

eco~

ISSUE #35 - MARCH 2022

# INSTIGATOR

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF HEALTH OF MOTHER EARTH FOUNDATION



Nembe Oil Disaster  
Must Catalyze a  
New Paradigm of Oil  
Responsibility in Nigeria

Propelling the  
Transition: A Report  
on HOMEF's Team  
Building

State of the Oceans:  
Gulf of Guinea

### Editorial Team

Nnimmo Bassey  
Nduka Otiono  
Cadmus Atake-Enade  
Joyce Brown  
Stephen Oduware  
Mfoniso Antia  
Magdalene Idiang  
Kome Odhomor  
Jasper Koikoibo

### Guest Copyeditor

Ogechi Cookey

### Administration

Dotun Davids Olatundun  
Elvis Omorogbe  
Kelechi Okoede  
Mabel Obaseki  
Cletus Ita-Chot

### Layout

Babawale Obayanju (Owales)

### Cover Design

Babawale Obayanju (Owales)

### Circulation

Shehu Akowe

### PUBLISHED BY

Health of Mother Earth Foundation,

30 19th Street, off Ugbowo-Lagos  
Road, Benin City 300212, Nigeria  
P.O. Box 1057 Ugbowo, Benin City,  
Nigeria

Tel: +2348173706095

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

### CONTACT INFO

All mails, inquiries and articles should be sent to **editor@homef.org** or **home@homef.org**

### Advisory Board

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

**Chris Allan (USA)** – Environmental health campaigner and philanthropy activist

**Akinbode Oluwafemi (Nigeria)** – Environmental justice campaigner

**Siziwe Khanyile (South Africa)** – Environmental justice campaigner

**George B.K. Awudi (Ghana)** – Climate justice campaigner

**Evelyn Nkanga (Nigeria)** – Environmental justice campaigner

**Esperanza Martinez (Ecuador)** – Environmental justice/Political ecologist

**Pablo Solon (Bolivia)** – Climate justice campaigner, diplomat and movement builder

**Liz Hosken (UK)** – Mother Earth rights advocate

**Lim Li Ching (Malaysia)** – Agroecologist and rights advocate

**Mariann Bassey Orovwuje (Nigeria)** – Food sovereignty campaigner

**Kwami Kpondzo (Togo)** – Environmental justice campaigner

FOLLOW US ON :



@EcoHomef

## Contents

Home Run 02

### Articles & Reports

Nembe Oil Disaster Must  
Catalyze a New Paradigm  
of Oil Responsibility in Nigeria 03

Propelling the Transition: A  
Report on HOMEf's Team  
Building 07

Trinity Spirit: The Tale of  
Pollution and Geezerhood 11

### Poetry

By Me We Spoke 14

### Articles & Reports

A Diagnostic Dialogue in  
Iwherekan 16

State of the Oceans: Gulf of  
Guinea 19

### Poetry

Regalia to Rags 24

### Articles & Reports

Nigeria Can No Longer  
Afford a Waste Economy 27

Learning from the  
Wise 28

Food Systems: The  
Corporate Capture 32

### Poetry

Dis-eased 36

### Articles & Reports

HOMEF's Reflections on  
COP26 37

The Cooking Pot for...  
Africa is Hotter! 42

The Team, The Fisherman  
and Me 45

**Books You Should Read 47**

### Upcoming Activities

*This edition of Eco-Instigator is supported by Ford Foundation*

*This publication or parts of it can be used for free as long as the user provides a proper reference to the publication. The content of the publication is the sole responsibility of HOMEf and does not necessarily reflect the position of Ford Foundation*

# Home Run



Welcome to the very first (for the year 2022) edition of our quarterly environmental magazine – the eco-Instigator.

This is the 35th of the series and as usual, we serve you educative, inspiring and compelling articles, reports, poems and a carefully selected list of books you should read.

COP26 has come and gone, what remains is the fact that while the COP dithers the global heating continues at a rapid pace. Despite public outcry for drastic emission cuts and the need to phase out fossil fuel exploration and exploitation, world leaders only agreed to and announced a phasing down of coal.

We believe in acquiring Earth wisdom through learning! In this edition, we also bring you excerpts from the first intergenerational dialogue (in a series of intergenerational dialogues to be conducted) tagged Learning from the Wise!

As you read this edition, remember to drop us a line or share feedback, stories, articles, poem, photos at [editor@homef.org](mailto:editor@homef.org). We look forward to hearing from you.

Until Victory!  
*Nnimmo Bassey*





## **Nembe Oil Disaster Must Catalyze a New Paradigm of Oil Responsibility in Nigeria**

Richard Steiner, Professor

The recent catastrophic oil and gas blowout at Nembe, Bayelsa State, again tragically highlights the continuing failures of oil management in Nigeria. The Nembe blowout continued unchecked from Nov. 1 to Dec. 8, 2021 releasing (by my estimation) a minimum of 500,000 barrels to one million barrels of toxic hydrocarbons (oil and gas) into the sensitive coastal mangrove ecosystem. Even by world standards, this was one of the largest oil and gas blowouts in history.

The Nembe disaster highlights the continued failure of Nigeria's Federal Government (FG) and oil industry to ensure the safety and integrity of oil and gas operations in Nigeria. Aiteo and its joint venture partner, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), are required by Nigerian law to: (1) maintain their oil infrastructure to global best practice standards, in safe and secure operating condition;

- (2) be able to promptly detect and respond to any pollution release, such as a well-head blowout;
- (3) promptly stop a release;
- (4) promptly commence an effective oil spill cleanup; and
- (5) promptly initiate a scientifically credible environmental damage assessment.

The parties responsible for the Nembe blowout failed all of these legal requirements. Now, seeking to avoid financial liability for their negligence, Aiteo and FG are blaming the blowout on sabotage while presenting no evidence in support of such a claim.

The Responsible Parties did not pay heed to earlier recommendations that they secure the failed wellhead in a rigorous chain-of-custody evidentiary process to prevent evidence tampering, and then subject the evidence to independent forensic assessment by independent experts.. Instead, they did what they always do – blame others in order to avoid responsibility or liability. But, even if the Nembe spill had been caused by sabotage (which remains unproven), the government and oil industry have, under Nigerian law, a duty of care to ensure the safety and integrity of oil operations and to prevent such third-party damage. The government and Aiteo obviously failed on this account.

-Clearly, both Aiteo and NNPC were negligent as they failed to prevent and promptly respond to the Nembe spill. Thus, they should be held fully liable under Nigerian law for all damages. It is high time such unconscionable corporate and governmental behaviour ended. The Nembe spill disaster must be used to usher in a new paradigm for oil responsibility in Nigeria.

The 30,000 square mile Niger Delta -- including rich coastal waters, islands, mangroves swamps, and rainforests -- was once one of the most productive and diverse ecological habitats on Earth.

Today, after almost 70 years of oil extraction, the region's environment and society are devastated -- a textbook example of the "oil curse."

In 2006, our team of scientists at Oasis Earth conducting the first oil environmental damage assessment in the Niger Delta, concluded that the Delta is the most severely oil-damaged environment in the world. In addition to the thousands of barrels of oil spilled annually, the scientists found out that oil companies' operations have caused extensive habitat degradation emanating from road building, forest clearing, dredging and filling, thousands of miles of pipelines, and chronic pollution from gas flaring and drilling wastes.

Oil in the Niger Delta has fueled a dangerous mix of environmental devastation, poverty, human rights abuse, violence, corporate greed and exploitation, epidemic corruption, massive oil theft, repression, anger and despair.

Despite hundreds of billions of dollars earned from Niger Delta's oil, millions of residents in the region, who are mostly subsistence fishermen and farmers, remain some of the most impoverished people in the world. Due to decades of government and industry neglect, these fine people continue to eat oil-contaminated food, drink toxic water,

**“oil companies’ operations have caused extensive habitat degradation emanating from road building, forest clearing, dredging and filling, thousands of miles of pipelines, and chronic pollution from gas flaring and drilling wastes”.**

breathe polluted air, and are chronically ill, with an average life span less than 50 years.

The business model for oil companies in the Niger Delta has been simple: produce as much oil as quickly and as cheaply as possible; exploit government oversight; cut corners and costs on safety, monitoring, and maintenance; ignore or blame others for oil theft, spills and violence; pay bribes to government, military and police when needed; continue making huge profits as long as possible; and then leave. And as the federal government is a joint venture owner of oil projects and relies on oil for much of its revenue, the government habitually turns a blind-eye to the ongoing crisis. Tragically, this is exactly what has happened so far at Nembe. Clearly, the people of the Niger Delta deserve better from their federal government.

The 2006 scientific team estimated the financial damage from oil in the Niger Delta to be in tens of billions US Dollars (\$). The team recommended full compensation, an immediate upgrade of all oil infrastructure to global best practice standards, an end to gas flaring, and a comprehensive Delta-wide cleanup and restoration programme. Subsequent assessments, including by the UN in 2011, confirmed the team's conclusions and recommendations. Unfortunately, little progress has been made since. After years of delay, the Nigerian government finally initiated HYPREP in Ogoniland. But the project will only address a portion of the impacted Delta ecosystem, and has reportedly had significant delays and problems.

This slow, partial, incremental approach will not solve the larger crisis, and local people cannot afford to wait decades for justice and restoration. Until all claims and grievances across the entire region are equitably resolved, the oil infrastructure upgraded to highest international standards

, and the ecosystem cleaned up and fully restored, there will likely be no peace or sustainable development in the Niger Delta.

As the Nigerian FG remains unwilling to initiate a comprehensive restoration effort on its own, the UN should be asked to convene an independent Niger Delta Restoration Commission, vested with the full legal authority to resolve the crisis. The Niger Delta Restoration Commission should function as an arbitration body, with similar authority to South Africa's post-apartheid "Truth and Reconciliation Commission." The team proposed this for Nigeria over a decade ago, but the UN deferred to the Nigerian FG, who ignored the suggestion.

