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HUNGER:
THE NEW PHASE OF
CLIMATE CHANGE
IN AFRICA

GREEN NEW DEAL

A Done Deal or A
Doom Deal?

LOCUST SWARMS

and Other Terrors

OGONI CLEAN-UP

and the Business
of Pollution

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Home Run



NNIMMO BASSEY

Director, Health of Mother Foundation

Selfish need to maintain so-called high living standards continues to blind decision-makers from taking the right pathways.

Climate change, driven by human actions, is changing the face of our planet whether we acknowledge this fact or not.

It is shocking that although the major underlying factors are known, the selfish need to maintain so-called high living standards continues to blind decision-makers from taking the right pathways.

2020 was welcomed not just with fireworks but by bewildering wildfires. Humans and animals scampered for safety. Many made it. Many lost out. Yet when the fires subsided, we slid back into business as usual.

Thanks to activists all over the world for steadfastly speaking truth to power in the face of governments' orchestrated onslaughts against them.

At HOMEF, the operational theme for 2020 is "Decolonizing Narratives", and campaigns are geared at breaking the strongholds of colonial paradigms and narratives over peoples, communities and Mother Earth.

In this edition of eco-Instigator, we bring you reports, articles and happenings in the environmental / climate justice circle from around the world

with the aim of showcasing the happenings and reminding ourselves to continuously act to respect the rights of Mother Earth and all our relatives from human-induced destructions.

As usual, we also serve you with poems and books we believe you should read.

Drop us a line or share your stories, articles, photos or poems at editor@homef.org. We always look forward to hearing from you.

Until Victory!
Nnimmo Bassey

LOCUST SWARMS

AND OTHER TERRORS

By Nnimmo Bassey



FILIPPE BESIMINI / UN SPLASH

The desert locust storms hitting East Africa portend unfolding horrors. They are also a metaphor for other terrors on the continent.

Pictures of swarms of locusts, crawling, flying, mating and stripping the rich greenery of the East and Horn of Africa regions appear like something out of a horror movie or some Africa Magic epic. One agrees that the poor devils have a right to live and to thrive, but why could they not find their own creepy planet? How could billions of the little horrors descend on shrubberies and

farmlands without care?

The Earth is already bedevilled by a plethora of crises and one would think that plagues of locusts are best left as already settled in the Holy Book.

To have those noisy crowds flying about and eating up every green thing is a form of terrorism.

And here we are, having these creeping disasters attack the last hope of the already desperately poor. It is said that a small swarm of desert locusts can devour the same amount of food as 35,000 people per day.

Imagine that one swarm can have up to 150 million locusts per square kilometre of farmland or an equivalent of about 250 football fields! No one wants these swarms, no matter how small. One report has it that a large swarm in northeastern Kenya measures as much as 60 kilometres long and 40 kilometres wide.

Despite rising temperatures and their tendency to die soon after copulating, these creatures are annoyingly fecund. Africa has had an unfair share of climate-related disasters. Floods, droughts, heat and water stress all pile harms upon the continent, deepening poverty and exacerbating inequalities.

These locusts should take their lust for greenery to another planet.

Mark Lowcock, UN humanitarian chief, warns that the locust invasion in East Africa can become “the most devastating plague of locusts in any of our living memories if we don't reduce the problem faster than we're doing at the moment.”



PHOTO: NEWS.BARMABASFUND.ORG/

What is being experienced is said to be inching towards the worst to be seen in the last 70 years. The menace is so shocking that even cows are wondering what on earth is happening. Humans know that a hotter climate means more swarms, no matter what deniers may postulate. It is estimated that if the locust storm (and that's a close image of the plague) persists, up to 10 million persons may plunge into hunger in that part of Africa. The locusts have already struck Kenya, Somalia and parts of Uganda. South Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia are also threatened.

They are believed to have been blown in by strong cyclones from the Arabian Peninsula and across the Red Sea and to have had a hit with greenery in East Africa. More rains offer better conditions for the locusts to thrive. Lesser rain reduces

“
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CAPITAL.**”

their population, but a whiff of water would quickly see a multiplication of the survivors.

What can be done about these creatures? Kill the nymphs before they grow! Really? That sounds horrendously gruesome. But that's the harsh truth. When they pop up, wiggly, wingless and hopping, that is the time to step on them. Ouch. That is the time to give them a shower of pesticides or locusticides.

The insects are edible, but locust fries, salad or suya would not eliminate these hordes. Imagine if nets were set and these troops are captured and sent to any community where they could be served for snacks or dinner. Where are the titans in search of capital?

This is a business idea, brisk, short-term and extremely profitable. The stock will be freely available, and you would not even need to pay for the creatures.

Aerial spraying could be a solution in the less accessible parts of Somalia, but that option is a no brainer with the presence of al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab groups. Halting the spread of the locusts is a task that must be done. Left to their devices, the attacks become a plague that, according to experts, would take years to eradicate.

Looking at the climate disasters and now the locust invasion in East Africa, one cannot help but conclude that West Africa has generally gotten off lightly from the tweaks of Nature and disasters triggered by the reckless plunder of Nature in

the pursuit of capital.

Look at a nation like Nigeria. Natural disasters are few and far apart. When the floods come, they are often predicted by relevant agencies, and the disaster nevertheless arrives at a leisurely pace, travelling down the Niger and Benue Rivers until they empty into the Atlantic Ocean after sweeping away the dreams of the hapless citizens.

While locusts devour lives from trees in East Africa, in Nigeria, city gates are locked before dusk in the fear of terrorists. Citizens locked inside the cities may enjoy a dubious respite, but those locked outside the gates get roasted and annihilated in exposed and unsecured villages.

The swarms of locusts love germinating crops and devour leaves, generating hunger and desperation. Climate change intensifies floods and wreaks havoc in many areas.

It seems that in places, like Nigeria, where these disasters aren't so potent, humans look for ways to spill blood, light the fires of terror in forests and scrubland, kidnap, abduct and make kids become targets merely by wearing school uniforms.

While no one can claim now to have an immediate solution to the locust strike, we have those saddled with the responsibility of providing security in Nigeria screaming that they have defeated their human locusts several months ago and that even if they are bereft of ideas

on how to tackle the murderous swarms, they are indispensable.

Meanwhile, we wonder why the number of victims of terrorist attacks in Borno State and the Northeast generally has regularly hovered around 30.

A casual look at some news reports shows that 30 persons were reportedly killed in some attacks in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019 and even in January and February 2020. Is it that we cannot count persons or is 30 a set number for massacres in the region?

This variant of the "locust storms" built by years of inequality, deprivation, poverty, corruption and ignorance has blown long enough and demands real actions.

HUNGER:

THE NEW PHASE OF

CLIMATE CHANGE

IN AFRICA

By Cadmus Atake-Enade

Climate change is transforming the planet's ecosystems and threatening the well-being of current and future generations. It is increasing the rate of food shortages as a result of droughts, floods and high temperatures globally.

Ever since the first climate talks in Geneva in 1979, there have been a series of climate talks, yet no profound solutions have been found. This has driven world leaders and scientists into postulating false solutions to climate change and rapidly driving the world into hunger and food shortages.

It is estimated that about 870 million people, or one in eight persons, suffer from chronic undernourishment and hunger. Among the vast majority of the undernourished and hungry people, about 852 million people, or nearly 98%, live in the global south, while 16 million people, or less than 3%, are undernourished in the global north.

Among these undernourished and hungry people, Africa has been the only region where the number of hungry people has consistently increased, with nearly 20 million added in the last decade. In Africa, the modest progress achieved in recent years up to 2007 was reversed, with hunger rising 2 per cent per year since then. Analysts say that the

increasing hunger can be traced to increase in droughts, increase in temperature, monoculture and land grabbing resulting from false solutions postulated by some climate scientists supporting polluting entities in their bid to maintain the status quo.

Food availability and access to adequate food constitute one of the most basic and essential requirements for maintaining a healthy and productive life. Presently, hunger and malnutrition comprise the major threats to human health, and climate change will continue to affect all aspects of food security globally.

Food insecurity and shortage are likely to pose a major challenge for countries that are vulnerable to extreme weather events and those that have low incomes and a high incidence of hunger and poverty. Inhabitants of affected nations are already at risk and will find it very difficult to overcome food production and income losses resulting from extreme weather events. This situation could mean short-term and long-term losses in food availability and access. Short-term infrastructural damage from extreme weather events of growing intensity can also make food distribution difficult.



