotola Abdul Quadri**  
HOME School #01 participant, Nigeria  
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# We **STAND** Before **HISTORY**

ZAID SHOPEJU

y o u n g

**T**his year hold a strategic and promising outlook for people in Nigeria.

It is strategic in the sense that it is a year leading to the general elections and politicians are bound to be more reachable and accessible at this time than any other times, and promising because we can elect (or be elected) selfless and visionary leaders who don't see Nigeria as a business venture of the rich and powerful but rather a joint project with equal stake and ownership shared amongst all – both the rich and the poor. It will be the time to stand before history to elect people to power not because of their political affiliation but instead because of the strength of their character, sense of duty to serve and passion for securing the future of this generation and those generations yet unborn. It is a time to reflect and think of the way forward - a year to revisit the labour of our heroes past and the sacrifices they have made. It will be a year and time to honour their sweet memories with pragmatic actions and see to the fulfilment of their dreams and aspirations.

For so long, young people have craved for the opportunity to lead, build and forge the destiny of this nation. I don't for a second doubt the sincerity of their aspirations, as a matter of fact; our past/present heroes

are once young activists in different fields who dare to challenge the status quo and forge a path of their own – but first, let history be our teacher, the sacrifices of the heroes past be our inspiration and the hope of a greater and just future be our motivation. We celebrate them today not because they followed the path of mediocre but because they follow the path of justice and Ujamaa. They challenged authorities with balanced argument, while proffering pragmatic solutions to the challenges of the people. Some of them lay down their lives for the struggle, while others were tortured and served different jail terms at one point or the other. But their exploit have liberated communities and left enduring mark on the sand of time.

Historically, the story of Nigeria is shaped by corporate greed, gross mismanagement of resources and vicious cycle of corruption. Orono Douglas once said of Nigeria "It was created by multinational companies and continues to be governed by multinational companies. Just one example: 90% of Nigeria's resources come from fossil fuels. And the fossil fuel industry is controlled by companies like Royal Dutch Shell, Chevron, Mobil, Texaco, and Elf, so on and so forth. So, these companies actually dictate in which direction the country should go.

So, these companies actually dictate in which direction the country should go. There is a symbiotic relationship between the military dictatorship, the civilian dictatorship, and the multinational companies, who grease the palms of those who rule, because they need to be there.



All strategies towards the capture of political power in Nigeria are aimed and directed at the capture of oil wealth and oil wells." It is an open secret that we have neglected the other mainstay of our economic for the easy lure of the black gold; agriculture and the textile industries are taking the backseat.

Therefore, this is the year we shouldn't forget the contribution and sacrifices made by the likes of Ken Saro-Wiwa and 8 other Ogoni who led peaceful and non-violent resistance against the exploitative and destructive operations of Shell Corporation and the military junta in Ogoniland.

The campaigns led by Ken Saro-Wiwa for the first time exposed the devastation of land, water and air of not just the Ogoniland but the whole of the Niger Delta. They were able to draw international attention and criticism to the systematic, greedy and inhumane practices of Shell in the Delta. Ken mobilised 500,000 Ogoni people to kick out Shell from Ogoniland in 1993 - a rare case of mass mobilisation of people for civil disobedience in Nigeria (without the help of social media which is now at our disposal at the push of a button). Although they paid the ultimate price with their lives but at least they started a fire of non-violent action for social change and left us the blueprint to liberate ourselves from the shackles of modern slavery and poverty.

The fire of resistance they started 2 decades ago wasn't meant to resuscitate and protect the livelihood and social wellbeing of the Ogoni people alone but rather it was a sacrifice for a country called Nigeria; and a template to be replicated in different part of Africa where injustice reigns. Ken Saro-Wiwa, Saturday Dobee, NorduEawo, Daniel Gbooko, Paul Levera, Felix Nuate, BariborBera, BarinemKiobel, and John Kpuine were here and stood before history.

Late Prof. Festus Iyayi is another unsung hero whose contribution to the academic world and environmental movement in Nigeria and Africa is undeniable. Comrade Iyayi was an academic stalwart who led the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in the 1980s and was known for his candid and radical style on social welfare and academic issues.

Nnimmo Bassey says, "One thing I learned from Comrade Iyayi was that the activism that would produce results and have lasting effect must be based on knowledge." He further says, "Comrade Iyayi played very key roles in shaping the focus of some of us environmental justice campaigners...a critical contribution he made to the global movement was his special interest in developing and giving a much-needed African perspective on the concept of ecological debt." Comrade Iyayi was here, stood before history and raised many disciples.

For a nation long captured by corporate interest and self-serving leaders, it is obvious we are in dire need of heroes who will lead social change and challenge the status quo of environmental degradations.

It is time young people express their disgust and dismay at the state of things just like Saro-Wiwa did decades ago.

Ken Saro-Wiwa while facing certain death in the hands of the junta made this statement which should be our battle cry "we all stand before history. I am a man of peace, of ideas.

Appalled by the denigrating poverty of my people who live on a richly endowed land, distressed by their political marginalization and economic strangulation, angered by the devastation of their land, their ultimate heritage, anxious to preserve their right to life and to a decent living, and determined to usher to this country as a whole a fair and just democratic system which protects everyone and every ethnic group and gives us all a valid claim to human civilization, I have devoted my intellectual and material resources, my very life, to a cause in which I have total belief and from which I cannot be blackmailed or intimidated.

I have no doubt at all about the ultimate success of my cause, no matter the trials and tribulations which I and those who believe with me may encounter on our journey. Nor imprisonment nor death can stop our ultimate victory."

As young people the question we should ask ourselves is that on what side of history would we stand and what will future generation say about us? ♦



# IYAYI:

## Tribute to a Consummate Fighter

By Denja Yakub



Precisely 25 days after we lost one of our most unswerving leaders, Baba Omojola, death has again taken one of our best. And this colossal, avoidable loss is through a ghastly motor accident primarily caused by the irresponsible culture of impunity often displayed by the convoys of public office holders who feel the capacity to “fly” on the road magnifies their obscure power of gripping other road users to acknowledge their weight even when it clearly further exhibits how much contempt they have for other lives.

Professor Festus Iyayi was a very rare endowment; an embodiment of humility, cerebral dexterity, prolific writer, articulate speaker, dependable leader, honest and valiant in all things. This was the gem killed in his prime by agents of an uncultured, rash, spineless, visionless and nauseatingly corrupt ruling elite as the convoy of a governor who is yet to recover from an earlier accident resulting from similar reckless driving, which almost took his life, sped off with the blood of a man who had spent nearly all of his life and resources fighting for a decent society; spearheading protests for the enthronement of social equality; a man who wouldn't have thought the convoy of one of the most unworthy beneficiaries of his struggles would eventually kill him with such reckless abandon.