Given the recent disaster at Nembe, and the continuing avoidance of responsibility by the Nigerian government and oil industry, it seems an appropriate time to convene the proposed Niger Delta Restoration Commission to implement a comprehensive restoration initiative across the entire Delta, with the following core elements (most of which are already required by Nigerian law):

1. Require the industry to upgrade its oil infrastructure to international best available and safest technology standards to prevent future spills. Substandard infrastructure must be removed or replaced; waste dumping, gas flaring, and illegal bunkering must end; and if a company cannot meet this global best practice standard, its permit to operate must be immediately revoked.
2. Cleanup and re-mediate all oil spill areas.
3. Restore all ecological and socio-economic systems injured by the oil industry, including fisheries, hydrology, agriculture, if a company cannot meet this global best practice standard, its permit to operate must be immediately revoked.





freshwater, and other socio-ecological systems to the maximum extent possible. Substandard infrastructure must be removed or replaced; waste dumping, gas flaring, and illegal bunkering must end; and

4. Compensate the people of the Delta in a fair and just manner for all injury caused by the oil industry.

5. Establish an equitable oil revenue sharing regime for all people in the Delta.

6. Expedite judicial proceedings to hold those guilty of corruption or violence accountable, restoring the rule of law.

7. Enact improvements in governance and corporate behaviour to secure future environmental and social integrity of the Niger Delta.

Although much of this is already required in Nigerian law, these requirements are seldom, if ever, enforced by FG. The proposed Niger Delta Restoration Commission will need tens of billions of dollars, which should be paid by all oil companies in the Delta, and the Nigerian FG

By comparison, BP paid over \$65 billion (USD) for its 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico. Oil spill damage in the Niger Delta is more severe and has persisted for many decades, but oil companies in Nigeria have paid only a small fraction of this amount.

This is clearly unjust, and must be remedied. The oil companies in Nigeria have a legal and ethical responsibility to fix their mess, and they have the money to do so. It is now up to the Nigerian government (and the UN) to move this comprehensive restoration process forward. If they do, then hopefully by 2030 the Niger Delta can be restored to the vibrant ecosystem and sustainable, peaceful society it had been before oil was discovered there in 1956. And that would indeed be an historic achievement for all involved.

*Richard Steiner is an international oil spill expert who for decades has worked on preventing and assessing environmental damage from oil spills around the world, including the Niger Delta. He was a professor of marine conservation at the University of Alaska, and founder/director of Oasis Earth, in Anchorage Alaska ([www.oasis-earth.com](http://www.oasis-earth.com)). He serves as the Technical Advisor to the Ijaw Diaspora Council.*

# PROPELLING THE TRANSITION:

## A REPORT ON HOMEF'S TEAM BUILDING

From 7th to 11th of February 2022, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) and her partners gathered in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State to commence a 5-day team building programme tagged “Propelling the Transition”. Aimed at building trust, wellbeing and focus within the team, the programme was a way for the HOMEF team, as a collective, to plan and gain direction for the future, discuss strategy and target areas, and map out activities for the next annual run in the fight for a sustainable future.

The team bonding event was focused on five key areas: reflecting on the past, self-discovery, team bonding, learning new methods, and projects for 2022.

### **REFLECTING ON THE PAST**

Poised to begin planning for the new year, it was only imperative to reflect on the past. On Day 1, using a ten-year benchmark, all participants shared changes that they have noticed in themselves, the society, environment and in the fight for environmental justice and food sovereignty.

Participants also shared what they have achieved individually and collectively in their work with HOMEF. Some of the achievements included: sparking new conversations and sustaining existing ones, increased capacity building, more manpower, structural and staff expansion, improved physical workspace, reaching more young people, improvements in internal communication mechanics, local and international recognition, increased media visibility, more influence on policies and policymakers.





## SELF-DISCOVERY

During the event, team members engaged in many activities targeted at the rediscovery of self. The first was a game where participants answered multiple choice questions that explored their career and work-life preferences. This was targeted at helping the team, as individuals and as a group, understand each other better.

In one session, team members took a personality test on [www.16personalities.com](http://www.16personalities.com). The results from the test were shared. Consequently, team members were grouped into: mediator, consul, entertainer, advocate, defender, commander, protagonist, adventurer, architect, and campaigner personality types. Individual team roles were also identified by team members using the Belbin chart. The roles included:

resource investigator, plant shaper, team worker, monitor evaluator, implementer, co-ordinator, specialist and completer finisher.

The different project leads were put on the spot by Mariann Bassey-Or-ovwuje, a member of the HOMEF advisory board, to be questioned by other team members on matters related to their desks. This activity was called “speed dating” and team members were “learning all they could about their dates”.

The discussion on spiritual, physical, financial, environmental and social wellness; emotional intelligence and work-life balance was led by Nnimmo Bassey. He stressed how important it was for every team member to strive to stay healthy in all ramifications, neglecting no aspect of their being.

## TEAM BONDING

Effective communication is a consistent feature of a healthy working relationship amongst co-workers. As a result, team bonding exercises started with trying to build effective communication amongst team members. These activities, in the form of games, were targeted at showing participants the importance of communicating effectively and accurately, verbal and non-verbal cues, synergy, division of labour, asking for feedback and confirming relayed information to minimize mistakes. There was also a visit to Ibeno Beach where team members played games, danced and spent time in each other's company in a serene and quiet, informal environment.

## LEARNING NEW METHODS

The first day of the team bonding event had HOMEf's director, Nnimmo Bassey, discussing the importance of seed bearing, emphasizing that HOMEf was doing important work that needs to be cultivated, nurtured and spread, and the team has been entrusted with the responsibility of making that happen.

There were multiple discussions on HOMEf's strategy covering an evaluation and reinstatement of the philosophy of HOMEf and the spaces the team needs to watch out for. The context of change was discussed and participants brainstormed how they could organise to respond to these changes. Together the issues that HOMEf as an organisation confronts were discussed with the aim of harvesting the best strategies for action. These issues included: mergers by big corporations who promote GMOs or do not care about the rights of Mother Earth and indigenous peoples, the NGO bill, the anti-social media bill, the dynamics of divestment,

tumultuous media relations and the new pandemic realities. The solutions included: defining our terms, owning them and being bold about it; building grass-roots movements to respond to mergers, unification in the CSOs' space, continuous media training and imbibing good, corporate governance culture.

Learning about content development and distribution is vital to HOMEf's work as a knowledge based organisation. Oto Bassey joined the meeting via Zoom and took the team through his presentation on content development. He stressed the importance of understanding target audience and aligning content with the brand voice and the relevant audience. He further emphasised the importance of a weekly schedule and focusing content on thematic areas so as not to dilute the brand's message.

There was also a virtual presentation on proposal planning, implementation and reporting by Akinbode Oluwafemi, Executive Director of CAPPA.





## 2022 PROJECTS

To discuss projects, strategies and set the tone for implementation, HOMEF was joined by her partners.

The project areas are focused on advocacy, training, dialogues, research, capacity building, ecosystem monitoring, eco-defending and -instigation, hosting workshops and Schools of Ecology (SoEs), organising press conferences, creating toolkits and training guides, producing podcasts and audio-visual documentaries.

The media desk took the team through their plans and concepts for the year 2022 especially concerning mainstream

media, training and engagements of the external media on HOMEF's ideals.

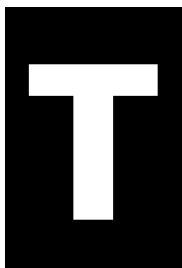
Implementation strategies for various projects were developed and the meeting ended on an inspiring note – with the need to do more!





# TRINITY SPIRIT: THE TALE OF POLLUTION AND GEEZERHOOD

Murphy Akiri and Stephen Oduware



he Trinity Spirit is a 46 years old Floating, Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel operated by Shebah Exploration and Production Company. The vessel is situated in Oil Mining Lease (OML)

108, in the Ukpokiti Terminal located on the western edge of the Niger Delta in shallow water offshore Nigeria, very near the Chevron's Meren field.

In 2004, Shebah Exploration & Production Company Ltd (SEPCOL) became the Technical Operator of the block upon acquisition of all 40% of ConocoPhillips' equity interest in OML 108. CAMAC Limited in partnership with EXPRESS Petroleum that was initially awarded the block in 1990 as Oil Prospecting Lease [OPL] 74 under indigenous concession terms, own the remaining 60% equity interest on OML 108.

Trinity Spirit is reported to have capacity to store up to 2 million barrels of oil and a processing capacity of up to 22,000 barrels of oil daily. Data from Nigeria's oil ministry, reveal that the Ukpokiti field has not been producing for a number of years now. It is reported to have stopped actual production since 2019 and may have been used for storage purposes only. Its output was on a steady decline from around 7,000 b/d some five years ago to zero in 2020 and 2021. Sources report that the producer battled cash flow problems and heavy debts, which curtailed its plans to raise output to 50,000 b/d in 2019.

## THE TALE OF POLLUTION

In the early hours of Wednesday, 2nd February 2022, Trinity Spirit caught fire, releasing its content into the environment while the vessel partially submerged.

The following day, SEPCOL, Technical Operator of the field, in a statement announced the incident thus: "SEPCOL in receivership, hereby announces the unfortunate incident of a fire that engulfed our offshore facility, the FPSO Trinity Spirit located at the Ukpokiti Terminal, following an explosion during the early hours of Wednesday, 2nd of February 2022.

We have duly notified all relevant authorities and we appeal to the members of the public to stay away from the area while our crisis management team continues to monitor the situation and update all stakeholders with new information as the investigation evolves."