EDGAR INFANTON ON TELTATSTORY.COM.ING

agricultural demand in recent years, and this has important implications for food production and availability in areas where agricultural capacity is diminishing. It takes a lot more grain to power the world than to feed it. The corn equivalent of the energy used for a few minutes of driving would feed a person for an entire day, and that same person could be fed for a year with the equivalent energy

burned from a full tank of ethanol in a four-wheel-drive sports utility vehicle.

In rural Africa, groundwater and rainfall are essential inputs for food production and are the main sources of potable water. The rural areas of Africa are where more than half of the region's young people live. Climate change impacts on water resources which directly affect the availability of water for agricultural utilization and domestic uses.

One area currently experiencing serious water deficit is the Sahel region where longer and more intense droughts constitute one of the most dramatic climatic changes recorded in any region. This situation is expected to worsen in the coming years, affecting more than 60 million young women and men. Outside the Sahel, groundwater supplies are expected to decrease by as much as 10 per cent, even with a 1oC increase in temperature. And the world is expected to move towards much higher temperature increases above pre-industrial level

The threat to agriculture is global and not restricted to one region. In northern Australia and southern United States, for example, food production could decline as a result of drier surface conditions.

The production of biofuels and other forms of bioenergy presents serious challenges also. Bioenergy is the largest new source of

REDD+ A carbon offset mechanisms is also another major challenge in this regard, a process whereby industrialized countries in the global north present forest, agriculture, soils, and even water as sponges for their pollution instead of reducing greenhouse gas emissions at source. This has led to land grabbing, thereby reducing land space for agriculture and food production which in turn leads to food shortage and hunger.

As dire as the situation may seem, there are local knowledge systems and agricultural practices that support resilient food production in the context of food sovereignty. Analyses that promote false solutions to climate change are simply tools of neo-colonialism aimed at force-feeding Africans with genetically engineered crops and foods touted as the only solution to supposedly burgeoning populations.

The solutions remain simple: keep fossil fuels in the ground, cut emissions at source, avoid food wastage, support agroecology and then incentives smallholder farmers with essential tools and natural inputs.



NATURE'S IRATE *Screams*

By Evelyn D'Poet Osagie

In the heart of the Forest
In the depth of the Sea
Beyond that Savannah
On top of that Hill
Come the echoes of degradation

Behind rain clouds
Above earth's curtains
Inside hidden caves
Beneath our planet's crust
Emissions and wastes choke Nature's
essence
Forcing her to scream

The Amazon wildfires
Fossil fuels fuel our heat
With plastic bottles
Non-recycled trash
Plus toxic waste
Earth and man may soon be extinct

From the angry eyes of the sun
To the receding steps of rivers
The forceful coup of deserts
The irate thrust of tides
Nature fights back for her being

From the melting ice in the Arctic and

Antarctic
To the crushing arms of Katrina
From Bangkok's eroding shoreline
To the drying banks of River Niger
We suffer for our inactions

The Mexican freak summer hailstorm
The angry spill of Tennessee's torrential rains
The mad flooding in Jakarta
Unsafe air in Sao Paulo, New Delhi and
Beijing
These bitter pills should force our hands
To end the ills against our world before it's
out of hand

about Evelyn Osagie

Known on stage as 'Evelyn D'Poet, Evelyn expresses her voice through diverse arts, especially performance poetry and photography. An arts/culture journalist with The Nation newspaper, she has also performed her poems and those of others at various artistic events/festivals in Edo, Oyo, Ogun and Lagos states.

GREEN NEW DEAL:

A DONE DEAL OR A DOOM DEAL?

By Magdalene Ime Idiang



For the past four decades, the planet has been warming up rapidly, from the North Pole to the South Pole. Since 1906, the world's normal surface temperature has increased by 0.9 degrees Celsius even more in the more sensitive Polar Regions. The heat is melting glaciers, sea ice, and shifting precipitation patterns. An overwhelming scientific consensus maintains that climate change is due primarily to the human use of fossil fuels (anthropogenic causes), which releases carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the air.

The gases trap heat within the atmosphere, which can have a range of consequences on ecosystems, including rising sea levels, severe weather events, and droughts that render landscapes more susceptible to wildfires. In current times, we are experiencing heat waves globally which have given rise to various changes in our weather patterns.

The urgency to mitigate climate change and its impacts grows greater with each passing day. This urgency has been made more obvious following the 2018 publication by the United Nations IPCC Report of Global Warming of 1.5oC and by federal scientists (the 4th National Climate Assessment) also in 2018 who warned that if global temperatures continue to rise, the world is set out towards intense heatwaves, wildfires and droughts. Furthermore, if rapid actions are not taken it will lead the planet into an unprecedented self-destructive climate future if we compare it to what has happened during all of human evolutionary history.

Since the United States has historically been responsible for a disproportionate amount of greenhouse gas emissions, having emitted 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions through 2014, and has a high technological capacity, the US Congress resolved that the country must take a leading role in reducing its emissions through a set of economic transformations.

The Congress, through a woman representative, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and Senator Edward J. Markey of Massachusetts, both Democrats, set up a 14-page congressional resolution known as Green New Deal that lays out a grand plan for tackling climate change.

The Resolution contains two major ideas:

- What America has to do to solve the greenhouse gas emissions in order to avoid the worst consequences of climate change i.e. to completely stop burning fossil fuel and transition totally to renewable energy this means zero-emission energy sources, home-energy-efficient, electric vehicles etc.
- Shows how America will be protected during transition in a way that will help ordinary American people through high wage jobs, economic security for all people of the United States while also trying to fix societal problems like racial injustice.

The proposal stipulates that it is the duty of the US Federal Government to create a Green New Deal to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. It also called on the Federal Government to wean the United States from fossil fuels and curb planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions across the economy while guaranteeing new high-paying jobs in clean energy industries.

What is in the green new deal?

The green new deal was inspired by the name The New Deal (old-new deal), a set of social and economic reforms and public works projects undertaken by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in response to the Great Depression. The Green New Deal (GND) combines

Roosevelt's economic approach with modern ideas such as renewable energy and resource efficiency.

A study published by The Brooklyn Rail (Beyond the Green New Deal) reveals that the New Deal (old-new deal) did not end the Great Depression, that the great depression was accomplished by the military-Keynesianism of World War II which brought massive employment and federal contracts.

The proposed Green New Deal has been questioned and criticized by conservative politicians in the USA who see it as a wildly unrealistic and politically untenable way to deal with climate change. They balk at the cost of implementation of the GND estimated at 93 trillion dollars and wonder how the United States government which has 22 trillion dollars of debt will pay for the implementation of the new deal.

John P. Holdren, a former science advisor to Obama, thinks The Green New Deal's 2030 goal is too optimistic, saying that 2045 or 2050 would be more realistic while another expressed concern that setting unrealistic "aspirational" goals of 100% renewable energy could undermine "the credibility of the effort" against climate. The debate continues.

European Version of the

In December 2019, the European Union presented a set of policy proposals under the name European Green Deal by the newly elected European Commission under Von der Leyen with a less ambitious decarbonisation timeline of carbon neutrality in 2050 compared to the United States' plan of 2030, a goal expected to be enshrined in a 'Climate Law' to be presented in March 2020. The policy proposal involves every sector of the EU economy, a plan to direct 1.2% of its annual GDP towards the green economy including new infrastructure, public procurement, research and development and industrial retooling.

The policy plan also presented how the European Union Commission will make the additional investment needed to achieve the 2050 climate target, totalling 260 billion euros per year while proposing to dedicate 45 billion euros per year from 2021 to 2027. This is not enough to reach the target so the remaining 215 billion euros will have to be made up by contributions from households, corporations, public investments and national governments. All members except Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary have signed up to the goal.

What Green New Deal holds for Africa?

The question before us is whether a GND manufactured in the global north will be used as a prescription for actions in the global south to exacerbate current suppressive, oppressive, and colonial extractivist paradigms.