Born in Ugbejun, Edo State 66 years ago in 1947, Festus started his education at the Annunciation Catholic College in his village and later, Government College, Ugheli, Delta State. He went on to read Industrial Economics at the Kiev Institute of Economics in the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, ending with a doctorate at the University of Bradford in England. Thereafter, he returned to Nigeria and since 1980, until his death had remained a lecturer in the department of Business Administration at the University of Benin. He also did his last sabbaticals with the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) where he added values to the work of Africa's largest trade union federation.

An award winner from the early stage of his education, Professor Iyayi received his first award as an essayist in 1968 when he won the John Kennedy Essay Competition organized by the Embassy of the United States of America in Nigeria. He was then in his final year at Government College, Ughelli.

A writer of high repute, his book, *Heroes*, did not only enjoy popular reading across the globe, it won him the esteemed Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1988. He had also authored other thought-provoking novels such as *Violence* in 1979, *Contract* in 1982 and *Awaiting Court Martial* in 1996.



These books are a compelling depiction of the decadence of the Nigerian society, a society that has continuously increased in its slide to banal reputations with leaders who continue to flaunt stolen public wealth in the face of the impecunious millions that form over 90% of the citizenry.

To these millions who bear the brunt of the imperious presence of a profligate ruling elite that is exceptional in its contempt for good governance, Festus committed the entirety of his productive life.

Iyayi was a conscientious organiser who had been involved in the development of ideologically focused organisations of the Marxist flank as well as mass organizations committed to the desired change for a country that is so endowed with all that is needed to lead in development. He did not only organise and lead intellectuals; he was deeply involved in organising peasants in remote areas of his native Edo State.

He was a leading light in the socialist movement in Nigeria from the Socialist Congress of Nigeria (SCON) to the Socialist Party of Nigeria. He was part of the ideological substratum of the radical student movement in the 80s when students spoke with one patriotic voice under united, strong and vibrant auspices. A dexterous leader he was!

At the level of human rights and pro democracy struggles, he succeeded Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti as President of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR). He was actively involved in the Campaign for Democracy (CD). And as a writer, he was part of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), encouraged by the commitment of personalities like the late Ken Saro Wiwa.

The most open attestation to his activism is his leadership of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

He was elected President of ASUU in 1986 at a time when the imperial structures of international finance capital used the opportunity provided by the anti people regime of General Ibrahim Babangida to unleash all sorts of neoliberal policies that has today left nearly all components of our collective socio economic and political existence in shambles.

ASUU, under Professor Iyayi's leadership, was a leading voice against the manipulations of that regime, most especially the economic sting called Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). He led ASUU to team up with the NLC, National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), and several others to challenge the introduction of SAP and other draconian policies that were clearly intended to hand over our country to the whims of neoliberal institutions whose policies were sketched to subsume the entire Nigerian populace and our collective resources in second slavery, the fulcrum of the new capitalist economic order.

He fought for quality education and the right of every Nigerian to have education regardless of class barriers. He saw scholarship as a major tool that can ensure the development of any country and to achieve this, only education that is people-driven in access, content and essence is required. ♦

***Yaqub is an Assistant Secretary at the headquarters of Nigeria Labour Congress, Abuja.***

## Carbon Trading A Critical Conversation On Climate Change, Privatisation And Power

by Larry Lohmann

The main cause of global warming is rapidly increasing carbon dioxide emissions primarily the result of burning fossil fuels despite international agreements to reduce such emissions.

The trouble is that despite being aware of the serious situation, very few decision-makers are ready to tackle the problem at its roots. Instead of reducing the extraction of fossil fuels and searching for other solutions, current carbon-trading policies, in practice, favour the further exploitation of these fuels.

Furthermore, new tree plantations, which are claimed as a means of mitigating the consequences of increased carbon dioxide pollution, often drive people out of their traditional living grounds and destroy biological diversity. This special report forms part of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's What Next project. It focuses on carbon trading and is intended to influence current climate politics. In the debate on the Kyoto Protocol few actors have expressed a critical view. It is high time, for the purposes of debate and policy-making, to put the spotlight on the core problem fossil fuel extraction and consumption.

This publication, therefore, takes a broad look at several dimensions of carbon trading. It analyses the problems arising from the emerging global carbon market pertaining to the environment, social justice and human rights, and investigates climate mitigation alternatives. It provides a short history of carbon trading and discusses a number of lessons unlearned. Nine case studies from different parts of the world provide examples of the outcomes on the ground of various carbon offset schemes.

**ZAID HASSAN** Foreword by JOI ITO  
Director of the MIT Media Lab

## THE SOCIAL LABS REVOLUTION

A NEW APPROACH TO SOLVING OUR MOST COMPLEX CHALLENGES

Current responses to our most pressing societal challenges—from poverty to ethnic conflict to climate change—are not working. These problems are incredibly dynamic and complex, involving an ever-shifting array of factors, actors, and circumstances. They demand a highly fluid and adaptive approach, yet we address them by devising fixed, long-term plans. Social labs, says Zaid Hassan, are a dramatically more effective response.

Social labs bring together a diverse group of stakeholders—not to create yet another five-year plan but to develop a portfolio of prototype solutions, test those solutions in the real world, use the data to further refine them, and test them again. Hassan builds on a decade of experience—as well as drawing from cutting-edge research in complexity science, networking theory, and sociology—to explain the core principles and daily functioning of social labs, using examples of pioneering labs from around the world. He offers a new generation of problem solvers an effective, practical, and exciting new vision and guide

## TO COOK A CONTINENT

### DESTRUCTIVE EXTRACTION AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN AFRICA

NNIMMO BASSEY

Arguing that the climate crisis confronting the world today is rooted mainly in the wealthy economies' abuse of fossil fuels, indigenous forests, and global commercial agriculture, this important book investigates how Africa has been exploited and how Africans should respond for the good of all.

## BE PART OF THE HOME RUN

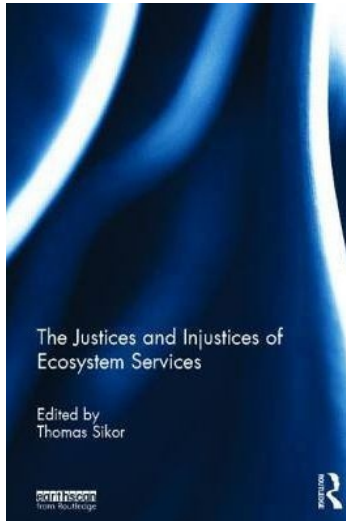
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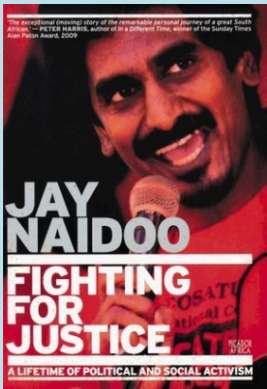
eco-INSTIGATOR

## YOU SHOULD READ



Humankind benefits from a multitude of resources and processes that are supplied by ecosystems, and collectively these benefits are known as ecosystem services. Interest in this topic has grown exponentially over the last decade, as biologists and economists have tried to quantify these benefits to justify management interventions. Yet, as this book demonstrates, the implications for justice and injustice have rarely been explored and works on environmental justice are only now addressing the importance of ecosystem services.