However, satellite images from the location of the incidence show that there is not much going on around the area of the incident. The expectation was that the area would have been cordoned off and the spill cleaned up immediately to prevent further spread by the water tide.

There are images of the spill spreading and there are fears that when the spills get to the shore, it may take a longer time to cleanup. The Minister of State for Environment, Sharon Ikeazor had said that a joint investigation visit (JIV) was made to the incident area, as well as the FPSO on Saturday, 5th February 2022. She said the JIV was done by NOSDRA, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), the Ondo State Ministry of Environment, Representatives of Communities proximate to the area and staff of Shebah Exploration and Production Company Limited. She admitted that while the cause of the fire incident was yet to be fully determined, the environment around the FPSO was slightly covered by the sheen and emulsified oil.



There are also concerns from other industry players. In an interview, a senior fossil fuel energy analyst expressed fears over the age of the vessel. He noted that “the Trinity Spirit was at the end of its lifespan, which is a cause for concern for other similar vessels and operations in Nigerian waters as they operate in a region with minimal regulations”.

The series of oil spills, blowouts/well-head and platform fires call for serious concern and has further exposed regulatory loopholes in the oil and gas sector. Who is responsible for issuing of operational licences? Who inspects, runs and issues facility integrity certificates? Who determines the lifespan of FPSO vessels (or even other facilities) in Nigeria?

Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) has a corps of Ecological Defenders (EcoDefender) trained and involved in monitoring and reporting environmental incidences. On Friday, 4th February 2022, an Ecodefender visited the Ukpokiti field but was unable to gain access to OML 108 for security reasons.

## TESTIMONY FROM THE FIELD

*A fisher, Temilorun Ajimisogbe from Awoye community some distance away from the Ukpokiti field narrated (in an interview): In the early hours of Wednesday, 2nd February 2022, I was already sleeping when the big bang was heard and everywhere shook, we all thought it was war coming because no one had answers; this was around 12:30am and everyone was asking what happened? Later in the morning we got the news that*

*EXPRESS exploded. We call it Express in the community!*

The major occupation in Awoye community is fishing and trading. Ajimisogbe who has been a fisher since his youth, lamented that there are many oil platforms in the sea and many pipes have been dug under the community (and other neighboring communities) connecting these platforms. So, whenever there is a problem in these platforms in the sea, the communities are affected. Community people and the environment continue to bear the actual costs of impacts from oil and gas related spills and fire.

In addition to the issue of oil pollution, Ajimisogbe also complained about ocean encroachment. He stated that in years past, one could see the community from the closest oil platform but now the sea has taken over parts of the community with over 3000 houses submerged and many people left homeless.

A question to which an answer is urgently required is *How many obsolete oil facilities such as Trinity Spirit do we have in Nigeria?*

In the interest of the wellbeing of community people and the environment, there should be a proper audit of oil and gas installations across Nigeria with the aim of knowing their age (lifespan), integrity and present condition.

We call for an urgent health and environmental audit of the entire Niger Delta.

*The time to cleanup Niger Delta is now!*



# BY ME WE SPOKE

Nnimmo Bassey

## **STOLEN**

Across swollen waters  
To you, thousands of us were  
Pieces of wood, tusks, brass  
To tickle the fancies of heartless merchants and en-  
ablers of violence  
But you were wrong

A heist of brass and wood and ivory  
Murderous desecration of our revered palace  
Over a hundred years and you are yet to nod in sleep  
Slowly your crimes sought you out.

Secured in mounted cells I wonder  
What you learn when you grope my bloodless frame  
In contrived musings in citadels of stealing  
Knowing you cannot know me on the altars of twisted  
history?

## **GAWKING**

Dumbstruck  
Awestruck at the loving work of ancestral masters  
You derided them  
Vilified cultures of justice  
Burnt, smashed, and plundered all night  
Setting off before cockcrow  
You couldn't imagine that akukor  
Will still crow years after entombment in your  
armoured cases

## **GRABBED**

Thousands of market days ago  
I was denied regal splendour of ethical multiversities  
In the ancient kingdom where thieving was strictly  
outlawed  
Who would dare the gods to be a thief?  
Wrapped in the cloak of darkness,  
Hopeless but trying to escape the spite  
Of a society run on honour and love  
To you everything was game  
To you everything is game  
With power you assumed the right to plunder  
With might your imperial right to grab  
Obnoxious culture grab!

## **DRAPED**

In awful sheets  
Hidden below bloodied boards  
Swung across stormy waves  
The raucous joy of receiving stolen blood  
Shocked me for over 120 years until  
I heard the shout Bring Home our Life!

Give me freedom  
Don't loan me to my home  
Freedom!  
Let me escape those dreadful eyes  
Those stares and whispering pierced my soul  
The sheer wildness and aloofness of false connois-  
seurs  
Scheming wretched plans to disembowel my essence  
My worth isn't on being on your pedestal  
Send me home!

Ancestors did not cast me to be a spectacle  
By me we spoke to generations long born and gone  
And generations yet unborn  
The flashing of the eben  
The slashing of the ada  
All spoke volumes as we celebrated life and cautioned  
against evil  
Send me home!

Oh, that I may be touched by blessed clay  
Oh, that my king may look at me and hear  
The rhythms of the past  
And warn against the madness of plunder



The name, Iwherekan, may not sound strange to those who are familiar with the murky waters of environmental litigation in Nigeria. Iwherekan is the Delta State Community in the landmark case of *Jonah Gbemre v. Shell & Ors.* In that case, the Federal High Court, Benin Division, held for the first time that the rights to life and dignity inevitably included the right to a healthy, pollution free environment; and ruled that the respondents stop gas flaring which had been going on in the community for decades. Sixteen years after the ruling, the respondents are yet to comply and are not diligently pursuing an appeal. Shell has since divested and sold off its assets to a new company, ND Western which now operates in the community.

On 25th February 2022, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) visited the Delta State oil producing community for Community Diagnostic Dialogue. The community people - men and women, chiefs and other community leaders, old and young - swarmed into the town hall at the arrival of the HOMEF Team, led by Nnimmo Bassey, the Executive Director.

# A Diagnostic Dialogue in Iwherekan

Jonah Gbemre gave the opening remarks, in the native dialect, Urhobo and welcomed the HOMEF team in a way that is symbolic to his people. Mr. Gbemre gave a brief on the community, mentioning its various quarters and natural resources, as well as introduced the chiefs, elders, members of the governing body and women groups.

Ken Henshaw made a presentation on the research that was carried out in the community before the dialogue. He noted that loss of the livelihood and environmental pollution were common to all oil field communities.

“Presently, multinationals are divesting and selling off their assets in the host communities without first restoring the damage they had done. Our research shows that, since the discovery of oil here, gas is being flared here, and that is poisonous in so many dimensions” Comrade Henshaw stated. According to him, “The big question is who would be liable since the ownership has changed hands?” Mr. Henshaw also made reference to the anti-people provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). He pointed, partic-

ularly, to the fact that according to the PIA provisions, the oil companies would be the one to constitute the Boards of Trustees that would administer the 3% contribution for community development purposes.

Moreover, the Act criminalises host communities, by holding the entire community liable in advance for any acts of sabotage on oil facilities.

One of the chiefs, speaking on behalf of other chiefs present, expressed dissatisfaction with the deplorable state of the community. “Our youths are skilled, but despite the presence of the oil companies, they are largely unemployed.

Our farming families are also labouring in vain as they cannot reap what they sow because of the effects of the oil exploitation in the community. And the air has become dirtier and thicker; if you wash white clothes and put them out in the sun; you will have yourself black clothes” The chief lamented

Henshaw, who is a partner of HOMEF, said that there was need to document the environmental losses of Iwherekan community. To achieve this, the participants were grouped into two for the



purpose of interactions and extraction of their first-hand experiences regarding their environmental losses and damage.

Members of HOMEf team, Stephen Oduware and Kentebe Ebiaridor guided the respective groups using HOMEf's community dialogue manual. The people participated fully and enthusiastically, revealing various losses that they had taken note of since the beginning of oil exploitation in the community. They included loss of economic trees like palm trees, coconut tree, bitter kola, scarcity of fishes in the river amidst a totally degraded environment and livelihood stress.

After the intense interactions, the participants re-assembled. The community people then resolved as follows:

1. that they would henceforth monitor the environment critically;
2. that they would work to hold Shell/ND Western responsible;
3. that they would select people from their community to be trained by HOMEf on environmental monitoring; and
4. that they would collaborate with and work more closely with HOMEf.

The Director of HOMEf, Nnimmo Bassey thanked the chiefs and townspeople for their patience and indulgence during the Dialogue. The chiefs gave their blessings.



PHOTO BY Ivan-Bandura / unsplash



# State of the Oceans: Gulf of Guinea

The Gulf of Guinea refers to all the countries that share the coastline consisting of Bight of Benin and Bight of Bonny, namely; Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon,

The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, São Tomé Príncipe, Sierra Leone and Togo. Measuring about 2.35 million km<sup>2</sup>, the Gulf is blessed with diverse resources, thus, attracting exploitative actions in mining, forestry, fisheries, and the oil sector.

On 22nd February 2022, an array of pro-environment Nigerians convened at the Conference Hall of Habitat Hotel in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria for a Workshop on the State of the Ocean/Gulf of Guinea.

The Gulf of Guinea refers to all the countries that share the coastline consisting of Bight of Benin and Bight of Bonny, namely; Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon,

The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, São Tomé Príncipe, Sierra Leone and Togo. Measuring about 2.35 million km<sup>2</sup>, the Gulf is blessed with diverse resources, thus, attracting exploitative actions in mining, forestry, fisheries, and the oil sector.

On 22nd February 2022, an array of pro-environment Nigerians convened at the Conference Hall of Habitat Hotel in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria for a Workshop on the State of the Ocean/Gulf of Guinea.

