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# INSTIGATOR

A PUBLICATION OF HEALTH OF MOTHER EARTH FOUNDATION

## CHALLENGE OF A POISONED CIVILISATION



**OGONI CLEANUP AND THE  
TOWER PARABLE**

**STUDENTS OF AGRICULTURE  
REJECT GMOs**

**A JOURNEY WITH KEN SARO-WIWA**

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## ADMINISTRATION

Dotun Davids Olatundun  
Anita Okpomo  
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## LAYOUT / DESIGN

Otoabasi Bassey (Base X Studio)

## COVER IMAGE

Photo by Max LaRochelle on  
Unsplash

## CIRCULATION

Shehu Akowe

## PUBLISHED BY

### Health of Mother Earth Foundation



Top Floor 214, Uselu Lagos Road,  
Ugbowo, Benin City



P.O. Box 1057 Ugbowo, Benin City,  
Nigeria



+234 817 370 6095



[www.homef.org](http://www.homef.org)

## CONTACT INFO

All mails, inquiries and articles should be  
sent to



[editor@homef.org](mailto:editor@homef.org)

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**Brot**  
für die Welt

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# Home Run



**NNIMMO BASSEY,**  
Director, Health of Mother  
Earth Foundation

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Mother Earth, our planet, is on the sick bed because of the irresponsible anthropogenic degradation she currently faces. We simply cannot stand aside and watch as things degenerate.

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We are here again with yet another thought-provoking edition of our quarterly publication, eco-Instigator. Mother Earth, our planet, is on the sick bed because of the irresponsible anthropogenic degradation she currently faces. We simply cannot stand aside and watch as things degenerate. To this end, this edition features informative and educative articles and reports as well as poetry. You will also find all the usual features.

Ogoni and the creeks of the Niger Delta are famous for their pollution. The Ogoni clean-up as recommended by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is underway. We serve you report from monitors' training organized to monitor the clean-up process and ensure thorough compliance to the UNEP recommendations.

We stress the need to interrogate the state of biosafety in Nigeria as concerns mount up on the implications of modern

agricultural biotechnology to our seeds and food systems. We insist that, Nigeria can feed herself without succumbing to corporate colonization of our food systems. Just the other day, we woke up with the news that Nigeria is keen hop into the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) wagon. We see this move as needless especially with all the red flags that this would be one route towards our nation willingly submitting herself for a dangerous corporate capture.

We bring you reports from our event on seeds, food, biosafety and farming systems in Nigeria. You will also see the stringent calls by our youths for a future devoid of toxic foods.

Together we can work to restore justice and dignity for our peoples and the planet.

Until Victory!



# Ogoni Cleanup and the Tower Parable



BY NNIMMO BASSEY

Exploiters are expected to put in place management plans for handling incidents that would inevitably occur. The plans also include decommissioning and landscape restoration when the mining activity ends in the particular locations. This is so because every oil well, or mine site, has a life span and they all require proper and adequate closure actions at the end of their lifespan.

The Ogoni cleanup exercise continues to generate much expectations, anxieties and doubts for a number of reasons. Basically, the heightened level of concern can be attributed to the fact that over the years, the federal government and the international oil companies have lost the trust of the people when it comes to the exploitation of the resources, remediation of the associated harms and/or the enjoyment of benefits.

The questions often asked with regard to the Ogoni cleanup include why the recommendations of the

In the several decades of oil exploration, exploitation and outrageous spills, it is easy to find individuals and contractors that claim to have expertise in pollution remediation and the processes by which that can be achieved. What is hard to find is a location that has been fully remediated and restored. The processes of hydrocarbons extraction, processing and

usage are inherently polluting, sometimes violent, and require careful planning to handle those negative effects even before they happen. This is what the law, including through the environmental impact assessments, requires for all types of activities with potential to cause environmental harm. These include oil and solid minerals mining activities.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are not religiously followed, especially with regards to the provision of potable water. This is a legitimate concern and an emergency issue, seeing that the Ogonis have for decades, been condemned to drinking water contaminated with crude oil and sundry wastes. The Hydrocarbons Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) has to meet this demand and should do so expeditiously. Enquiries as to what action is being taken reveals that plans are on to revive existing water projects while the plan for a comprehensive water supply scheme for the entire Ogoni area continues. This clearly is one area that must be treated as an utmost emergency.

On the question of the recommendations of the UNEP report not being strictly adhered to, we note that UNEP is a critical consultant in the entire exercise and sits on both the governing council and board of trustees of HYPREP. This immersion and collaboration of the UN body in the process should allay fears concerning adherence to

recommendations of the report and the direction of the efforts.

Secondly, there is the issue of health audit needed for the establishment of the exact cause of the rampant ill health in the area. Interestingly, UNEP had reviewed thousands of health records during the assessment of the Ogoni environment but could not come to definitive conclusions on the prevalence of certain diseases and their underpinning causes due to the quality of health records. The health audit cannot be avoided and HYPREP has to attend to this with the urgency it deserves. This is a preliminary activity that would provide a collective diagnosis, so to speak, that would make for meaningful and targeted healthcare delivery for the people.

Thirdly, there are concerns over the establishment of centres for examining, handling and treating contaminated soils and wastes. Indications that this is not an ignored item can be seen in the undertaking of a study tour of similar facilities elsewhere by the HYPREP Governing Council.

Fourthly, citizens complain over the processes of selection of contractors for the cleanup, as well as a lack of public awareness of benchmarks and milestones of the exercise. The issues of transparency and milestones are often raised and rightly so because the people need to have basic information about the why, what, where, when and how of the exercise.

The question as to whether the Ogoni cleanup has begun or not has become basically rhetorical because for all intent and purpose, the process has been long and could have been faster. However, if we understand the complexity of the task and the monumental nature of the pollution, it is easier to agree that between the declaration of intention to cleanup and the actual scooping of the first mess lies a gamut of intricately interwoven preparatory steps to be undertaken. These include socio-cultural as well as technical matters that must be resolved, some of which, would mostly remain beneath the radar eating away chunks of time.

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The question as to whether the Ogoni cleanup has begun or not has become basically rhetorical because for all intent and purpose, the process has been long and could have been faster

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# Resolutions from Conference and Workshop on Seeds, Foods and Biosafety in Nigeria

**BY: JOYCE EBEBEINWE,**  
Project Lead, Hunger Politics



The state of biosafety in Nigeria does require critical interrogations as concerns mount up about the implications of modern agricultural biotechnology. These concerns are further increased as Nigeria begins move to sign into the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV). The Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) hosted a stakeholders' Conference on Seeds, Food and Biosafety on the 10th of April in Abuja and brought together over 100 stakeholders made up of consumers, farmers, academics,

researchers, government officials, medical professionals and representatives from Civil Society Organisations to look into these concerns and define a sustainable course for Nigeria with regard to seed laws, agricultural productivity and food sovereignty. The conference was followed with a workshop focused on seed treaties and farmers' rights. At the end of the two-day engagements, participants made commitments to enforce the demand for the preservation of farmers' rights, indigenous seeds varieties and overall biosafety.



## The following are the resolutions reached by the participants at the events.

### 1. Genetic modification of food crops is not needed in Nigeria

The challenges of food production in Nigeria lie outside the realm of supposed solutions offered by genetic engineering. What is needed is adequate support for farmers in terms of extension services, credit schemes, storage and processing facilities to reduce wastage, good roads to access markets, and increased access to agricultural land for increased productivity and food security.

### 2. No to colonialism, neo-colonialism through the use of modern agricultural biotechnology.

Colonialism and neocolonialism are implicated in the disruption of food systems and in the introduction of unnatural plants and animals. Agricultural biotechnology will foster corporate control of food production and disrupt local economies and thus we oppose its use in Nigeria.

### 3. Our current regulatory frameworks require urgent review

In order to protect Nigerians and ensure a robust management of our biosafety, we need strict regulatory frameworks that protect/promote the rights of farmers and the rights of the people to safe food and environment. The National biosafety Management Agency Act 2015 needs to be reviewed to prioritize the precautionary principle, strengthen public participation, and include strict provisions for liability and redress.

### 4. The National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) must be held accountable to carry out their regulatory duties thoroughly.

It is the responsibility of NBMA to regulate in an unbiased manner and not to promote the use of GMOs in Nigeria or issue permits to Biotech companies indiscriminately or without due diligence including public consultations.

### 5. Enforce the preservation of natural and indigenous food system in Nigeria.

Our farmers' rights to own, use and share their seeds and to be involved in charting the path for

the development of our food and agricultural systems must be secured.

### 6. The combination of GMOs and a loosely unregulated biosafety landscape will constitute great environmental harm and will intensify poverty, hunger and a devastation of consumer rights.

### 7. Agricultural research institutions should be well funded by the government to produce wholesome foods and to proffer sustainable, consumer friendly solutions to challenges of agricultural productivity.

### 8. There is need for rigorous training for small scale farmers on the implications of modern biotechnology, seed treaties and the threat to farmers' rights. Information and terminologies on genetic engineering technology and seeds issues should be simplified to aid thorough understanding.

### 9. Nigeria should not sign the Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV 1991) but instead should design its own plant variety protection laws that are suitable to the Nigerian environment.

- There should be supervised seed extension villages where seed saving, research, seed exchange/sharing will be facilitated.
- Farmers should be carried along in the formulation of policies and legislations concerning agricultural seeds and systems.
- There should be stronger engagements among all stakeholders including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and the National Agricultural Council on the implications of joining UPOV.

### 10. The National Agricultural Seed Council Law requires amendment to ensure that:

- All seed breeders, formal or informal, private small or large corporations ensure full disclosure of information relating to improved varieties.
- Informal seed breeders are harmonised and empowered to sustain our indigenous varieties.