The GND may sound like a message of hope for its proponents, but will it hinge on the back of the poorest people in the global south and deepen foreign domination through climate initiatives that will exploit Africa's resources in terms of land grabbing and policy intrusion or otherwise compromise our sovereignty? As "green industries" pile more pressures to gain access to certain minerals needed for renewable energy appliances to meet the needs of consumers in the global north, and as local politicians remain hooked on expected foreign exchange, what will be the fate of the fence line communities in Africa?

We are talking about the large expanse of land needed to execute this plan and a significant part of the accessible land is in Africa, occupied by individuals who are least politically powerful, a situation which might put them in competition for the land that provides their basic needs with powerful private interests from the world's most powerful countries. For instance, a research institute reported in 2014 that Norwegian companies' quest to buy and conserve forest land in East Africa to use as carbon offsets came at the cost of forced evictions and food scarcity for thousands of Ugandans, Mozambicans and Tanzanians.

The GND could encourage exactly this kind of well-known socio-economic and political trade-offs. Until the GND is thoroughly interrogated, especially with an eye on those who are not on the negotiating tables but would be impacted by the deals, this might well spell doom for many and must not be seen as a done deal.

Magdalene Idiang is an intern with HOMEF

Women IN THE FRONTLINE AGAINST DESTRUCTIVE DAMS

By: Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA)

What does a just and clean energy system look like?

There are a lot of exciting possibilities, but one thing is clear: it does not include the wholesale destruction of a river ecosystem. It does not involve taking away women's land, water and livelihoods, and forcing them to relocate. It does not mean severing a community's spiritual ties to their ancestral territories. Yet this is exactly what happens in the building of large-scale hydropower plants.

Large dams are not only destructive and dirty, they are profoundly unjust, especially for women in the communities directly affected. Women often take charge of securing food, water and energy for their families. If, how and where they get these resources – and their quality – can seriously influence women's daily lives, not to mention their long-term health and well-being.

Among other things, large dams can reduce or destroy local food and water supplies, forcing women to search for new sources and in extreme cases, to relocate to new communities. Increased time and effort may

be compounded by increased dangers, such as an increased risk of sexual violence when travelling further afield. With forced displacement, the uprooting carries a heavy burden on women, given the responsibility they bear to ensure the survival of their family and children in an unknown environment. Meanwhile, electricity generated by large-scale dams primarily flows to industries and urban populations, sometimes bypassing local women and their communities altogether.

Around the world, women are in the front line of the fight against destructive large-scale hydropower. The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) is supporting them in their struggle to make their demands heard and respected by authorities, companies and financiers, including development finance institutions like the World Bank and regional development banks. Two of these cases are highlighted here: the struggle of women in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) against the INGA 3 dam and the fight of women in Guatemala against the Pojom II and San Andres hydropower projects.



Dams in the DRC: Women No Longer in the Dark

In the 1970s and 1980s, millions of dollars were invested in two large hydropower dams on the Congo River, known as INGA 1 and 2. It was claimed that the dams would provide greater energy access to people in the DRC. Some fifty years later, however, less than 10% of the country's citizens have access to electricity. 85% of the electricity generated from the dams goes to high-voltage consumers, mainly industries. The communities displaced by the dams still struggle to secure economic opportunities and some kind of justice, and many still live without electricity. Despite this abysmal track record, the DRC

government is planning more dams and pursuing financing for the construction of INGA 3. Maggie Mapondera of the African gender and extractives alliance called WoMin explains: "It is called the 'Grand INGA Project' because it is meant to be this massive development

that will eventually – and this is the language that the African Development Bank has used – 'light up Africa.' They are selling this notion of development that is supposed to take Africa to the next millennium." For more information read more [here](#).

As part of GAGGA, WoMin supports women and communities across Africa who are fighting against big infrastructure or extractive projects, including hydropower and coal plants, and mines.

WoMin is active in the DRC and 10 other countries, including Burkina Faso, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, and

Zimbabwe.

WoMin has joined forces with the Congolese organization Femmes Solidaires (FESO) and International Rivers to support women in the area threatened by INGA 3. FESO works directly with women who live close to the river in Matadi and a few other towns. Salomé Elolo of FESO explains that the group's mission is to build a women's movement around the Congo River its protection in order to protect it.

To that end, FESO has created SOFLECO (Solidarité des Femmes sur le Fleuve Congo), an association composed of several local groups of women in the provinces and territories that have been or will potentially be, affected by INGA projects.

"Already we have six SOFLECO groups," says Salomé. "We go to the communities and explain the consequences of INGA 1 and 2, we build alliances and do advocacy, demonstrations and lobbying both nationally and internationally."



Salomé: “As a consequence of INGA 1 and 2, water downstream has declined, and people had to be relocated. Women were most affected while their opinions had not been taken into account, during and even after the construction.

They are the ones who use water most in their role to secure water and food for their families, and after relocation, they had to walk longer distances to get clean water and work harder to produce the same amount of food on the more marginal land.

With INGA 3, these women and the communities will be deprived (again) of their means of subsistence, including arable land, water from the river, hunting, fishing, fruit crops, land of the ancestors, and their cultural enjoyment. They will be evicted from their lands and moved to a place not yet known. Moreover, with the construction of the dam many people, especially women, fear a huge influx of migrant workers, which may affect the safety of women and girls in the communities”

FESO, WoMin and International Rivers have jointly worked to strengthen the capacity of local women to carry out advocacy work and effectively defend their rights.

These women have learned about the actors and financial flows involved and the regional and international instruments and mechanisms available to protect the rights of local communities, indigenous peoples and women.

Maggie of WoMin explains the importance of this information, given that there is also Spanish and Chinese money involved in INGA. It is critical, she says, that “people can identify the enemy and organize on different levels against it.” WoMin has brought local women to its regional feminist schools and feminist participatory action research trainings, so they can develop their skills to tell their own stories, conduct research on the ground, and build political capacity to challenge the INGA projects. WoMin and International Rivers are also working in

solidarity with allies in the DRC and communities directly impacted by the project to challenge the South African government directly, urging the country's parliament to scrutinize the feasibility and risks of the projects closely and withdraw funding. To learn more about this advocacy work, you can read more [here and here](#). It is still possible to block the construction of INGA 3.

Through the continuous mobilization of women, supported by GAGGA, the affected communities, especially women, are becoming increasingly aware that INGA 3 is not necessary and will pose direct harm to their livelihoods. This mobilization and awareness-raising of local communities have clearly contributed to the fact that INGA 3 is not yet constructed.

Mayan Women Defend Freedom, Security and Territory

For the communities of the Ixquis microregion in Guatemala, life was quiet before the Pojom II and San Andrés hydro-projects began.

“Now it's quite the opposite,” says Carla, an indigenous Maya Chuj woman. “We can't go out and be safe, we don't have that freedom because of the company's presence... They came to our communities with lies, saying they would bring development and that is not true. All they have done is to destroy our natural resources.

” Carla (her name has been changed to protect her safety) is a member of one of the ten communities that make up the Ixquisis microregion. They are part of a larger group defending their territory against the threat of the dams.

The approval of the loans and the start of the construction of the dams have led to the disruption of the communities' ways of living, harassment of the communities, and militarization. “We feel great sadness, pain and fear for what is happening in our territory.

The army and the police forces are taking care of these companies, instead of taking care of Guatemalan citizens. If they weren't in our territory, everything would return to normal,” says Carla. “We have directly suffered threats, ridicule, abuse and discrimination by the police, the army and the private security of the company.

As women, we have been treated as if we are irrational, wild animals.” The construction of the dams has already caused severe environmental damage, including water scarcity and pollution, which have affected local people's ability to fish, grow food, and maintain their traditional lifestyle.

The affected people of the region of Ixquisis are primarily indigenous Mayans including

the Chu, Q'anjob'al and Akateko ethnic groups. The affected Mayan communities and allied organizations have been protesting the dams for six years now. They have voiced their opposition to municipal, departmental and national authorities.

Through GAGGA, the Latin American environmental lawyers group AIDA is now supporting the women from Ixquisis in their vital work to defend their rights. “We generally work with local

the accountability mechanisms of international financial institutions, the key financiers of large hydropower projects.