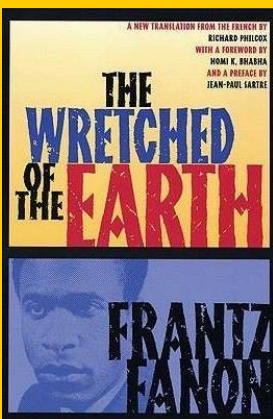
The authors establish important new middle ground in arguments between conservationists and critics of market-based interventions such as Payment for Ecosystem Services. Neither can environmental management be separated from justice concerns, as some conservationists like to believe, nor is it in fundamental opposition to justice, as critics like to put it. The book develops this novel interpretation of justice in environmental management through analyses of prominent governance interventions and the conceptual underpinnings of the ecosystem services framework. Key examples described are revenue-sharing around protected areas and REDD+ for forest ecosystems. The analyses demonstrate that interventions create opportunities for enhancing social justice, yet also reveal critical design features that cause ostensibly technical interventions to generate injustices.



Fighting for Justice is an autobiographical account of Jay Naidoo's life.

The book charts a course of struggle, commitment and sacrifice, seen through Jay's eyes from turbulent rebelliousness of youth, to leading the country's biggest federation of trade unions, COSATU.

It navigates the successes and challenges of transitional justice and the political maneuverings of the country's nascent democracy



The Wretched of the Earth (Les Damnés de la Terre, 1961), by Frantz Fanon, is a psychiatric and psychologic analysis of the dehumanizing effects of colonization upon the individual man and woman, and the nation, from which derive the broader social, cultural, and political implications inherent to establishing a social movement for the decolonization of a person and of a people. The French-language title, Les Damnés de la Terre, derives from the opening lyrics of "The Internationale", the 19th-century anthem of the Left Wing.

The Wretched of the Earth presents thorough critiques of nationalism and of imperialism, a discussion of personal and societal mental health, a discussion of how the use of language (vocabulary) is applied to the establishment of imperialist identities, such as colonizer and colonized in order to teach and psychologically mold the native and the colonist into their respective roles as slave and master, and a discussion of role of the intellectual in a revolution. Fanon proposes that revolutionaries should seek the help of the lumpenproletariat to provide the force required to effect the expulsion of the colonists. Moreover, in traditional Marxist theory, the lumpenproletariat are considered the lowest, most degraded stratum of the proletariat social-class — especially criminals, vagrants, and the unemployed — people who lacked the class consciousness to actively participate in the anti-colonial revolution. Yet,

Fanon applies the term lumpenproletariat to identify the colonial subjects who are not involved in industrial production, especially the peasantry, because, unlike the urban proletariat (the working class), the lumpenproletariat have sufficient intellectual independence from the dominant ideology of the colonial ruling class to readily grasp that they can successfully revolt against the colonial status quo, and so decolonize their nation and their country.



# Madam Juliana Odey aka Mama Cassava

## WE LOST A STRONG VOICE!

HOMEF is sad to announce the passing of Madam Juliana Odey(aka Mama Cassava).

She slept on Tuesday, the 10th of December 2013 aged 72.

She was a notable Nigerian cassava grower and anti-GMO (Genetically modified organisms) activist. Her death marks another loss to the corps of committed civil society activists. She spoke passionately against GMOs at HOMEF's workshop in Abuja, Nigeria on 8 October 2013 on 'Nutrition and the Convention on Biological Diversity'.

She was involved in the campaign and mobilization of rural women on the benefits and need to cultivate cassava, a staple food crop consumed by people in Nigeria and in some other parts of Africa daily.

In recent times, the biotech industry and their supporters are sparing no efforts in their push to open up Nigeria and the entire African continent down the GM road.

Madam Odey stood as one of the strongest voices of resistance against the introduction of GMOs and in particular GM Cassava (a.k.a super cassava) in Nigeria.

She was unswerving in her belief that we do not need GMO; Nigerians can feed themselves and that farmers can feed the whole world.



Mariann Orovwuje is an anti-GMO campaigner and spoke glowingly about Mama Cassava, "she was one of those few that believed that farmers needed to be at the driving seat of decision-making on agricultural matters."

One of Madam Odey's favourite phrases was ***"you don't play politics with food, and that you can run away from everything but when it comes to food you must eat."***

At the Public Hearing on the Biosafety Bill organized by the Joint Committee on Science and Technology and Agriculture, Abuja, on the 9th of December 2009, the outspoken activist did not mince words in condemning the attempt to introduce GMOs into Nigeria via the bill and again stressing that Nigeria does not need GMOs.

### **The Woman, Madam Juliana Ifo Odey**

Mama Cassava was born on July 16, 1941 and hailed from Bekwara in Cross River State. She has grown cassava for more than a decade. She was the Cross River State Coordinator of the Cassava Growers Association of Nigeria for over ten years and further served on the board of the organization.

She had her primary education at Holy Ghost Primary School, Makurdi, Benue State 1948 – 1954 and thereafter became a student of Women Training Centre in Enugu, Enugu State in 1955 – 1956.

In 1957 – 1958, she proceeded to Sacred Heart Hospital, Obudu, Cross River State, and then attended worked at the Malta Misericordiae Hospital Afikpo, Ebonyi State, 1959-1960.

In 1990, she became the Chairperson, Managing Director, Jucab Ventures Nigeria Limited. While in 2005, she embarked on cassava training workshop in two senatorial Districts of Cross River State tagged "Training for Sustainable Development" where women were trained in various processes of using cassava to produce chin-chin, meat pie, doughnut bread among others.

In 2007, she became a member of the Board of Trustee (BOT) of Nigeria Cassava Growers Association of Nigeria while in 2008, she was elected the Vice Chairperson, Potato Growers Processing and Marketing Association of Nigeria (POGPMAN).

In 2009, she was the Zonal Co-Coordinator, South – South Potato Growers Processing and Marketing Association of Nigeria (POGPMAN).

As a lover of knowledge and research, Mama Cassava had a stint at the Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Oshodi, Lagos State in 1990, at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Ibadan, Oyo State in 2004, Raw Material Research and Development Council, Abuja in 2007 and at again at International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Ibadan, Oyo State 2010.

She had certifications in the following areas:

- Certificate in fish drying, bottled palm wine, soap making, odourless fufu and fufu flour from cassava in 1990
- Certificate in High Level Quality Cassava Flour (HQCF) and Glucose syrup from cassava in 2007
- Certificate in cassava processing and product development and cassava product packaging and labeling in 2010
- Certificate in High Level Cassava Production " Unleashing The Power Of Cassava In

### **Response To The Food Crisis In Africa" In 2010**

She was the recipient of Environmental Rights Action's Comrade Che Ibegwura Award for outstanding community in 2010.