**The resolutions were endorsed by individuals and representatives of the following organisations:**

1. Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF)
2. GMO Free Nigeria Alliance
3. Association for Plant Breeding for the Benefit of Society (APBREBES)
4. Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)
5. Bio-Integrity and Natural Food Awareness Initiative
6. Heinrich Boell Foundation
7. Nigerians against GMOs
8. Urban-Rural Environmental Defenders
9. Cassava Growers Association of Nigeria
10. Women in Agriculture
11. Nigerian Women Farmers Ass. (NIWAAFA)
12. Association of Small Scale Agro Producers in Nigeria (ASSAPIN)
13. Small Scale Women Farmers Organisation (SWOFON)
14. National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO)
15. Eco Defenders Network
16. Women Environmental Programme (WEP)
17. Climate Transformation and Remediation Society (CLIMATTERS)
18. Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (CISLAC)
19. Women and Children Life Advancement Initiative
20. Gender and Environment Risk Reduction Initiative
21. Youth Voyage of Nigeria (YVN)
22. Cashew Farmers Association
23. Population and Environmental Monitoring International



# Global Environmental Politics, Human Rights and Conflicts

BY STEPHEN ODUWARE

Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) in collaboration with the Right Livelihood College, Robert Bosch Stiftung and the Center for Conflict and Gender Studies at the University of Port Harcourt organised the 2019 Right Livelihood Lecture on 28 May, 2019 with the theme: **Global Environmental Politics, Human Rights and Conflicts**. The Lecture was followed on 29 May, 2019 with the 12th session of the Sustain-Ability Academy.

The events featured lectures by three Laureates of the Right Livelihood award: Dr. Ruth Manorama (2006), Prof. Raul Montenegro (2004) and Bill McKibben (2014) and were attended by over 300 persons including the Vice Chancellor, staff and students of the university; Non-Governmental Organisations; and media representatives.

Ruth Manorama, speaking on *Gender, Ecology and Human Rights*, stated that for the past 50 years, human rights activism and indeed feminist activism, globally and in India, have managed to challenge several centuries of patriarchal order by striking at the root of exploitation, oppression, subjugation and degradation of women; deconstructing covert and overt violence against women in personal and public life.



According to Manorama, “there is a trajectory between ecology and human/gender rights. When the environment is polluted and the earth is in turmoil, women and the poorest of all are the hardest hit.”

She added: “the earth is our house, our home. From this, it follows that we need to love and cherish it. There is a growing awareness among people all over the world that we are facing an Ecological/ Environmental crisis, the manifestations of which are many and varied. The earth system is being polluted and destroyed through profligate actions and predatory practices by modern profit-oriented and scientific-technological culture, be it industrial, agricultural, or communicational. Signs of the crisis are seen in the

diversion of precious resources to destructive and poisonous purposes like production of arms, stockpiling of nuclear weapons and similar insanities which have wrecked and ruined the earth partially, totally, irreparably. Nuclear, radioactive and other fatally toxic wastes are being dumped in the oceans, on islands and continents of the poor and the powerless.”

Manorama shared about how she has dedicated her life to battling a host of interconnected issues related to oppressions arising from caste, gender and class hierarchies. She has fought for rights of domestic workers and the unorganised labour sector, slum dwellers, Dalits, and for the empowerment of marginalized women. She works at the grassroots level and as well focuses on mass





**“There is a trajectory between ecology and human/gender rights. When the environment is polluted and the earth is in turmoil, women and the poorest of all are the hardest hit.”**

mobilization and advocacy at the international level.

Bill McKibben spoke on *Climate Change: a Ticking Time Bomb*. He explained that the rate at which our planet is changing was unnatural, adding that it is more than anytime we know of from geological records and that it is as a result of climate change. He gave example of the Antarctic and the Arctic which are probably the biggest physical structures on our planet, noting that they are both melting at an enormous speed. “80 percent of the rays reaching the Arctic used to be reflected back into space but now all the energy gets absorbed and that fast tracks the melting. Even the ocean is 30 percent

more acidic because it is also absorbing more carbon from the atmosphere than it used to. The interior of our continent is drying fast and that’s why we see horrific drought in the Middle East, Central America, Africa and many more places”. “These and many more” he said, “are ticking time bombs that can explode anytime if we continue on the path of extractivism and destruction of our planet.”

A third Lecture was delivered by Prof. Raul Montenegro. Speaking on *Social and Environmental Conflicts: Interaction between Communities and Universities*, he pointed out that so many factors are top drivers of conflicts and crises including: social and environmental

destruction, fake news, bad governments, dictatorship, corruption, breach and violation of laws, consumerism, organised crime, lack of justice, inequity, poverty without power, and militarization.

Montenegro emphasized that there has to be interactions between the academics and communities in order to promote people power and promote knowledge exchange. This can be achieved by women and children empowerment, organisation of affected people, technical empowerment of citizens, forming coalitions with universities, campaign and media outreaches, protests (with respect to the law), judicial actions, administrative actions and provision of social shields for protecting menaced defenders.

Montenegro added that to have a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship between communities and the academics, it should be taken into account that good science interacts with good popular knowledge. This means that there should



be no secrecy of information, knowledge should flow freely and it must be accessible to the community; working groups should develop their activities in horizontal structures but try to avoid university hegemony; and safety measures should be designed, adopted and displayed according to the degree of violence in the area or country.

At the Sustain-Ability Academy, it was stressed that for us to have a sustained environment, there must be a space for multilateral learning and a system of learning based on balanced structures between academia and the grassroots people. Participants gathered in three groups for conversations on: *Building Movements against Oil and Gas Pollution; Gender Justice and Ecological Democracy-How do we achieve this in Nigeria?; and Academics and Practitioners- Mapping the Points of Intersections.*

**At the end of the discussions, the following were resolved by the participants:**

1. The academia should reach out to activists and practitioners for strategic and practical synergy and to form a platform to carry out researches for sustained environment and also to setup practical institutes that meet the society's needs.
2. Negative legislations that undermine the people and environment should be interrogated and corrected.
3. Efforts should be made to have more women in the policy-making circle so that women's voices will be amplified to achieve gender and ecological justice.
4. Women and youth groups should be engaged to resist the activities of the extractive industries which pollute and destroy our environment.
5. There should be partnerships between key stakeholders such as NGOs, CSOs, policy makers, legislature, women, and youth groups to tackle the issues of human rights abuses, pollution and environmental degradation.
6. Media outreaches and other forms of advocacy and campaigns against pollutions of any form should be embarked on by stakeholders.
7. More information should be shared on how people can preserve their environment and remove all religious and cultural barriers.
8. Community/ecological monitors and focus groups should be setup in schools.
9. The Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 should be enacted and made effective.



# Oilwatch Nigeria Holds Strategic Meeting

BY: CADMUS ATAKE-ENADE

On the 15th of May 2019, Oilwatch Nigeria organised a one-day strategic planning meeting which aimed at positioning and reorganising Oilwatch Nigeria's unit to develop new strategies to actualise resistance against the extractive industries and activities in Nigeria and to plan for the forthcoming Oilwatch Africa Annual Conference/General Meeting and FishNet Alliance General Assembly. The meeting commenced at 12:25pm.

## Details of the meeting:

The meeting was declared opened with welcome words from Emem Okon (who is she?) who was ably represented by Idongesit Umoren. She welcomed the participants and introduced Oilwatch Nigeria as the country unit of Oilwatch Africa explaining that Oilwatch is a network of resistance to fossil fuels activities in tropical countries, whose environment are been impacted negatively by the extractive industries.

She stressed that due to the impacts of the extractives industries on communities and their livelihood across Nigeria there is need to synergise and develop strategies to put an end, or a halt, to expansion activities of the extractive industries across Nigeria most especially communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Participants affirmed acceptance of The Principles of Oilwatch after it was read out by Lawrence Dube of Citizens Trust. The principles will continue to govern the Nigeria Unit of the network.

Following the presentation of the principles the participants shared their work experiences in various communities and areas of advocacy.

It was generally agreed that Oilwatch Nigeria must be focused and bring back the issues of resource justice, Climate Justice, and resistance against the extractive industries. The network will robustly stand with other nations to resist the extractive industries.

## Experience Sharing by Participating organisations:

*Kebetskache Women Development and Resource Centre:* Has been working on the extractive industries and the impacts on the livelihood of the community folks most especially the women from impacted communities.

They have setup strategies and methodology to explore the impacts of the extractive industries in Nigeria and they get their detailed information from the community women, through the use of questionnaires and direct interviews from the community people who tell their own stories and the information are documented for advocacy.

They added that they are currently working with a community in Akwa Ibom State that has 23 oil wells. During a recent visit to the community, they discovered a fresh oil spill in one of the well sites. Kabetkache empowers the women to tell their stories of the impacts of the extractive industries in their communities.

*Women Initiative on Climate Change* stressed on the issue of gas flaring which is ravaging the communities and causing various health challenges with women and children as the most impacted ones. She urged the network to look at the issue and find a way to also address it, possibly by developing a policy paper that will be sent to the government in a bid to address the issue and advocate for communities facing the negative effects of gas flaring.

*Peace Point Development Foundation* works with impacted communities in Ibeno, Akwa Ibom State, and other communities impacted by fossil fuel extractions. They have established Climate Change clubs in schools to educate the younger generation about the impacts of climate change and fossil fuel extraction in their communities. They engage in developmental work to ensure that the livelihood of the community people are sustained and are glad to be part of OilWatch network as it will help them to further collaborate, share ideas and amplify their work to other parts of the Niger Delta region with similar issues.

*FishNet Alliance* Member from Okrika Waterfront expressed sadness that in the past they used to have many species of fish and aquatic animals which served as sources of livelihood

but currently, all those things are gone. Fishing has become unprofitable as all the rivers are now polluted. FishNet Alliance noted the health impacts on community people and expressed joy being a part of the meeting. They hope that as members of the network, they can rest assured that something will be done to save the environment and put a stop to the extractive industries operations in the coastal environment.

*Policy Alert*, explained that they have been following the work of Oilwatch Africa and now they are glad to be part of its Nigeria network. They informed the participants that they had a new campaign called “Wetin we gain” - a campaign for justice and transparency from the government to communities playing host to extractive industries and natural resources in the nation. The campaign is being supported by Publish What You Pay Nigeria and United Kingdom.

They believe that their campaign will succeed if all in the Oilwatch Nigeria network worked together to ensure that these communities get justice and benefit from their resources.

*Media for Justice Initiative* explained that their organisation focuses on using media approaches to advocate for impacted communities across Nigeria. They do this through production of short films and documentaries to tell the story of the impacts of the extractive industries and impacted communities.

