

# Insecurity and the Niger Delta Environment, Sustainable Peace and Development: An Overview

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## Abstract

The world with all its complexities is a puzzle, but the most complex of its entire component is man. Man is so complex in nature that even the devil himself does not know the state of mind of a man. The environment where he lives was ordained and given to him by God for his daily needs and survival. Unfortunately, the aftermath of the activities of man on the environment has hitherto altered the natural and uniqueness of the environment. The conflict generated as a result of the selfish exploitation and oppression of man to man has led to insecurity and violent disturbances. The study examined the drivers of human security and its antecedent causes. It x-rayed the mechanisms for sustainable peace and development. It also delved into the violations and abuse of human rights as well as the challenges limiting sustainable peace and development in the Niger Delta. It concluded that without sustainable peace, the Niger Delta region cannot experience sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Environment, Pollution, Niger Delta, Insecurity, Peace, Development

## 1.1 Introduction

Right from the creation of man in the beautiful Garden of Eden through to the period of industrial revolution and development, the environment has always been the most precious asset in the life and development of man. Perhaps, the environment predated man and it was created for his benefit, which presupposes that man was created to depend on the environment for his daily needs and survival. That is why the Creator of man attaches enormous importance to the sustainability of the environment when it recorded in the Book of Revelation Chapter 7 Verse 1-3, when four angels stood on the four corners of the earth in order to destroy the earth. God immediately sent His angel carrying the Seal of the Living God and cried out with a loud voice in Verse 3, saying: "Hurt not the Earth, neither the Sea, nor the Trees". This act of course depicts that the Living God cherishes the environment so much that He will not be happy seeing the environment is being destroyed. With the commencement of oil exploitation in Nigeria when Shell B.P. struck the first oil in Oloibiri in the present Bayelsa State in 1956, it signaled the commencement of exploitation in high hopes and great excitement for accelerated development and civilization. But the people of the region knew little or nothing about the dangers and the aftermath of such exploitation. As a result of this, the oil producing communities have known only poverty, mystery and sorrow (Tell Magazine, 2005:30). Because of the adventurous nature of man to exploring and exploiting the environment in search of natural resources for his needs, the industrial development and societal practices of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century have undoubtedly had a disturbing impact on the environment.

The insecurity of lives and properties in the Niger Delta region has assumed an increasing propensity due to the emergence of militia groups. This is due to the growing security challenges it portends for Nigeria as a nation and the Niger Delta as a region. Militancy is a direct response to the human rights violations and the perceived neglect, and marginalization of the region by the Nigerian state and environmental and human hazards imposed on the Niger Delta communities and inhabitants occasioned by exploration and exploitation by oil multinationals. Okumagba (2012:29) observed that the crisis has taken a new dimension with issues bothering on illegal bunkering of crude oil, kidnapping and hostage taking. There is no doubt that the alarming rate of militancy in the region has made the Nigerian oil fields among the most dangerous in the world and has also become a major threat to Nigeria's main source of revenue. The activities of militarization leading to the insecurity of the region has made the federal government lose billions of dollars in oil revenue and the criminal activities of militancy have created a state of insecurity and the distortion of values of the region. The security impasse in the region has slowed the pace of sustainable peace and development. In addressing the security dilemma, there is the need for sustainable peace which will usher in sustainable development. Since the provision of peace and security and the protection of the citizens and the territory against external evasion is a sole responsibility of the state, the state should objectively take the bull by the horns and ensure absolute peace in the region. Human security and peace building initiatives are important ingredients for achieving sustainable development. Perhaps, the path to sustainable peace and security in the region is situated in mainstreaming peace building and developmental programs as a paradigm for societal reconstruction. In a chaotic and peaceless zone like the Niger Delta, peace as a policy objective could only be premised on transformational agenda which address structural issues, basic necessities of life, societal and social dynamics of building relationship, and the development of an enabling environment and infrastructure for peace.

## 1.2 Conceptual Issues

### 1.2.1 Niger Delta

The Niger Delta, the delta of the Niger River in Nigeria, is a densely populated region sometimes called the Oil Rivers because it was once a major producer of palm oil. The area was the British Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 until 1893 when it was expanded and became the Niger Coast Protectorate. It lies between latitudes 4° and 6° north of the Equator and 4° and 8° east of the Greenwich (Eyinla, et al 2006). Historically and cartographically, it consists of the present day, Bayelsa, Delta and River States. In the year 2000, the government under President Olusegun Obasanjo expanded its definition to include all the oil producing states in Nigeria which includes: Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Edo, Imo and Ondo States (<http://wikipedia.com>). It stretches over 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> of swamp land in the littoral fringes of the country and embraces one of the world's largest wetlands, over 60% of Africa's largest mangrove forests, and one of the worlds' most extensive aquatic environment which embraces marine, brackish and fresh water ecosystems, it encompasses the most extensive fresh water swamp forest in West and Central Africa, and manifests an intricate network of creeks, rivers, streams, swamps, braided streams and Oxbow lakes, besides a stretch of flat and fertile land mass (Eyinla et al, op. cit). It extends over about 70,000 km<sup>2</sup> and makes up 7.5% of Nigeria's land mass. The area covers some 31 million people of more than 40 ethnic groups including the Efik, Ibibio, Ikwerre, Annang, Oron, Ijaw, Itshekiri, Urhobo, Kalabari, kwale, Igbo and Yorubas are among some that speaks over 250 dialects in the Niger Delta (<http://wikipedia.com>).