As part of GAGGA, AIDA works to highlight the impacts of poorly planned development projects on women and bring women's rights to the fore in environmental advocacy work. To this end, in August 2018, AIDA joined the International Platform Against Impunity and the Plurinational



organizations of lawyers that are leading legal disputes or want to present cases where elements of the human right to a healthy environment are debated or cases that have to do with sensitive ecosystems which are being affected. Our institutional policy is to work very closely with [local organizations] and support them in strengthening their legal strategy, and also support their media follow-up,” says Liliana Ávila, a senior lawyer at AIDA. A key strategy is to support communities to make use of

Ancestral Government of Q'anjob'al, Popti, Chuj and Akateko in supporting the Ixquisis women to file a complaint to the Inter-American Development Bank's Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism (known as the MICI). The complaint called on the bank to withdraw its investment in the dams (amounting to nearly \$15 million), since the projects do not meet the bank's own standards.

The complaint is unique. Not only does it contain a gender perspective, looking specifically at how women suffer most from large-scale hydro-projects, it also seeks to hold the bank accountable for violating its own gender policy.

This is often ignored in complaints to development banks, which usually do not go further than community-level environmental and social impacts.

In a first positive step, the MICI has formally accepted the complaint and is now conducting a thorough investigation into the alleged policy violations. The investigation includes a visit to Guatemala scheduled at the end of 2019.

Although the publication of MICI's findings is not expected until 2020, the fact that the investigation is taking place is already an achievement. It could set an important precedent. AIDA hopes that the independent investigation will affirm the content of the complaint and lead to better compliance by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) with its own gender, social and environmental policies.

Better implementation of these policies would strengthen protections for women and improve the sustainability of IDB's investments in general. "We do not want dams. We want to live in an environment free of contamination. We want our territory to be free," says Carla.

AIDA's support has enabled the women to understand where their fight fits into a larger context, which includes the key role of international financial institutions. It has also strengthened their activism as women. "We have learned, thanks to the organizations that have supported us in this

fight, to create a space for ourselves as women."

The complaint process has also been a valuable learning experience for AIDA, which has increased its knowledge of gender issues in relation to large infrastructure projects.

The group aims to incorporate a stronger gender perspective in its future environmental and human rights work and share experiences with other organizations, regionally and globally. With GAGGA's support, AIDA is already preparing a new report focused on the impacts of dams on women's lives. It includes an analysis of gender-related policies and practices of international financial institutions, as well as the experiences and brave struggles of the women of Ixquisis.

Culled from:



<https://gaggaalliance.org/news/women-at-the-frontlines-against-destructive-dams//>

IMPLEMENTATION OF **UNEP REPORT** ON OGONI CLEAN-UP: IS HYPREP FOR THE PEOPLE?

By Damian BF Gbogbara,

From its inception, the activities of HYPREP (Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project) have generated heated argument amongst Ogoni people and other stakeholders in the ongoing clean-up exercise in Ogoniland as regards sincerity and capability to deliver on its mandate.

According to the people of Ogoniland, HYPREP has blatantly refused to give attention to the basic needs of the people as recommended in the Emergency Measures by UNEP, such as the provision of drinking water to the affected communities, the establishment of a health desk to audit and profile the health challenges of the people.

It will be recalled that on Tuesday 4th February 2020, HYPREP in a ceremony in Port Harcourt, Rivers State handed a certificate of completion to contractors to mark the success of the first phase of the remediation exercise in Ogoniland and announced its readiness to commence the second phase. This issuance of a certificate of completion to contractors and pronouncement to issue new contracts to contractors for the second phase of the clean-up by HYPREP sparked widespread criticisms from various groups and individuals across Ogoniland, condemning HYPREP for its hasty conclusions. They called on the Federal Government of Nigeria to

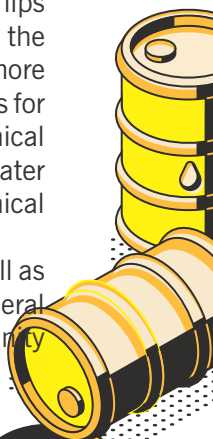
stop awarding further contracts to HYPREP until some of the emergency measures are met, especially the provision of drinking water.

The real situation of drinking water in parts of Ogoniland cannot be described adequately with words. Against this widespread condemnation and outcry for the failure of HYPREP and the call on the Federal Government to stop awarding further contracts, the Federal Government on Thursday 13th February 2020 in a ceremony organized by HYPREP in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State re-awarded 36 contracts (sites) to HYPREP and its contractors.

According to the Minister for Environment, Dr Muhammad Abubakar, 29 out of the 36 contracts are for continuous remediation exercise while 7 are for underground water monitoring. In a remark, the King of Eleme, Dr Philip Obere decried the absence of potable water in Eleme and the environs. Responding, the Minister promised that the livelihoods of the people will not be neglected.

It is worthy of note that HYPREP had on various occasions while defending its alleged slowness to the clean-up, stated that the remediation of the environment of Ogoniland is very complex and therefore requires high-level technicality and expertise. The questions on the lips of Ogoni people at the moment are: Is HYPREP for the interest of the people or its own interest? Why is it more convenient for HYPREP to award and renew contracts for remediation which require a high level of technical expertise than awarding contracts for drinking water which do not require comparable levels of technical expertise?

Ogoni people need good health, potable water as well as a clean environment. Hence the call on the Federal Government of Nigeria and the international community to pressure HYPREP to do the needful to avert further humanitarian crises in the area.....



OGONI **CLEAN-UP** AND THE BUSINESS OF POLLUTION

Will Ogoni be Cleaned?



“ the squabbles over the Ogoni clean-up contracts are a huge distraction at a time when we should be clamouring for an audit of all places in the Niger Delta (and elsewhere) with hydrocarbon pollution.”

Recent news making the rounds is that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and their oil company partners, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Total Exploration and Production of Nigeria (TEPNG) and Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) have “disbursed” a total of \$360 on the clean-up of Ogoniland.

This claim is reported to have been made by the Chief Operating Officer for Upstream of the NNPC at a hearing on the clean-up at the Nigerian National Assembly on Monday, 17 February 2020.

Even before this announcement at the National Assembly, there were grave doubts regarding how such a colossal sum could have been spent on the Ogoni clean-up without corresponding results. For example, the president of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) alleged massive corruption in the manner the Hydrocarbons Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) is handling the contracts.

According to the MOSOP president, “it was unfortunate that an overwhelming \$350 million, an estimated NGN128,000,000,000 (One hundred and twenty-eight billion Naira) meant for the clean-up has been largely misappropriated due to the massive corruption in HYPREP.”

While this article cannot speak to the charges of corrupt practices, it is important to deal with the delicate issues of perception and acrimony that presentations of this sort can generate. Let us refresh our memories about the funding architecture of the Ogoni clean-up exercise. Following the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report of 2011, it was decided that a total of \$1 billion should be

contributed towards the clean-up of Ogoniland by the entities that polluted the area. Out of this sum, 90% is to be contributed by the Joint Venture partners (according to the ratio of their shareholding) while the balance of 10% of the funds would come from a rather nebulous cohort including the refineries.

There is no doubt that the clean-up could be faster than it has been. There is also no doubt that certain emergency measures could, and must, be undertaken. There is no reason why anyone in Ogoniland should be drinking contaminated water after a report, from no less an agency like UNEP, has clearly confirmed the fact of such contamination.

Citizens have a right to be emotive over the clean-up exercise because this is a matter of life and death for the present generation and generations yet unborn. Pollution is an intergenerational crime. Indeed, some places in the Niger Delta will require several lifetimes to recover because the harms that have been inflicted can best be described as ecocide.

One of the problems with the clean-up is that some people see it as merely a business opportunity rather than as a duty to ensure that this intergenerational crime is redressed. Indeed, the clean-up of the entire Niger Delta could possibly provide employment for a large proportion of Nigeria's unemployed youths if they are suitably trained and drawn into a comprehensive clean-up corps.

In fact, the squabbles over the Ogoni clean-up contracts are a huge distraction at a time when we should be clamouring for an audit of all places in the Niger Delta (and elsewhere) with hydrocarbon pollution.

Chasing after an extremely difficult and complex clean-up without an adequate technical and financial capacity is actually a disservice to our communities and peoples. We have seen the poor clean-up exercises carried out at locations where new spills occur. And the fact that it took UNEP to expose the lie in oil company claims that they had remediated polluted places in Ogoniland.

The poor efforts at covering rather than remediating pollutions at places like K-Dere and others were all exposed by the UNEP report. The pursuit of the clean-up as “jobs for the boys” or where jobs are given out based on a sense of entitlement or as political patronage cannot portend anything good.

