

eco~  
**INSTIGATOR**

A PUBLICATION OF HEALTH OF MOTHER EARTH FOUNDATION

ISSUE #1  
AUGUST 2013



**Everyone  
Must Accept Binding** **Climate**  
**Commitments**

Homef, The  
Ecological Think-  
tank Arrives

Politics of  
Ecological Defence

Youth Bulge:  
Climate Change  
Challenges and Opportunities



The *Eco~Instigator* is a publication of Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF)

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@ Health\_Earth



Health of  
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## Home Run

It is with great excitement that we bring you the maiden edition of the *Eco~Instigator*, the journal of the Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF).

We aim to make this a biannual affair and through this medium present critical issues of the day as they fit into the HOMEF framework of being an ecological think tank. As detailed in the section About HOMEF, our work is rooted in environmental justice covers two broad areas- fossil fuels (dirty energy, climate change, geo-engineering, REDD, etc) and hunger politics (genetic engineering, food aid, land grabs).

Why do we call this journal *Eco~Instigator*? This name is carefully chosen to signify our great desire to provoke positive ecological changes to ensure the rights of Mother Earth with the understanding that this is the assured way or ensuring the rights of humans and other species. The key concept here is that instigators provoke positive and wholesome change as well as the defense of ecosystems as necessary.

We should also state why the HOMEF slogan is Solidarity and Dignity! The words solidarity and dignity convey strong sense of relational duty on peoples between themselves and towards the planet and other beings/species on the planet.

The Wiktionary defines solidarity as a bond of unity between individuals, united around a common goal or against a common enemy. It adds that solidarity entails a willingness to give psychological and/or material support when another person is in a difficult position or needs affection.

The same Wiktionary defines dignity as: A quality or state worthy of esteem and respect. Article 5 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), stipulates that ***Every individual shall have the right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being.***

These are words that call us all to act beyond our individual or personal interests and to consider the collective in our actions. This is what every instigator is expected to do.

You should not be surprised, therefore, that we call the discussion leaders at our HOME School (Sustainability Academies) instigators. They are persons with deep knowledge in their areas of focus and with demonstrated experience in instigating positive changes in those areas.

It is thus very fitting that our first instigator is Pablo Solon, former ambassador of Bolivia to the United Nations and the current head of a focus on the Global South. He stands out among climate justice activists whose experience cuts across both the official climate change negotiations and the public spaces of mass mobilizations. His article on page 6 gives an insight to his thoughts on climate change and the necessity for action.

In this issue we serve you “Waterscape” - an eco-poem by Ogaga Ifowodo on page 4. We welcome poems on ecology and Justice for subsequent editions.

The HOME TEAM is made up of a crop of committed youths who understand that the future has arrived and see the urgent need to provoke change. Enlistment on this Winning TEAM is open to all who are ready to join the struggle for environmental justice.

As a think tank, HOMEF is a learning and action space. That is why our HOME School is a space you must be in.

It is our pleasure to serve you.

Welcome to *Eco~Instigator*. Be an instigator!

@ HOMEF,  
Nnimmo Bassey





# HOMEF

## The Ecological Think Tank Has Arrived

**H**OMEF is an environmental/ecological think tank and advocacy organisation. It is rooted in solidarity and in the building and protection of human and collective dignity.

We believe that neoliberal agendas driven by globalization of exploitation of the weak, despoliation of ecosystems and lack of respect for Mother Earth thrive mostly because of the ascendancy of enforced creed of might is right. This ethic permits the powerful to pollute, grab resources and degrade/destroy the rest simply because they can do so.

HOMEF recognizes that this reign of (t)error can best be tackled through a conscious examination of the circumstances by which the trend crept in and got entrenched. Thus, HOMEF will have as a cardinal work track continuous political education aimed at examining the roots of exploitation of resources, labour, peoples and entire regions. HOMEF hopes through this to contribute to the building of movements for recovery of memory, dignity and harmonious living with full respect of natural cycles of Mother Earth.

Three key areas of focus are fossil fuels, the politics of hunger and creating spaces for knowledge generation and sharing.

### Fossil fuels

Although the massive dependence on fossil fuels has been seen as the major cause of global warming, wars and destruction, the world's addiction to fossil fuels is yet to wane. The fossil fuels industry together with international finance institutions and the military complex continue to engineer the literal scraping of the

bottom of the barrel to squeeze out more fossil fuels completely ignoring the harm and the fact that they are non-renewable and will ultimately be abandoned or exhausted.

The short-term logic that empowers this blind drive is one that worships profit and ignores the future of the planet and her children. HOMEF work on this track builds from the power of the communities who subsidise this perverse industry and who suffer gross despoliation. HOMEF believes that a transition from fossil fuels must be rapid and urgent and devoid of distractions by way of fuels and techno-fixes that either depend on the same infrastructure that has rigged in the crises or claim to provide solutions to the crises in order to sustain the current polluting logic.

### Hunger politics

This track asks the basic question: why are people hungry. It also looks at why obesity is increasingly becoming a problem in the world today. HOMEF works in the paradigm of food sovereignty and exposes the false premises of food aid and its exploitative and contaminating linkages.

### Sustainability Academy

This provides the fundamental vehicle for the attainment of the change HOMEF seeks to build. The academy provides spaces for knowledge creation and sharing. Through this we work to eliminate ignorance and build self-reliance and confidence in the wisdom that has preserved and improved our environment over the millennia. The academy is not a physical structure, but rather fluid spaces for participatory learning.



Through the academy HOMEf connects peoples and shares knowledge and ideas of what has worked or is working or would work.

The space is vital for analyses and sharing of why and how communities are trained to acquiesce to exploitation, oppression and humiliation. The academy also helps to expose tokenistic actions to dull resistance and breed debilitating dependence.

The Sustainability Academy is also a space for contest of ideas.