Mama Cassava whose salient and penetrating voice would certainly be missed by all. She left behind by 7 children and 12 grandchildren. ♦♦



# THE ROLE OF WATER ABUSE IN CLIMATE CHAOS

MAUDE BARLOW

**T**here is a crucial, missing component in the both the current analysis of climate chaos and in the proposed solutions to it. Most climate academics and activists see climate chaos as almost solely the result of greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels as well as methane pollution from extractive industries and animal production. The solution to the crisis is to curb the creation of CO<sub>2</sub> and other air pollutants and move to alternative and sustainable energy sources.

While of course I fully recognize and support the science behind this analysis and join with other climate activists in fighting the growth in fossil fuels, especially those coming from fracking and the tar sands of my own country, Canada, I do strongly feel that there is a missing piece of the puzzle that needs to be addressed if we are to properly understand the true nature of the crisis. That missing piece is our abuse, mismanagement and displacement of water.

When we speak of climate change and water, it is usually to acknowledge that warming is having a serious and negative impact on freshwater supplies around the world. And indeed it is. Warmer weather causes more rapid evaporation of lakes and rivers, reduced snow and ice cover on open water systems, and melting glaciers. All this takes a terrible toll on the planet's water systems.

What is less understood is that our cavalier treatment of fresh water is also a major cause of climate chaos and global warming and needs to be addressed by our movement. If we are to successfully address climate change, it is time to include an analysis of how our abuse of water is an additional factor in the creation of global warming and that any solutions to the crisis must include the protection of water and the restoration of watersheds.



Modern humans have largely lost our connection with water in its natural state. Instead of seeing water as the essential element in a living watershed that gives us all life, we view water as a resource for our convenience, pleasure and profit.

So we dump pollutants into our watersheds, over-extract our rivers to death and pump ancient fossil groundwater faster than nature can replenish it. Rivers no longer reach the ocean; aquifers are running dry; deserts are expanding. Five hundred scientists recently warned that our collective abuse of water has caused the planet to enter a "new geologic age" - a "planetary transformation" not unlike the retreat of the glaciers 11,000 years ago.

There are two ways in which this mistreatment of water affects climate.

The first is the actual displacement of water from where it sustains healthy ecosystems, which in turn sustain healthy hydrologic cycles. Modern societies regularly move water around to suit their needs. Cities are built over top buried rivers and streams. Water is massively dammed and diverted for our purposes. Water is moved from where nature has put it (and where we can access it) in watersheds and aquifers, either for flood irrigation for food production - where much of it is lost to evaporation - or to supply the voracious thirst of mega cities, where it is usually dumped as waste into the ocean.

Because humanity has polluted so much surface water of the planet, we are now mining the groundwater far faster than it can be replaced by nature. Global water withdrawals have risen 50 per cent in the last several decades and are still increasing dramatically. Using bore well technology that did not exist a hundred years ago, humans are now relentlessly mining groundwater. Worldwide pumping of groundwater more than doubled between 1960 and 2000 and is responsible for a significant percentage of the rise in sea levels.

When water cannot return to fields, meadows, wetlands and streams because of urban sprawl, poor farming practices, overgrazing, and the removal of water-retentive landscapes, the actual amount of water in the local hydrologic cycle decreases, leading to desertification of once-green land. When we remove water from soil, the soil

heats up the air around it.

Water is also lost to ecosystems in the form of virtual trade - water used in the production of crops or manufactured goods that are then exported. Over 20% of daily water used for human purpose is exported out of watersheds in this way. Water is also piped across long distances for industry leaving behind parched landscapes.

The second way our treatment of watersheds affects climate is the removal of the vegetation needed for a healthy hydrologic cycle. Urbanization, deforestation and wetland destruction greatly destroy water-retentive landscapes and lead to the loss of precipitation over the affected area.

Quite simply, if there is nothing green to receive the rain, cloud vapours will blow away, creating desert where there was a living ecosystem. Recent studies confirm that when rainforests are cut down, precipitation in the area declines. We all know that the Dust Bowl was caused by rapid clearance of prairie grasslands, leaving dried up topsoil to blow away. But we think the drought was an unfortunate and untimely act of God. Not so. Studies show the removal of water from the soil amplified a natural drop in rainfall and turned an ordinary dry cycle into a disaster.

Slovakian scientist Michal Kravcik and his colleagues explain that the living world influences the climate mainly by regulating the water cycle and the huge energy flows linked to it. Transpiring plants, especially forests, work as a kind of biotic pump, causing humid air to be sucked out of the ocean and transferred to dry land. If the vegetation is removed from the land, this natural system of biosphere regulation is interrupted. Soil erodes, reducing the content of organic material in the ground,

thus reducing its ability to hold water. Dry soil from lost vegetation traps solar heat, sharply increasing the local temperature and causing a reduction in precipitation over the affected area. This process also destroys the natural sequestration of carbon in the soil, leading to carbon loss.

Of course, these two ways in which our abuse of water affects climate are deeply related. Just as removing vegetation from an ecosystem will dry up the soil, so too will removing water from an ecosystem mean reduced or non-existent vegetation.

As Kravcik explains, the yellow of the sun combined with the blue of water creates the green of our living world. Remove either the blue or the green from the earth and the heat of the sun will change everything.

Taken together, these two factors are hastening the desertification of the planet, and intensifying global warming.

Kravcik says that even if we successfully address and reverse greenhouse gas emissions and our dependence on fossil fuels, if we do not deal with the impact of our abuse of water on the planet, we will not be able to stop climate change. Unless we collectively address the crisis of fresh water and our cavalier treatment of the world's water systems, we will not restore the climate to health.

### Restoration of Watersheds

The solution to the water portion of this crisis is the restoration of watersheds. Bring water back into parched landscapes. Return water that has disappeared by retaining as much rainwater as possible within the ecosystem so that water can permeate the soil, replenish groundwater systems, and return to the atmosphere to regulate temperatures and renew the hydrologic cycle. All human, industrial and agricultural activity must conform to this imperative, a project that could also employ millions and alleviate poverty in the global South. Our cities must be ringed with green conservation zones and we must restore forests and wetlands - the lungs and kidneys of fresh water. For this to be successful, three basic laws of nature must be addressed.

First, it is necessary to create the conditions that allow rainwater to remain in local watersheds. This means restoring the natural spaces where rainwater can fall and where water can flow. Water retention can be carried out at all levels: roof gardens in family homes and office buildings; urban planning that allows rain and storm water to be captured and returned to the earth; water harvesting in food production; capturing daily water discharge and returning it clean to the land, not to the rising oceans.

Second, we cannot continue to mine groundwater supplies at a rate greater than natural recharge. If we do, there will not be enough water for the next generation. Extractions cannot exceed recharge just as a bank account cannot be drawn down without new deposits. Governments everywhere must undertake intensive research into their groundwater supplies and regulate groundwater takings before their underground reservoirs are gone. This may mean a shift in policy from export to domestic and local production.