The nature, depth and complexity of the pollution of Ogoni require the application of best skills and safe technologies from any part of the world. The exercise should be pursued

only, the outcome may be massive delays as jobs that should be completed quickly would have to be redone repeatedly to meet set milestones and indicators. We have seen this in simple construction projects given out to less-than-competent contractors, which results in shoddy deliveries, delays and abandonment of sites. Neither HYPREP nor the Ogoni people can afford that scenario.

Back to the matter of cash. When the NNPC chief announced that the polluters had disbursed \$360 million, the impression people get is that HYPREP had spent the cash. Few understand that the funds contributed or paid by the polluters are held by an Ogoni Trust Fund and not directly in HYPREP's accounts. The NNPC chief may not have told the world exactly when they disbursed the 2019 tranche of the funds to the Ogoni Trust Fund. If the sums were paid at the end of the year or the beginning of 2020, how could anyone think or believe that the money has been spent or spirited away in the clean-up process?

The misrepresentation of facts and figures and continuous infighting for whatever reasons continue to generate bad blood over the entire efforts and raise the question as to whether Ogoni will ever be cleansed.

And, by extension, will the Niger Delta ever be cleaned?



as an ecological emergency where the fact that a company has not previously operated in Nigeria should not be prioritised in the process of award of contracts. Some of us are convinced that this is the approach that is needed as the clean-up moves to a more complicated stage.

If HYPREP stands firm on the quality of project delivery, as we believe they should, and if jobs are awarded on the basis of local capacities

I AM AN
AFRICAN

I am an African
Not because I was born there
But because my heart beats with Africa's

I am an African
Not because my skin is black
But because my mind is engaged by Africa

I am an African
Not because I live on its soil
But because my soul is at home in Africa

When Africa weeps for her children
My cheeks are stained with tears
When Africa honours her elders
My head is bowed in respect
When Africa mourns for her victims
My hands are joined in prayer
When Africa celebrates her triumphs
My feet are alive with dancing

I am an African
For her blue skies take my breath away
And my hope for the future is bright

I am an African
For her people greet me as family
And teach me the meaning of community

I am an African
For her wildness quenches my spirit
And brings me closer to the source of life
When the music of Africa beats in the wind
My blood pulses to its rhythm
And I become the essence of sound
When the colours of Africa dazzle in the sun
My senses drink in its rainbow
And I become the palette of nature
When the stories of Africa echo round the fire
My feet walk in its pathways
And I become the footprints of history

I am an African
Because she is the cradle of our birth
And nurtures an ancient wisdom

I am an African
Because she lives in the world's shadows
And bursts with a radiant luminosity

I am an African
Because she is the land of tomorrow
And I recognise her gifts as sacred.

I AM AN AFRICAN

By Wayne Visser



PHOTO BY OLADIMEJI ODUNSI ON UNSPLASH



PHOTO BY ALEX WIGAN ON UNSPASH

AGRA

ISN'T THE FACE OF AGRICULTURE

By Nnimmo Bassey

The announcement of the nomination of the President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Agnes Kalibata, as the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General to the 2021 UN Food Summit is very troubling. It is not a shock because of the person of Kalibata but because of her connection to AGRA. It is a shock because AGRA stands in stark contradistinction to some fundamental positions of UN agencies such as the FAO.

The FAO leans towards the promotion of agricultural systems that are in harmony with Nature as opposed to systems that erode biodiversity and force farmers to depend on artificial and chemical inputs. For example, the FAO launched an initiative to scale up agroecology as a key pathway of supporting the SDGs. An important International Symposium on Agroecology organized by the FAO in 2014 was attended by six UN organisations, 700 participants from 72 countries and 350 civil society organizations and NGOs. The symposium considered diverse ways by which agroecology can be enhanced around the world to contribute to realizing the SDGs.

The benefits of agroecology were pointed out as including food security and nutrition, resilience, promoting health, protecting biodiversity and soil fertility, and mitigating climate change. During the symposium, the FAO Director-General Graziano da Silva noted that it strengthens “the role of family and small-scale farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, women and youth.” At the end of the symposium, the participants endorsed the launch of the Scaling up Agroecology Initiative and demanded that the FAO should develop a ten-year plan for its implementation.

After over 10 years of the existence of AGRA, it is hard to find any evidence that a so-called green revolution is happening in Africa. According to Timothy Wise, “AGRA's stated goals are to double yields and incomes for 30 million farming households by 2020. Despite millions of dollars spent by AGRA since 2006, few comprehensive evaluations of AGRA have been made available.

An additional USD 30 billion was recently pledged at the African Green Revolution Forum to continue AGRA's work and help launch the organization's new strategic vision, without a clear understanding of how effective AGRA has been in increasing agricultural productivity, adopting green revolution technologies and reducing poverty and malnutrition in the countries over the past decade.”

Critics see AGRA as a body that deploys all the right language in framing its work as supporting small-scale farmers whereas the reality is that its approaches promote the strategies of big business and the promoters of genetic engineering. AGRA has not categorically denied leaning on genetic engineering but, like the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), they would claim that they don't rule out technologies. This is duplicity of focus – posing as a supporter of small-scale farmers working with Nature while in reality working with systems that fight Nature and undercut the resilience of local ecosystems. This is why the elevation of the President of AGRA as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the UN to the UN Food Summit is a loud endorsement of genetic engineering in agriculture, which comes with a stab of worry. The move is rightly seen by critics as a route to

taking control of the agenda and muffling the voices of African farmers and environmentalists while promoting the profits of agri-business.

Unfortunately, big capital, such as that wielded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the parent of AGRA, has shut the ears and hearts and governments from paying attention to the people. They promote environmentally harmful agribusiness, negate local knowledge and food systems and promote systems that are ultimately inimical to the best needs of local farmers.

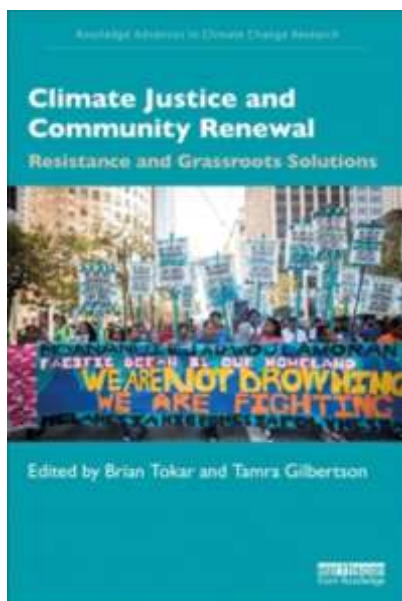
We are convinced that the UN Secretary-General can better be represented by persons and organisations whose fundamental ideologies promote agroecology and systems that would protect global biodiversity, tackle hunger and fight global warming.

At this point in time, a Special Envoy should be someone that would clearly show support for the implementation of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). The findings of IAASTD were captured in the 2008 report titled Agriculture at the Crossroads. The report clearly showed that the future of food supply in the world will depend on the production from small-scale farmers as opposed to industrial agriculture and those applying genetically engineered organisms (GMOs).

A special envoy of the UN Secretary-General should be someone who would demand that African governments implement the decisions of The African Union's (AU) Maputo Declaration, better known as CAADP. That Declaration was officially adopted by member states in 2003 with the requirement that each country should allocate at least 10% of their annual budgets to agriculture by 2015. Only a handful of African countries have met this target with the continental average standing at about 5%.

AGRA is not the face of agriculture in Africa and cannot speak in our name or represent us in any way.

Books You should Read



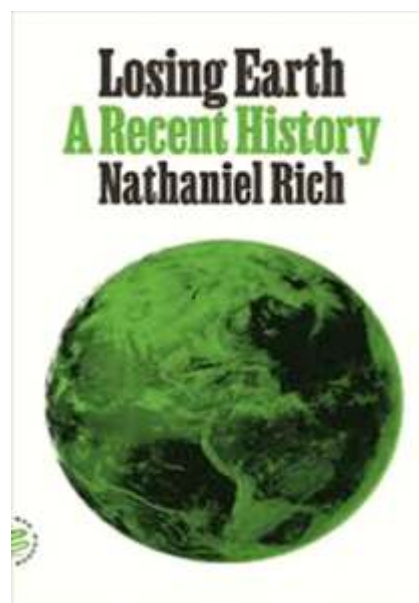
CLIMATE JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL

Edited by Brian Tokar and Tamra Gilbertson

Climate Justice and Community Renewal "...brings together the voices of people from five continents who live, work, and research on the front line of climate resistance and renewal. Contributors share the impacts of extreme weather events in Africa, the Caribbean, and on Pacific islands, experiences of life-long defenders of the land and forests in Brazil, India, Indonesia, and eastern Canada, and efforts to halt the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure from North America to South Africa. They offer various perspectives on how a just transition toward a fossil-free economy can take shape, as they share efforts to protect water resources, better feed their communities, and implement new approaches to urban policy and energy democracy."