The Gulf of Guinea refers to all the countries that share the coastline consisting of Bight of Benin and Bight of Bonny, namely; Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon,

The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, São Tomé Príncipe, Sierra Leone and Togo. Measuring about 2.35 million km<sup>2</sup>, the Gulf is blessed with diverse resources, thus, attracting exploitative actions in mining, forestry, fisheries, and the oil sector.

On 22nd February 2022, an array of pro-environment Nigerians convened at the Conference Hall of Habitat Hotel in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria for a Workshop on the State of the Ocean/Gulf of Guinea.

The event, was organised as part of activities under FishNet Alliance and the FishNotOil campaign. The purpose was to familiarise participants with the Global Oceans Hub for Human Rights (Africa) now "Platform for Oceans and Human Rights".

It began with self-introductions by attendees from communities around Port Harcourt and elsewhere in Rivers State and its environs. Stephen Oduware, HOMEf's Alliances/Networks project lead, gave a brief preface on the FishNet Alliance and their work, explaining that the Alliance stands in solidarity with and advocates for respect of the rights and dignity of fisher folks. He stated that FishNet is an organisation that believes in justice for the environment.

He also spoke about FishNotOil campaign, stressing that the campaign is geared towards the promotion of the fishing culture as against the culture of dependence on oil.

The Workshop featured incisive presentations from eminent persons in the intersects of environment, scholarship and activism. These persons are Chief Nengi James, who is the Vice Chair of the Ijaw National Congress (INC), Professor Fidelis Allen of the University of Port Harcourt and Nnimmo Bassey, the Director of HOMEf.

Chief Nengi James, who joined virtually presented on the Oceanification of the Niger Delta illustrating how it is currently ravaging communities such as Odiama, Koluama, Bonny, Sangana and other coastline towns in the Niger Delta.

According to him, oceanification is the landward expansion of the ocean and consequent encroachment of the ocean on natural land boundaries due in part, to the economic and exploratory activities of the multinational corporations in the Gulf of Guinea. He reported that, even as he was speaking, over 20 trailers were cutting and carting away mangroves trees (known for protecting the shorelines from erosions and storms amongst other functions) in the Nembe/Brass area. He decried the situation because mangroves are multifunctional. They serve both aesthetic and as non-aesthetic functions like protection of the shoreline from washing away and are home for breeding to diverse aquatic life.

He exposed the socio-economic and cultural threats which these activities pose to coastline communities, including the fact that communities are slowly losing ancestral lands, and graves where their ancestors' bones once rested with some being swallowed in the ocean. With oceanification steadily re-adjusting ocean/land boundaries, land disputes are arising among community members, thereby, threatening their peaceful co-existence Chief James explained.

The Chief also stated that the incidence of oceanification is akin to the more frequently discussed desertification but worse than it because, whereas in desertification only the vegetation is lost, in oceanification both the vegetation and the land is lost. He reminded that what is happening in the Ocean is affecting aquatic lives in the rivers. He said that the issue was such a great one and should be on the table of global discussions, as it requires global action. When asked what temporary measures may be employed while waiting for action on a global scale, the INC leader responded-“What we can do presently is to intensify advocacy on the issues and press for them to be addressed on a global scale.”

Professor Fidelis Allen spoke on the State of Environmental and Resources Governance in the Gulf of Guinea. The Professor made it clear during his presentation that the foremost question, in a discourse of environmental resources governance in the Gulf, is that of development and whose development. Explaining, he stated that whenever there was a critique, it unavoidably ended up revolving around the false models of development and the victimhood of such models. He explained that, while the Gulf is rich in many other resources, oil has become the “common denominator” of all the countries in the Gulf as the global quest for energy security has reconfigured the economies of those countries. Consequently, environmental resource governance in the re-configured

## **“What we can do presently is to intensify advocacy on the issues and press for them to be addressed on a global scale”**

economies have excluded local communities and

indigenous people - this ought not to be so, he condemned.

He posited that the crucial issue has been that of the legitimate involvement of oil companies, government and illegal refiners of oil without endangering the integrity of other resources in the region such as mangroves, air, rivers, soil, creeks, and forests.

The activist-academic also noted the sad reality that, in many countries in the Gulf, oil has become conceptualised as a national security issue because of the overwhelming slide into the oil economy, so much so that countries think that without oil, they will die. He reminded participants of the sad fact that, although oil exportation in Nigeria began in 1957, it took the government so long to formulate laws on environmental protection. Presently, the pressing issue is the lack of full enforcement of the extant regulations due to lack of political will.

Professor Allen concluded by stating that the continuous reliance on oil as a key source of national revenue and foreign exchange by Nigeria and the rest of the



countries in the Gulf of Guinea means that other environmental resources will be at the risk of degradation. Rejecting the false notion that countries cannot do without oil, he stated bluntly that, on the contrary, “When you lose the ecosystems, even though you have all the money, you have lost everything. Was the Earth created to be destroyed by us? Something is fundamentally wrong with us!” he decried.

“When is it going to be put to an end, and who is going to do it?” he asked, rhetorically. When asked what is the way out, and what the people could do in the circumstances, the Professor responded ,thus, “There is need for a more radical civil society that is pro-environment and pro-people - an ideologically driven civil ociety that will take up these issues with the government.”

In a similar vein, he endeared that the pro-fisher folk network should take the legal route to challenge arbitrary acts and governmental policies threatening our environment and culture of fishing, and carry out knowledge based awareness creation. When asked what could be done to change the tendency of people in power to regard civil ociety as the enemy rather than a partner in nation building, the Professor said that it had been so for as long as there have been unscrupulous elements in power and it may remain so for

**“human rights,  
social equity,  
and climate  
justice must  
be an integral  
part of the Blue  
Economy”**

as long as they remain in power.

The Director of HOMEF and Alternate Nobel Prize Laureate, Nnimmo Bassey, introduced the Global Oceans Hub for Human Rights Africa, its principles, how to key in on it, and who can be partners. The Global Oceans Hub for Human Rights, according to him, is a global center of excellence and a “Think and Do” association. It is a go-to source and authoritative voice for social issues in the world’s Oceans, working closely with and forging strategic partnerships with other key actors and initiatives in the Blue Economy.

The Hub is initiated by The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights and the Institute for Human Rights and Business, in alliance with the Bergen Chamber of Commerce.

In his presentation, Nnimmo Bassey noted that the High Level Ocean Panel for a Sustainable Oceans Economy, co-chaired by Prime Minster Solberg, has asserted that, to secure a sustainable ocean economy that meets the needs of current and future generations, we must put people at the centre and find ways to more fairly share the benefits associated with the development of ocean industries.

According to the director, “The Panel has made it clear that human rights, social equity, and climate justice must be an integral part of the Blue Economy. Companies in ocean industries are facing increasing demands from governments, consumers, workers and communities to demonstrate that they are taking these issues seriously. Yet to date, discussions on environmental sustainability have largely overshadowed concerns about social equity and human rights in the global discourse on the Blue Economy”.

To illustrate the plagues of the Gulf,



Nnimmo Bassey referred to Exxon's Idoho platform, which spilled 40,000 barrels of crude oil in 1998; Shell's Forcados terminal, which spilled 570,000 in 1979; Chevron (then known as Texaco) which released 400,000 in 1980 and the more recent Aiteo OML29, well 1 blowout, which spewed about 500,000 barrels in November 2021. In terms of pollution, the Gulf of Guinea is second only to the Gulf of Mexico, he said.

Against this backdrop, Bassey stated the key lines of action of the Hub as follows: *building and sharing knowledge on the social dimensions of a sustainable ocean economy; using knowledge to shape policy; advancing practice through dialogue; convening collective action platforms; amplifying local voices and; educating future leaders.*

He stated that the Hub will work with ocean industries, governments, local communities, financial institutions (investors, banks, insurance), civil society, and workers and trade unions.

Its focus ocean industries are shipping, fishing/aquaculture and other marine harvesting, offshore renewable energy, marine mining, tourism and finance.

The Hub aims at ocean equity by focusing on the social dimensions and social actors in ocean economies, particularly workers onshore and offshore, workers in global value chains, coastal indigenous communities, local fisher folks and future generations.

Bassey stated that, "the Global Oceans Hub for Human Rights desires to see that:

(1) oceans stakeholders, in the private and public sectors, have a core focal point for up-to-date knowledge and ideas on addressing social issues relating to ocean industries;

(2) ocean-based industries are better equipped to fulfil their human rights responsibilities;

(3) impacts on and the voices of local actors in ocean industries have been highlighted and valued;

(4) collective actions have addressed several of the most significant social issues in ocean industries and have demonstrated that collective action is possible and; (5) that innovations to address core social challenges have been supported and highlighted."

The Director concluded by entreating participants to key in and make the most of the Global Oceans Hub for Human Rights.

The event was brought to a close after Professor Zabbey Nenibarini refreshed the memories of the attendees all that had been said at the event by the presenters.