Third, we must stop polluting our surface and groundwater sources and we must back up this intention with strict legislation. Water abuse in oil and methane gas production and mining must stop. We must wean ourselves of industrial and chemical-based agricultural practices and listen to the many voices sounding the alarm around the rush toward water-guzzling biofuel farming. We need to promote "subsidiarity," whereby nation-state policies and international trade rules could support local food production in order to protect the environment and promote local sustainable agriculture.



Such policies would also discourage the virtual trade in water and countries could ban or limit the mass movement of water by pipeline. Government investment in water and wastewater infrastructure would save huge volumes of water lost every day in old or non-existent systems. Domestic laws could enforce water-harvesting practices at every level.

#### Toward a Water Secure World

Clearly, for this rescue plan to be successful, governments around the world must acknowledge the water crisis before them and the part that water abuse plays in the drying of the planet. This in turn means that a nation's water resources must be considered in every government policy at all levels. Nations must undertake intensive studies to ascertain the health of watersheds and placement and size of groundwater reserves. All activities that will impact water must conform to a new ethic - backed by law - that protects water sources from pollution and over-pumping. This will likely mean a strong challenge to government policies that favour unlimited global economic growth.

Nearly two billion people live in water-stressed regions of the earth. Until now, most governments have addressed this terrible reality with a program to further exploit groundwater sources. But current levels of groundwater takings are unsustainable. To truly realize the universal right to water, and to protect water for nature as well, means a revolution in the way we treat the world's finite water resources. There is no time to lose. ♦

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Maude Barlow is a Canadian water activist and author. Her new book - *Blue Future, Protecting Water for People and the Planet Forever* - has recently been published.



We launched the Health of Mother Earth Foundation's Online TV – HOMEF TV in late November 2013 as another platform to amplify the voices of the grassroots people who are most impacted by environmental degradation and share the untold stories of the raging exploitation of the indigenous people. The rich multimedia platform have hosted in-depth interviews, presentations by foremost environmentalists, concerned scientists and academics and field trips to enlighten the general public on the state of affairs on our relationship with nature.

In one of the videos Dr. Eme Ekekwe during the launch of Right Livelihood College Campus in University of Port Harcourt, says “sometimes in this country, it is not the academics and intellectuals who should be leading; it is the artisans, farmers, fishermen. It is those people whose fishing waters are being polluted, those people whose lands are been grabbed and appropriated not only by the multinationals but by our own people.” Another featured video shows Nnimmo Bassey reflecting on the ecocidal destruction of the land and the sea of Goi community in Ogoniland, River State, Nigeria – which is one of the most impacted community in Ogoniland.

It is our plan to keep **HOMEF TV** updated with groundbreaking interviews, tours, investigative documentaries and top-notch analysis on current environmental justice and human rights issues. You can watch all our videos in high resolution (HD) on HOMEF TV by visiting.

[www.vimeo.com/channels/HOMEFTV](http://www.vimeo.com/channels/HOMEFTV).



# SARO -WIWA'S LAST STRIKE **at the Hangmen**

by Patrick Naagbanton

**K**enule Beeson Saro-Wiwa's latest book, *Silence Would Be Treason – Last Writings of Saro-Wiwa* (2013) came to us as a big surprise. Some of us had thought that “A Month and A Day (1995) was his last memoir. On 11th June 1993, operatives of Nigeria's secret police, State Security Services (SSS), seized Saro-Wiwa's international passport. Ten days after, he was “kidnapped” by plainclothes detectives and held in solitary confinement until 22nd July (a month and a day). Saro-Wiwa's 180 page book (*Silence Would be Treason*) is published posthumously by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal.

*Silence Would be Treason* is a different detention diary. The title is taken from one of Saro-Wiwa's poems in the book, “Keep out of Prison,” page 159. From the book (*Silence*

*Would Be Treason*) wouldn't be his last prison or so work. The current memoir is a collection of 28 letters and 28 poems (not 27 poems, page 3) he wrote while in military custody in Port Harcourt to Sister Majella McCarron, the Irish missionary, teacher, poet, letter writer and environmental activist) between “20 October and 14 September 1995” (page ix).

Majella was Saro-Wiwa's long-time friend and supporter of the Ogoni people's nonviolence struggle for justice. She preserved them and “In 2011, -- donated letters she received from Ken Saro-Wiwa to the library at NUI (National University of Ireland) Maynooth.” (Page vi). There were correspondences between Saro-Wiwa and Majella. We hope she will publish her letters too.



Nigeria's leading environmental rights campaigner, poet, activist and architect, Nnimmo Bassey wrote a foreword to the book (page ix-xvii), while three distinguished international scholars (Helen Fallon, Ide Corley and Laurence Cox) all at NUI, edited the book. Bassey in page ix denounced the inhuman conditions Saro-Wiwa was subjected before his hanging on 10th November, 1995.

His foreword summarized the entire struggles of the Saro-Wiwa, his Ogoni people, the era and its challenges; Bassey in the book boldly admitted that he was a student of the Saro-Wiwan School. "...Saro-Wiwa challenged me as a fledging writer who thought I would find a niche as a poet and short story writer. His pioneering work in building a virile environmental justice movement as well as the rights of minorities in Nigeria remains outstanding and continues to inspire campaigners around the world."

In the introductory section of the book, Helen Fallon, the Deputy Librarian at the NUI wrote the article, "The Saro-Wiwa Collection at the Library, National University of Ireland Maynooth." (Page 3-13). While Ide Corley, whose expertise in the areas of "Postcolonial and World literatures," Irish, African Literatures and struggles for modern African identity is outstanding. She wrote an article in the book, which runs from page 15-30, "Ken Saro-Wiwa and West African Literature; the Politics of Language." And Laurence Cox, a specialist in social movements theorization and praxis, wrote, "Ken Saro-Wiwa in Political Context; Social Movements in the Niger Delta" (Page 31-38). Expectedly, the above scholars explicated the Saro-Wiwa phenomenon, its merits and demerits and the post-Saro-Wiwa's epoch in the Niger Delta.

Saro-Wiwa belongs to the Post-Colonial Nigerian writers who view literature as a tool for consciousness nurturing and mobilization to confront problems of society. This is demonstrated even in his letters and poems in the book. The book exposes Saro-Wiwa as an archetypal soldier of the pen.

Writers whether in the global south or north are just the same. Louise Purwin Zobel and

Jacqueline Harmon Butler, both famed travel writers and academics, in their book, "Travel Writer's Handbook" (2007) warned old, new or aspiring writers: "Writing is a public profession. You reveal so much of yourself. You may be writing about somebody quite different in a setting far away, but there's always a great deal of you in the story. Your secrets, your mistakes are there for the world to see," (Travel Writer's Handbook) (page 284).