The book "uniquely highlights the accounts of people who are directly engaged in local climate struggles and community renewal efforts, including on-the-ground land defenders, community organizers, leaders of international campaigns, agroecologists, activist-scholars, and many others. It will appeal to students, researchers, activists - young and old - and all who appreciate the need for a truly justice-centred response to the escalating climate disruptions."

This is an upcoming publication from Routledge's series on Advances in Climate Change Research and will soon hit the stands. You can pre-order on major distribution outlets. Publication date: April 15, 2020.



LOSING EARTH – A RECENT HISTORY

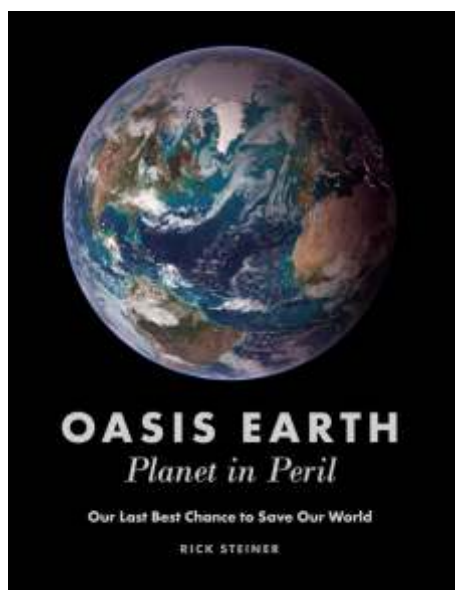
By Nathaniel Rich

By 1979, we knew nearly everything we understand today about climate change including how to stop it. Over the next decade, a handful of scientists, politicians, and strategists, led by two unlikely heroes, risked their careers in a desperate, escalating campaign to convince the world to act before it was too late. Losing Earth is their story, and ours.

The New York Times Magazine devoted an entire issue to Nathaniel Rich's groundbreaking chronicle of that decade, which became an instant journalistic phenomenon the subject of news coverage, editorials, and conversations all over the world. In its emphasis on the lives of the people who grappled with the great existential threat of our age, it made vivid the moral dimensions of our shared plight.

Now expanded into a book form, Losing Earth tells the human story of climate change in even richer, more intimate terms. It reveals, in previously unreported detail, the birth of climate denialism and the genesis of the fossil fuel industry's coordinated effort to thwart climate policy through misinformation propaganda and political influence. The book carries the story into the present day, wrestling with the long shadow of our past failures and asking crucial questions about how we make sense of our past, our future, and ourselves.

Like John Hersey's Hiroshima and Jonathan Schell's The Fate of the Earth, Losing Earth is the rarest of achievements: a riveting work of dramatic history that articulates a moral framework for understanding how we got here, and how we must go forward.



OASIS EARTH: PLANET IN PERIL: OUR LAST BEST CHANCE TO SAVE OUR WORLD

By Richard Steiner

Published by Cirque Press, Anchorage, March 2020.

The book was published to mark the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and is dedicated to Earth Day 50 and the World Environment Day. The book uses many images from UNEP, NASA, Greenpeace and others. It is an entirely non-profit, educational enterprise, and the project intends to motivate environmental change.

As the book declares, "Science confirms that humanity is currently destroying the biosphere of Earth, ourselves and our future with it."

"We know the causes, the consequences, and the solutions to the crisis, but our efforts to date have not been enough to reverse global environmental collapse. On this crisis, we are out of time – almost.

"This decade, 2020-2030, is our last best chance to secure a sustainable future."



UPCOMING EVENTS

Within the next quarter, HOMEf will be hosting or co-hosting some thought-provoking, informative and educative events:

- Biosafety Conference and Rally
- School of Ecology / International Convergence (Freshwater + Marine Protected Areas (MPA))
- Community Dialogue/Monitoring training
- Rights Livelihood Lecture
- School of Ecology -- Climate & Power Alternatives
- School of Ecology - Blue Economy Blues + MPA
- Dialogue with Students

Want to be part of any of the event?
Regularly visit our events calendar at www.homef.org for information about upcoming events and how to participate.

Follow our social media pages.



Health_Earth



HealthEarth



homefthethinktank

On 3-6 February 2020, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) organized a capacity-building workshop with its staff, volunteers and other stakeholders at Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. The core aim of the meeting was to map out strategies for the organisation's operations in 2020 as well as how to strengthen its working relationship with key partners.

The Director, Nnimmo Bassey, in his presentation titled Decolonizing Narratives, posited that there is a need for all to be on the same page and that standing in our places is very vital in our daily activities. According to Bassey, if we do not stand up for ourselves, other people will take our places or even stand on us. Therefore, it is pertinent for us all to be more proactive and dedicated, because we are in a long-term struggle. He also posited that there is the need to change and decolonize narratives as we struggle for a total overhaul of the system. Some key points I took away include the following:

- Resist moves to destroy the environment for profit purposes and the benefit of big businesses.
- Promote the restoration of ecological justice
- Promote socio-ecological

transformation.

- Reclaim the narratives

Thus, as human rights and ecological defenders, we should be able to confront injustice because we have one Earth that must be protected. Moreover, we should also speak up against false narratives that will paint the image of the victims as those who damage our environment.

The right of Mother Earth must be safeguarded and to do this, we must equip ourselves with the necessary knowledge and tools. We are to work with communities to ensure that they stand strong in the first line of ecological defence and avoid both physical and intellectual pollution. Strategic networking and policy advocacy were also emphasised. Networking amplifies people's views and paves the way for communities and interest groups to share ideas.

Additionally, the team-building workshop was an avenue for me as an environmental monitor to interact with other comrades and also an opportunity to learn some new concepts like the Green economy, Blue economy and the Green New Deal.

TEAM BUILDING

- the Panacea for Organizational Advancement

Comrade Nkpordee B. BASIL





PHOTO BY MIDHUN GEORGE ON UNSPLASH

AHON MANGINGISDA: FISHERS RISE - A Call to Unite Fishers All Over the World

Stephen Oduware

Fishers have been the protectors and guardians of both freshwater and marine ecosystems for ages. Through local knowledge, they have been able to regulate fishing practices and contribute effectively to both local, national and international economies.

Fishers are among the most marginalized, deprived and displaced farmers around the world. They face a series of threats ranging from displacement to loss of livelihoods as a result of government policies, while the marine and freshwater ecosystems are continually being degraded by reckless mining and exploitation of natural resource offshore.

***Ahon Mangingisda is a Filipino word for
“Rise and Fisherfolks”***

In 2018, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), together with South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) and working with fishers, facilitated the formation of the FishNet Alliance, which is a network of fishers along the coast of Africa engaged in and promoting fishing in line with ecosystem limits and stands in solidarity against extractive/mining activities in water bodies - including rivers, lakes and oceans. Through the Alliance, fishers in Nigeria and some other parts of Africa have been trained to speak up in defence of their environment and livelihoods. Fishers have learnt how to (re)group and synergise to amplify their voices to save their unique environment.

In the Philippines, The Fishers Rise Up! (Ahon Mangingisda) is an initiative led by the National Federation of Small Fisherfolk Organizations in the Philippines (PAMALAKAYA). This initiative has unique campaign and advocacy tools which include a series of mass protests and educational campaigns in coastal communities, and they are largely supported by environmental defenders and climate justice groups.