*Social Action* is currently working on issues of artisanal refineries. They condemn the acts of oil theft and have been calling on those

in the creeks responsible for the act to desist from it. However, based on their experiences from encountering some individuals involved in the act, they realise that many have no other sources of income and no job opportunities so they engage in what brings them money. They were also using the campaign to draw government's attention to the fact that alternative sources of livelihood to youths living in oil producing and non-producing communities should be provided as this will put a check or halt on the artisan refiners and their polluting activities.

### **Strategic planning for OWA Conference/AGM and FishNet Alliance General Assembly**

Following the experience sharing session, a briefing was given on plans for the Oilwatch Africa Annual General Meeting and Fishnet Alliance General Assembly coming up in August 5th- 9th 2019 in Port Harcourt. It was stressed that the events were coming to Port Harcourt because of the central location of the city in the fossil fuels geography of Nigeria.

### **Inauguration of Steering Committee and tenure**

A steering committee to lead the affairs was nominated and endorsed by participants. The Steering Committee is made up of Kabetkache Women Development and Resource Centre (which will play host to the secretariat of Oilwatch Nigeria), Citizens Trust, We the People, Peace Point Development Foundation, and HOMEf. It was agreed that the tenure will be a period of two years and would be renewable by a General Meeting at the end of the tenure.





## Resolutions

At the end of the deliberations, the participants observed that there has been continuous oil and gas exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta region for over 60 years without any sustainable benefit to communities in the region. The negative impact of the oil and gas industry on the people and environment of the Niger Delta region has been life-threatening and thus, there is need for urgent attention.

For over almost 20 years of democratic rule, the hopes and expectations of the Niger Delta region that government will address the human rights and environmental degradations in the area have been dashed. Environmental pollution caused by illegal refining and oil theft is a leading cause of health hazards in communities in the region.

OilWatch members observed that despite the dangers posed by gas flaring to the environment and people of the Niger Delta region, government is paying lip service to ending the menace and at the same time collecting penalties from oil companies for gas flaring, while the communities continue to suffer from the consequences.

After deliberations, the participants resolved to:

1. Resist and reject all forms of legislation by the National Assembly that fail to address the historic injustices and human rights violations against the Niger Delta region by the Nigerian State and International Oil Companies.
2. Work assiduously to take a holistic approach to engage the Nigerian State and International Oil Companies on the issues of environmental pollution, climate change, divestment, food security, health, water and many others as they concern the environment and people of the Niger Delta in order to free the people and their environment from destruction by the extractive industries.
3. Intensify the struggle to hold the Nigerian Government and International Oil Companies accountable for the environmental degradation and human rights violations caused by oil and gas industry activities in the area.
4. Work in partnership and solidarity with fishers, and ecological defenders to resist and halt every form of destructive extractive activities in the coastal and marine environment of Nigeria

Oilwatch Nigeria also renounced and rejected the illegal divestment of onshore assets by international oil companies from their onshore platforms to offshore locations, and calls on the Nigerian Government to review all divestment programmes in the Niger Delta. The participants also resolved to have an effective and functional secretariat in Nigeria to pilot and coordinate the affairs of the network for the next two years, and Kebetkache Women Development & Resource Centre was adopted as the Secretariat of Oilwatch Nigeria Network for a two year tenure, while a steering committee was also inaugurated to coordinate the network.

The meeting ended at 2:30pm.

The following organisations were in attendance:

- Citizens Trust (CT)
- CMAP
- Environmental Rights Action
- FishNet Alliance Okrika Waterfront.
- Peace Point Development Foundation (PPDF)
- Policy Alert (PA)
- Lekeh Development Foundation (LEDEF)
- Social Action
- Niger Delta Citizens and Budget Platform
- Pius Dukor Foundation
- Ogoni Ecological Defenders
- Media Awareness and Justice Initiative (MAJI)
- We the People
- Kebetkache Women Development and Resource Centre
- Health of Mother Earth Foundation



# New Report Shows How World Bank Enables Corporate Land Grabs



**BY: ALNOOR LADHA**

*Alnoor Ladha is a researcher, writer and community organiser. He is the co-founder and executive director of The Rules, a think tank focused on the global political economy, and a member of the Our Land Our Business campaign, a coalition of over 280 civil society organisations, demanding an end to the World Bank's Enabling the Business of Agriculture project.*

At the World Bank's annual meeting, the Bank's new president and former Trump adviser, David Malpass, ignored research concluding that its policies were driving large-scale corporate land grabs across the Global South, with devastating consequences for the poor.

A new report by the land rights think tank, the Oakland Institute, demonstrates how the World Bank's Enabling the Business of Agriculture project — funded by the U.S. and U.K. governments, as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation — pushes countries to remove “barriers” to big agribusiness, including laws that protect commons like land and seeds.

As part of the project, the World Bank has developed a contentious new land indicator. Initiated as a pilot program in 38 countries in 2017,

the indicator is expected to be expanded to 80 countries this year. The purpose of the indicator is to get countries to transform customary land tenure arrangements into formal titles, so as to render land a “transferrable asset” and therefore make it easier for corporations to acquire it from small-scale farmers.

Countries are under enormous pressure to align with this objective, as doing so grants them preferential access to aid and foreign investment.

Frédéric Mousseau, the policy director at the Oakland Institute and co-author of the report, said, “The Bank claims that this indicator will protect land rights and bring more freedom and equity in terms of access to land, but it is actually an



Now, more than ever, we need public institutions that are focused on regenerative development and are contextually relevant for the most pressing issues of our time, such as ecological collapse and rapidly increasing inequality. We must challenge the mantra of highest bidder takes all with the rallying cry, “Our world is not for sale.”

unprecedented push to privatize public land and facilitate private interests’ access to the commons, to the detriment of millions around the world.”

The project has been met with fierce resistance. Ibrahima Coulibaly, president of ROPPA [the West Africa network of farmers’ and producers’ organisations] and president of the National Coordination of Peasant Organisations in Mali, says that the new indicator “risks opening the way to more land concentration and land grabbing, degradation of natural resources, and deforestation.”

The Bank’s own research has shown the devastating effects of large corporate agriculture on the health of the land and topsoil, as well as the quality of life for farmers.

Coulibaly is part of a growing movement of civil society organisations that have united under the rubric of Our Land Our Business. With over 280

organisations coming together in this coalition, they argue that small-holder farmers hold the key to their country’s prosperity, food sovereignty and their ability to mitigate climate change.

Although there has been widespread and peer-reviewed research showing that small-holder farmers are still providing about 70 percent of the world’s food using only 25 percent of the world’s agricultural resources, the World Bank and other pro-corporate institutions are ignoring the potential of small-holder farmers to create strong, local, resilient economies. This is in the face of the Bank’s own research that has shown the devastating effects of large corporate agriculture on the health of the land and topsoil, as well as the quality of life for farmers.

Moreover, recent research from the UN trade body UNCTAD, the U.S. agricultural think tank the Rodale Institute, and the Center for Food Safety, shows that regenerative agriculture — using practices such as, no-till farming and agroforestry — can not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions by sequestering carbon, but has the potential to help reverse climate change. This would require a shift in policy from supporting big corporate agribusinesses to supporting small-holder farmers to transition to fully regenerative practices.

Regenerative agriculture can not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions by sequestering carbon, but has the potential to help reverse climate change.

The Oakland Institute report concludes with a clear solution: “Governments have to be urged

and helped to design food and agricultural policies that put family farmers, pastoralists, and indigenous people at the centre to address the major challenges of hunger, environmental degradation, and climate change. Instead, with its new land indicator, the World Bank is launching an unprecedented attack on their land rights and their future.”

Given Malpass’s political affiliations, it is unlikely the Bank’s new president will acknowledge (much less move away from) its destructive, pro-corporate development model. With this new context and amidst the growing controversies about the World Bank’s policies, including the mass displacement and relocation of over 3 million people to make room for Bank recommended projects such as oil pipelines, it is time we question the very mandate of the World Bank.

Now, more than ever, we need public institutions that are focused on regenerative development and are contextually relevant for the most pressing issues of our time, such as ecological collapse and rapidly increasing inequality. We must challenge the mantra of highest bidder takes all with the rallying cry, “Our world is not for sale.”

Culled from: <https://truthout.org/articles/new-report-shows-how-world-bank-enables-corporate-land-grabs/>



# STUDENTS OF AGRICULTURE REJECT GMOS;

Call for Protection and Promotion of Indigenous Farming Systems

Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) in collaboration with the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Benin, Edo State on 30 April, 2019 organised a Dialogue with students to examine issues with food and farming systems in Nigeria; the implications of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and to define suitable alternatives for agricultural productivity.

The highly interactive session was attended by the Dean, Associate Dean, lecturers and students of the Faculty of Agriculture and a major consensus was that the argument that Nigeria needs GMOs because we do not produce enough to feed our growing population is

false. Speaking at the event, Dr Peter Ebabhamiegbebo of the Department of Animal Science stated: “We have produced enough food but [studies have shown that] about 40-50 percent of food produced is lost post-harvest due to lack of storage facilities and good roads to access markets”. “Our problem is poor administration” he added.

It was agreed in the Dialogue that GMOs are a false solution and one that will create bigger problems for the people in terms of health, environment and socio economic hazards. Tatfeng Mirabeau, a professor of Medical Microbiology and Immunology at Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State explained that there are potential problems (often overlooked by the promoters of the technology) which arise from antibiotic-resistant genes used

in gene-altered crops; risks from unintended effects of the genetic engineering process and increase in herbicide use stemming from widespread planting of herbicide resistant crop varieties. He further explained that GMOs, particularly those made to act as pesticides are toxic to non-target organisms such as bees which are important pollinators.

Professor Tatfeng stated that the safety of GMOs cannot be ascertained, adding that a team of international scientists has found that there is a particular association between glyphosate and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The case of the US citizen named DeWayne Johnson who was diagnosed with cancer connected to his usage of glyphosate-based herbicide and the many other cases resulting to numerous lawsuits filed

against the seed and chemicals corporation, Monsanto, confirms that glyphosate is carcinogenic and must be banned outrightly.

Also speaking at the Dialogue, Mariann Bassey-Orovwuje, Chair of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) and Coordinator of food sovereignty programme for Friends of the Earth Nigeria/Africa pointed out that GMOs will foster corporate control of food systems, destroy our biological diversity, lead to an irreversible contamination of indigenous seed varieties and loss of local knowledge.