Silence would be Treason shows that Saro-Wiwa lived as a writer in the Zobel and Butler's categorization. He knew that what the secrets he was exchanging with her friend and comrade, Majella McCarron would be made public one day. From his tortuous military detention, he shared his secrets about the Ogoni cause, his family, friends and foes and his passion for writing.

The letters start from page 46 and end on page 131, while the poems start from page 134 and end on page 162. The first letter dated 20th October 1993 was virtually a response to Majella's earlier letter. Saro-Wiwa was thanking her for mobilizing grants to help his poor Ogoni villagers when they were attacked. "Thanks for your note. I'm really quite happy to have EC (European Commission) help pass through the Catholic Church. You've all been supportive and MOSOP will be right glad to have such friends or supervisors", he wrote on page 46.

From page 54, one sees the real anguish of Saro-Wiwa in deplorable military custody. On Saturday, 21st May 1994, four chiefs from the Gokana Kingdom of the Ogoni nation were murdered at Giokoo community, the traditional home of the Gokana people. Saro-Wiwa and others were promptly arrested as the masterminds. In the letters, Saro-Wiwa stated explicitly his innocence of the allegation of murders.

There was no evidence of Saro-Wiwa's direct or indirect involvement in the murders of the chiefs, which he had some relations with. In the third letter on page 54, he lamented about his condition

"My current detention is sheer torture. I'm a private prisoner of the Lt. Col. Komo and his Internal Security Task Force".

Komo was the Military Administrator of Rivers State, who from the letters, was posted to the state to "pacify" the Ogoni. While, the Rivers State Internal Security Task Force (RSISTF) was headed by Major Paul Okuntimo. In the book, Saro-Wiwa tagged Okuntimo, "the sadist" because of the beating of famous British ecologist, Nick Aston of Jones, (page 66). In page 86, the 15th letter to Majella dated 27th October 1994, he described Okuntimo again as "Commander of the Ogoni murder squad." In September, Saro-Wiwa informed that as a new person, Major Obi Umahi took over as the head of the RSISTF and continued the bloodletting from where his successor stopped. Apart from Ogoniland, the RSISTF also committed violence and extra-judicial killings in places like Etche Local Government Area and others places in the state. But their killings and violence spree was more in Ogoniland than any other place.

In later part of that third letter in page 55, Saro-Wiwa told us again that he knew the consequences of his nonviolence struggle. "I am not worried for myself. When I undertook to confront Shell and the Nigerian establishment, I signed my death warrant, so to speak. At 52, I think I've served my time and, come to face it, I've lived a charmed life. A few more books, maybe, & the opportunity to assist others would have been welcome. But it's okay," he wrote In page 117, offended by the unbearable condition in detention, sought for martyrdom for the sake of his people, "... have always recognized that my cause could lead to death", he added.

In same letter above, Saro-Wiwa reinforced his guiltlessness and blamed the murders on the tyrannical state under General Sani Abacha "I even suspect that Kobani and others were murdered by the security agencies in order to justify some of the reports that had been submitted by the security people in support of the Constitutional Conference. We (Ledum Mitee and I) have met soldiers who are prepared, if they have the protection, to talk about what instructions they had, who looted what, who killed whom," he said (page 88).

He re-defined what the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the organization he founded was all about. "Of course, I and MOSOP had nothing to do with the death of the four gentlemen.

We are struggling for justice, not for power" Here again, Saro-Wiwa pointedly accused Komo of complicity in the murders of the chiefs. "Komo has just succeeded in masking the government's role in the unfortunate and brutal deaths".

Though such custody Saro-Wiwa was dumped into wasn't a good place to be, but it afforded him the opportunity to write and read copiously. In letter 16 (page 11), he took solace in what the comrades before him had suffered. "Yes, I have everything to be thankful for, and do not forget that I've been here only 23 weeks now. Mandela and Walter Sisulu were there for 26/27 years. How can I complain?" He also lamented the lack of culture of writing among his Ogoni people and others.

In three places in the book – page 59, 111 and 113 respectively, mention were made of a book, which we have not seen or heard about. In page 59, he said, "...somehow, I'm finding a lot of activity – reading and writing. I've now completed a volume of short stories. I've actually written five of the stories before now. I've done five more & gotten a book."

The editors alleged that it might be "A Kind of Festival and Other Stories". Saro-Wiwa also wrote, "I start on re-writing the novel I lost in 1992 at the end of next week." The editors' guessed again, it might be another book, Lemona's Tale. In letter 23, page 111, he wrote; "However, I hope to complete the diary of my first detention and to send it off to the U.K. in the hope that I might find a publisher. Also a collection of short stories, A Kind of Festival and Other Stories which I believe to be the best of the three collections I've done so far." Again, in page 113, "...I've completed the corrections on my latest short story collection A Kind of Festival and Other Stories. I think this collection is my best so far. I'll be sending both to junior Ken & asking him to see if he can get a publisher in the U.K."

On page 84 (letter 14) Saro-Wiwa stated clearly that he was not going into partisan politics, rather expanding the Ogoni struggle to other parts of the Niger Delta. He outlined what he was struggling as "ERECTISM – ethnic autonomy, resource and environmental control." In same page, Saro-Wiwa eulogized Oronto Natei Douglas, "Oronto is a lawyer and committed to the Niger Delta – his home is one of the six places studied." Not only Oronto, he also praised progressive Yoruba leaders and independent press and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (page 100).



"Locally, the support of the non-governmental press has been tremendous. And Yoruba leaders meeting on August 31 (1994) sent solidarity messages to the Ogoni and called for my release" (Page 72).

Icons like Wole Soyinka, the late Claude Ake and the late British Anita Roddick, the late GaniFawehinmi were lavishly praised by Saro-Wiwa (see pages 61,72,90,108,106,114,117 and 130). He also mentioned the roles of other defence lawyers, Femi Falana, OlisaAgbakobar and his younger brother, Owens Wiwa (pages 106 and 114). He also praised Mairead Corrigan, the Northern Ireland peace activist award winner (page 123), the Irish and their organisations like Trocaire( page 106) and the Ogoni Solidarity Ireland(page 123). Remember that Saro-Wiwa had said he drew some of his inspiration from the Irish Renaissance of the Swiftian period.

Even in prison, Saro-Wiwa's undying love for his suffering Ogoni people was demonstrated. From there, he deployed his diminishing financial resources to support them – especially his comrades who were either in detention, underground or haunted – page 109. On page 130, he vowed, "I am in good spirits, expecting the worst as usual, but hopeful for the best." According to the book, Saro-Wiwa's deep distrust in the Nigerian judiciary, contrary to his parent's expectation is exposed. "My parents are always in court, and my father believes that I will be free at the end of the case. I've tried very hard to dampen his optimism but the old man won't budge. I just hope he does not get a rude shock" (Page 130). On page 88 (letter 15) Saro-Wiwa warned, "Don't expect anything from the court. The matter is political, and the military do not care for the judicial system" ( page 87).

