



Federal Republic of Nigeria

CHAPTER 2



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS



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“With contribution from this multiplicity of stakeholders, there is an absolute need for a Development Master Plan by which available resources can be effectively coordinated and utilized...”

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-President Olusegun Obasanjo (2001)

Chapter 2

Regional Development Efforts

Introduction

The Niger Delta Region has witnessed a number of attempts to influence the pace and nature of development in the area and improve the standard of life for its people. For the most part the legacy of these schemes translates into a picture of missed opportunities, low value for money and, not least, enormous disappointment for communities of the Niger Delta whose hopes and aspirations have been raised and then repeatedly shattered. This part of the Master Plan document puts into focus the efforts that have been made so far to put the NDR on the path of sustainable development.

2.1 The Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB)

The unique characteristics of the Niger Delta Region lay behind Sir Henry Willink's Commission (1958) recommendation that the area deserved special developmental attention by the Federal Government of Nigeria. This was even before crude oil became a critical factor in Nigeria's development. In response, the Federal Government established the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) in 1960 to manage the developmental needs and challenges of the region. The special area was defined as Yenagoa Province, Degema Province, the Ogoni Division of Port Harcourt and the Western Ijaw Division of Delta Province.

In its seven years of existence, however, the NDDB achieved little before it faded away following the military coup in 1966 and the outbreak of civil war in 1967. After the civil war, the NDDB was not revived and the Government showed no interest in addressing the developmental needs of the region. Rather, it decided to use the substantial revenue accruing from oil production in the region to fund a massive rehabilitation and reconstruction program in various parts of the country. Even with the quadrupling of oil prices in 1973 and the subsequent oil windfall, there was no deliberate attempt to use part of the oil wealth to address the issue of poverty and the developmental needs of the region.

2.2 Presidential Task Force (the 1.5% Committee)

Following growing agitation for a renewed focus on the development of the region, the

1979/83 Administration set up a Presidential Task Force (popularly known as the 1.5% Committee) in 1980 and 1.5% of the Federation Account was allocated to the Committee to tackle the developmental problems of the region. Although the Committee existed until early years of the 1985/93 regime, it was largely ineffective. There were only a few projects to show for the funding received from the Federation Account and very little visible beneficial impacts on the welfare of the people of the oil producing communities.

2.3 Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)

Further growing discontent and restiveness in the oil producing areas, caused the Babangida regime to set up the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992. Three percent of federal oil revenue was allocated to the Commission to address the developmental needs of the areas. Although OMPADEC initially raised the spirit and hopes of the people, inefficiency and corruption in the organisation resulted in yet more disappointment.

Between 1992 and 1999 when it was wound up, OMPADEC completed several projects but bequeathed numerous abandoned or unfinished projects and huge debts. There is no reliable information on the total amount the Commission received from the Federation Account, but what is clear is that OMPADEC suffered from lack of focus, inadequate and irregular funding, official profligacy, corruption, excessive political interference, lack of transparency and accountability, and high overhead expenditure. Most of its projects had little to do with poverty reduction and the vast majority of the people did not benefit from its activities. In brief, OMPADEC failed abjectly to abate discontent and restiveness in the Region.

Given this background it is hardly surprising that one of the first actions of President Obasanjo, soon after his inauguration in May 1999, was to submit a Bill to the National Assembly for the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to replace OMPADEC.

2.4 Niger Delta Environmental Survey

The Niger Delta Environmental Survey

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(NDES) was set up to reconcile industry, environment and community interest in the Niger Delta. The initiative was prompted by increasing pressure from rapid deteriorating ecological and economic conditions, social dislocation and tension in communities, which were not being addressed by policies and action. A study of the region by the World Bank (1995) warned that:

"An urgent need exists to implement mechanism to protect the life and health of the region's inhabitants and its ecological system from further deterioration"

It was against this backdrop that the Niger Delta environmental Survey (NDES) was initiated in February 1995, by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) on behalf of its joint partners (NNPC, ELF and AGIP) to undertake an environmental study of the region and to provide the required database. The Survey is now almost entirely funded by Oil Companies in Nigeria under the umbrella of the Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS) of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce.