Mariann stated that “we the people, not corporations or politicians are our best hope for restoring sanity to our food and farming systems”. She stressed that there are better approaches to agricultural problems





such as agroecology which enriches ecosystems, increases productivity, promotes local knowledge/food, incentivises smallholder farmers, and in addition, cools the planet.

Joyce Ebebeinwe, Project Officer at HOMEF shared the report (titled What's on our Plates?) of the market survey conducted by the organisation on GMO products in Nigeria. This research was carried out in 2018 in ten major cities across the country and revealed that over 30 different food products including cereals, vegetable oils, ice cream, noodles, chocolates and food spices in our markets are produced with genetic engineering/genetically modified constituents. These products were seen to be mostly imports from USA, India, China and South Africa and genetically modified ingredients were mostly corn and soy. According to the report, glyphosate based herbicides including Monsanto's Roundup Ready herbicide known widely as a carcinogen are abundant in market shelves across the country. Joyce encouraged individual commitment to understanding of the threats posed by GMOs and action to ensure better protection of our food/health.

It was agreed in the Dialogue that GMOs are a false solution and one that will create bigger problems for the people in terms of health, environment and socio economic hazards.

### **The students and staff of the Faculty in the Dialogue resolved that:**

- GMOs are not needed in Nigeria and should be banned.
- There should be further research on the subject and on alternative means of promoting agricultural productivity.
- Nigeria needs a strong regulatory system and very close surveillance of our borders against infiltration of GMOs.
- Our indigenous seed varieties/systems should be preserved/promoted.
- Organic Agriculture/Agroecology, with adequate support for farmers in terms of extension services, good roads to access markets, access to land/loans, and provision of storage and processing facilities will ensure availability of food and access to it by all.

At the close of the session, the Dean of the Faculty, Professor M.A Bamikole and the Associate Dean, Dr Mrs A. E. Odiko on behalf the Faculty, appreciated HOMEF for organizing the Dialogue and pledged their partnership to ensure a protection of our food and farming systems in Nigeria. The students committed to further study and adopt projects on alternatives for agricultural productivity and food sovereignty in Nigeria.



# Challenge of Poisoned Civilization

BY: NNIMMO BASSEY



The Planet is on the sick bed. With up to one million species gone extinct and many of the remaining ones under threat, it is clear that things have gone terribly wrong. While it is known that humans are largely responsible for the harms brought on the Planet, we do not seem to care about halting

the predatory relationship with other beings, simply because business as usual is so profitable to the drivers of the destruction.

Civilization ought to mean progress, sophistication, advancement and refinement but is that where we are today? If advancement means

oppression, militarisation, violence, destruction and a reign of intergenerational injustices, then humans are living in a state of willing delusion. You may call it a state of willing blindness. In an age of threats of the Planet being burnt up, humans stubbornly insist on continuing to burn fossil fuels for energy. In a time when it

is clear that species are being wiped out in droves, humans insist that progress means entrenching agricultural modes steeped in poison.

It appears we are stuck on the fatal track because of layers of corporate blindfolds placed over the eyes of policy makers across much of the world. The interrelatedness of lives on the Planet is not a matter for debate. When a part of the web of life is interfered with by humans, other parts get affected. The war against insects gave rise to the production of chemical insecticides. The war against unwanted plants gave rise to the production of herbicides. Profit-driven industrial agriculture continues to poison the species on the Planet and yet the push is to carpet the world with more of the toxic broths.

A recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) warned that “Rapid expansion and unsustainable management of croplands and grazing lands is the most extensive global direct driver of land degradation, causing significant loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services – food security, water purification, the provision of energy and other contributions of nature essential to people. This has reached ‘critical’ levels in many parts of the world...” The IPBES report also warned that, “With negative impacts on the well-being of at least 3.2 billion people, the degradation of the Earth’s land surface through human activities is pushing the planet towards a sixth mass species extinction.”

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The war on insects is a war on other species. It is known, for example, that much of our food production depends on the agency of insects who facilitate production through pollination. The effect of the use of poisons in agriculture is already known to have greatly decimated the population of bees in the world. It is so bad in some places that farmers have to rent beehives in order to enjoy the services of the creatures and ensure good harvests on their farms.

Today, humans do not only dump insecticides or poisons on croplands, crops are genetically engineered to be insecticides themselves, killing intended and unintended insects. Today, crops are genetically engineered to withstand specific poisons labelled herbicides ostensibly to eliminate the drudgery of weeding on farms, reduce competition with unwanted plants and increase the harvest for farmers and investors. Humans have advanced to the point where extinction is actually being engineered in the laboratory in a technology known as gene drives. The extinction or terminator technology, for example, aims to deliberately drive or force a genetic trait through entire species in such a way that reproduction ends up yielding off springs of a particular sex, for example and over a period of time wipes out that species. Experiments are being cooked up against mosquitoes and will be unleashed in Burkina Faso, Mali, Uganda and Cote d’Ivoire. No one loves mosquitoes, especially the malaria parasite carrying ones, but these experiments are simply a foot in the door towards teasing out the efficacy of a technology that can easily disrupt ecological balances and can rapidly be weaponised.

Let us return to the horrors of farming with deadly poisons. Landmark legal decisions are being made in the United States of America (USA) over the impact of Bayer-Monsanto’s famous herbicide, Roundup. A few days ago, a jury awarded \$2 billion in damages against the company for cancer suffered by a couple who were exposed to the herbicide in that country. Court findings suggested that the presence of glyphosate, a major ingredient in the herbicide, Roundup, in food supply has a link to increased level of more severe cases of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) in the USA. In the course of the legal tussle, lawyers showed members of the jury heaps of materials said to show how the manufacturers of the herbicide are manipulating scientific literature, ghost-writing scientific review papers and getting them published and cited as authoritative by policy making agencies like the



**The war against weeds is a war that requires delicate consideration. What is termed a weed in one community may actually be food elsewhere.**

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of that country. In the midst of the legal fights, the EPA issued a new approval for the deadly herbicide.

Nigerians should be worried about the prevalence of the herbicide, Roundup, in our markets. We should also worry that approvals for field trials of crops genetically engineered to withstand this same herbicide are ongoing in our country. Monsanto-Bayer claims that the chemical is safe when applied as prescribed by them. The right way to apply the chemical includes being suited up as though you were headed for a space flight. With lax industrial practices, our farmers are not following those prescriptions. Even with the best adherence to the prescriptions in the USA, the results are now out that farmers and others that are exposed to the poison are not safe.

The war against weeds is a war that requires delicate consideration. What is termed a weed in one community may actually be food elsewhere. The same applies to pests. Where an insect is a threat to a plant, it may be food for humans and other predators.

Science decorated with corporate interests must not be allowed to trump good sense. The fear mongering by proponents of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) that we cannot feed ourselves without their dangerous products and that those opposed to their trade are anti-development, anti-science and anti-national interests must be discountenanced as blatant nonsense. The unfolding guilty verdicts in the courts of the USA should be early warning signs to us all.

We have to wake up and eliminate the poisons from our markets and farms. We must wake up and demand an end to permitting crops engineered to be cultivated with these poisons. It is time to make global peace with the Earth, recognize her rights and that of all other threatened inhabitants. The way to the future must be poison and fossil fuel free and we have to pave the pathways today.



# Landmark Jurisdiction Case won by Zambian Farmers at UK Supreme Court

Historic victory opens the door for global claimants to seek justice against British multinationals in the UK

The Supreme Court announced its verdict in the landmark case of the Zambian communities consistently polluted by Konkola Copper Mines (KCM), a subsidiary of British miner, Vedanta Resources Plc, allowing them to have their case against the parent company and its subsidiary tried in the UK. The ruling sets a strong legal precedent which will allow people with claims against subsidiaries of British multinationals to sue the parent company in the UK.

The judgment by Chief Justice Lady Hale, and four further judges, re-affirms the rulings of the Court of Technology and Construction in 2016 and the Court of Appeal in 2017. Lady Hale refused Vedanta's pleas in appealing the former judgments stating that, contrary to the claims of Vedanta's lawyers:

- the claimants do have a bona fide claim against Vedanta
- the company does owe a duty of care to the claimants, especially in view of the existence of company-wide policies on the environment, health and safety.
- due to the size and complexity of the case, and the lack of funding for claimants at 'the poorer end of the poverty scale in one of the poorest countries of the world', they do not have substantive access to justice in Zambia.



The 1,826 claimants, represented by UK law firm Leigh Day, are from farming and fishing communities downstream of KCM's mines and plants. They claim to have suffered continual pollution since UK firm Vedanta Resources bought KCM in 2004, including a major incident in 2006 which turned the River Kafue bright blue with copper sulphate and acid, and poisoned water sources for 40,000 people. 2,001 claimants took KCM to court in Zambia in 2007. The courts found KCM guilty but denied the communities compensation after a nine year legal battle. As a result the victims took their case to UK lawyers.

**Criminal companies like Vedanta can no longer so easily whitewash their reputation and assume a ‘cloak of respectability’ by virtue of a London listing.**



Photo: Samarendra Das/Foil Vedanta

Now that the Supreme Court has confirmed their permission to have the case tried in the UK, the case itself can begin.

Samarendra Das from Foil Vedanta said:

*“As the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals recognise sustainable development and access to justice go hand in hand, the judge’s ruling today also recognises and enforces that principle.”*

*Criminal companies like Vedanta can no longer so easily whitewash their reputation and assume a ‘cloak of respectability’ by virtue of a London listing. This is an historic day for victims of British multinationals’ abuses worldwide.”*

In a further development, Vedanta Resources de-listed from the London Stock Exchange on 1st October 2018, amid global protests following the killing of 13 people, shot by police during protests against the company’s copper smelter in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, India. Commentators (including Foil Vedanta in their comprehensive report on the company’s global operations entitled ‘Vedanta’s Billions: Regulatory failure, environment and human rights’) claimed the company were fleeing regulation in the UK. However, Vedanta remains liable in the UK for damages arising from the Zambian case.

It is now possible that claimants from some of the many Indian communities affected by pollution and human rights

abuses by Vedanta can also seek to get justice in the UK.

In April 2016, a High Court ruling granted the claimants jurisdiction to have their case against KCM and Vedanta heard in the UK, citing KCM’s uncertain and opaque finances as one reason they may not be able to get justice in Zambia. The Court of Appeal upheld this verdict in July 2017.