Saro-Wiwa strongly believed that the intervention of the West would save the situation of the Ogoni. He specifically appealed to the American President Jimmy Carter to intervene in the Ogoni situation as well as Western embassies in Nigeria. He took a swipe at the military dictatorship and called on the European Union (EU) and the Americans to kick the military out if any meaningful development would take place in Nigeria. They couldn't save Ken Saro-Wiwa. Abacha hanged him on 10th November 1995. But General Abacha, the maximum head of the Nigerian establishment was eventually kicked out as Saro-Wiwa requested.

He reportedly died of "cardiac arrest". Professor Charles R. Larson, in his ground-breaking book, *The Ordeal of the African Writer* (2001) on page 140,

lampooned the international system Saro-Wiwa believed so much in. "Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa's execution by hanging on 10 November 1995 was a travesty of justice, a mockery of human rights and a failure of international diplomacy".

From page 133-162 are the 28 poems. In the collection, Saro-Wiwa poeticised about the Ogoni struggle-"Around the drooping neck of a shell-shocked land"- page 143. The sweeping solidarity for the Ogoni struggle, "On the walls of history"- page 142. His love of great women like Anita Roddick, "I would sing your song"- page 136 and Majella McCarron, "--- To a journey of faith/-- For the voiceless of the earth!/-- And strange lands, we pour fourth/--- Of your Ogoni, my Fermangh", page 137.

He complained about "the agony of trees dying—of dying children" (page 143) and poor Ogoni women, "Her wretched soul destroyed"- line 4 on page 150. He satirized about prison condition in the poem, "Prison Song"- "Bedbugs, fleas and insects/---- I'm reminded of this crude place/Shared with unusual inmates"- page 140.

Saro-Wiwa, even when walking to his grave didn't spare military dictatorship- "Makes Babangidance such a hit!" (Line 12 in page 148). Babangidance, derived from the name of Ibrahim BadamosiBabangida, Nigeria's former military ruler becomes a metaphor for dictatorship. He wrote of his love for his children, both male and female. It pervades both the letters and poems. But deeper one for the females- Zina and her sisters ( Singto, Adele, Noo) "which you and your kids must ponder"- page 151. Back to the letters, Saro-Wiwa was happy that, "— I have a real team of capable women, if they do not meet and get enslaved by some mean men!"

The book, *Silence Would be Treason – Last Writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa*, is a great book. It revives and supplements the fading memories of actors and actresses like us (not spectators) during the gloomy days. It needs to be read carefully with an open mind. The book contains correct information about the hey days of the Ogoni struggle, its victories, failures, betrayals and travails in the naked face of highly organized state/corporate violence and conspiracies against a marginalised and embittered people of the eastern Niger Delta belt in Nigeria. ♦

***Naagbanton, the book reviewer lives in Port Harcourt, Rivers State capital.***

## Press clips – HOMEF in the News

HOMEF in the News...in case you missed these, we serve some clips

### **Food Security: N14bn FG grant needs technology boost –**

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/01/food-security-n14bn-fg-grant-needs-technology-boost/>

### **NDelta leaders want confab of ethnic nationalities**

<http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/index.php/news/national-news/145323-n-delta-leaders-want-confab-of-ethnic-nationalities>

### **Niger Delta : Groups Rejects Confab Committee Report**

<http://mobile.saharareporters.com/news-page/niger-delta-groups-rejects-confab-committee-report>

### **The Niger Delta Environment and the Nigerian State**

<http://telegraphng.com/2014/01/niger-delta-environment-nigerian-state-1/>

### **The Niger Delta environment and the Nigerian State**

<http://www.theneighbourhood.com.ng/nigerdeltanew/2030-the-niger-delta-environment-and-the-nigerian-state.html>

### **Ghana: Backpedaling as gas flaring could be permitted at Jubilee Field**

<http://www.theafricareport.com/West-Africa/ghana-backpedaling-as-gas-flaring-could-be-permitted-at-jubilee-field.html>

### **Nigerian governments claims of implementing UNEP report on Ogoni false, Niger Delta environmental activists say**

<http://premiumtimesng.com/news/154742-nigerian-governments-claims-implementing-unep-report-ogoni-false-niger-delta-environmental-activists-say.html>

### **Environment college debuts in Uniport**

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### **Nigeria loses \$2.5bn to gas flaring yearly' – HOMEF**

<http://energymixreport.com/nigeria-loses-2-5bn-to-gas-flaring-yearly-homef/>

### **Food Security: N14bn FG grant needs technology boost**

<http://www.daargroup.com/daar-group/latest-news/vanguardngr-food-security-n14bn-fg-grant-needs-technology-boost>

### **OGONI POLLUTION: Civil Society Clamour for State of Emergency**

<http://watchdogreporters.net/ogoni-pollution-civil-society-clamour-for-state-of-emergency>

### **Prof. Williams Okowa ' College Campus Inauguration: Nnimmo**

[BasseysRemarkshttps://africangong.wordpress.com/tag/prof-williams-okowa/](https://africangong.wordpress.com/tag/prof-williams-okowa/)

### **No WTO! No REDD!No to using Rice for Carbon Markets!**

<http://ggjalliance.wordpress.com/2013/12/06/no-redd-rice-manifesto/>

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# NEW PRIVATIZED AFRICAN CITY Heralds Climate Apartheid

Martin Lukacs



**I**t's a sight to behold. Just off Lagos, Nigeria's coast, an artificial island is emerging from the sea. A foundation, built of sand dredged from the ocean floor, stretches over ten kilometres. Promotional videos depict what is to come: a city of soaring buildings, housing for 250,000 people, and a central boulevard to match Paris' Champs-Élysées and New York's Fifth Avenue. Privately constructed, it will also be privately administered and supplied with electricity, water, mass transit, sewage and security. It is the "future Hong Kong of Africa," anticipates Nigeria's World Bank director.

Welcome to Eko Atlantic, a city whose "whole purpose", its developers say, is to "arrest the ocean's encroachment." Like many low-lying coastal African countries, Nigeria has been hit hard by a rising sea-level, which has regularly washed away thousands of peoples' homes. To defend against the coastal erosion and flooding, the city is being surrounded by the "Great Wall of Lagos", a sea defence barrier made of 100,000 five-ton concrete blocks. Eko Atlantic will be a "sustainable city, clean and energy efficient with minimal carbon emissions," offer jobs, prosperity and new land for Nigerians, and serve as a bulwark in the fight against the impacts of climate change.

At least that's the official story. Other facts suggest this gleaming city will be a menacing allure to most. In congested Lagos, Africa's largest city, there is little employment and millions work and scavenge in a vast, desperate informal economy. Sixty percent of Nigeria's population – almost 100 of 170 million people – live on less than a dollar a day.