NDES therefore created a steering committee in 1996 and engaged EuroConsult, a Dutch firm as the managing consultants for the execution of:

- ✍ A cartographic definition of the Niger Delta
- ✍ A preliminary description of the features of the region
- ✍ An overview and evaluation of existing information and data on the region
- ✍ The identification of major issues to be addressed
- ✍ The identification of additional data requirements and
- ✍ The preparation of a detailed TOR and scope of work to be carried out in phases

The NDES objective has been:

- ✍ To describe and quantify the renewable and non-renewable resources of the Niger Delta, identify and assess the positive and negative Factors of resources use in the area and the manner in which they serve and affect local, regional and national interest;
- ✍ To stimulate pro-actively and encourage relevant stakeholders to address and solve specific current social and environmental problems identified in the course of the survey and propose an indicative plan for future management of the region;
- ✍ To appraise how the present state of the region has evolved over time and assess the present conditions of social and economic under-

- ✍ development; and
- ✍ Generate data and information on the Niger Delta, including the formulating strategies and plans for effective natural management towards the sustainable use of resources in order to protect the environment and the livelihood of the people in the region.

2.5 The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

The NDDC was officially inaugurated on December 21, 2000 with a vision "to offer a lasting solution to the socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta Region" and a mission "to facilitate the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful".

The NDDC Act provided for generous funding sources, including:

- ✍ Federal Government contribution, which was to be equivalent to 15% of the monthly statutory allocation due to member States of the Commission from the Federation Account.
- ✍ Oil and gas processing companies' contribution of 3% of their total budget.
- ✍ 50% of the Ecological Fund Allocations due to the member States.
- ✍ Proceeds from NDDC Assets and miscellaneous sources, including grants-in-aid, gifts, loans and donations.

The Act also provides for a Governing Board of twenty members. Ten of the members are appointed by the Federal Government (The Presidency) including the Chairman, the MD/CEO, the two Executive Directors, three Representatives of non-oil producing states, one representative each from the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Federal Ministry of Environment and one representative of the oil companies. Each of the nine oil producing states appoints one member each while the oil companies appoint one member to represent them.

The Commission's initial task was to review and complete some of the abandoned/unfinished projects of the defunct OMPADEC and embark on some new ones whilst preparing a comprehensive Master Plan for the development of the Niger Delta region.

With offices in each of the nine oil-producing states, during the first three years of its

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existence (January 2001 to January 2003), the NDDC:

- ✍ Received N47 billion from all its funding sources.
- ✍ Awarded about 700 contracts of which 358 had been completed by June 2003.
- ✍ Undertook the construction of 40 road projects, 90 water projects, 129 electrification projects, 47 shore protection/jetty projects, 50 health centres, 205 new blocks of six classrooms each.

In the relatively short time since its creation the NDDC is therefore beginning to deliver some of the benefits to the people that its clear and demanding agenda requires. Clearly, the continued pursuit of its mission will be greatly assisted if action is integrated with that of other bodies and agencies.

2.6 Recent and Current Programmes and Projects in the Niger Delta

The challenges and opportunities in the Region cannot be tackled effectively by the NDDC alone in the absence of cooperation and collaboration across the public, private and non-governmental sectors. The delivery of sustainable development stands a chance of success but only if the lessons of the past are taken on board and used to formulate realistic programmes and projects in partnership with organisations that already have or can inspire the confidence and meaningful involvement of the local people.

The ingredients for fruitful partnerships are evident in various programmes focusing on or likely to impact on the Region as highlighted in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.6.1 National, State and Local Government

The Federal Government has put in place the National Economic, Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). NEEDS is the instrument for poverty reduction in the country.

The State and Local Government counterparts of NEEDS are State and Local Government Economic, Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS / LEEDS). NEEDS, the Federal Government's poverty reduction strategy will have a significant bearing on the future development in the Niger Delta Region. It is a medium term strategy (2003-2007) for a nationally coordinated framework of action in close collaboration with the States and Local

Governments. It derives from the country's long-term goals of poverty reduction, wealth creation, employment generation and value re-orientation.

The strategy lays particular stress on four key actions: reforming the way government works and its institutions; growing the private sector; implementing a social charter for the people; and re-orientation of the people with an enduring African value system.