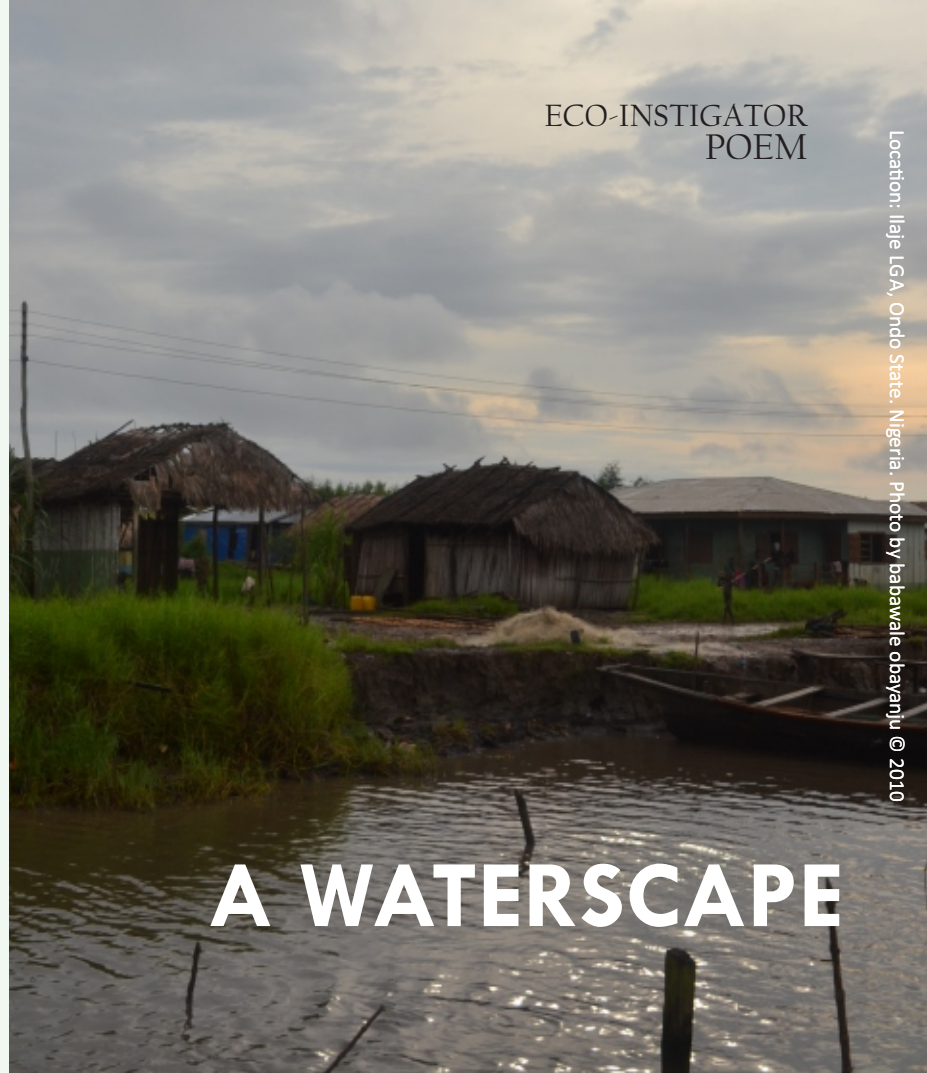
The Sustainability Academy provides the space for our work on Fossil Fuels and Hunger Politics.

The Academy will have two regular sessions each year with the length of one week each. Each session has at least one instigator/lecturer who would inspire and challenge the people in at separate meetings within that week. Target groups include:

- High school students
- Students in tertiary institutions
- Community people/other civil society activists
- Government officials/policy makers

### Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is composed of women and men who have distinguished themselves in the struggle for environmental justice and the rights of Mother Earth ☯



## A WATERSCAPE

Hung above water, hands in the air,  
whited tongues and breathing fibrous hair:  
roots, white mangrove roots.  
Blacker than pear, deeper than soot,  
massive ink-well, silent and mute:  
water, black water.

Floating hats of lily, yellow plume,  
plankton and shrimp, egg-and-fish in bloom:  
lakes, ancestral lakes.  
Rich mud of eels, water-holes of crab,  
sink-place for fisher of dig-and-grab:  
bog, mudskippers' bog.

And in the mangrove waters, where tides  
free the creeks of weeds, fishermen glide  
home to the first meal.

© Ogaga Ifowodo  
from The Oil Lamp (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press,  
2005)

# Everyo Must Accept Bindi

**T**he United Nations climate negotiations in Bonn are more of the same and we are running out of time.

Everybody recognizes that there is a “gap”, but there are no concrete proposals to solve the “gap”. Most delegations prefer not to put a number on the “gap” to avoid the embarrassment of what all countries had agreed to in Doha last December 2012.

According to UNEP reports, global emissions should be around 44 GT of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020 to be on track to a 2°C scenario, that still in fact is dangerous. With the Doha, Durban and Cancun outcomes they will hit the level of 57 GT of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020. So the “gap” is 13 GT of Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e)

If this “gap” is not closed by 2020 the global average temperature of the planet will increase by more than 4 to 8°C. The last time the

Earth lived a global warming like this was millions of years ago.

In the UNFCCC every delegation knows the urgency of the climate crisis... but the speeches and arguments are almost the same. Representatives from the 195 parties to the UNFCCC are meeting in Bonn to discuss ideas for a global emissions treaty 2015

The US and others that have quit from the Kyoto Protocol want a “pledge and review regime”. In other words: no targets. No binding commitments. Lets do what each one can do... and lets see. And what is the US willing to do? 3% emissions cut based on 1990 levels by 2020.

This is almost nothing. And what is even worse is that more and more countries are entering into that same dynamic with the argument that even if their countries cut their emissions by half the impact in the global emissions will be less than 1% because the bigger emitters are not taking the lead.