Preventable diseases are widespread; electricity and clean water hard to come by. A few kilometres down the Lagos shoreline, Nigerians eke out an existence in the aquatic slum of Makoko, built precariously on stilts over the ocean. Casting them as crime-ridden, the government regularly dismantles such slums, bulldozing homes and evicting thousands. These are hardly the people who will scoop up square footage in Eko Atlantic's pricy new high-rises.

Those behind the project – a pair of politically connected Lebanese brothers who run a financial empire called the Chagoury Group, and a slew of African and international banks – give a picture of who will be catered to. Gilbert Chaougy was a close advisor to the notorious Nigerian dictatorship of the mid 1990s, helping the ultra-corrupt general Sani Abacha as he looted billions from public

coffers. Abacha killed hundreds of demonstrators and executed environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa, who rose to fame protesting the despoiling of the country by Shell and other multinational oil corporations. Thus it's fitting for whom the first 15-story office tower in Eko Atlantic is being built: a British oil and gas trading company. The city proposing to head off environmental devastation will be populated by those most responsible for it in the first place.

The real inspiration for Eko Atlantic comes not from these men but the dreamworlds of rampant capitalism, stoked by a successful, thirty year global campaign to claw back gains in social security and unchain corporations from regulation – what we now know as neoliberalism. In Nigeria, oil wealth plundered by a military elite spawned extreme inequalities and upended the economy. Under the IMF's neoliberal dictates, the situation worsened: education and healthcare were gutted, industries privatized, and farmers ruined by western products dumped on their markets.

The World Bank celebrated Nigeria; extreme poverty doubled. The most notorious application of the power of the Nigerian state for the interest of the rich came in 1990: an entire district of Lagos

- 300,000 homes – was razed to clear the way for high-end real-estate development.

As elites in Nigeria and elsewhere have embraced such inequality as the very engine of growth, they have re-established some of the most severe forms of colonial segregation and gated leisure. Today, boutiques cannot open fast enough to serve the Nigerian millionaires buying luxury cars and yachts they'll be able to dock in Eko Atlantic's down-town marina.

Meanwhile, thousands of people who live in communities along the coast expect the new city will bring displacement, not prosperity, says environmental activist Nnimmo Bassey. To get their way, the developers, backed by industry and politicians, have trampled over the country's environmental assessment process. "Building Eko Atlantic is contrary to anything one would want to do if one took seriously climate change and resource depletion," he says.

The wealthy and powerful may in fact take climate change seriously: not as a demand to modify their behaviour or question the fossil-fuel driven global economy that has made it possible, but as the biggest opportunity yet to realize their dreams of unfettered accumulation and consumption.

The disaster capitalists behind Eko Atlantic have seized on climate change to push through pro-corporate plans to build a city of their dreams, an architectural insult to the daily circumstances of ordinary Nigerians. The criminalized poor abandoned outside their walls may once have served as sufficient justification for their flight and fortification – but now they have the very real threat of climate change as well.

Eko Atlantic is where you can begin to see a possible future – a vision of privatized green enclaves for the ultra rich ringed by slums lacking water or electricity, in which a surplus population scramble for depleting resources and shelter to fend off the coming floods and storms. Protected by guards, guns, and an insurmountable gully – real estate prices – the rich will shield themselves from the rising tides of poverty and a sea that is literally rising.



A world in which the rich and powerful exploit the global ecological crisis to widen and entrench already extreme inequalities and seal themselves off from its impacts – this is climate apartheid.

Prepare for the elite, like never before, to use climate change to transform neighbourhoods, cities, even entire nations into heavily fortified islands. Already, around the world, from Afghanistan to Arizona, China to Cairo, and in mushrooming mega-cities much like Lagos, those able are moving to areas where they can live better and often more greenly – with better transport and renewable technologies, green buildings and ecological services. In Sao Paulo, Brazil, the super-rich – ferried above the congested city by a fleet of hundreds of helicopters – have disembedded themselves from urban life, attempting to escape from a common fate.

In places like Eko Atlantic the escape, a moral and social secession of the rich from those in their country, will be complete. This essentially utopian drive – to consume rapaciously and endlessly and to reject any semblance of collective impulse and concern – is simply incompatible with human survival. But at the moment when we must confront an economy and ideology pushing the planet's life-support systems to breaking point, this is what the neoliberal imagination offers us: a grotesque monument to the ultra-rich flight from responsibility.

A counter-point to Eko Atlantic, Nigerian architect KunleAdeyemi has designed floating structures for the Makoko slum that are buoyed by plastic barrels and powered by solar panels.

There are, however, alternatives, like one proposed for the Makoko slum, the home of a quarter-million Nigerians – the same number who

are intended to inhabit Eko Atlantic. Nigerian architect KunleAdeyemi has designed what amounts to a counter-point, a floating settlement of which a school has already been built – making it only the second school that Makoko has ever had. The floating structures – made of low-cost wood and buoyed by recycled plastic barrels – have solar panels, sloped roofs to harvest rainwater, and compost toilets to solve dire sanitary needs.

Nnimmo Bassey thinks the floating settlements are just the thing to help the sustainable development of under-served communities across Nigeria's coastlines. "It is a structure that suits the environment, is easy to replicate and appropriate to peoples' lifestyle, and is sensitive to the challenges of sea level rise," he says. "It would help create what we need: communities for people, not gated anti-people communities."

The project is animated by a very different vision: that we must share rather than hoard, reduce inequality rather than increase it, and encourage the resiliency of everyone rather than the escape from the worst for a few.

That the needs of the most vulnerable, rather than the desires of the most wealthy, must be the starting point of any effort to truly combat the climate crisis.

The choices before Lagos confront us all. While ours is not the first civilization whose elites have proved spectacularly indifferent to collective, ecological survival, it is up to us whether we will be the last. ♦

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/true-north/2014/jan/21/new-privatized-african-city-heralds-climate-apartheid>

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## **HOMEF in Networks**

### **Oilwatch Africa/International**

HOMEF is founding member of the **No REDD in Africa Network (NRAN)** formed in March 2013 at the World Social Forum at Tunis

**Yes to Life – No to Mining Network (YLMN)** – HOMEF is a member of this anti-mining network that came to being under an ancient baobab tree at Tharaka, Kenya in April 2013 at an African Biodiversity Network meeting

### **Alternatives International**

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- HS03 Instigator: Firoze Manji, CODESRIA.
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Silence Would Be Treason - Last Writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa  
& Claim No Easy Victories - Essays on the legacy of Amilcar Cabral

### **Ø ABUJA: 20 May 2014**

(Heinrich Boell Foundation, Jabi, Abuja)  
**Sustainability Academy - Turmoil in Africa**

### **Ø PORT HARCOURT: 22 May 2014**

**Sustainability Academy - Turmoil in Africa**  
**@ Bori Camp, Ogoni. River State**

**Ø LAGOS: 23 May 2014 @ The Floating School, Makoko Lagos.**  
**Sustainability Academy - Turmoil in Africa**

**You are welcome to register online and be part of the session in any of the locations.**