NEEDS, in collaboration with State SEEDS, constitutes a response to the challenges of underdevelopment. The aim is to mobilise people around the core values, principles and programmes of both strategies. A coordinated implementation of both programmes is expected to create at least seven million new jobs over the period, reduce poverty, and lay the foundations for sustainable development.

The States in the Niger Delta Region have their own projects. They are responsible for basic infrastructure, schools and medical facilities. Many also have training programmes and job creation schemes. Similarly, local governments have supervision of the roads, waterways, schools and medical facilities in their areas.

2.6.2 International Agencies

United Nations


The United Nations has a long association with the Region and its agencies have been involved in a number of projects affecting the Niger Delta. A number of UNDP projects have included work with non-governmental organizations and the public sector:

- ✍ In its first country cooperation framework (CCF) -1998-2002- UNDP supported a minimum of eight communities per state in the improvement of their access to health and basic social services through support to health centres, provision of boreholes and qualitative education. In the same programme, many skill development centres were facilitated and capacity built to sustain them with backing from micro-financing, etc..
- ✍ another priority has been on unemployed youths, with skills development centres in each state being given equipment and training of trainers. These programmes were underpinned by micro-credit, which was made available to those involved in these projects
- ✍ a capacity building of local government staff.
- ✍ Assistance to Bayelsa and Cross River States to prepare their State blueprints for economic development.

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The current UNDP projects focus on governance, energy and the environment, HIV/AIDS, information and communication technology with crosscutting issues, such as gender.


World Bank


 Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme in Niger Delta

The project with a total estimated cost of US\$ 82.2 m, which includes a loan of US\$15m, is planned to commence in year 2005.

The initiative aims to improve the standard of living and quality of life of the rural poor with emphasis on women and youth. It sets out to strengthen rural communities and service provider capacity for community development and by establishing a community development fund. The latter includes support for village infrastructure, livelihood development and natural resource management. The livelihood development component comprises fisheries (aquaculture), agriculture and agro-forestry development with a particular focus on soil fertility management and conservation.

A prominent feature of the planned effort is that it will be community-based and primarily demand-driven and will, if successful, provide valuable lessons for future activities to be supported by the NDDC


 Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project The project, with a competition date of 2006, aims to improve access by the

 poor to social and economic infrastructure and increase the availability and management of development resources at the community level. It is a country-wide development effort that also covers the NDR. The World Bank loan amounts to US-\$ 60 million.

The project will assist the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) to move from a town, supply-driven and non-participatory mode of delivering services to communities to a demand-driven approach to poverty reduction covering multiple sectors depending on specific community determined needs. The project will assist in implementing the government's strategy through


building government capacity, related to policy-making and dissemination, analytical work, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. The project will also assist States by building the capacity of state governments and LGA's to work with communities in designing and implementing community-based projects, as well as, through investments in such projects.

The major project components include institutional development at Federal, State, and Local Government level, and financial support to community-based activities through social funds and social assistance (micro-projects).

 Fadama II
The objective of the World Bank financed project is to sustainably increase the incomes of fadama users by enabling the communities to take charge of their own development agenda, and by reducing conflict between fadama users. The project will take a demand-driven approach whereby all users of fadama resources will be encouraged to develop participatory and socially-inclusive Local Development Plans (LDPs).

The project, based on a US\$ 100m loan, will help to increase the supply of rural infrastructure by financing small-scale irrigation systems, feeder roads, other community infrastructure, and marketing infrastructure that fadama resource users consider as priorities, and which they agree to implement, operate and maintain. By empowering producers' associations to purchase their own agricultural research and advisory services, the project will support demand-driven research and extension, and provide better access to inputs and product markets.

A separate project -- to be funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) -will contribute to the development objective of the proposed project by focusing on the conservation of critical ecosystems within the fadama areas as well as enhance the conservation of biodiversity and environmental services of global significance.

 Local Empowerment and

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Environmental Management Programme Areas

The project, which was approved July in 2003, is planned to be executed between 2004 and 2009. In the NDR, the participating states will be Bayelsa and Imo. The total loan amount is US-\$ 70 million.