Culled from: <http://www.foilvedanta.org/news/zambian-villagers-win-right-to-have-case-against-vedanta-kcm-heard-in-uk/>



An illustration of an underwater scene with various fish swimming in the upper half and coral reefs and sea anemones in the lower half. The background is a gradient of blue. A solid yellow rectangle is positioned in the upper right corner.

BY: PABLO SOLÓN

# What are systemic alternatives?

The premise of systemic alternatives is that the environmental, economic, social, geopolitical, institutional and civilizational crises are part of a whole, are interrelated and feed into one another. Therefore, it is impossible to resolve one of these crises without addressing the others as a whole. One-dimensional strategies are incapable of solving systemic crises and, on the contrary, can aggravate them.

Systemic crises are caused by a set of factors like capitalism, xenophobia, racism, patriarchy, extractivism, anthropocentrism, plutocracy, productivism and colonialism. A systemic alternative seeks to confront and overcome the structural causes of the systemic crises.

Systemic alternatives do not follow stages. They do not suggest that capitalism must first be overcome in order to confront patriarchy or anthropocentrism. Systemic alternatives affirm that capitalism, patriarchy, anthropocentrism and the other factors mentioned above are interdependent and are mutually reinforcing.

An alternative may begin by dealing with one or some of these factors but acquires a systemic dynamic when it doesn't stop and advances to challenge the other factors that are in the underlying causes of the systemic crises.

Generally, the alternatives arise from rejection: from STOP fossil fuels, END femicides, NO to authoritarianism; from rejection, we start to build alternatives in order to give a positive answer.

The proposal of renewable energies against fossil fuels is an alternative. Peace in opposition to war is an alternative. Agro-ecology against toxic agriculture is an alternative. These positive proposals are alternatives but not necessarily systemic alternatives.

When can we say they are systemic alternatives? When those alternatives become multidimensional and start to challenge capitalism, productivism, extractivism, patriarchy, anthropocentrism, plutocracy, xenophobia, colonialism and other structural factors of the systemic crises.

The most important thing to define a systemic alternative is where it is going. If it remains in the one-dimensional framework, for example to propose only renewable energies, it is an alternative in relation to fossil fuels; but it is not yet a systemic alternative. The moment in which this proposal begins to state that the problem is not only the source of energy but also who controls it and how it is produced, distributed and consumed, it begins to have a broader and systemic dynamic that starts to question capitalism, productivism and extractivism. However, the process of building a systemic alternative has to go even further.

If we see for example the issue of water, the recognition and application of the human right to water is an alternative, but it is not enough. To be a systemic alternative, it must question the privatization and commodification of water as well.

The global water crisis cannot be addressed without overcoming extractivism, productivism and consumerism. Mining uses huge amounts of water and leaves rivers and ecosystems polluted. The large agro-industry is the sector with the highest water consumption. A kilo of meat requires 15,000 liters of water. Without sustainable agroecology and changes in consumption patterns, it is impossible to face the water problem. The manufacturing of a car uses 148,000 liters of water. Productivism, whether under a capitalist or socialist logic, is a serious factor that must be confronted in order to face the world water crisis.

Water can't be managed only under statist logic with a top down approach. Different human groups of the countryside and the city must be involved in water management, promoting the practice of the commons.

The issue of water and basic sanitation expresses in a very visible way the patriarchal system. On the planet, hundreds of millions of women walk more than an hour to collect water daily. The lack of basic sanitation is one of the factors that aggravates sexual aggressions and rapes against women. According to the World Health Organisation, in the world, there are 2.1 billion people who do not have access to safe drinking water in their homes, and 4.5 billion people lack safe basic sanitation. This extremely critical situation is getting worse with climate change. Women spend more time than men in tasks related to water in agriculture, cooking, cleaning and family health. However, in general, women are subordinated in water management

The global water crisis cannot be addressed without overcoming extractivism, productivism and consumerism.

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structures at different levels. The construction of systemic alternatives requires the feminization of water management in all instances.

Water management must be comprehensive and encompass not only the human dimension but also the preservation of the vital cycle of water. To guarantee the human right to water, it is necessary to recognize and secure the rights of water. It is fundamental not to consider water as a simple resource, as an object, but to recognize that water is a subject that in its different forms of river, snow or ocean has the rights to flow, not to be contaminated, to live and give life.

If rivers are subject to rights then this must be reflected in the exercise of democracy in our municipalities, provinces, states and international integration spaces. A real democracy must include representation mechanisms for water. An anthropocentric democracy can't solve the systemic crisis of water.



The continuation of capitalism, globalization, anthropocentrism, patriarchy, extractivism, xenophobia and productivism is a source of increasing conflicts and wars over water. Water will be one of the most determining factors in geopolitical disputes between countries, regions, social sectors, ethnic and religious groups. Water does not recognize borders and its existence raises the need to rethink the boundaries of nations to move towards a shared management of watersheds. The global water crisis requires a new kind of international integration that is not dominated by capital and the geopolitical ambitions of the elites of nation states.

An alternative can be multidimensional and yet not be anti-systemic. The capitalist, patriarchal and neocolonial systems also develop multidimensional proposals to adjust to the new realities in order to preserve their existence. There are alternatives that are born with an anti-systemic dynamic but are captured by the system. This is the case, for example, of the green economy that in its origins promoted a different relationship with nature but now has become a new way to commodify nature through initiatives such as REDD+ and payment for environmental services. In other words, a systemic alternative doesn't have guarantees of an anti-systemic character for life. Everything depends on its dynamics, the process it follows, its implementation, how it evolves by adopting new perspectives and deepening of its own proposals to really address the different factors of the systemic crises.

That is why systemic alternatives can't be reduced to a list of good practices. All good practices must deepen and transform themselves to become systemic alternatives. Without this evolution, which is not exempt from crises, contradictions and conflicts, a good practice may end up being captured by the system which once aspired to change.

Systemic alternatives are in first place processes rather than given facts. That is why they can't be replicated and multiplied indiscriminately. There are no generic and universal systemic alternatives. Everything has a context, a history, a future and actors that can't be repeated mechanically in any situation. The construction of systemic alternatives always has to start from the knowledge of the concrete realities and their dynamics.

To build systemic alternatives, it is fundamental to start from the changing reality and from the theoretical postulates and practical experiences of different visions and approaches such as the commons, degrowth, Vivir Bien, ecosocialism, the rights of Mother Earth, ecofeminisms, food sovereignty, just transition, deglobalization and many others. All these proposals are very valuable, but none of them can answer all the complexities of systemic crises. All of these approaches need to engage in processes of complementarity to forge systemic alternatives. Complementarity means to complement one another to form a whole that responds to the complexity of the problems we are facing. A process of complementarity requires to learn from the other vision, to see through the postulates of the other proposal, to discover the strengths of others, to explore your own weaknesses and the gaps that all visions share, and above all, to think in terms of the totality of the whole.

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Water can't be managed only under statist logic with a top down approach. Different human groups of the countryside and the city must be involved in water management, promoting the practice of the commons.





# Witnessing Nigeria's Resilience:

Oil Attacks on Water, Food, and Family

BY: NICHOLAS JOHNSON

Despite the pollution, fishermen are still forced back to the river to fish for what few creatures still reside in the water. Ogoni Land, Nigeria.

*In January 2019, our graduate fellow Nicholas Johnson joined Grassroots International Solidarity's Program Officer, Mina Remy for a trip to Nigeria. In the blog below, Nicholas describes the contamination grassroots communities are facing, and the resistance they are waging.*



During our time in Nigeria, following the conclusion of the *National Summit on the Human Right to Water*, we met with two organisations. They opened their doors to us, and shared stories of the turmoil from denationalizing public water. The two organisations, Health of Mother Earth Foundation and Kebetkache, work in ecological justice from different vantage points, but share the same mission to democratize resources.

## Ogoni Land: Poisoned Rivers

The Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) is an ecological think-tank that advocates for ecological justice and food sovereignty in Nigeria and throughout Africa. Their reps took us to see one of the most polluted places on the planet: the fishing towns of the Niger Delta. Also known as Ogoni Land, it is home to the Ogoni people, an indigenous community.

A Chief of the Goi Community of Ogoni Land shared the story of reckless extraction of oil by corporations such as Shell and Eni. Their actions have caused oil spills that have leaked for weeks at a time — killing fish, polluting the air, and poisoning the soil. All of this has had sinister effects on people: shortening life expectancy to 41, causing birth complications for many of the women in the area, and waking people from sleep to have them find soot under their noses.



*A closer look at the river bed contamination in the area.*

As we stepped out of the car, a strong odor hit our noses. This was just the first sign of the injustice left by Shell; the second showed up as we approached the river delta. We laid our eyes on the once massive body of water, now left with dry pits of oil congealed onto the river floor amid pools of grey & green water of various sizes. A fish caught by some local fishermen was our third sign. Cutting it open revealed flesh filled with oil. The final sign was the frustration in the eyes of the men and women who told us of how the oil pollution had robbed them of their land, water, and peace.

### **Kebetkache: Food and Family Disrupted**

We also met with Kebetkache, a women's development organisation dedicated to building the capacity of women to break away from patriarchy and traditions that do not support their own empowerment. Through their environmental work, Kebetkache provides political, educational and leadership development to local women using an ecofeminist lens.

Kebetkache's headquarters is based in the city of Port Harcourt where they organise for clean water and against oil extraction. This extraction has had devastating effects on the climate and food security of rural families.

Our first sight of these atrocities came from three bottles of water pulled from Kebetkache's village's river. The first two bottles were cloudy, but the last two were brown with hints of green — all showing signs of oil contamination. But even more tragic was the smell of the water — a strong chemical-laced odor.

Later, Kebetkache took us from their headquarters to their village, to learn more from an Elder and other community members on the challenges they have faced from corporate oil drilling. They testified to the land destruction and its related rifts in family structures. Children are turning their backs on their homes and parents in search of food, which has become harder to secure due to the tainted land. Farming is now more difficult thanks to the overbearing

temperatures from nearby gas flaring. Companies burn off, or flare into the atmosphere natural gas that cannot be processed or sold profitably.

This led us to the final demonstration. We were taken to an oil drilling site owned by Shell, where we witnessed an enormous flame shooting from the ground. We could only imagine what the intensity of its heat must have felt like at high noon.