The discussions instead of focusing on how to reduce global emissions to much more less than 44 GT CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020 has been about the principles of the Convention, “equity”, “historical responsibility” and “CBDR” (Common But Differentiated Responsibility) between developed and developing countries.

The climate emergency that we are living was not the first priority.

## Common sense

First, define the target: global emissions of much more less than 44 GT of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020.

Second, divide that amount between the world population in 2020 (around 7.6 billion). That is 5.7 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e per capita by 2020.

Third, apply the principles of the convention (historical responsibility, CBDR and equity) to that per capita number. This will give different targets of per capita emissions for each country.



# ne Climate ng Commitments

PABLO SOLON

Those who carry more historical responsibility will have to do more and those with less historical responsibility will have more space for development, but all together will guarantee that the world is below 44 GT of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020.

There should not be a pledge and review system for anybody. No one is exempt. Everybody has to adopt binding commitments. Some do much more, some do less, some can increase emission for some years but its clear when they will reduce and by how much.

And in order to guarantee these binding commitments we need to strengthen the compliance system with some kind of climate justice tribunal and sanctions.

Here the Common But Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) principle should also be applied. Strong sanctions for historical emitters, moderate sanctions for others and very light sanctions for the least responsible.

In other words the principles of the convention have to be preserved but not understood as if only one side has binding commitments and the other side can do what they want. At this stage of the climate crisis we all have to commit with figures on the table to be below the 44 GT of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020.

## Carbon 'omissions'

Another important issue is the outsourcing of emissions of developed countries.

One third of China's emissions are consumed in the "developed" world. To be fair and equitable the per capita emissions should take into account the consumption and not only production of green house gas emissions, because many developed countries can simply outsource their emissions.

In the same line a country should not pass its binding commitment to another country through offsets and carbon market mechanisms.

The obligation of that country is the obligation of that country.

Finally the issue of the "right to development" should be not understood as the "right to pollute" as much as the others. In Bonn we have heard from many developing countries that they need development to reduce poverty.

This formula is not totally true. In the majority of countries, poverty is the result of concentration of wealth in very few hands. The main task to address poverty is not development but redistribution of wealth at national, regional and global level.

The "right to development" is the right to attend to the fundamental needs of the population following a very different kind of development than the current capitalist way that doesn't take into account the limits of the Earth.💎

## Meet HS#01 Instigator

**Pablo Solón Romero** served as Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations from February 2009 to July 2011. He is the son of the famous Bolivian muralist Walter Solón Romero Gonzáles. He is now the Executive Director of the NGO Focus on the Global South.

Before becoming Ambassador to the United Nations, Pablo Solón Romero worked as an activist for many years with different social organizations, indigenous movements, workers' unions, student associations, human rights and cultural organizations in Bolivia.

As Ambassador to the UN, Solón spearheaded successful resolutions on the Human Right to Water, International Mother Earth Day, Harmony with Nature, and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

He was very active in climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC, and helped organize the World People's Conference on Climate Change in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2010.

He participated in December 2011 in the Durban COP17 and he advocated there that it is time to change how we relate with nature

and restore harmony with nature. Criticizing the limits of the so-called "green economy" he declared: «The current relation with nature is through the market. You have to buy it. The problem with green economy is that they are saying capitalism has failed because we have not put a price on nature. The logic is that you do not take care of what does not have a price. We must change the paradigm of how we relate with Mother Earth. It is not a problem of compensation it is of restoration. The green economy will include insurance so that if your environmental property is damaged you will be compensated. We need a citizens tribunal for the environment.

In April 2012, it was announced that Solón had become the Executive Director of the Bangkok-based NGO Focus on the Global South where he continues to promote the Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth. In September 2012, he participated in several workshops of the Summer University of the altermondialist NGO Attac in Toulouse (France).

Pablo Solón was named the 2011 international Human Rights Award winner by Global Exchange.◆





# YOUTH BULGE & CLIMATE CHANGE:

Challenges and Opportunities by Zaid Shopeju

**T**wo important statistical announcements were made in the last two years. On 31 October 2011, the world population reached a milestone when it was announced by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) that we have hit the 7 billion mark, and young people between the ages of 10 and 24 makeup 1.8 billion of the population. A significant number in all ramifications. The other milestone is the peaking of concentration of carbon dioxide at up to 400 pmm (parts per million ratio used to calculate carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere). The question then is why these thresholds are important and what is its implication for young people?

Currently the world is running on a linear system with finite resources. From extraction to production, distribution, consumption and disposal. This system looks perfect to the economists, big corporations and multinationals; or at least that is what they want us to believe. But the underlying implications are becoming obvious by the day in the light of the two statistical announcements.

In a world where science have shown that if natural resources are not used sustainably then they are likely to be exhausted before the middle of this century. This is a time bomb situation for the bulging world

population and especially the youths. By 2050, urban population is projected to almost double with 70% of the 8.9 billion people living in cities. The implication of this is that we have to build an urban capacity within 40 years that we have built over the last 4000 years. Unfortunately, most countries of the world are still playing politics with science and nature. Leaders are yet to come to terms with this new reality.

They are yet to set to working in building sustainable cities, but are rather busy marketing false ideas of megacities without mega sustainable plans to back them up. Meanwhile, science has warned us severally of the danger of the rising global temperature. Canada, Russia and New Zealand have pulled out of the Kyoto protocol which is the only legally binding treaty on climate change. This move can be interpreted as a green light for multinationals in these countries to go ahead with their unsustainable enterprise of extraction and fracking of natural resources – from drilling in the fragile Arctic region, extraction from tar sands of Alberta to building of massive coal plant in Auckland and gas flaring in the Niger Delta.