The project will address the direct and indirect causes of degradation of Protected Areas. These will include:

- (a) clarifying the policy and legislative environment governing management of Protected Areas and biodiversity conservation;
- (b) establishing effective mechanisms of institutional coordination among public agencies from the national to the state and local levels of government;
- (c) building capacity to monitor and enforce regulations;
- (d) stakeholders' participating in determining the management plans of Protected Areas;
- and (e) promoting ecologically sustainable livelihoods in the support zone to reduce poverty and the dependence on resources in the protected areas.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is implementing a major national Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS),

European Commission

Projects are targeted at the grassroots and focus on rural road and water transport, health, education and income generation. There is an extensive role for civil society, with discussions to determine how the projects will be organized, as well as actual proposals and implementation of the projects.

The combined EU social development programme will fund over 17,000 mainly village-based micro-projects across the nine NDR states. They may be in various sectors such as water supply, village transport, health systems, and income-generation or micro-credit schemes. Communities will actively contribute at least 25% of the cost in labour, in kind or in cash. This requirement is mainly in order to ensure that communities select micro-projects to which they have a real commitment and to achieve sustainability of projects after their accomplishment. The overall budget is Euro. 63m

USAID

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is implementing a major programme based on micro-enterprise development, linkages with the private sector, processing and marketing, and youth development and training. USAID is also focusing on health activities, including

HIV/AIDS. It works with the media on interactive radio and television programmes between public officials and members of their constituencies.

USAID has also worked with the Rivers State legislature and on capacity building of the judiciary in some other States.

The Agency has recently signed a US\$20 million partnership agreement with Shell Nigeria to help develop local capacity in agriculture, health and business enterprise over the next five years. The first of the programmes under the partnership, a cassava enterprise development programme, was launched early in 2004.

The Roots and Tubers Expansion Project, a twenty three million, one hundred thousand US dollars (US\$ 23.1m) project, aims to enhance national food self-sufficiency and improve rural food security and the incomes of poor farmers through increased production of cassava, yam and Irish potatoes, adoption of improved processing technologies, education on adequate storage methods, and increased support/education in marketing activities. The principal target group for this programme is comprised of smallholders, generally with less than 2 ha of land per household. These smallholders have been selected from 18 of the southern and middle-belt states.

2.6.3 Other Development Activities of Major Donors

With respect to poverty and natural resources management, IFAD, the World Bank and African Development Bank (ADB) have jointly adopted participatory community-based approaches.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is implementing a major national Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), which uses similar approaches and target groups for community mobilization. The SPFS is complementary to the West African Regional Sustainable Livelihoods Programme, which aims at improving livelihoods and influencing policies in favour of natural resource-dependent communities.

Foundations

Some of the most successful projects have been those that have reached out into the grassroots of the communities in the Niger Delta.

Pro-Natura International - the Akassa Model
The uniqueness of the Akassa Development Model is that it is wholly designed and driven by the people of the Akassa Community. Beginning with extensive consultations with

all segments of the community, Pro-Natura International, a non-governmental organization (NGO), guided the community in a prioritization exercise, the institution of an Akassa Community Development Association and the commencement of projects for the development of the people. Initial funding came from Statoil, a Norwegian firm prospecting for oil in the region. Subsequently, funding has come from several other development partners including the UNDP. The model has worked well and is being replicated in other areas.

Some of its notable achievements are:

- ✍ Bylaws for the conservation of sea turtles.
- ✍ Partial conservation of various other seafoods and boat trees.
- ✍ Complete participation of all segments of the community (e.g. men, women, youths and the disabled) in the development process, including financial management of the initiative.
- ✍ Institution of the Akassa Development Fund for institution building and the development of a credible collateral to source for more funding.
- ✍ The establishment of the Akassa Micro-credit scheme that has recorded remarkable 100 per cent recovery rate.

Other Organisations

Other prominent initiatives in the region include:

- ✍ MacArthur Foundation. In addition to its original work on population and reproductive health, MacArthur has funded some governance work in the Niger Delta through several NGOs, mainly focusing on human rights and legal systems. It has also funded some environmental projects in the Region. In addition, some individuals have received grants under the Fund for Leadership. The Foundation's Niger Delta Initiative programme includes a partnership working arrangement with the Local and State Governments and the NDDC.
- ✍ Friedrich Naumann Foundation. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation working on human rights promotion and legal systems. It collaborates with the Centre for Advanced Social Studies (CASS) in Port Harcourt.
- ✍ Heinrich Boll Foundation. The Foundation is working in the area of gender issues and human rights, socio and economic rights, minority rights including ethnic and religious issues.