Ese Ojeanelo

# REGALIA TO RAGS

*Adorned with an awe-filled breath-taking  
regalia and beauty  
She moved with so much innocence  
Likened to a bride meeting her  
bridegroom for the first time  
Still, she carried herself with undiluted  
charisma and pride  
Like the story of King Solomon in the Holy  
Bible*

*Tales of the beauty and unmatched  
splendour of our queen reached the ends  
of the earth*

*Strangers from other hometowns came  
visiting - to see her in all her radiant glory  
And as always, we displayed the beauty*

*of our Queen  
Her skills and regalia of bright colors and  
the love she shared with all had no  
reserve*

*But these strangers, we have never  
encountered before  
Our elders and councilmen believing it  
would be a short visit  
Of just sightseeing saw to them with open  
arms*

*They came into the palace dressed  
differently from what we knew  
And whatever language they spoke  
was indeed as strange as their  
appearance*

*Still wonderstruck, our councilmen asked  
them what they wanted  
First, they said "no communication"  
They needed to understand us no scratch  
that*

*We needed to understand them, so they  
made us learn their language, their way of  
life*

*"Oh, it is fun learning something new", our  
king and elders thought  
And slowly our culture became something  
you only could see in the rearview mirror  
It was being left behind*

*The use of an unbreakable stick with teeth  
to eat meals  
An object that shows how black you are*

*When you place it before your eyes quite  
fascinating indeed  
Before we could grasp the situation  
It became like the tale of the one-eyed men  
ruling in the city of the blind  
In this case, both of their eyes were  
working just fine*

*But ours were closed,  
Because they said "only with your eyes  
shut will your imagination grow"  
What is the proportionate effect of having a  
one-eyed man rule the city of the blind?  
The blind becomes fully dependent on him  
Trusting his judgments and moving in the  
course he dictates*

*In all this, they had not told us why they  
came  
What attracted them to our town, what they  
wanted from us.  
Gradually, they said there is "better"  
In fact they convinced us that truly there  
was a better and easier way*

*They told us we could see even in the  
darkest hour of the night  
When there is no full moon to light our path  
That cocoa was too bitter so they offered  
us chocolate bars  
"Oh those taste so good"*

*That we looked too black we needed to shine  
more  
So they gave us gold  
We were too energetic and wasting it  
Caring for a Queen with no value was  
pointless*

*And that somewhere else offered better use  
of the vigour  
So they took our strength and dignity  
And in the process we lost our identity  
Because we never recognized how valuable it  
was*

*By the time we realized the exact reason of  
the 'short visit'  
Our Queen's regalia had been shredded to  
rags  
For all that we received  
They took a chunk of material, precious  
jewels from her*

*She was abused repeatedly and she is still  
being abused  
It seems she may never regain her beauty  
and glory  
How did this happen without us knowing?*

*We were sold out!!!  
Sold by the same people chosen to protect  
us  
The King and the Elders Council, they were  
blinded  
And are still eyes shut by ignorance and  
insatiable greed  
Where do we go from here?  
A question that still rings in the heart of  
generations*

*Is there hope for Africa our queen?  
Do we run back to our abuser who gives  
solutions with hidden knives?  
Do we go battle head on with the issues we  
can change?  
And if it is one piece of material hemmed at a  
time*

*We keep going until restoration of Africa  
becomes our Freedom song?*



Nigeria is currently ranked as one of the world's leading destinations for electronic waste due to lack of a sense of waste management. The average Nigerian generates about 0.65kg of waste daily and apart from local dump sites present in most communities, Nigeria is home to six of Africa's largest landfills.

In 2018, Nigeria was estimated to have discharged about 200,000 plastics into the ocean, while annual plastic production is estimated to grow to 523,000 tonnes by 2022. Nigeria would be generating 72.46 million tonnes of waste by 2025, according to the World Bank's 2012 Urban Development Series Publication, bringing waste production at par with crude oil production. While some have made calls for Nigeria to utilize her waste economy, Nigeria can no longer afford one! Even though a waste economy can create employment, generate power and contribute to economic diversification, it encourages throwaway culture and seeks to preserve the consumption paradigm.

In a waste economy, humans will continue to drive the planet to the extreme by producing and pursuing huge amounts of waste, consequently depleting resources that future communities will require. Hence, a worthy alternative is the circular economy which aims to boycott recycling by giving us an actual chance at waste elimination.





# Nigeria Can No Longer Afford a Waste Economy

Arekpitan Ikhenade

According to the World Economic Forum, a circular economy is an industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design. It is based on the idea that there is no such thing as waste. Instead of a take-make-dispose linear cycle, in a circular economy, products are created for several life cycles. Their lifespans are elongated through maintenance, repair, redistribution, refurbishment or remanufacture loops. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, dumping used items in a landfill creates six jobs, recycling creates 36 jobs, and reuse and repair creates up to 296 jobs for every 10,000 tonnes of used goods.

The circular economy provides a chance to end waste streams, ensure fewer greenhouse gases emissions, explore waste-to-energy options, save more resources, demand new services, find new profit and employment opportunities, and ensure a step into a more sustainable lifestyle for everyone.

To achieve a circular economy, efforts must be targeted at business innovation, policy support and consumer demand. It is important that the Nigerian government creates and implements policies that would make producers take responsibility for the entire lifecycle of their products. The use of recycled materials should also be incentivised to encourage the process.

Despite Nigeria's status as a founding member of the African Circular Economy Alliance, efforts to engage citizens have been modest, if not non-existent. Thus, public enlightenment is important. Citizens must be aware of the hazards of sustaining the status quo, and they must desire these solutions enough to undertake the necessary lifestyle adjustments.

Through mass education, consumers' habits can be influenced by assisting them in reexamining their interactions with natural resources, raw materials, and waste economic systems. People need to know that throwing outdated things away is not the only option. This must be taught in classrooms at all levels of education— young people should be encouraged to develop local solutions and start eco-friendly businesses. They must be encouraged to pursue careers and work in recycling and clean technology fields.

Since erasing the volume of waste is not feasible, then there is an urgent need to invest in the recycling industry as this will ensure a better transition to a more sustainable lifestyle.

*This article first appeared on The Punch (<https://punchng.com/nigeria-and-the-need-to-invest-in-recycling-industry>).*



# Learning From the Wise

Over the years, there have been efforts to groom, sustain and keep the momentum in the activism space. HOMEF believes that the youth and the younger ones need to be prepared to receive the baton and lead the space that will engender a transition to the future we want to see – including energy transition.

On the 24th of February 2022, HOMEF facilitated an intergenerational dialogue- Learning from the Wise, at Erema Community, ONELGA in Rivers State, Nigeria. The purpose was to spend time learning with Comrade “Che” Cheta Ibama Ibegwua. This was the first of such dialogues in a series aimed at restoring the place of right knowledge in the environmental struggle.

### Who is Comrade Che?

Comrade Che is an only child born on 16 November 1932 in Erema, Rivers State, southern Nigeria, to Apostle Robert Ocha Ibegwura and Mrs. Mayina Adakosa Ibegwura. He attended a school run by the Seventh Day Native Church (SDNC) and completed Standard Five before leaving for Government School Ahooda to acquire his school-leaving certificate. He is also popularly called Saraswati or Wati for short—a nickname after the Hindu Goddess of Knowledge and Arts—for his outstanding brilliance in the missionary school he attended as a little boy. As a young man, Comrade Che had the dream of becoming a lawyer, but could not fulfil his dream because of lack of sponsors.

He engaged in hunting, farming, fishing and wrestling before Paul Kill, an American timber trader, employed him as a clerk. After Paul Kill’s company winded up, Comrade Che moved to Port Harcourt in search of greener pastures. It was in this city that Comrade Che’s class-consciousness was awoken, after he routinely witnessed police in Port Harcourt extort money from petty criminals, harlots, drunkards and the unemployed who had been arrested on trumped-up charges.

Thereafter, he became a Marxist and a dye-in-the-wool trade unionist, enraptured by revolutionary ideas on transforming the Nigerian social situation. He went on to walk the radical paths, with the likes of Ken Saro Wiwa, Dr. Obi Wali, Dr. Mofia Akobo, Tunji Otegbeye, Paul Lartey, etc. as his co-travelers, and was subjected to inces-

sant harassment and surveillance by security operatives. During the Nigerian Civil War, he was caught in the middle of the two sides of War, and tossed into detention by both sides on false allegations of espionage.

Comrade Che chose the life of an activist to call for the basic rights of workers and his community. He was present in the struggle for Nigeria’s independence, good governance, and justice, suffering pain and discomfort in the process. He was no opportunist. He is the Last Comrade Militant.

### Journey to Comrade Che’s home

“Did you carry the microphones?” “Are your phones charged?” Last minute checks were made as the bus began to move. Participants, who were majorly between ages 24-37, were briefed on what was to be expected, and on the purpose of the visit.

They were told the visit was for a drink from the fountain of Comrade Che’s knowledge and experiences in the national struggle, with a view to rejuvenating the youthful, revolutionary spirit of present generation of Nigerians in the face of the current social and environmental struggles in the country. The youth participants were few but hash-tags such as **#LearnfromtheWise**, **#EarthWisdom**, **#PropellingtheT-ransistion**, had been created to enable them share what they would learn with their friends and network on Twitter and other social media platforms.

### Arrival

At about 10 am the bus arrived at Comrade Che’s place—a paradise in many senses. Various economic and fruit trees—cherry, mango, orange, oil palm and others—stood in the vast compound.

The lushly leaves of the trees shaded the compound from the full blast of Erema's scorching sun. The sandy ground was speckled with yellowish, fallen leaves.

The compound was well kept with minuscule hips of dry leaves mixed with some dirt in the corners of the compound. And, all the while, the leaves filtered-in soft breeze, fanning the peace that wrapped its arms around the compound. But this paradise was equally hot, as heat from the many gas flare sites that besiege Erema and environs came uninvited to the venue, and made the visitors' skins uncomfortable. But the more the heat stroked their black skins, the more stoked their burning thirst for the fountain of knowledge became.

Upon arrival, the HOMEF team set down mats under a section of the trees and prepared the setting for the event, while the invited participants from Port Harcourt waited for the Last Militant to step out from his humble-looking bungalow to welcome his visitors. It took a while, but the 90-year old Comrade Che finally came out, supported and guided to his seating place, right in front of the banner that carried the words, Learning from the Wise.

The Executive Director of HOMEF, Nnimmo Bassey then introduced Comrade Che as his 90-year old mentor who was "still more radical than people who are in their 20s". He said Comrade Che was another living ancestor like himself, as they both have lived for at least 60 years considering the fact that average life expectancy in the Niger Delta is around 40 years. Indeed, it was true.