There are not enough words to describe either the destruction or the resilience which we witnessed during our time in Nigeria. Our site visits allowed us to build greater solidarity with front line communities that are directly impacted by pollution and exploitation. We hope that these words and photos begin to show not only the damage done by a global economic model that values profit above all, but the work to ensure that water, a human right, is controlled by the people.

*Nicholas Johnson is Grassroots International's graduate fellow for Winter 2018-2019 and Spring 2019. He is an Anti-Racism Facilitator and student at Northeastern University studying Global Studies & International Relations.*



*Members from Kebetkache show us water samples from nearby villages. They might look different in color, but once opened, there is the same chemical stench.*



# OGONI CLEAN-UP MONITORS' TRAINING

**BY: STEPHEN ODUWARE**

Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) held a two-day training at Boro Bara, Tai Local Government Area of Rivers State for Ogoni Ecological Defenders (selected from the 4 local government areas in Ogoni) on monitoring of the Ogoni Clean-up project on 30/31 May 2019. They learned of the processes of the cleanup including how to gauge progress with regard to key performance indicators and timelines.

The monitors received direct information from officials of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) as well as from consultants and officials of the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) and the impacted communities. Participants included members of civil society Organizations, the media and two Right Livelihood Award laureates: Ruth Manorama from India and Raul Montenegro from Argentina.

The monitors were charged to see themselves as very critical stakeholders in the cleanup process, noting that the tasks ahead are enormous and the Ogoni people are in the best position to monitor the cleanup activities and their environment. Among other things they were encouraged to remain objective, impartial and to always make reports and demands from the point of knowledge.

Well-seasoned practitioners on hydrocarbon pollution remediation and restoration facilitated the training programme.



## At the end of the training, participants drew up the following demands/action points:

1. HYPREP should device effective means of information sharing with communities to close the already existing communication gaps, massively engage impacted communities (not just community heads) and women should be carried along in the cleanup process.
2. Milestones and various Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the cleanup process should be made available to measure progress against planned activities, Engage communities in the design of livelihood packages and development of KPIs
3. Government should enact adequate policies and legislation to prevent new spills
4. HYPREP and the relevant government sector should develop measures for providing potable drinking water and carry out public health registry/audit for impacted communities as recommended in the UNEP report
5. The Ecological Defense Network (monitors) should be registered with HYPREP
6. Monitors should be given more detailed training to unmask the technicalities involved in the cleanup process.
7. Monitors should ensure that they use PPEs during monitoring
8. Monitors should use different communal platforms to create awareness and sensitize the local population on the deliverables of the remediation exercise. To this end, develop internal communal mechanisms to supporting the clean-up process
9. Monitors should Interface and partner with community-based organizations and faith-based organizations to sensitize other youths in the communities



# Fire Explosion Rocks Trans Niger Delta Pipeline in Gokana Local Government Area, Rivers State.

There was a fire outbreak on a section of the 28 inches Trans Niger Delta Pipeline carrying petroleum products in Kpor headquarters of Gokana LGA, on Thursday 18th April, 2019.

According to Chief Donald Gberesuu, paramount ruler of K-Dere community in Gokana LGA, a loud sound was heard from the said pipeline on the 18th of this month and because of its proximity to the community, the loud sound drew attention of some youths who rushed to the scene the next day, to see what happened.

Speaking with news men on an alleged invasion of his community by Soldiers who accompanied Shell staff to seal off the place, the Paramount Ruler said that youths of his community who visited the scene have been seen in groups discussing what may have happened to cause the fire. On sighting the youths, soldiers detailed to Shell envisaged that the youths could be violent or hostile and on the order of Shell, started shooting sporadically in the air to scare the youths away. The shooting caused panic in the community which also led to the killing and injuring of some youths. He demanded a public apology from Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) within 14days or legal action would be taken.




However, a rumour making the rounds have it that the fire explosion was ignited by spark from bunkers who were smoking at a bunkering site close to the point. According to the report, all 3 of them were roasted in the fire.

The massive fire outbreak had since been put out by fire fighters from the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) of Nigeria.

**BY: DAMIAN B. F.  
GBOGBARA**

Coordinator, Ogoni Ecological  
Defenders.



# Oil - A Blessing or a Curse?

Stories from community representatives across the nine States of the Niger Delta region during the recently concluded Nigeria Resource Justice Conference were indicative and indicting of the destructive business oriented, divide and rule tactics of Shell at the detriment of oil bearing communities.

With the support of their local collaborators (some community people, chiefs & youths), Shell has willfully and successfully destroyed lives and livelihood of oil bearing communities with reckless abandon. They sponsor gang rivalry, chieftaincy wrangling and division among members of the community to get away with their atrocities. It is clearer now that oil companies did not come to develop us or our communities. They came to do business and make profit with our lives and Environment caring nothing for whatever happens to us in the process. Therefore we have to be wise. We have to stop taking peanuts from them (the oil companies) to turn against ourselves and destroy our own people and our environment.

The story of the recent oil spill in Bodo City in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State is very pathetic and typical of the character of Shell in a gullible Niger Delta Community with weak leadership comparable to Shell's sophisticated structure and personnel.

The Spill was reported to have occurred on the 18th of February, 2019 and ideally a JIV (Joint Investigation Visit) team should be constituted to properly ascertain the cause of the spill. The team would figure out if the spill was caused by equipment failure or third party interference. Such a team must comprise of qualified Representatives from:

1. The regulator which is NOSDRA (National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency),
2. The operator which is Shell,
3. Civil society and the media if available,
4. Community leadership, (Chiefs, Youths etc).



Also, the JIV report should be made public and accessible to all the participants including relevant and interested parties. Sadly, there was no genuine JIV report to this effect.

This was evident in a confession made by some serving chiefs during an interaction with them.

On the 18th of March, 2019, Shell came in to the community with troops of the Nigeria military to seal off the spill point. Community people protested, tied traditional palm fronds around the point insisting that Shell go and negotiate with the community leadership to ensure that the right thing was done before sealing off the point. In the long run, Shell successfully penetrated the already cracked leadership structure in the community. The resultant effect was heavy accusation.

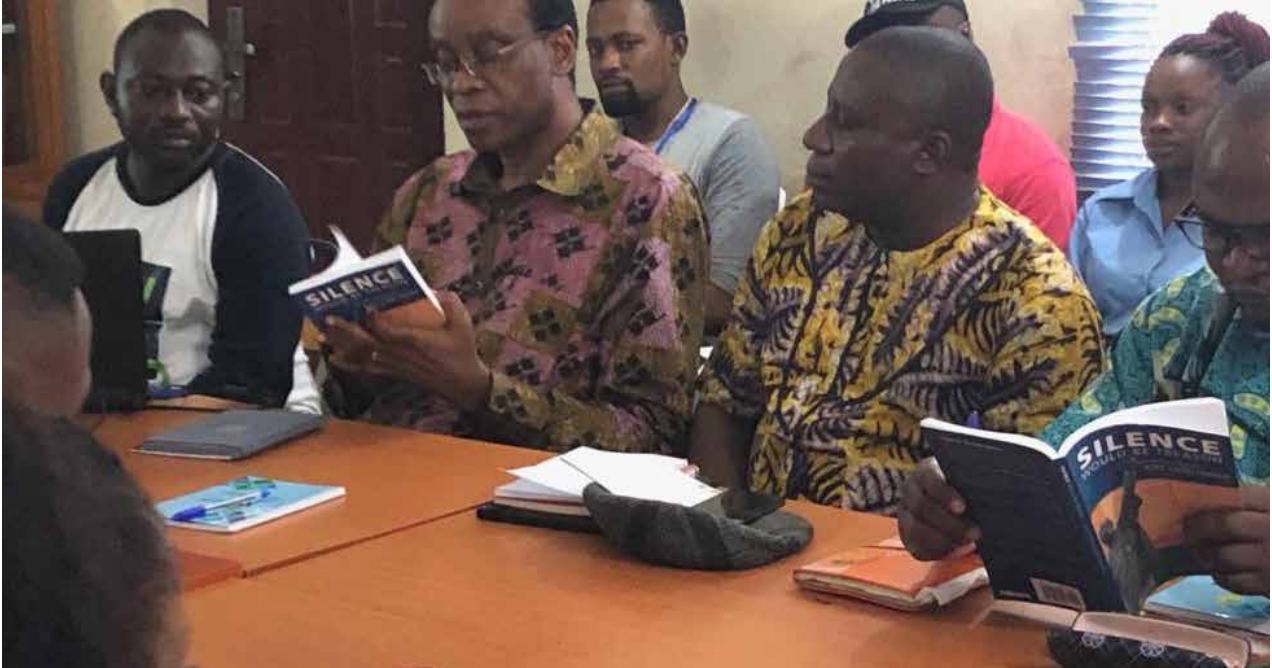
Shell, with its well-orchestrated divide and rule tactic, polarized the community along different lines. On the 18th of April, 2019; the oil company reinforced its security with over 11 pick-up vans of soldiers and with the help of its local collaborators, sealed off the point on the same day that a town hall meeting was proposed to hold at the town square. The

meeting was to clarify and exonerate a Shell staff that had been implicated in a bribery saga involving some community representatives about the spill. What a coincidence!!! The meeting which was slated to hold by 9am was shifted to 2pm. To me, this was a diversionary strategy to engage the people and keep them at the town square (from any possible protest) while work was going on.

Interestingly too, community folks who attended the town hall meeting which had heavy security personnel from the Police, DSS, NSCDC, Army etc, reported that Shell told them among other things, that they (Shell) have decided that whenever there is any occurrence that requires compensation to communities, they (Shell) would not pay cash, rather they will use the money for developmental projects such as road construction, amongst others. The community was then asked to disregard any rumour of bribe concerning the spill. Probably it also means that if Shell's facility fails and spills oil into our environment, destroys our lives and livelihood, we should not complain because they (Shell) have decided what to do for us without our input. What an insult!!!



# A JOURNEY WITH KEN SARO-WIWA



Conversation with Ken Saro-Wiwa took place at the offices of We The People in Port Harcourt on Thursday, the 25th of April, 2019. The room was packed and yet more seats had to be brought in. One seat only had a book on it. That book was Silence Would be Treason – the last writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa. The book is principally made up of letters and poems he exchanged with Sr Majella McCarron while in his last detention.