A particular project that the fishers are resisting in the Bulacan Airport, in Manila Bay, 25 kilometres North of Manila is known as Aerotropolis. This is a proposed 2,500-hectare airport and airport city complex - a massive development called an 'Aerotropolis.' It is projected to be the country's most expensive infrastructure project to date and its six runways are expected to accommodate 100 million passengers per year. This development would more than triple the capacity of the existing main airport in Manila, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

With reclamation done for the project, there are possibilities of sea-level rise and the forecast of rising sea levels spells disaster for the Philippines, which is composed of more than 7,100 islands. 60% of the country's population is either directly dependent on the coastal geography for their livelihoods or living in coastal areas. There are fears that residences of about 8 million people will be



submerged at sea-level rise of 1.5 – 1.8 metres and the coastal community dwellers and fishers bear the brunt of this looming ecological disaster.

Manila Bay is home to over 20,000 fishers in Bulacan (known as one of the key biodiversity areas in the country and is home to 22 types of mangroves including Piapi, a firm type of mangrove that serves as natural wave barrier and shelter for fish) and its neighbouring towns subsisting on fishing in the bay. The project will forcibly evict hundreds of fishing families from their homes and destroy the economic value and biodiversity of the rich marine ecosystem. Based on the Coastal Resource Management Project conducted by scientist group AGHAM, 670 kilos of fish caught per year will be lost for every hectare of mangrove that will be damaged.

Big infrastructural menaces are replicated around the world and these are systematically leading to massive ocean grabs, sea grabs and other forms of grabbing of the marine environment and its ecosystems. While the fishers in the Philippines have called for a Climate Strike to halt the Aerotropolis project, it is time for fishers from around the world to work together and to join the FishNet Alliance. This alliance provides a ready platform for fishers to share capacities and stand together to defend their marine ecosystems especially against big and unnecessary infrastructure as well as against polluting extractive activities. Water is life!



DECOLONIZING NARRATIVES

- A Report on HOMEF's
Team-Building and
Annual General
Meeting 2020

By Stephen Oduware & Joyce Ebebeinwe

The team-building meeting is an annual event of Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) which brings together staff, board members, consultants, volunteers, ecological monitors, representatives of the FishNet Alliance and other partners. The gathering provides space for the review and evaluation of the deliverables of the previous year's projects and for the development of winning strategies to implement current year's projects.

Our theme for the year 2020 is Decolonizing Narratives, and it was in line with this that we held the team-building and annual general meeting on 4-6 February 2020 at Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria, which inspired and positioned us to achieve our set goals.



We strategized on how to decolonize false narratives by telling our own stories and communicating in ways that are convincing and effective and how to speak up on our ideas/ideals. We spoke to ourselves and bonded as a team, reviewing our organizational policies and work approaches. We exchanged ideas on how to dialogue and network with allies and ensure that our work is properly rooted.

HOMEF stands firm as the ecological think tank promoting the culture of ecological knowledge, re-source democracy and environmental defence and we work to support wholesome ecological and socially cohesive/inclusive communities where people live in solidarity and dignity. We work at the person, community and policy levels and as part of global movements for the recovery of dignity and for harmonious living with Mother Earth.

We promote justice and equity, action (solidarity), knowledge, dignity (respect) and recognition of people and the planet through our three thematic areas: Fossil Politics (covering issues of environmental justice, climate justice, oil, gas and solid minerals), Hunger Politics (covering issues of biosafety, biodiversity (forests), GMOs, synthetic biology and gene drives) and Ikike (which is the knowledge space for development,

sharing and contestation of ideas encompassing the Sustain-Ability Academy, School of Ecology, Community Dialogues, Conversations and Research & Publications such as policy papers, eco-Instigator (published quarterly), factsheets etc. These thematic areas are the wheels of action for the change the organization seeks.

This year's team-building and annual general meeting featured presentations on Decolonizing Narratives, Strategic Networking and Policy Advocacy, Telling our Stories, Strategies for Communicating our Narratives, and Keeping our Brand-Feeding our Website and Social Media Platforms. Representatives from the FishNet Alliance in Ibeno, Akwa Ibom State and from the Eco-Defenders Network (Ogoni Clean-up Monitors) also presented on their work within the grassroots communities.

It was strongly emphasized that our narratives should not be left to others to write or decide and that we must take full responsibility for de-constructing false narratives and re-constructing the true narratives. We must resist moves to sacrifice our environment in the guise of attracting businesses, and we must promote restorative ecological justice, demand rehabilitation in all cases,

and promote socio-ecological transformation and re-source democracy (going back to source-recognizing that resources are gifts of Nature).

We conceptualised 'Re-source Democracy' as people having a say in what happens in their environment and it is not just about resource control, but ensuring that people have a sense of ownership. We must fight colonialism and interrogate concepts such as Development/Developed/Underdevelopment/Developing, Third World/Dark Continent/Sub Sahara and the Green Economy/Blue Economy/Green New Deal.

On telling our stories, it was noted that we need to tell the African story the way we want to be seen and remembered. There are false narratives about who we are as Africans making the rounds and it is our responsibility to tell our own story - the true story. To change false narratives through our stories, we must first watch and redefine how we see ourselves to be able to project narratives of how we want to be perceived.

We considered the need for the rights of Mother Earth to be preserved and for the insurance of justice in our engagement about the environment and Nature's cycles at policy, corporate and individual levels. Communities should be equipped to protest against the oppression and pollution in their environment.

We also learned the importance of networking and advocacy and the various steps involved. It was noted that while networking is intended for joint solving of problems, resource exchange, cooperation and coordination; partnership brings together capabilities and human resources in the form of skills, experience, ideas, reach, resources etc. to tackle common problems that are often beyond the capacity of a single organization.

On strategies for communicating our narratives, we learned to communicate effectively through measures such as developing terms of reference, framing the issue of concern, identifying our audience and carefully picking the tools/medium for communication, bearing in mind who we are and what we stand for.

A key point that was made about keeping our brand and feeding our website and social media platforms was that perception drives behaviour which in-turn drives result.

Branding is how we put ourselves out and how we are perceived. Everything we do, including our project execution, should communicate in a cohesive, clear and consistent way who we are and what we do, and we have to be thematically, visually and ideologically consistent.

The team discussed a fire incidence that occurred in Iwokpom, Ibeno, Akwa-Ibom State in January 2020. Impacts on the people, especially fishers, were noted to include loss of properties, loss of livelihoods, displacement of households, and emotional, social and economic torture. The team deliberated on how to support the affected FishNet Alliance members.

Also, the team discussed current environmental trends in Rivers State. It was noted that while some of the recommendations stipulated in the report of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have already been implemented, other key ones are yet to be implemented including the provision of potable water to impacted areas such as Nsisioken Ogale in Eleme L.G.A., close to the Nigerian National Petroleum Company product pipeline where up to 8cm layer of refined oil floats on the surface of groundwater which serves the community well. Another yet-to-be-implemented recommendation as reported by the ecological monitor present at the meeting is the provision of a contaminated soil treatment center. Although the foundation for this center was laid by the former Minister of Environment, Amina Muhammed, in February 2017, it has since been abandoned.

This year's team-building and annual general meeting brought about an increased/cohesive knowledge of our organizational strategy and ignited in the team (members) the energy and enthusiasm to achieve our objectives and make maximum impact in our society.

Overall, the team-building meeting served as a preparatory event for the execution of this year's projects as individual projects were discussed and strategies were mapped out for effective implementation.

DIS- PLACED!

Text written by Babawale Obayanju
and The Images are created by Omoregie Osakpolor



Out from the sea came this low lying place called Lagos, growing from a port city to becoming the nation's economic hub. Home to well over 20million Nigerians with about 70% of them living in shacks or slums in the city's coastline and lagoons. From Makoko to Otodo Gbame to Tarkwa Bay to Oniru the list goes on. This is a place prone to and susceptible to environmental impacts due to the changing climate; rising sea levels and flooding.

Of interest in this publication is Tarkwa Bay. Ancestral home to about 4500 peoples who are mainly of Egun and Gunuvi decent whose main occupation is fish farming. It is an escape island for hardworking Lagosian to have fun and relax on weekends and festive seasons.

Located within Lagos, a three and a half hour drive from the new developing, ocean floor sand filled Eko Atlantic , a city that if critics are right pose a potential hazard and unimaginable risk to the people of Lagos and islands like Tarwa Bay.