All these negative energy policies continue to contribute to the rise in global temperature and steady climb of the concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Are you still wondering how this affects your life as a young person? This means literally that the power to share a peaceful future with your grand children in harmony with mother earth is being striped away from you now. Some few individuals in windowless rooms and making beautiful presentations to our government are taking decisions in your name (and your children unborn) solely for their personal gains. Picture a world where the most priceless natural resources will not be gold, diamond or petroleum but rather safe portable water because this current pattern of extraction is polluting the air, underground body of waters, farmlands and oceans. Needless asking who is going to be affected most by this miscarriage of leadership and vision? These decisions will affect the over 1.8 billion young people across the world especially young people in developing countries such as Nigeria. You and I!

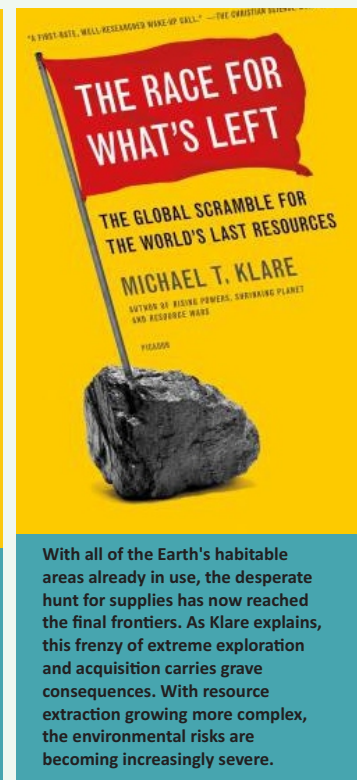
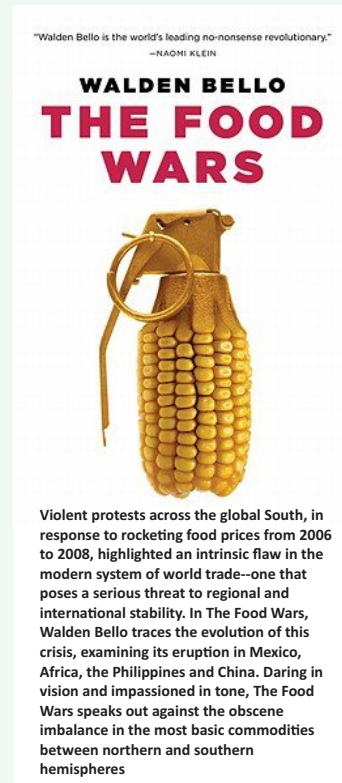
But the good news is that we have never had such a large percentage of young people in the world like we do now. Young people are now leading change in several parts of the world. The world-celebrated Arab Spring was not started by the adult but rather youths. Young people are playing leading roles in calls for change. We are also proposing real solutions. . We are advocating non-violent action and grassroots mobilisation from the community level to policy centres in the hope of securing the future we want. This is the time to leverage on our number for, as they love to say, "politics is a game of numbers". Young people are versatile, energetic and creative! Let's bring

this to bear on those powers that be with one mantra on our mouth "keep the oil in the soil, the coal in the hole and tar in the sand."

\* Zaid is a forefront youth climate activist in Nigeria. He coordinates Zero Carbon Africa 📍



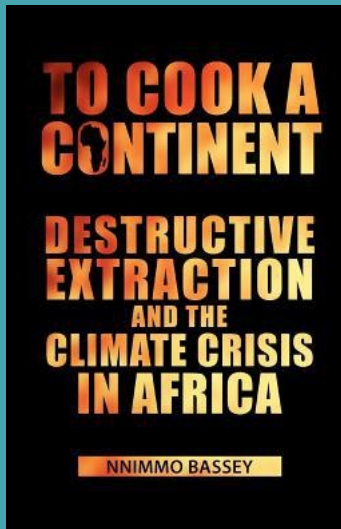
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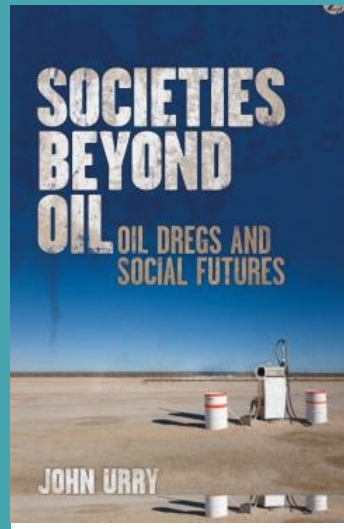


# OKS YOU SHOULD READ

ECO-INSTIGATOR



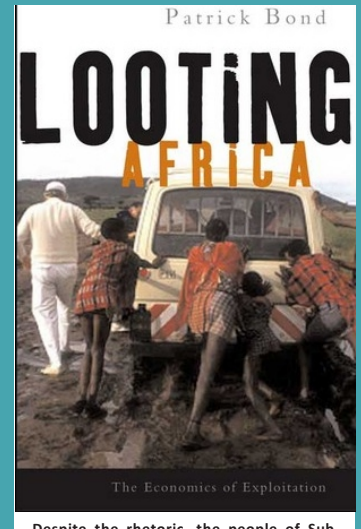
Arguing that the climate crisis confronting the world today is rooted mainly in the wealthy economies' abuse of fossil fuels, indigenous forests, and global commercial agriculture, this important book investigates how Africa has been exploited and how Africans should respond for the good of all.