Although the gathering was for a Conversation with Ken Saro-Wiwa, he was not physically in the room because he was murdered by the Nigerian State on 10 November 1995. This event confirmed the truth that killing the messenger does not kill the message.

Ken Saro-Wiwa was a man of many parts. He was a minority rights and environmental activist. He was an acclaimed writer with works of poetry, prose, drama and other genres. He was an astute businessman and a politician.

Opening comments by Nnimmo Bassey were drawn mostly from Silence Would be Treason and included a reading of three poems from the book. The poems were “Fire”, “Ogoni! Ogoni!” and “Keep Out of Prison” where the title of the collection was taken. The last poem, Keep Out of Prison reads:

*“Keep out of prison,’ he wrote  
‘Don’t get arrested anymore.’  
But while the land is ravaged  
And our pure air poisoned  
When streams choke with pollution  
Silence would be treason  
Punishable by a term in prison.”*

We reminded ourselves that Saro-Wiwa understood his task as taking the Ogoni people on a journey. In a letter written on the 1st of October, 1994; he referred to having escaped an assassination plot:

“Not that death would have mattered to me. It would have carried more harm to those still alive.



However, I do want to take the Ogoni people as far on the journey to re-vitalization as is possible—until other leaders are bred.”

His socio-ecological dream was captured under what he termed ERECTISM – an acronym for ethnic autonomy, Resource and environmental control. His vision has nothing to do with partisan politics. He fought for the dignity of his people and for the social, economic and environmental justice.

“We all stand before history.” Our actions and sanctions will invariably be judged at some points in time.

A second introductory presentation by Ken Henshaw of We The People spoke of Saro-Wiwa as a man that utilized his writing as a tool to liberate his people. He stressed that a writer must go beyond being a critic and use his craft as a tool for shaping society. He concluded by saying that Ken Saro-Wiwa lived the principle that a writer must be combative both in theory and in practice.

A punchy presentation by Celestine Akpobari summed up that Saro-Wiwa was truthful, courageous and prophetic.

Participants in the conversation agreed that the positions taken by Ken Saro-Wiwa with regard to the devastation of the Ogoni environment have all been validated, especially by the 2011 report of the Assessment of the Ogoni environment by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The Conversation With Ken Saro-Wiwa stressed that although he focused primarily on the Ogoni situation, the lessons from his life, ideas and actions have broad implications for oppressed peoples across Nigeria and beyond. He was more than just an Ogoni. He showed that we are all Ogoni.

A conversation with Saro-Wiwa would not be complete without reference to his allocutus or concluding speech before the Tribunal that passed a death sentence on him and 8 other Ogoni leaders. In the allocutus, he declared that “We all stand before history.” Our actions and sanctions will invariably be judged at some points in time.

“I and my colleagues are not the only ones on trial. Shell is here on trial and it is as well that it is represented by counsel said to be holding a watching brief. The Company has, indeed, ducked this particular trial, but its day will surely come and the lessons learnt here may prove useful to it, for there is no “doubt in my mind that the ecological war that the Company has waged in the Delta will be called to question sooner than later and the crimes of that war be duly punished. The crime of the Company’s dirty wars against the Ogoni people will also be punished.

“On trial also is the Nigerian nation, its present rulers and those who assist them. Any nation which can do to the weak and disadvantaged what the Nigerian nation has done to the Ogoni loses a claim to independence and to freedom from outside influence. I am not one of those who shy away from protesting injustice and oppression, arguing that they are expected in a military regime. The military do not act alone. They are supported by a gaggle of politicians, lawyers, academics and businessmen, all of them hiding under the claim that they are only doing their duty, men and women too afraid to wash their pants of urine”

“Conversations” is an initiative of Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) as part of our learning efforts and aims to create a space where citizens share ideas from the lives of reputable thinkers and practitioners in the quest for justice and radical Socio-economic transformation. We aim to ensure that young activists learn from history, struggle sacrificially and ground their works on solid thinking and analyses. We emphasize intellectual militancy!

Conversation with Ken Saro-Wiwa will be held in other locations including in Ogoni and in schools. We will also have Conversations with other leaders including Aminu Kano, Thomas Sankara, Amilcar Cabral, Eskor Toyo, Frantz Fanon, Oronto Douglas, Chima Ubani and others.

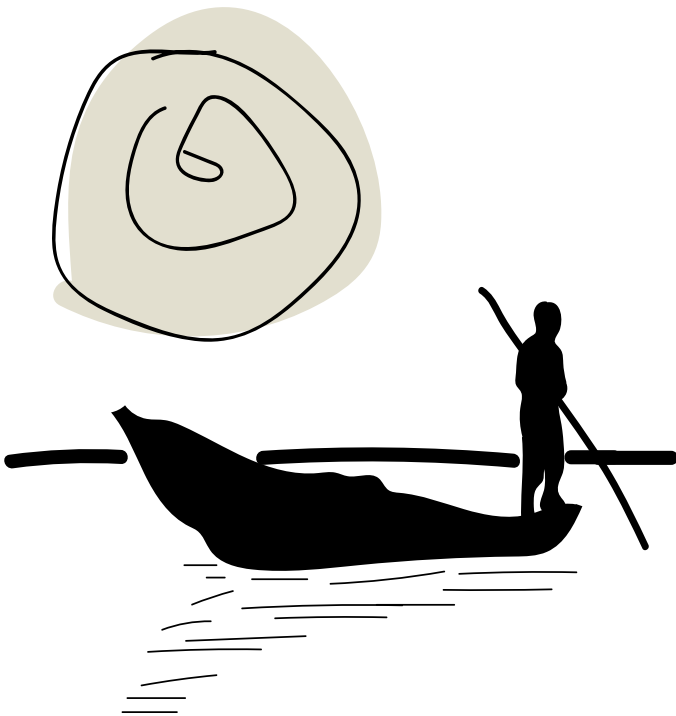


# Beside the banks

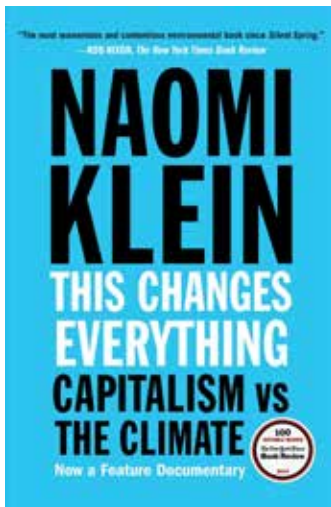
POETRY

BY: KINGSLEY ADINDU

Beside the banks stood Nnimmo  
Staring beyond the sights of mortals  
The streams were sad that day  
From another spill the night before  
Isam and Ngolo left for the afterlife  
A day of mourning for atabala and sungu  
As the swamps mourned in silence  
Wrapped in slick.



# Books You should Read



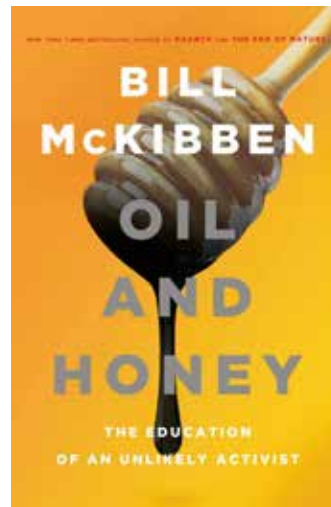
## **This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs The Climate**

Naomi Klein

In her most provocative book yet, Naomi Klein, author of the global bestsellers - The Shock Doctrine and No Logo -, exposes the myths that are clouding climate debate.

You have been told the market will save us, when in fact the addiction to profit and growth is digging us in deeper every day. You have been told it's impossible to get off fossil fuels when in fact we know exactly how to do it – it just requires breaking every rule in the 'free-market' playbook. You have also been told that humanity is too greedy and selfish to rise to this challenge. In fact, all around the world, the fight back is already succeeding in ways both surprising and inspiring.

It's about changing the world, before the world changes so drastically that no one is safe. Either we leap – or we sink. This Changes Everything is a book that will redefine our era.



## **Oil and Honey: The Education of an Unlikely Activist**

Bill McKibben

Bill McKibben is not a person you'd expect to find handcuffed and behind bars, but that's where he found himself in the summer of 2011 after leading the largest civil disobedience in thirty years, protesting the Keystone XL pipeline in front of the White House.

With the Arctic melting, the Midwest in drought, and Irene scouring the Atlantic, McKibben recognized that action was needed if solutions were to be found. Some of those would come at the local level, where McKibben joins forces with a Vermont beekeeper raising his hives as part of the growing trend toward local food. Other solutions would come from a much larger fight against the fossil-fuel industry as a whole.

Oil and Honey is McKibben's account of these two necessary and mutually reinforcing sides of the global climate fight—from the center of the maelstrom and from the growing hive of small-scale local answers. With empathy and passion, he makes the case for a renewed commitment on both levels, telling the story of raising one year's honey crop and building a social movement that's still cresting.

# Green Angle Receives International Media Award

*“An acknowledgement of the dangers of being an environmental journalist in the south of the world”*



Environmental information is complicated in every corner of the world, no matter what the level of interest in public opinions is. Yet, in the South of the world, our job is almost pioneering. Denouncing the damages caused to the natural resources means exposing oneself to dangerous consequences and threats. This is why; the West must stand by those journalists who, regardless the dangers, continue to report with passion”. These are the reasons behind the decision of the network of journalists of Greenaccord to assign the International Media Award to the Nigerian Television Network TVC News and their weekly environmental TV Magazine “Green Angle”.

The award was assigned to TVC News in the last day of conferences of the 15th International Forum for environmental journalism organised in San Miniato by Greenaccord and the Region of Tuscany. It was also an occasion for the one hundred environmental journalists to reflect on the dangers of reporting on environmental crimes in an African country.

“Our job – explained Ugochi Oluigbo, editor of the Nigerian network receiving the award – is extremely difficult for two reasons: it is very dangerous to confront the crimes committed against our forest and environmental patrimony because of the strong economic interests of national and international companies. Often, we discover murders of environmentalists who had investigated too deep.

Second, we must challenge and reverse the public opinion’s indifference”.

When one’s main preoccupation is to eat and have a minimum salary at the end of the month, it is hard to think long-term and care about the future of the natural resources of one’s country. “Nigeria is a large country, very young and with endless hopes for the future” Oluigbo explained. “But the environmental issues are inevitably put on the back-burner until the primary needs of our citizens are satisfied”.