Comrade Che may have aged, but his spirit was unwrinkled; it was still that of a young revolutionary, and this could be spotted in the vehemence with which he spoke, and his remembrance of dates and events that went as far back as the 1960s with fascinating specificity.

## What Was Learnt?

The stage was set, the listeners had sat down on the mats in clusters of threes and fours, with their writing materials in hand, ready to drink from the fountain; and the fountain was ready to pour out. Even the leaves appeared to have become still, ready to listen to the sage.

A lot was learnt, that these pages will not contain all.

After brief complimentary remarks, Comrade Che noted that during his days, schools were scarce and achieving Standard Six was no child's play. *"One could write cross-border letters, and stand on any podium, with that basic qualification. But nowadays, so-called graduates can hardly communicate clearly and properly, because we are no longer free. When you are not free, your mind is also not free; you think within the box. Knowledge can be acquired, but not common sense."*

Proceeding, Che said,

*"I do not agree with the theory that regard man as a political animal. I am not a political animal. I was created in God's image. I am spirit over matter."*

Some of Comrade Che's other remarks were as follows:

- Poverty is of the mind, and a by-product of possessive individualism. Equity and justice, is what makes people happy. Take from each according to his ability, and give to each according to his need. That is a basic law of Nature.
- Power is not corrupt. Corrupt people corrupt power. It is organised power; the origin of modern governments, that corrupts and corrupts absolutely.
- Today's education does not teach us how to think; they teach us how to become workers and turns us into industrial slaves.



- It is the workers who generate the wealth in the fields, and the elites distribute it in parliaments. It is the civil service that helps the government to dupe the people, and that is why only direct action involving the civil servants can bring the government to their knees. But the civil servants are slowly losing their place to the peasants.
- You must understand the power of language and harness it. Through language, one can enslave or set free.
- Comrade Che also stressed the fact that the youths must be in the front line of fighting for a just transition. He insisted that the transition requires a propelling force and the youths have that force.
- The stakes are clear. Either you follow the new norm or you lose your life. People turn against conscious people. Jesus is a perfect example. The sage also noted that the history of all struggles involved land and resources. *“The capitalist will pay any price including taking your life, to grab your land. This is because he knows that land is invaluable. Hold onto your land; there lies the road to your freedom.”*

Perhaps one of the most notable remarks by the sage was, “In Nature there is no Applicant—no jobless person. This was something the natives understood. The natives worked only to satisfy the basic physical needs—food, shelter and clothing. Nowadays we work to accumulate wealth. That is why the Earth is being stampeded for her resources. It’s a by-product of possessive individualism.

*“Once you understand that Nature would always provide for your basic needs, you are a free man; you will not allow yourself to become an industrial slave, working long hours to get so little. Go to Nature, she has all you will ever need.”*

Concerning the destructive exploitation he said,

*“When you tamper with the land like that—digging and drilling, you tamper with our being-ness and minds, and it affects the way we relate with each other—we become shadows of ourselves. This is because everything is connected, and the law of nature is that of sowing and reaping.”*

The meeting then took a break to munch, analyze, and consolidate on all that the participants had heard. A question and answer session followed for about 40 minutes. By this time, udara fruits – Cheery, freshly plucked from Comrade Che’s compound sat in plates and everyone picked and ate.

Some of the participants wanted to know how Comrade Che was able to resist the allure of money. In response, the sage said, it was about personal decision.

*“To hold your ground, you must conquer yourself: fear, poverty, and death. Death is a lie, for there is no death in Nature, only transformation. Do not give money power over you; disrespect it, only then will it respect you. Nature will take care of you as long as all you desire are your needs and not accumulation of wealth.”*

The sage cited an example of how an executive of Shell had approached him and sought to bribe him with a “blank check”. Comrade Che had refused the bribe and had responded by telling the man that, *“When you give the community what is due to them, I will have my share in that.”*

At the end of the learning time, the participants made commitments to be more committed to advocacy and activism; conquer fear and kill their love for money. They also committed to spread the knowledge they had gained from the event with their friends and networks.



# Food Systems: The Corporate capture

Magdalene Idiang

The controllers of today's food and farming systems have succeeded in supplying large volumes of food to global markets, but are generating negative outcomes on multiple fronts. The outcomes include- the degradation of land, water and ecosystems; deforestation driven by ever expanding commodity crop plantations; and soil erosion driven by unsustainable agricultural practices also resulting in high greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss. The transporting, processing and freezing of food produced in places far away from where it is consumed; the tremendous energy waste in the increasingly-centralized corporate retail and supermarket systems; persistent hunger and livelihood stresses for peasant farmers are also part of the negative outcomes.

To help shape our understanding of what could be the cause of the perilous situation our food system is in, many studies have been conducted. These studies, according to Global Agriculture, reveal that the industrial food system – from farm to fork — is a main culprit. Besides not feeding the people with enough healthy, culturally appropriate and sustainably produced food, the industrial food system is also leading us down the path of a global environmental crisis of a scale and impact that humanity has never faced before, according to an editorial on agroecology.





## The Roots of Industrial Agriculture

Science History sees industrial agriculture as the large-scale, intensive production of crops and animals which relies on fossil energy. It involves crops that are genetically modified, the heavy use of pesticides, herbicides and other practices that deplete the land, mistreat animals, and increase various forms of pollution. The roots of industrial agriculture is traced to a German scientist named Fritz Haber.

Haber invented a process for making synthetic nitrogen fertilizer that increased food production during the world war. His other scientific breakthrough was the creation of a poison known as dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT).

DDT is a potent pesticide, effective at preventing the spread of typhoid, malaria, and other diseases transmitted by insects. It saved countless lives during the war. Haber used his pesticides as the first chemical weapon in history.

When the war ended, the US Department of Agriculture and Corporations brought Haber's poisons back to America and re-branded it as pesticides for American farms. These wartime innovations created the most powerful industrial food production system the world had ever seen.

## **The Problems of Industrial Agriculture**

Today, the industrial system of agriculture—which started in industrialised countries—has spread more recently into farming and indigenous communities in developing countries, especially in Africa with serious political, social and environmental implications for small-scale farmers. Industry associations, research consortium and a number of foreign development aid agencies are pushing this industrial model of agriculture upon Africa. They are selling the notion that the model will help solve the problems of hunger and poverty and feed the world. Their activities, in the real sense, is called the corporate capture.

These corporations/ industrial agricultural companies are designed to maximize profits, not to contribute to the wellbeing of the populace. They do not care about providing food for people rather they care about the profits to be made from people. To them, it does not matter what food a person eats provided he/she eats something. The food could be totally alien to the individual, it would not

matter.

The second notion the industrialists are pushing is that their model will increase Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

There is, however, vast evidence that GDP growth does not reduce poverty, instead it is often linked with unequal distribution of income and further wealth accumulation by the rich, according to Nnimmo Bassey. Industrial agriculture contributes to land grabbing by corporations which leaves communities with little or no land for farming or other resources such as water. The industrial agricultural model focuses on increasing production at all costs, therefore, threatens the rights of indigenous people, their food and survival.

Today, we are witnessing the forced introduction of genetically modified crops by international agencies in collusion with national governments, as a result of massive lobbying by an increasingly powerful biotechnology industry. Genetically modified crops, quite contrary to what the masses are told, do not increase yields.

They require more

chemical inputs including herbicides, as well as irrigation water. Also, our most common crops are genetically altered to resist the spraying of toxic pesticides. For example, the number one crop in Africa, field corn, is almost entirely sprayed with glyphosate, a chemical suspected to cause cancer and is reported to have found its way into the masses' drinking water. These chemicals, which are considered dangerous with far-reaching ecological consequences are now being used at rates that would have been inconceivable twenty years ago.

## **What Industrial Agriculture Does Not Do**

Industrial Agriculture does not tackle hunger or poverty. The vast majority of crops produced by the industrialists are for animal feeds, for the meat and livestock markets in the rich industrialized nations rather than for feeding the poor.

According to a HOMEF research report, genetically modified (GM) crops, as part of the industrial model of agriculture, contribute to small farmers losing their land and livelihoods and do not



alleviate poverty. There are pockets of bold farmers who are aware of the false notions, hence, are resisting the industrial system and providing hope for possibilities of growing food outside the toxic frame of industrialized agriculture. They are championing agroecology, a sustainable farming system that reduces environmental footprint and build resilience to climate change.

Industrial agriculturists do not enrich farmers but only lure them by initially giving out GM patented seeds and their associated chemical fertilizers for free or at a subsidized price.

The farmers would have to buy the seeds and the chemical fertilizers that they are engineered to be dependent upon for growth, after a year or two planting seasons. And the multinational companies producing the GM seed usually state that the seeds cannot be saved and reused.

This means that farmers who used to save and share indigenous seeds now

have to buy seeds yearly to be able to plant. This has forced many farmers to borrow money so as to buy the seeds. As a result, many farmers have ended up in a cycle of debt as they attempt to sustain their livelihoods through this farming method that, in the end, leaves them dependent on the products of multinational companies rather than their own local seeds. Reverting to the indigenous seeds after using the GM variants have proven to be challenging, as the soil has been leached by the fertilizers and chemicals required to grow the GM seeds.