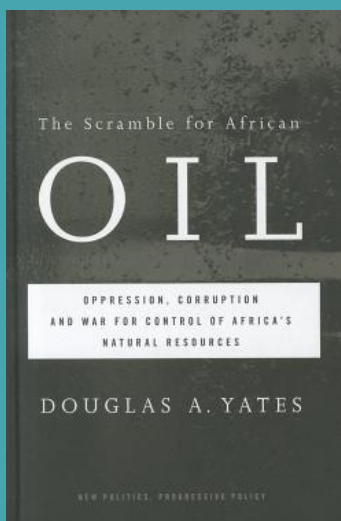
This groundbreaking book, from a distinguished sociologist, examines the profound adjustments required to live in a world where oil is no longer an easily-available energy source. It considers what societies that are powering down would be like; what lessons can be learned from the past



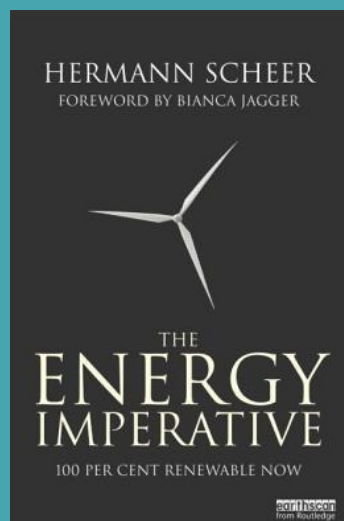
Part literary criticism, part media analysis, and part marketing handbook, "A Poetics of Resistance" provides a refreshingly new take on the Zapatistas. While much has been written on the history of the Zapatista insurgency and on the communiqués of Subcomandante Marcos, very little has been said about "Zapatismo"



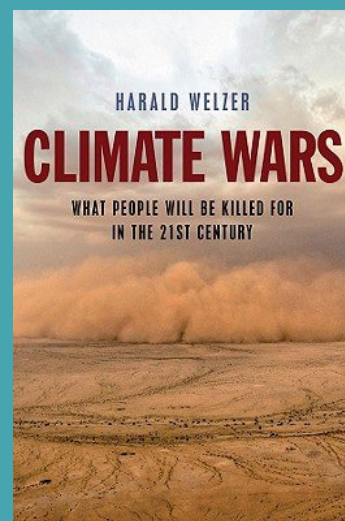
Despite the rhetoric, the people of Sub-Saharan Africa are becoming poorer. From Tony Blair's Africa Commission, the G7 finance ministers' debt relief, the Live 8 concerts, the Make Poverty History campaign and the G8 Gleneagles promises, to the United Nations 2005 summit and the Hong Kong WTO meeting, Africa's gains have been mainly limited to public relations. The central problems remain exploitative debt and financial relationships with the North, phantom aid, unfair trade, distorted investment and the continent's brain/skills drain.



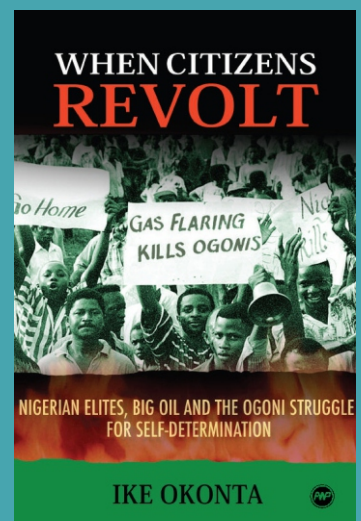
Africa is often seen as a place to be pitied or feared as an area of instability. This book challenges these common placent assumptions, showing how our demand for oil contributes to the chronic problems plaguing the continent.



For decades, Hermann Scheer was one of the world's leading proponents of renewable energy. In this, his last book before his death in 2010, he lays out his vision for a planet 100% powered by renewables and examines the fundamental ethical and economic imperatives for such a shift.



Struggles over drinking water, new outbreaks of mass violence, ethnic cleansing, civil wars in the earth's poorest countries, endless flows of refugees: these are the new conflicts and forces shaping the world of the 21st century.



In 1995 the Nigerian military regime under General Sani Abacha hanged Ken Saro-Wiwa, the writer and minority rights activist, with eight other members of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, after a judicially flawed trial. The hangings were a critical event, both for the Nigerian junta and for Royal Dutch/Shell, the major international oil company operating in the Niger delta. Okonta re-examines the evidence concerning the Ogoni struggle for self-determination and raises questions about its origins and implications as a case study of politics in post-colonial Africa.



# POLITICS OF ECOLOGICAL DEFENSE

NNIMMO BASSEY

It cannot be denied that the multiple crises currently confronting humankind are intimately linked to our perception of nature's resources and that this perception drives the manner by which these are exploited and utilised. The last century has been driven by the mindset that man can extract whatever is needed and if anything gets broken such can be easily fixed. This has been the path of limitless exploitation, limitless growth and limitless power. Unfortunately this exploitative system chooses to forget that the Planet Earth is finite and that most of what is being exploited is non-renewable.

For one, our concept of energy has been so shifted that what comes to mind when we think of energy is either electricity or the power to move objects and human beings. The faster we move objects or ourselves from one point to another convey a sense of satisfaction,

achievement and even pleasure. The development and ultimate unravelling of capitalism can be understood in its overall view of nature as something to be exploited and not to be nurtured, respected and protected. This mindset requires examination so that we see clearly that the nature-society dialectic generating and compounding the unfolding ecological crises is not accidental.

A review of literature on the origins of reckless despoliation of the environment as mankind's ambition to accumulate by cornering common goods for private enjoyment shows that this trend was visible even at the transition from feudalism to industrialisation in Europe. The reality is simply getting worse across the world today. Some commentators point out that technology is not the primary driver of man's antagonistic relationship with nature "but rather the nature and logic of capitalism as a specific mode of production."



The concept of disaster capitalism has been well defined by writers like Naomi Klein and we increasingly have situations where catastrophes are seen as opportunities for business. When floods, earthquakes or tsunamis level the properties of the weak in society, the power brokers sweep in, demolish what may be left standing and then appropriate everything without any sense of accountability or responsibility. Some of these disasters have been termed “natural disasters” whereas they are clearly the result of the activities of humans.

Someone was quoted as saying that oil spills make economic sense in that they could generate new businesses for those who would handle the clean-ups. In fact this “witness” at an hearing even went as far as insisting that where fishermen are displaced from their trade they would have an opportunity of starting a new line of work perhaps with any compensations they may be paid.

It may sound crude, but this captures the basic sense in the drive for disposition, acquisition, accumulation for profit. In this context there is pretty little economic difference between activities that maintain the integrity of natural ecosystems and those that destroy people and their environment. The narrow pursuit of profit makes it impossible to see into the future, as whatever can be grabbed now is fair game.