- ✍ Africare receives funding from USAID and CEDPA for work with AIDS orphans in 5 local government areas in Rivers State. In 2003, Africare signed a \$4.5million partnership with SPDC for a Malaria Rollback, shrimp culture and business development initiative focused on the Niger Delta region over the next three years.

2.6.4 Oil, Gas and Servicing Companies

The oil and gas industry is the most important private sector group in the economy of Nigeria and the region. Operating oil and gas companies also play an important role in the social life of the region. Many oil and gas companies have well-established community development programmes through which they have provided support to their host communities. Here one example, SPDC, is described in greater detail, being the oldest and largest of the oil and gas companies' initiatives.

The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd (SPDC)'s initial community assistance programme, which began in the 1960s, started with agricultural extension services to improve the livelihood of agrarian communities. The programme gradually extended to education, infrastructure and water and sanitation programmes. In the 1990s, assistance with health care provision, hospitals and youth programmes was added. During that decade SPDC began a transition from community assistance to community development. However, under the community assistance model there was a low level of community participation and ownership of the welfare schemes and infrastructure projects provided as part of the company's programme.

A comprehensive review of all community interface activities within Shell Companies in Nigeria (SCiN), in April 2002 highlighted the inadequate capacity within SCiN to fully deliver the social dimension of development; the company began the process of developing new strategies to address current and emerging social issues. The objectives of this shift were to:

- ✍ Promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities;
- ✍ Support government in building capacity to enhance delivery on its role in sustainable community development;
- ✍ Form partnerships with other corporate bodies and civil society organizations in developing communities;

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- Secure SCiN's License to Operate and ultimately, maximize oil and gas development revenues for the benefit of all.

This new approach, termed Sustainable Community Development (SCD) strategy, is aimed at improving the management of all community interfaces within Shell Nigeria, and has become the next phase of social uptake in SPDC's journey from community assistance to sustainable social development. It involves managing community interface as a core line responsibility and through the Area teams who interact daily with the communities, complemented by strong central guidance and monitoring from the SCD organization, thus enabling faster attention to community issues and concerns.

The SCD strategy places greater emphasis on partnerships, not just with the communities themselves, but also with government and strategic local and international development organizations to complement SPDC's efforts and develop solutions SPDC can not achieve on their own, thereby accelerating developmental and employment-generating opportunities across the region. Two of such partnerships were entered in 2003, the first one with USAID a five-year \$20 million agreement that will develop Nigerian capacity in agriculture, health and business enterprise and the second with Africare a three-year \$4.5 million partnership that will focus on reducing deaths from malaria. A third partnership, with UNDP, was signed in 2004. Apart from leveraging expertise and additional development funding into the Niger Delta, these partnerships are intended to offer excellent opportunities for improved cultivation for farmers, increased access to domestic and overseas markets, development of local industry and agro-allied enterprise. They will also increase opportunities for local employment and capacity building, and help to improve the local economy. Implementation of the programmes under these partnerships will begin in 2004, whilst discussions are ongoing to develop new partnerships (including with NDDC).

Through partnerships with government agencies such as the NDDC, SCD hopes to build a closer and more supportive relationship with government in their primary role of providing basic infrastructure and services for the Niger Delta citizens.

The new strategy also aims to abolish corrosive practices that currently impede sustainable development in communities, chiefly the pressure for cash payments for

unjustifiable reasons, such as the payment for "ghost workers" (or standby labour). The demand for, and payment of, cash to community youths for access fees, standby labour, and so on, have sometimes led to disputes within communities and often distort genuine community needs. Accordingly, SPDC's interaction with communities will henceforth be governed by a set of SCD 'big rules', which amongst other things outlaws unjustifiable payments.

The primary goal of the big rules and SCD as a whole is to ensure that SPDC's community interventions are sustainable and deliver real and measurable benefits to intended beneficiaries right across communities, and not just concentrated in the hands of a few influential individuals.

To ensure sustainability, benefiting communities need to take the lead in the decisions and planning for their own development, and ownership of the resulting projects and programmes. To provide them the skill and confidence to do so, SCD places emphasis on capacity building helping communities (other development partners) to build their capacity.