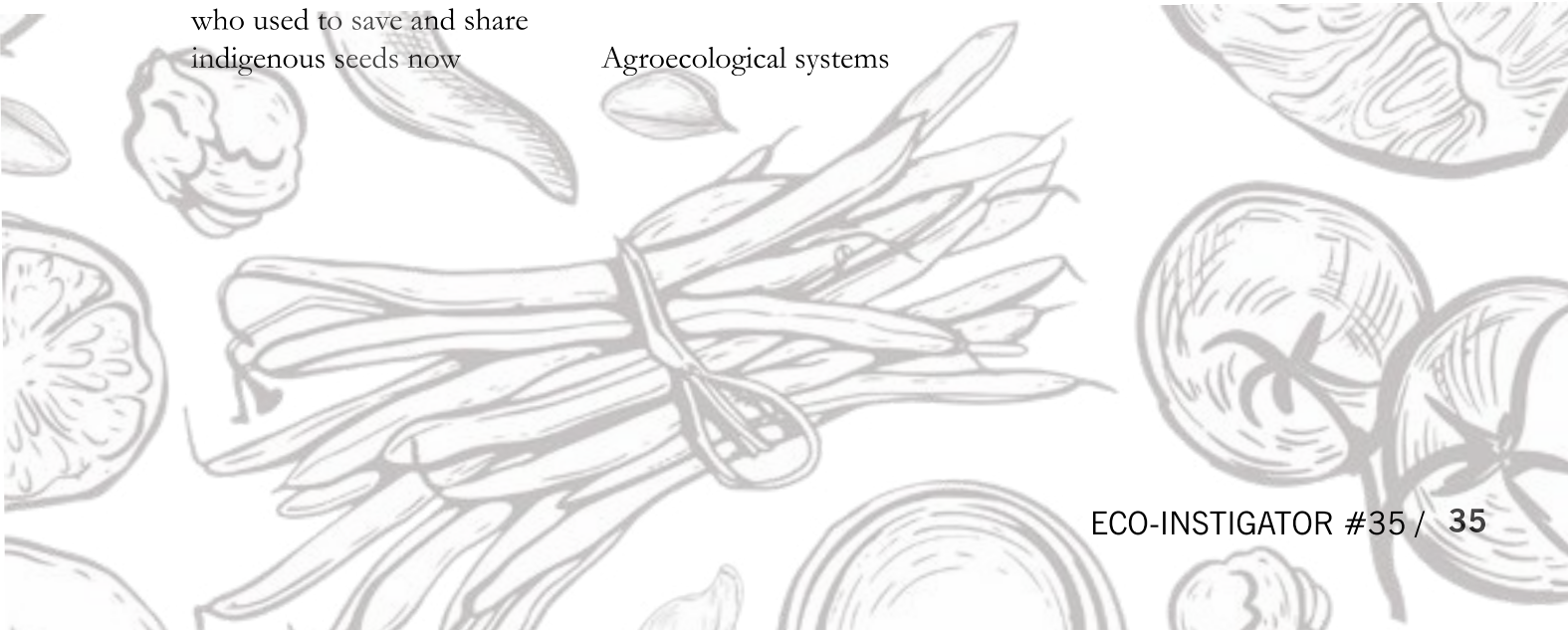
### **What to do? Support Agroecology!**

Agroecological system of farming has helped farmers escape the debt trap that results from using GM patented seeds and chemical fertilizers. It is an agricultural system that does not cause farmers or the soil and general environment harm.

Agroecological systems

rather help to revitalize and build-up soil resources.

They may be ‘uneconomic’ within the context of an aberrant and short-lived benefits of the industrial model, but they are the only systems designed to feed the world in a really sustainable manner, consequently ameliorating the worst manifestations of climate change.



# DIS-EASED

Dieworimene Koikoibo

Land so fat and ripe,  
And so, you 'press us,  
Spilling oily pus on our water bodies  
From Ogoni to Izon, float  
Boils of bloated fishes, the symptom of  
your viral disease  
Transmitted through veins of crude  
crisscrossing our land  
We bleed the black blood of your corpo-  
rate greed

Acquiring, drilling, pumping,  
Selling, spilling, smoking,  
Dumping, dividing and conquering—  
You criminalize our communities,  
Militarise our creeks,  
And cook our land—our creeks sizzle,  
Seasoned with chili tempers and diced  
lives

Your long throats have also reached our  
sky  
As you belch gas-fire and make a barbe-  
cue of it  
And you wonder why we flare up?  
What do you know about dying of  
drought at the riverside?  
You puncture our dignity and bring us  
stitches  
Too strictured for our worldview  
Stop, stop! Riverside is allergic  
To your oily dish—we resist this disease.

# HOMEF'S REFLECTIONS ON COP26

## Background to COP26

The Copenhagen Accord, outcome of 15th Conference of Parties (COP15), jettisoned binding emissions reduction by Annex 1 nations and introduced voluntary emissions reduction. On its own, the Paris Agreement, outcome of COP 21 consolidated the voluntary emissions reduction pathways and set temperature targets at 1.50C and well below 20C. In the same vein, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) introduced by the Paris Agreement treated the global problem as though it were a national problem, and clearly cannot solve the problem. All of these made nonsense of the pursuit of real solutions.

This was the backdrop against which the world looked on to 26th Conference of Parties, held in Glasgow. The world hoped that the discussions will be back on track and real solutions would be pursued with more action.

## What was at Stake at COP26

The 6th Report of IPCC review indicated dire climate change indices for the planet, and especially so for Africa.

There will be increases in fire weather conditions; increases in mean wind speed; increase of average tropical cyclone wind speeds and associated heavy precipitation and of the proportion of category 4-5 tropical cyclones; projected increase in dryness from 1.5°C, higher confidence with increasing global warming; increase

in river flooding; projected increase in meteorological droughts at GWL 4°, mostly in seasonal timescales; climate change will amplify the existing stress on water availability in Africa; climate change will increase the burden of a range of climate-relevant health outcomes and a multiplier of existing health vulnerabilities (high confidence), including insufficient access to safe water and improve sanitation, food insecurity, and limited access to health care and education; ocean ecosystems, in particular coral reefs, will be affected by ocean acidification and warming as well as changes in ocean upwelling, thus negatively affecting economic sectors such as fisheries.

A summation of NDCs show that the world is headed for 2.7C temperature increase above preindustrial levels; and Net Zero postulations have been quickly adopted by nations mainly because it defers action. These fictional postulations moderate expected temperature rise to 2.4C. With Africa suffering temperatures 50% above global average, 2.4C would mean 3.6C for the continent. This will be catastrophic for Africa.

However, COP26 held in Glasgow, UK, in 2021 was not different from what we have been seeing in the past COPs.

### **What was the outcome?**

It is important to note that COP26 was highly exclusionary, with only two delegates per nation in the negotiation rooms. COVID19 provision was a basis for exclusion of many voices and constituencies. Some side events were held virtually without in-person participants.

The Glasgow Climate Pact—the result of COP26, is a mere whimper as far as climate actions and solutions are concerned. The Pact referred to climate justice as something

that is important only to some people.

This position is unbelievable and shows that the COP is heading for a dead-end and the justice basis of the UNFCCC is severely eroded. The Pact also did not recommend a phasing out of fossil fuels – the main driver of climate change, but rather called



PHOTO BY BABAWALE OBAYANJU





for a phase down of subsidies on coal. This is a clear insult to upcoming generations that require a future. Equally, Climate finance still mere promises.

**What are the implications?**

With the above, fossil fuels investments are set to continue to grow. In Oil Change International's report, Sky's Limit Africa, we learn that the fossil fuel industry plans to sink USD \$230 billion into the development of new extraction projects in Africa in the next decade and up to USD \$1.4 trillion by 2050.



See Time for a Peoples' COP. At home in Nigeria, the government claims right to use fossil fuels for development and energy provision. This means that they will continue exploration, extraction, and production.

#### **What is to be done?**

It is obvious that the market powered by dependence on fossil fuels created the climate problem and mechanisms of the market will not solve it.

The Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) should be a good base for global climate action as it is the foundational justice basis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The principle requires that

although everyone must act to tackle global heating, those most responsible should take the most action, provide the finance and share useful technology.

It is clear that REAL actions are needed including REAL leadership: A total phasing out of all forms of fossil fuel across Africa and globally-through the promotion of Real Zero, Not Net Zero. Phasing out fossil fuels will give a chance for the recovery of the Niger Delta and avoid a repeat of catastrophic oil spills such as the Aiteo OML 29 oil well blowout.

The IPCC solutions of emission reducing to 1.5 degrees Celsius is faulty because 1.5 degrees in the Global North means 2.5 or 3 degrees

Celsius in Africa – this means Africa will be burning if emission from extractive activities are allowed to continue.

There is need to take real climate solutions not false solutions (such as Geo-engineering, GMOs, REDD+, Net Zero etc) - the struggle is about justice today and not a promissory note that may not ever be fulfilled, or that would be of no consequence by 2050 should the planet have already stepped into catastrophic climate change by that time.

Current investment models must be interrogated - investments in fossil fuel industries and subsidies should be channelled to promoting a people-centred Just transition and subsidizing of renewable energy across the African continent.

According to a report by Oil Change International 'Sky's Limit Africa, we learn that the fossil fuel industry plans to sink \$230 billion into the development of new extraction projects in Africa in the next decade and up to \$1.4 trillion by 2050. We call for a replacement of the COP with a Climate Change Conference of Peoples.

When the COP at Copenhagen flopped, Bolivia convened the Peoples Summit on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba in April 2010. With more than 30,000 delegates from over 100 countries, the peoples of the world came out with a clear roadmap for climate action as well as the Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth.

Nature Based Solutions should be redefined – stating what it should be, clearly defined as solutions that work with nature, respect local knowledge and are not used as a ploy for land/ sea grabbing and displacement of indigenous communities.

Governments need to urgently go back to a binding global emissions reduction rather than the so-called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which according to the UN computations of submissions made so far will lead the world to a calamitous temperature increase of up to 2.7oC above preindustrial levels, while also ensuring a global just transition to 100% access to renewable energy, with no corporate and no extensive base, that contribute to energy sovereignty, support for dependent economies to diversify away from fossil fuels, and enable all people and communities, especially in the Global South, to flourish.