The environment is the theatre of life. We are part of it and not apart from it. We do not own it and cannot reasonably appropriate it as private property. This is what makes the continued colonisation of the atmosphere through unmitigated pumping greenhouse gases unreasonable and utterly unacceptable. Defending the environment is an unavoidable political duty.

As the exploitation of nature draws to the zenith of unreasonableness, merchants are now seeing nature as an object for speculation and wholesale commodification. Good concepts such as sustainable development are being turned on their heads. The concept of Green Economy on which even the brownest sectors cling turns out

to be a platform insisting that nature cannot be defended except it is assigned a monetary value and absolutely ignoring the intrinsic value of nature.

On the whole, the expansion of capital conveniently overlooks the ruination of nature. This is why the Nigerian environment, from the South to the North, has been so utterly abused and ignored. We are confronted with a situation where land is grabbed with brute force, forests have been chopped down, pollution is rife and wastes are not adequately taken care of.

The sorry state of the Nigerian environment is best seen through the lens of the impacts of the oil and gas sector.

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) assessment of the Ogoni environment shows the level of ecocide inflicted by over five decades of reckless exploitation. UNEP surmises that it would require about 30 years of work to detoxify the Ogoni environment where active oil extraction was shut down in 1993. Almost two years after the presentation of that report to the government of Nigeria little has been seen by way of responses to the clear situation of environmental emergency the report announces.

The system of nature is circular and these remain in a state of recycling and replenishment until man interferes with them. Current dominant production systems are linear and overload natural systems with excessive amounts of waste products. The governing creed appears to be that the more polluting the action, the more profitable they are. And, in a twisted sense, that is right because it extends the doctrine of pillage and brigandage in which environmental costs are externalised to the poor and to nature.

Transnational corporations are in the vanguard of the unrelenting assault on nature. By their mode of operation they are forever seeking ways to block the doors of justice and not to do what is right. State companies driven by similar neoliberal principles are just as bad.

What is to be done? Shall we throw up our hands in despair because the challenges are daunting? The simple answer is that this is not the time to despair. It is the time to organise! We have the seeds for the growing of national as well as pan-African movements for ecological justice. These must be deepened, expanded and linked with the global wave of movements taking their stand on this. It is the right time to place the ecological question in the heart of our political debates and plans of action. We are the people of the environment: our lives, culture and production are embedded and intertwined with nature.

We must act to break the transactional relationship with nature by exploitative forces. It is time to take a clear stand and fight to build a real and radical path for change based on the empowerment of our people to defend their patrimony, ensure justice and equity. In the struggle for environmental/ecological justice when we pretend to be neutral we simply show that we are accomplices in the despoliation of nature.🌀



## No REDD Network Born: Africans Unite Against New Form of Colonialism

Outraged by the rampant land grabs and neocolonialism of REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest degradation), Africans at the World Social Forum in Tunisia took the historic decision to launch the No REDD in Africa Network and join the global movement against REDD.

REDD+ is a carbon offset mechanism whereby industrialized Northern countries use forests, agriculture, soils and even water as sponges for their pollution instead of reducing greenhouse gas emissions at source.

“REDD is no longer just a false solution but a new form of colonialism,” denounced Nnimmo Bassey, Alternative Nobel Prize Laureate, former Executive Director of ERA/Friends of the Earth Nigeria. “In Africa, REDD+ is emerging as a new form of colonialism, economic subjugation and a driver of land grabs so massive that they may constitute a continent grab.

We launch the No REDD in Africa Network to defend the continent from carbon colonialism.”



In the UN-REDD Framework Document, the United Nations itself admits that REDD could result in the “lock-up of forests,” “loss of land” and “new risks for the poor.”

REDD originally just included forests but its scope has been expanded to include soils and agriculture. In a teach-in session yesterday at the World Social Forum Tunis, members of the La Via Campesina, the world’s largest peasant movement, were concerned that REDD projects in Africa would threaten food security and could eventually cause hunger.

A recent Via Campesina study on the N’hambita REDD project in Mozambique found that thousands of farmers were paid meager amounts for seven years for tending trees, but that because the contract is for 99 years, if the farmer dies his or her children and their children must tend the trees for free. “This constitutes carbon slavery,” denounced the emerging No REDD in Africa Network. The N’hambita project was celebrated by the UN on the website for Rio+20, the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro last year.

Mercia Andrews, Rural Women’s Assembly of Southern Africa urged “We as Africans need to go beyond the REDD problem to forging a solution. The last thing Africa needs is a new form of colonialism.”

Africans from Nigeria, South Africa, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Mozambique, Tunisia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Tanzania participated in the launch of the No REDD in Africa Network.

According to The New York Times, over 22,000 farmers with land deeds were violently evicted for a REDD-type project in Uganda in 2011 and Friday Mukamperezida, an eight-year-old boy was killed when his home was burned to the ground.

REDD and carbon forest projects are resulting in massive evictions, servitude, slavery, persecutions, killings, and imprisonment, according to the nascent No REDD in Africa Network.

“The Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities on Climate Change against REDD and for Life hails the birth of the NO REDD in Africa Network. This signals a growing resistance against REDD throughout the world,” Tom Goldtooth, Director of the Indigenous Environmental Network. “We know REDD could cause genocide and we are delighted that the Africans are taking a stand to stop what could be the biggest land grab of all time.”