The SCD strategy also recognizes the 'symbiotic relationship' between development and peace. An integral part of the new SCD strategy is the development of a Peace and Security Strategy (PaSS) for the Niger Delta. Preliminary work has been done with the help of internationally recognized experts on conflict reduction and peace building. So far, a synthesis and a baseline report of the conflict situation in the region have been produced following wide consultation across the region. Going forward, a peace and security working group comprising public and private stakeholders in the Niger Delta will be set up to collectively develop the PaSS. On completion, it is expected that PaSS will become an essential component of the strategy for fostering sustained peace and development in the Niger Delta.

The success of this new strategy will depend on all stakeholders working together and each one playing their part. This, of course, includes the necessity of SPDC delivering on promises. The SCD vision of the Niger Delta is of a region "that is characterised by safe, healthy, thriving and self-reliant communities capable of sustaining their own development, and wherein Shell is a welcome and valued stakeholder".

The essential approach of SPDC to development intervention in communities before the SCD era has been quite representative of the practices amongst other companies in the oil and gas industry. They

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also failed to deliver lasting benefits or sustainable development for various reasons, including:

- ✎ An excessively community-pressure driven or crisis management approach, which reduced development efforts to meeting a set of demands expressed in Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the communities.
- ✎ A high rate of default on the MOUs, which have usually been explained as due to budgetary constraints.
- ✎ A high cash-payment and placatory tendency to dealing with community agitations.
- ✎ The absence of any long-term or integrated view to development challenges.
- ✎ The limited arrangements if any for maintenance of infrastructure provided, leading to very short-lived benefits from the rapid collapse of structures erected.
- ✎ The poor networking and synergy with other agencies and governments, leading to duplication of infrastructure and poor resource use.

But SCD as envisaged is a marked departure from the approach to relationships with the communities in times past and raises hopes

of improved oil industry contributions.

2.7 Lessons for the Future

The UNDP has summed up the defects of some of the previous development strategies not just in the Niger Delta but in Nigeria as a whole. The conclusions it draws are that :

'The greatest flaw in these (past) poverty alleviation strategies is their 'top-down' approach. The Federal authorities have taken all the initiatives. The State and Local Governments were reduced to mere implementing authorities. Even here, their areas of maneuvers were extremely limited as autonomous institutions manned by people with extremely limited experience were set up. It is needless to add that the involvement of the supposed beneficiaries both in the conception and the implementation of the programmes were conspicuously negligible.' (UNDP 2001).

The main programmes preceding the creation of the NDDC suffered from a lack of clarity of vision, adherence to meaningful, achievable goals and objectives within a framework guiding systematic action and review and evaluation of progress. This is precisely the framework that the Niger Delta Master Plan and a strategic implementation plan will offer in providing the guidance and

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One of the many Oil Installations in the NDR

context for detailed action by State and Local Governments, as well as other development actors in the region..

While public expectations have been raised in the past, the failures of successive programmes to reach out into the communities have simply served to compound the frustrations of the people of the Niger Delta. Of particular note in the failures of past efforts is the grossly inadequate focus on the actual oil producing communities, a glaring failure of which all tiers of government and even the oil producing states are guilty.

The main lessons for the future are that the Master Plan and all the programmes and projects it promotes must be based on a holistic plan for the development of the communities within the context of their respective states and the region. There is also need for clear criteria for distributing development resources to emphasize the areas most adversely affected by the oil activities and adherence in practice to those criteria as to douse the perceptions of neglect that have reached boiling points in recent years. An open and transparent partnership between NDDC, Federal, State and Local Government, private sector organizations (including the oil industry), communities and civil society a partnership that ensures that all the main actors have a stake in the future development of the Region will also facilitate synergy among all parties and optimize use of scarce resources.

The seeds for such a partnership have been sown in the approach followed for the preparation of the Master Plan where considerable effort has been expended on the involvement of a range of stakeholders from the grassroots upwards. This is the beginning of an empowerment process that must now be taken forward in the refinement of the policies and proposals of the Plan into a sustainable implementation programme and, not least, into the monitoring, review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the programmes and projects in meeting the needs of the Niger Delta people.

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