Martin Lukacs in a Guardian report of 2014 described Eko Atlantic as a place where we can begin to see a possible future – a vision of privatized green enclaves for the ultra rich ringed by slums lacking water or electricity, in which a surplus population scramble for depleting resources and shelter to fend off the coming floods and storms. Protected by guards, guns, and an insurmountable gully – real estate prices – the rich will shield themselves from the rising tides of poverty and a sea that is literally rising. A world in which the rich and powerful exploit the global ecological crisis to widen and entrench already extreme inequalities and seal themselves off from its impacts – this is climate apartheid.

On the 21st of January 2020, slum dwellers and families in Tarkwa bay faced forced eviction one similar to that experienced in 2016 by their brothers living in Otodo Gbame when state security agents allegedly destroyed their homes. Many of them are still homeless despite a court ruling that the Lagos state government should resettle those affected by the demolition.

The Nigerian Navy was reported to have entered Tarkwa Bay community shooting into the air and commanding a swift eviction of the peoples out from their ancestral habitation. The official reason given for the eviction is that it is part of government's effort to stop the looting of nearby oil from vandalized pipeline belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). A spokesman for the operation, Commander Thomas Otuji, confirmed this and added that residents had been advised to leave since December. "We found at least 300 illegal spots and dug out pits where oil products were being tapped and sold illegally, even to neighboring countries," Otuji said.



But the big question now is, take for an example there was discovered in the house of assembly of a state, 10 corrupt members. Would a state government evict the whole house of assembly membership because 10 out of 30 members are corrupt thieves? Or would a university sack all her lectures because 300 lecturers out of 4500 lectures take bribe on a continuum from students for grades?

The ideal thing to do one would think (if the reason given by government is correct), is to fish out the culprits, arrest and prosecute them rather than give untold and unplanned hardship to all the peoples.



In a 2015 blog post by Nnimmo Bassey, he wrote that our coastal cities such as Lagos have been afflicted by the addiction to cementification. No better example could be found for the enclosure and erasure of a public beach (commons) and waterfront than the notorious example of the piece of property called Eko Atlantic. The push against the ocean, lagoon and wetlands definitely attract negative feed backs through floods, properties with early obsolescence and general loss of biodiversity. Some may be delayed, but we can be sure of a day of reckoning, he said.

But barely 5years after this report is another eviction of peoples located very close to the said new city without any consideration of the inhabitants, as to where the peoples would be resettled.

DISPLACED is an ongoing project by Omoregie Osakpolor, a documentary photographer based in Lagos and Benin City, Nigeria..(<https://omoregieosakpolor.me/>)

He began this project in late 2016 when he began documenting some daily moments in the lives of waterfront community peoples.

The project tells the story of the Egun people who are struggling to keep their identities and communities in the midst of the city called Lagos (of which they make a significant part) against the backdrop of globalization.

He is faced with these questions in the pursuit of this assignment; what happens to the peoples culture, religion and identity when they are forcefully and violently evicted from a place that they have known and called home for generations?

The project pays tribute to the resilient spirit of this people.

Culled from www.tellthatstory.com.ng

AGROECOLOGY FOR CLIMATE ACTION STAKEHOLDERS' MEETING

By Mfoniso Antia

Climate change and food availability are two major global challenges calling for urgent and drastic actions today. The government of Nigeria, like most countries, has developed adaptation and mitigation plans to curtail the impacts of climate change. This plan of action titled 'National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change for Nigeria (NASPA-CCN)' has laid down strategies and action points on adaptation and mitigation on different thematic areas including agriculture.

Knowing the effectiveness and sustainability of agroecology, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) – an umbrella network of networks and civil society organisations plans to launch a continent-wide campaign through its members and networks for the inclusion of agroecology in the climate change adaptation plans of national governments.

Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) – a member of AFSA – hosted about 17 stakeholders in an interactive session to review relevant aspects of Nigeria's NASPA-CCN.

Promoting Agroecology

The meeting was a follow-up to an earlier meeting held by the climate change working group of AFSA in Thies, Senegal, in June 2019. At that meeting, member organisations of the working group were tasked to organise a stakeholders' meeting to review each country's national adaptation plan to include the sustainable solutions to the impacts of climate change on agriculture and biodiversity – Agroecology.

At the follow-up meeting organised by HOMEF, participants expressed their expectations and remarks were made from representatives from the National Assembly, the Department of Climate Change of the Federal Ministry of Environment and by the chairman of the Cassava Growers Association, Abuja.



The representative from the National Assembly expressed the need to urgently engage and educate the lawmakers, as she said that some of them may not be aware of the implications of some of the policies and laws they make, especially with regard to the health and well-being of the people who are more directly impacted. She added that the legislators do not understand the impacts of the one-sided legislations that they make and promised to engage with as many as she can to educate them on the need to promote agroecology against the false solutions promoted by profit-driven corporations.

To get the participants abreast with the current trends in agriculture and the need for projecting and promoting agroecology as a viable solution to the impacts of climate change, two presenters had sessions tagged Climate Change and Proposed False Solutions in Agriculture and Agroecology: A viable solution to the impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture. These presentations were handled by Nnimmo Bassey and Marian Bassey Orovwuje respectively. Stakeholders worked in 2 groups to review the agreed sections on adaptation (agriculture, forest and biodiversity) of the NASPA-CCN. This was followed by a plenary session to bring together their suggestions.

The way forward

Stakeholders agreed that the overall agricultural strategy should include the adoption of agroecological practices as they are in line with Nature for both crops and livestock. This would include the diversification of livestock, the improvement of range management and the increase of cultivation techniques and breeding programs that do not depend on chemicals, pesticides or genetic modifications but,

- adopt better soil management practices
- provide early warning/meteorological forecasts and related information.
- focus on improved agroecological resource management and enhance the implementation of these strategies by building the capacity of communities for resilience.

The stakeholders emphasised the need to adopt agroecology as a viable solution to the

impacts of climate change on agriculture, forestry and biodiversity because, as they said, agroecology draws on local and traditional knowledge to ensure that agricultural production is environmentally sound, culturally sensitive, socially just and economically viable. It was also said that agroecology embodies traditional and local knowledge about soil, water, seed, and crop management as technical knowledge that should be enhanced rather than supplanted by harmful practices that depend on artificial inputs.

They added that civil society organisations (CSOs) and communities should intensify efforts in advocacy and campaigns to ensure the achievement of stated goals and act as watchdogs for the implementation of the policies.

On the whole, stakeholders emphasised that the action plan should be such that it promotes agroecological practices with the aim of conserving biodiversity, and that community needs should be integrated into development agendas, including through the promotion of alternative livelihoods.

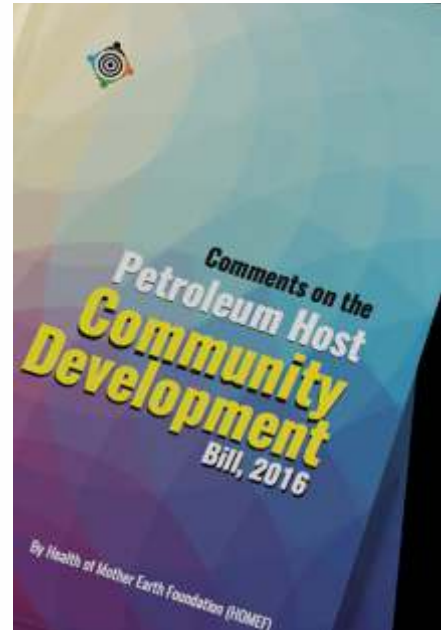
The meeting ended with the following organisations adopting the recommended adjustments/resolutions:

- Health of Mother Earth Foundation
- Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa
- FCT Cassava Growers Association
- BFA Food and Health
- Climate Energy Remediation Society
- Urban-Rural Environmental Defenders
- Daylight Network
- Nigerian Women Agro-Allied Farmers
- Association of Cashew Growers



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- To Mint an Illusion
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- Community Dialogue Guide (Forest)
- Community Dialogue Guide (Fishery)
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- Oil Power and a Sign of Hope by Klaus Stieglitz and Sabine Pamperrien
- Oil Politics: Echoes of Ecological war by Nnimmo Bassey
- Living in Fear by Juan Lopez
- Re-source Democracy
- Beyond Oil - Reimagining Development in Niger Delta Community
- Guide to Environmental Monitoring and Reporting
- Community Dialogue Guide on Food and Farming Systems



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



LOOKING TO HELP?

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



volunteers@homef.org