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

*Solidarity & Dignity.*

## **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 (YNMN)** – 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**

# MONEY CAN'T BUY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: NORWICH DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

*This declaration emerged from a workshop held at the University Of East Anglia In Norwich, England on June 20-22, 2013, on global environmental justice.*

*We, an international group of activists, academics and researchers, observe that environmental injustices are proliferating across the globe.*

*Cases of environmental injustice are however frequently being addressed by governments, multinational corporations and multilateral institutions as problems that can be resolved through technical or monetary means. Such narrow understandings of environmental justice normalise the perpetration of injustice. Instead we believe it is essential to advance an approach to environmental justice founded on fundamental principles of citizenship, political and cultural rights, democratic decentralisation, rule of law, access to due juridical processes and transparent, democratic and accountable governance.*

Recognising that globalized economic activity, growing demand for natural resources, and the continued absence of transparent, democratic and accountable governance have enabled unprecedented levels of resource capture across multiple scales, rendering environmental injustices ever more politically complex and ideologically sophisticated;

Acknowledging that these conflicts typically lead to calls for environmental justice on the part of the local people affected by the negative impacts of outside interest on their local resources; Asserting that justice entails righting the wrongs committed (sometimes through compensation), restoring the environment, and promising to cease and desist harmful activity, as well as preventing further wrongs through strengthening participation in decision-making over the use of resources;

Recognising that calls for environmental justice relate to recognition of rights to customary resources, territories, and cultural difference, fair

negotiation processes and fairness in the distribution of benefits and costs, both within society and inter-generationally; Concerned by the fact that those seeking to secure resources and manage these burgeoning conflicts (e.g. governments and corporations) are increasingly turning to solutions based on compensation payments for disadvantaged communities for losses incurred by expropriation, resource use, pollution and environmental degradation[i];

Troubled by the fact that these initiatives are based on the premise that payments make the distribution of outcomes more equitable, and therefore presume that such measures produce just outcomes[ii];

We assert that global calls for environmental justice are multi-dimensional, concerned not solely with equity in the distribution of environmental risk and benefits, but equally with recognition of the diversity of people and cultures, and citizenship-based participation in political processes which create, manage and implement environmental policy[iii];

We argue that these plural, contextual notions of injustice are inevitably insufficiently dealt with by compensatory approaches (apart from a very narrow range of cases, for example, where historic liability and punitive damages are concerned). We identify the following reasons why compensatory approaches fall short of redressing injustices and serving justice:

(1) The focus on outcomes deflects attention from the root causes of injustices[iv]. Compensation is an 'end-of-pipe' intervention that may address distributive outcomes but not the underlying distribution of assets and political-economic power[v].

(2) Compensation is founded on particular conceptions of distributive justice[vi]. Many people experience injustices in ways that cannot be redressed via compensation, or they demand other forms of redress than compensation[vii].



(3) The focus on compensation may become coercive in contexts of stark economic inequality and political power asymmetries. Furthermore, compensation can reinforce inequalities among communities as well as engender new forms of conflict and corruption[viii].

(4) Compensation only serves justice where affected people can enjoy democratic rights and have access to legal recourse[ix], yet even under these circumstances, experience has shown that powerful vested interests are able to evade payment of compensation through the use of lengthy and costly legal appeals, or that even when it is granted, compensation rarely reaches those entitled to it.

We therefore:

Express our solidarity with global movements of environmental justice and the struggles of disadvantaged local communities to secure justice;

Assert that there is a need for strategies to bring about environmental justice that effectively address the distribution of assets and outcomes as well as issues of democratic participation, recognition and environmental integrity. Such strategies should be founded on principles of: citizenship, rights to customary resources, territories and cultural difference, democratic decentralisation of powers to local bodies, rule of law, access to due juridical processes and transparent governance[x];

Demand that governments hold perpetrators of environmental injustice culpable for their actions through local and global mechanisms of global governance, and act to prevent further future injustices;

Call upon companies, governments and multilateral organizations to acknowledge that some values (such as loss of identity and culture, sacredness) can never be compensated for, and cease the co-opting of injustices through compensatory measures that more often than not serve corporate interests over long term community needs;

Support the application of compensation or payments of ecological debt, within an integrated strategy for transformative / restorative reforms[xi].

For information about the signatories and the references to the declaration please visit [www.homef.org](http://www.homef.org)



# Get a HOMEF T-Shirt today!

**Spread the word...support the cause!  
Tshirts and other HOMEF materials  
are available on request from  
[homef@homef.org](mailto:homef@homef.org) at a token price.**



**HOMEF...Solidarity and Dignity**

It is with shock and extreme disappointment that we note the position of two ministers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that the country should import and consume genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The reports quote the ministers of Agriculture, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, and that of Science and Technology, Professor Itaewu as both happily endorsing the steps. We are disappointed because these ministries and the government of Nigeria ought to protect the interests of the citizens of Nigeria and not pander to the desires of the makers of genetically engineered products.

We are surprised that the government would take such a stand without a backing Biosafety Law in place in Nigeria and without consideration of the profound impact that such an open door to the products would have on the Nigerian agriculture, environment and the people.

The Nigerian government has of late treated the concerns of the people with palpable contempt. For instance, field trials of genetically engineered cassava has been carried out without public consultation and without public

# DO NOT FORCE-FEED WITH **GMOs** NIGERIANS

NNIMMO BASSEY



information as to whether that variety of cassava has been introduced into our farms and whether we are already consuming such. In fact some Nigerians think that the cassava bread the Minister of Agriculture advertises may actually be made of GMO varieties. Nigerians need to know.

As stated in The Daily Trust (26/06/2013) the Minister of Agriculture said at a media briefing "that Nigeria could not afford to be alone among African countries in accepting and consuming GM products. He noted that South Africa, Egypt, Burkina Faso and Sudan were already doing the same." We should state here that Sudan was arm-twisted by donor nations to accept whole grain GMOs in food aid following the food crisis of 2004. The same tactics were applied on Angola. When it was earlier tried on Zambia in 2002 that country resisted the pressure, was denied food aid, and weathered the storm through self-reliance and protection of their agriculture and food systems. Zambia still refuses to accept today.

Contrary to the claims of the minister, Burkina

Faso has not introduced GMOs into their food. That country planted genetically engineered cotton otherwise called Bt Cotton. The first harvest of that cotton last year was a big disappointment as the farmers got short fibre cotton rather than the long fibres they harvested from the conventional cotton they were used to planting.