Promote agroecology which builds healthy soils and cools the planet rather than destructive industrial/ colonial agriculture that destroys soil. There should be a Peoples' COP especially by Africans to strengthen our voices in continental movements and campaigns.

*Based on a Presentation by Cadmus Atake-Enade, Project Lead (Fossil Politics), Health of Mother Earth Foundation at the post-COP26 meeting organized by Coalition for Economic Transformation (COSET) held on the 20th of January 2021 in Abuja.*



# The Cooking Pot for...

## *Africa is Hotter!*

Dieworimene Koikoibo

Some time ago I was scrolling down my Instagram timeline (TL) and came across a post by one of the pages I follow—a page dedicated to renewable energy news and related sundry issues. The post was a screenshot of a LinkedIn post, which read as follows:

*“While on transit today in Rwanda four Norwegian and African Oil Campaigners recognised me and they went after me. They called me Anti African and imperialists’ enabler. So laughable. They want Africa to not produce Oil and Gas when Norway is developing new fields. And some Africans are so stupid to fall for this scam in the name of climate change. The thought of getting rid of oil and gas is really about symbolism. And it’s a backward looking decision by Norway on their policy with Africa. They develop their oil and gas and tell Africans to not do same. The pushback on the oil and gas use and all round the transition away from oil and gas is important for Africa. But the issue is — this transition is not going to happen overnight, and you can’t destroy Africa’s economies to achieve that.”*

PHOTO BY Jerome-ramos / unsplash



What baffled me was not the many Instagram users who nodded in agreement like, sorry to say, agama lizards in the comments section under the post.

I was rather, befuddled by the fact the writer seemed to believe that, in the climate change “chemistry”, the cooking pot for the goose is also the cooking pot for the gander or however the saying goes; and that one must run naked after a madman to recover the covering that had been snatched from him by the madman.

What our friend missed or deliberately left out was the grim reality of climate change that is faced by Africa.

The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which has been described as ‘code red for humanity’, observed in the African continent an increase in hot extremes (including heatwaves), which are projected to continue for the rest of the 21st century with additional global warming.

Marine heatwaves are also observed to have become more frequent since the 20th century and are projected to increase around Africa.

According to the report, relative sea level has increased at a higher rate than global mean sea level around Africa over the last 3 decades, and this is projected to continue, contributing to increases in frequency and severity of coastal flooding in lowlying areas to coastal erosion and along most sandy coasts.

It is also projected that the frequency and intensity of heavy precipitation events will increase almost everywhere in Africa with increased global warming.

For the West African region in particular, an increase in river flooding, agricultural and ecological droughts are observed. It is projected that there will be an increase in meteorological droughts, mean wind speed and pluvial flooding.

Going by the 2021 Emissions Gap Report,

the titled “The Heat is On”, to keep global warming below 1.5°C this century, the world needs to halve annual greenhouse gas emissions between now and 2030’.

The Report also says that the present net-zero emissions pledges, if implemented effectively, could only limit warming to 2.2°C, closer to the well-below 2°C goal of the Paris Agreement. But 2.2°C means Africa will be roast, because it has temperatures 50% higher than the global average.

This is the reason why it is dangerous to accept the “it is our turn to ‘develop’ through destructive extraction” as pushed by our friend and his colleagues-in-fossil. Indisputably, Africa has contributed little to the present state of the world’s climate but has ironically been most impacted by the fossil industry, the main driver of climate change.

This is especially in terms of resource depletion, violence, political uprisings, environmental assault, food shortage, hunger

and what have you. Unfortunately, African governments would rather find succour in Gross Domestic Production (GDP) growth peddled as a measure of a country's economic prosperity and viability for investment, than to sever the unhealthy relationship with fossil.

But who by now does not know that bogus GDP figures of a country does not automatically translate to better standard of living for the citizens of that country?

Nigeria, for example, is currently ranked as the 27th-largest economy in the world based on nominal GDP (amounting to \$514.076 billion in 2021), and the largest economy in Africa followed by Egypt, South Africa and Algeria.

But where are the good roads, well-paid jobs, portable water, affordable housing and electricity in Nigeria that may be able to justify all these years of crude-oil extraction?

Where is the economy referred to by our friend? We must not be deceived to think that GDP growth is growth in the actual

sense. It is not. What we should pursue seriously, however, is the moratorium on new fossil projects, as well as environmental justice, repayment of the ecological debt by the global North and a just energy transition.

The people who have contributed most to the climate crisis should bear as much responsibility in the efforts to restore Mother Earth. In addition, adequate compensation should be given to those who have suffered a violation of their environmental rights, and punishment for those who have committed these violations. Equally importantly, there should be a transfer of clean technology by developed countries to developing countries without such technology being subject to conventional market prices and intellectual property rights, in order to help them avoid the destructive path.

Nobody has ever said that these things must happen overnight. The concern is, where lies our focus? Are we focused on changing our destructive course or are we focused

on fighting for space in the atmosphere where we can deposit "our own share" of the greenhouse gases?

We must focus on stopping and keeping the oil in the soil not only because it has brought nothing but havoc to our home, but also because we just cannot afford to continue in this trajectory led by the North.

The cooking pot for Africa is not the cooking pot for the rest of the world; ours is hotter.

Keep the oil in the soil and the coal in the hole!

# **The Team,**

# **The Fisherman**

# **and Me**

Magdalene Idiang

It is an established tradition at Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) to commence each year with a Team Building/Annual General Meeting meant to set the direction and tone for our campaign. Though it was my third participation, the 2022 edition was my most revealing team building event thus far.

So, from the 7th to the 11th of February, HOMEF brought together team members, board members, partners, interns and volunteers for the meeting at Havillah Towers Hotel in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital. The gathering had over 30 persons in attendance. Indeed a big shift from the days when there were lesser number of persons.

The Team Building was themed “Propelling the Transition”. The meeting was focused on a number of deliverables for the four focal areas of our work, which are: Fossil Politics, Hunger Politics, Ikike (Space for knowledge generation and sharing) and Alliance/Networking.

According to Nnimmo Bassey, the Director of HOMEF, by propelling transition, we hope to build trust, well-being and focus to effect positive changes not just at the grassroots but also at decisions making levels. It would also require linking up local environmental struggles with international movements by way of building alliances and solidarity to cause local and global resistance against environmental exploitation.

Day one of the meeting started off well and exciting. We had a worship and prayer session led by two team members (Mabel and Cadmus), and a short exhortation/exposition on the thematic focus/strategy by the director.

Shortly after this, we had a collaborative game session, tagged sKnowing Africa', alongside an evaluation exercise that took us on a process of reflection on how as an organisation we could become better enabled to implement and manage processes of change and growth. The triggering questions included: 'what is going well in the organisation? What are the organisational vision, mission and values? How are these modelled? How can HOMEf attain more visibility? How will amplifying what is going well be supported and measured so as to progress towards the vision'? Team members brainstormed and shared excellent feedbacks.

The next day we headed out for field trip at Ibeno Beach in Akwa Ibom. This was the highlight and most exciting part of the Team Building for me. Here, I saw for myself the beauty of the Atlantic Ocean, and learned of its socioeconomic and cultural values and the need to save it from anthropogen-

ic activities such as fossil extraction, environmental degradation, industrial fishing e.t.c., that affect aquatic lives. In a conversation with a fisherman captured in the photograph attached herewith, he narrated how fishing life use to be in time past and what it is now.

"We use to have bigger fish catch with different species within these coastal lines which sometimes may amount to a minimum of four to five baskets a day, but today the story is different as you can see, we could barely get half a basket" the fisherman informed. This diminishing fish catch is as a result of the impacts of climate change on coastal communities like Ibeno that are around the Atlantic Ocean - impacts arising from continuous fossil extraction and toxic industrial waste dumped into the Atlantic Ocean.

Though the fisherman looked worn out due to the hectic morning fishing activities, I was able to convince him to flash a warm smile for a photograph. That smile turned out to soften everything around him irrespective of the tough fishing activity and he was able to later say "welcome to Ibeno".





# BOOKS YOU SHOULD READ



## **Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger by Julie Sze**

Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger is a rousing primer that illuminates the movement's core principles. It demonstrates how interconnected disparate social movements are and shows that they can coalesce into more powerful networks.

In this 'moment of danger' Sze's book is a call to recognize how the past, present, and the future are intertwined. If you want to understand how, let this book immerse you in the many worlds of environmental justice.



## **Who Fears Death? By Nnedi Okorafor**

In a post-apocalyptic Africa, the world has changed in many ways; yet in one region genocide between tribes still bloodies the land. Who Fears Death is a story of a woman who has survived the annihilation of her village and a terrible rape by an enemy general wanders into the desert, hoping to die. Instead, she gives birth to an angry baby girl with hair and skin like the colour of sand. Grippled by the certainty that her daughter is different—special—she names her Onyesonwu, meaning “Who fears death?” in an ancient language.

It does not take long for Onye to understand that she is physically and socially marked by the circumstances of her conception. She is Ewu—a child of rape who is expected to live a life of violence, a half-breed rejected by her community. But Onye is not the average Ewu. Desperate to elude her would-be murderer and to understand her own nature, she embarks on a journey in which she grapples with nature, tradition, history, true love, and the spiritual mysteries of her culture, and ultimately learns why she was given the name she bears, Who Fears Death.

Let's save the suspense. Enjoy the read!

## **Upcoming Activities**

- **Community Diagnostic Dialogues**

- **Monitoring Training**

- **Learning from the Wise**

- **School of ecology on Transforming the Earth**

## **Volunteers Needed!**

**If you will like to join our team of volunteers.**

**Kindly visit [www.homef.org/volunteer](http://www.homef.org/volunteer)**

**For More updates on upcoming events visit [www.homef.org](http://www.homef.org)**