Finally, here is a response to those in the Western world who share and spread the populist motto that Africans “must be helped in their own homes”. “You truly want to help us in our home?” the editor of Green Angle questioned. “Well then, pressure your governments and your companies to stop ransacking our resources, fueling corruption in our countries and in our governments. Then we shall truly demonstrate what Africa is capable of, as soon as it is free to decide its own future”.

Culled from: <http://www.greenaccord.org/it/news/3374/il>

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# Senior Comrade Che Ibegwura receives HOMEF's maiden Lifetime Achievement Award



*“The strength of any great man’s achievement is rooted in the depth of his passion”.*

A major highpoint of the Sustain-Ability Academy held at the University of Port Harcourt was the induction of Ruth Manorama and Raul Montenegro as HOMEF Fellows. Their induction brought to 17 the total number of HOMEF Fellows. These Fellows provide a ready think-tank for knowledge generation and sharing. The other provide solid back-ups to our processes of building a viable cross-sectoral knowledge base for socio-ecological transformation.

At the same occasion, HOMEF presented her inaugural Life Time Achievement Award for to 85 years old Comrade Cheta Ibama Ibegwura, popularly known as Comrade Che. He was singled out for this award for his consistent campaigns and mobilizations for the protection of the Egi environment as well as for inspiring generations of environmental justice campaigners across Nigeria and Africa at large.

Comrade Che Ibegwura was born on the 16 November 1932, in the village of Erema which is part of Ogba nation located on the far northern part of present day Rivers State to the families of Robert Ochaa Ibegwura and Mayina Adakaosa Ibegwura. He attended Wati’s school in old Ahoada town which prepared him for the tasks and challenges ahead.

He grew up in the slums of Port Harcourt, where he lived for some few years, and this environment radicalized his thoughts and actions. But his encounters and association with Mokwugo Okoye, the famous author and anti-colonial activist and philosopher, changed his ideologies and perspectives about the occurrences in his environment and community and this reinforced his consciousness and eventually earned him the name Comrade Che as his fondly called presently by all.

Comrade Che was strongly influenced by his association with the left –wing trade union movement and politics where he encountered some great Marxists.

Comrade Che is devoted Christian, a bold and fearless man who in countless times escaped death and assassination due to his passion for fighting minority rights, democracy, environmental justice struggles and defending the oppressed people of Egi from the oppressions of multinational oil companies operating in his community in Rivers State.

Comrade Che stands out as a hero and patriots that deserves to be celebrated and honoured for his dogged commitment and contributions to the cause of justice, despite the challenges and horrors he faced in the hands of the dictatorship military government and oil corporation during his days.

He has remained a vocal figure in the struggle for the emancipation of the Niger Delta people in all ramifications, environmental, political, socially and otherwise. His deep-rooted convictions that the liberation of the nation from political shackles will come through the working class struggles have never wavered but rather provide the background to all his activism.

HOMEF conferred Lifetime Achievement Award on Comrade Cheta Ibama Ibegwura for his inspiring environmental justice struggle and community organizing.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**School of Ecology  
on Climate  
Justice,**  
Uyo, Akwa Ibom  
State, Nigeria.



**Oilwatch Africa  
Meeting and FishNet  
Alliance General  
Assembly,**  
Port Harcourt, Rivers  
State, Nigeria.



# Meet HOMEF's New Fellows

HOMEF's Sustain-Ability Academy is a space for knowledge generation, contestation of ideas and also for instigation of same. Presenters at the Academy are called "Instigators" and are inducted into HOMEF's Fellowship. Sustain-Ability Academy #12 which held at the Center for Conflict and Gender Studies, University of Port Harcourt on 29th May, 2019 produced two Fellows. Please meet our Fellows:



## Ruth Manorama (RLA, 2006)

Ruth Manorama was born in the early 1950s to Dorothy & Paul Dhanraj, the eldest daughter of five girls and three boys. To escape the worst of caste oppression, her parents converted to Christianity. Ruth grew up seeing her parents consistently involved in social work. Her mother Dorothy fought for the right to be educated against her conservative family and eventually became a teacher and campaigned for women's education rights. In 1975 she completed a master's degree in social work from the University of Madras. In 2001, she was awarded an honorary doctorate degree "for the distinguished contribution made to church and society" by the Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology and Church Administration.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Manorama led processions of over 150,000 people to protest against 'Operation Demolition' by the State Government of Karnataka, which was a forced eviction campaign. She and other activists demanded

protection for those to be evicted and the right to live legally and with dignity. On behalf of the slum dwellers, she fought court cases at the High Court and the Supreme Court of India against this move by the Karnataka administration.

Ruth Manorama has dedicated her life to battling a host of interconnected issues related to oppressions arising from caste, gender and class hierarchies. Among the issues she has fought for are the rights of domestic workers and the unorganised labour sector, slum dwellers, Dalits, and for the empowerment of marginalised women. She works at both the grassroots level as well as focuses on mass mobilisation and advocacy at the international level.

Ruth also established the first trade union in the country in 1987 for domestic workers in Bengaluru and strove for inclusion in the Minimum Wages.

Ruth has worked to mobilise the underprivileged from a grass-root levels since the 1980s. In more than 120 slums, she has been responsible for the mobilisation, training and empowerment of women to deal with the discrimination and violence that they face and to take leadership within their communities. Ruth is also committed to the cause of emancipation of Dalits. She has participated in several struggles against human rights violations, for land rights and for the cause of Dalit women and contributed immensely to the mainstreaming of Dalit issues.

"In 2006, Ruth Manorama was awarded the Right Livelihood Award for "her commitment over decades to achieving equality for Dalit women, building effective and committed women's organizations and working for their rights at national and international levels.



## Raúl Montenegro

Raúl Montenegro is an Argentine biologist, environmentalist and activist. His work transverses across many fields; he has worked as a professor at the University of Córdoba (Argentina), and at several other educational institutions. He founded FUNAM—a grassroots environmental organization in 1982, and became its president in 1995.

In all his activities, Montenegro combines an expert use of science with community-based campaigning, and an ability to generate enormous media coverage.

Montenegro received University of Buenos Aires' Prize to Scientific Research when he was a student (1971) and the national 'Argentina has examples' prize in 1996. FUNAM received a Global 500 Award from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1987, and Montenegro received the same Award personally in 1989. In 1998 Montenegro was in Salzburg as one of four recipients to be accorded the Nuclear-Free Future Award while also in 1999, he became honorary president of the grassroots group Salus Terrae. In 2004, he received the Right Livelihood Award "for his outstanding work with local communities and indigenous people to protect the environment and natural resources".

He has been involved in a number of human and environmental justice activities since the 1980s. For example, he has led anti-nuclear and anti-toxic waste disposal campaigns including a six-year successful campaign to close Los Gigantes uranium mine; campaigns against plans for nuclear waste dumps, nuclear waste shipments and nuclear releases; a successful campaign to stop the construction of a reprocessing/MOX plant and a Cobalt 60 irradiation plant; a successful campaign to stop nuclear prospecting in the Traslasierra Valley; promotion, with substantial take-up, of the concept of municipal nuclear-free zones; campaigns against the privatisation of Argentina's two nuclear plants (third under construction), against the construction of a fourth plant, and against the import of Canadian CANDU reactors, into both Argentina and Guatemala.

Montenegro has been instrumental in the establishment of six national parks or nature reserves. He has prevented car rallies through one, and received death threats for campaigning against the building of a golf course in another. He has also campaign to stop the deforestation of at least 500,000 hectares, campaigned to prevent forest fires, run campaigns to protect endangered ecosystems, and acted to tighten up the protection, and national trade rules affecting the export, of



several endangered species.

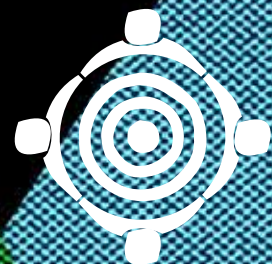
For 4 years Montenegro was Córdoba's Under-Secretary of the Environment, an independent and non-political member of the Cabinet, promulgating many environmental laws and initiatives, including Argentina's first requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment for both private and public projects. He formed an Environment Council and launched the Environment Defence Brigade of conservation volunteers. Out of office he contributed to the drafting of a number of environmental laws and has launched more than 40 prosecutions for environmental destruction in the courts.

Environmental education: for five years Montenegro wrote a column on ecology in one of the main weekend newspapers. He was Chairman of FUNAM's Children's Campaign for Peace and Life, which worked with 350,000 children in Argentina, and coordinated the Voice of the Children International Campaign at the time of the Earth Summit, which involved more than 600,000 children in 42 countries. For 20 years he has been a familiar figure on Argentine TV and radio. He was Project Director of FUNAM's 'Only One Environment' project, which produced 36 videos on ecological subjects for distribution throughout Argentina and neighbouring countries.

In 2003 Montenegro joined indigenous groups in their struggle against logging and mining companies. In the case of the Mby'a Guaraní, the threat is that logging will reduce the land available to them from 4,000 ha to 300 ha. Living with the Mby'a Montenegro helped them map their land and biodiversity needs. Having documented their customary use of the land, he is now helping them to fight for their rights in the courts. His approach is spreading to other tribes. With regard to mining, Montenegro is helping to convene an historic and unprecedented meeting of 140 indigenous leaders to fight for their land rights.



**OUR SCHOOL OF  
ECOLOGY PROVIDES  
SPACES FOR THE  
INTERROGATION OF  
COLONIALISM IN THE  
FRAMEWORK OF THE  
COLONISATION OF  
NATURE.**



**HOMEF**  
HEALTH OF MOTHER EARTH Foundation

A yellow background with a large white speech bubble in the center. The speech bubble has a black outline and a small tail pointing towards the bottom left. Surrounding the speech bubble are several small white circles and short black lines, resembling confetti or a burst effect.

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



## LOOKING TO HELP?

If you would like to join our team of volunteers, send an email to



[volunteers@homef.org](mailto:volunteers@homef.org)



# FISHNET ALLIANCE

FISHERS UNITED DEFEND OUR RIVERS, LAKES, OCEANS



**JOIN OUR  
FISHNET ALLIANCE TODAY**

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