South Africa is the most problematic on the continent when it comes to the regulation and introduction of GMOs. Public resistance have been strong, but the historical political context must also be considered in understanding the path the nation began to toe and the difficulties in ensuring a transition from certain routes.

Studies by the African Centre for Biosafety has revealed that corn products supplied by Tiger Brand in South Africa to companies including to Dangote Foods, a Nigerian conglomerate, has high GMO corn contents.

This revelation ought to drive the Nigerian government to order an investigation into the importation of unwholesome foods and food products into Nigeria rather than making



announcement of backdoor moves to ambush Nigerians into eating GMOs without their consent.

We recall here that in 2006/7 when an unauthorised (Liberty Link Rice 601) GMO rice was known to have been introduced into the market, Friends of the Earth Africa in efforts coordinated by Nigeria's Environmental Rights Action conducted tests on rice samples obtained from markets in Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. It was like searching for a pin a densely covered forest floor, but the illegal rice was found in food aid in Sierra Leone and in commercially imported varieties in Ghana and Nigeria. Following the issuance of the report the variety vanished from the Sierra Leonean markets but persisted in Ghana and Nigeria. Reports forwarded to Nigerian authorities and agencies including NAFDAC where neither acknowledged nor acted upon.

The propensity of Nigeria's government officials to push the biotech industry advertisement spin with regard to GMOs is condemnable.

The trumpeted advantages of GMOs over natural varieties have been shown to be nothing other than industry-generated myths. The same can be said of the manipulative narratives of hunger and malnutrition on the African continent. Once it was said that Africans are starved, today we are told that perhaps we may not be starving, but that we are malnourished. While we do not deny that some persons go to bed hungry and that some are malnourished (this is true of any nation or continent) the politics of hunger has been so hyped and jaundiced that even the G8 has now formed an alliance on malnutrition in Africa. The Nigerian Minister of Agriculture was among the first to jump on the bandwagon of praise singers for the so-called initiative that is nothing but a foot in the door for the biotech industry that have fought with little success to open up Africa for their Frankenstein seeds and foods.

The myths of GMOs include that they are higher yielding, are more nutritious and require less herbicides and pesticides. Another myth that is often peddled is that they are climate-smart and can flourish in adverse weather conditions. Scientists independent from the biotech industry have shown through careful research that GMOs are not higher yielding than natural and conventional varieties. They are not more nutritious but may actually be injurious to human health. They do not reduce the

use of chemicals in agriculture either. It has been seen that although the crops are often engineered to withstand herbicides produced by the same companies that produce the seeds, the weeds grow to resist the herbicides and farmers are forced to keep raising the concentration of the herbicides, thus compounding the resulting harm to biodiversity of the areas affected. The ones engineered to kill pests have ended up sometimes killing unintended organisms.

We should also mention here that GMOs work best with large-scale commercial agriculture. But the widespread dependence on chemical inputs have led to the death of pollinators like bees and saddled the world with silent farms and forests without insects and other beneficial species. Certainly Nigeria does not want to join the ranks of nations that hire or buy bees to pollinate their farms. We are not sure also that Nigerians want to toe a path that may lead to farmers pollinating their crops by hand.

Africa's soil is acclaimed as among of the best for crop cultivation. This, coupled with the myopia of some of our leaders, have led to massive land grabs on the continent and the permission of unregulated farming practices in those colonial enclaves.

Finally, we call on the Nigerian government to consider the fact that the nation is yet to have a Biosafety Law with which the environment and our biodiversity can be protected and defended. The government should also consider the fact that Nigeria is a signatory to the Cartagena Protocol that has the cardinal Precautionary Principle. We cannot be force-fed by a savage biotech industry that seeks to colonise African seeds and food systems. The fact that GMOs will not feed the world is well studied and documented. See the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) report, for example.

GMOs will enslave the world through the intellectual property rights that allows the biotech industry to patent their seeds, debars farmers from sharing or saving seeds and forces them to buy seeds every planting season. It seeks to overturn age long sustainable practices.

Nigeria should be a leader in the defence of the African environment, not a Slavic follower of the dictates of the biotech industry or by others who are offering thirty filthy pieces of silver.◆

# HOMEF SUSTAINABILITY ACADEMY



HOME School (HS) is a mobile and multi-city experience. Our inaugural Sustainability Academy also known as HOME School (HS01) kicks off on 19 August 2013 in Abuja with policy makers. 21st August will see us having sessions with secondary school kids and community folks in Benin City. The final leg of HS01 will hold at the University of Lagos on the 23rd of August..

HOMEF is proud to announce that the Lagos session will be co-hosted with the Department of Mass Communication of the University of Lagos.

The theme for this session is ***Communicating the Risk of Climate Change and the Looming Food Crisis***".

## **HOME SCHOOL#02**

HOME School 02 comes up 25-30 November 2013.

In keeping with our tradition, the academy will be mobile and in multiple cities. Sessions will hold in Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt.

HS02 will examine among other topics, ***The African/Global Awakening and implications for the***

## ***Environment.***

The instigator will be Firoze Manji, founder of Pambazuka and currently with Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). We will also be having Professor Anwar Fazal, Director of the Right Livelihood College. This unique HOME SCHOOL will also feature eminent scholars from UNILAG and UNIPORT.

## **FILMS & WORKSHOP**

\*\*\***THIS LAND IS NOT FOR GRABS** ( A struggle in drama by oppressed community people)  
A story of resistance against land grabbing in Nigeria. Written, directed by community people. Dates and venues to be announced. Keep on the alert!

## \*\*\* **THE HUNGRY AND THE MALNOURISHED**

A workshop to interrogate the reasoning behind the new label on Africans as not just hungry but malnourished peoples. Watch [www.homef.org](http://www.homef.org) for details.🌀