### 1.2.2 Insecurity

Insecurity is a feeling of general unease or nervousness that may be triggered by perceiving oneself to be vulnerable or inferior in some way, or a sense of vulnerability or instability which threatens one's self image or ego([en.wikipedia.com](http://en.wikipedia.com)). Maslow (1942:35) describes an insecure person as a person who "perceives the world as a threatening jungle and most human beings as dangerous and selfish; feels rejected and isolated; anxious and hostile; is generally pessimistic and unhappy; shows signs of tension and conflict, tends to turn inward; is troubled by guilt-feelings, has one or another disturbance of self-esteem; tends to be neurotic; and is generally selfish and egocentric". A person who is insecure lacks confidence in their own value, and one or more of their capabilities, lacks trust in themselves or others, or have fear that a present positive state is temporary, and will let them down and cause them loss or distress by going wrong in the future(Ibid).

### 1.2.3 Environment

Amokaye (2004: 3) observed that the term 'environment' is inherently technical in scope and application. This generally accounted for difficulties in finding a uniform and generally accepted definition of the terminology. Many scholars have attempted to define this term in ways, which expressed the full extent of its role and purpose in environmental management. According to Garner (1999: 479) on the *Black's Law Dictionary*, environment is the totality of physical, economic, cultural, aesthetic and social circumstances and factors which surround and affect the desirability and value of property and which also affect the quality of peoples' lives. Section 37 of the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act defines environment to include water, air, land and all plants and human beings or animals living therein and the inter-relationships which exist among these or any of them (NESREA Act, 2007). These definitions comprehensively take cognizance of not only the physical components of the Nigerian environment, but also the human and animal components. It certainly recognizes not just the human or animal component, but the interaction among the different components.

### 1.2.4 Pollution

Nchi (1996:251) defines pollution as a man-made or man aided alteration of chemical, physical or biological quality of the environment to the extent that it is detrimental to that environment or beyond acceptable limits. Heijnsbergen (1979:11) defines pollution as an act whereby offensive use of the water becomes impossible either for animal life or human use, or create a danger to such life or such use. Also, Section 37 of the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act (NESREA) also defines pollution as "man-made or man-aided alteration or chemical, physical, or biological quality of the environment beyond acceptable limits and "pollutants" shall be construed accordingly (NESREA Act, 2007).

### 1.2.5 Peace

Peace is a sign of harmony characterized by the lack of violence, conflict behaviors and the freedom from fear of violence. Generally it is understood as the absence of hostility; peace also suggests the existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal or international relationship, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and a working political order that serves the true interests of all ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/peace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/peace)). The term 'peace' originates from Latin 'pax', meaning compact, agreement, treaty

of peace, tranquility, absence of hostility. The English word came into use in various personal greetings from C.1300 as a translation of the Hebrew *shalom*. Such a translation is, however, imprecise, as *shalom*, which is also cognate with the Arabic *salaam*, has multiple other meanings in addition to peace, including justice, good health, safety, well-being, prosperity, equity, security, good fortune, and friendliness(Ibid). At a personal level, peaceful behaviours are kind, considerate, respectful, just, and tolerant of others' beliefs and behaviours tending to manifest goodwill. According to the former South African President whose death was recently and globally celebrated, the Late Nelson Mandela said: “if you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy, and then he becomes your partner” (www.brainyquotes.com).

## 2.1 Environmental Pollution in the Niger Delta

In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the major cause of pollution is the exploration and exploitation activities of oil companies. The effects and problems of oil pollution are now well known (Omorogbe, 1993:147). There seems to be a re-awakening awareness on the need to protect the environment from the hazards of oil pollution in the past decade, particularly in the Niger Delta area. Apart from the problems suffered from blow-outs and oil spills and from the devastation caused by constant gas flaring, they differ from ravages of day to day production activities (Oluwole, 1991:15). Atsegbua et al (2004:67) posits that about one quarter of the available land in the Delta area of the former Bendel State has been barren due to spillages and leakages. Saliu, et al (2007:1) captured environmental pollution in the Niger Delta Area as follows:

*Oil spills are like spilling blood  
Sometimes one lead to the other  
Birds die on beaches, and  
Poets languish in prison*

The above quoted prose depicts the complex nature of environmental degradation and the crisis in the Niger Delta Area. It talks about how aquatic lives are lost, some are extinct already and how advocates who cry out loud because of the decadence in the area were unjustly prosecuted and gaoled. Prince Udo Edukere, a former Council Chairman confirmed the wanton situation when he said some biota and flora had already been extinguished in the Niger Delta as a result of environmental pollution and he went further:

*I remember one incident as a small boy in the 50s when I and my cousins were on holiday. One afternoon, we jumped into a canoe and raced down the Creeks. As we turned round one of the bends, we saw a group of Elephants crossing from one side of the Creeks to the other. Frightened, we beat on the canoe with our paddles to scare them. As the Elephants ran, they knocked down every tree on their path. We were thrilled. But now, you can't see an Elephant any more in this area. Following oil exploration, the dense equatorial forest with its elephants, monkeys, and other wild lives are all gone. Now, I wouldn't be surprised if our children didn't know what crabs look like. For 29 years, oil exploration has disrupted the ecological balance and made some wildlife extinct (Africa Today, 1998: 23).*

Going by the above account which probably occurred before the discovery of oil in the region, it is really exciting and sad too. Exciting because as kids, even as adults, when you encounter wild animals and you feel entertained, you will love to return the following day, to watch and catch more fun. It also shows how close the people were and accessible to wildlife. It is sad because environmental degradation has taken away the wildlife, aquatic life, and even the natural environment, everything has fallen apart and the center could no longer hold. Peters (1992:II) opined that the reckless petroleum exploitation over the years has turned the Niger Delta region into what could be described as the world most over polluted Delta or Niger. The volume of pollution of the Niger Delta region was clearly illustrated by Africa Today (1996:31) which quoted a World Bank source and stated the quantum of pollution arising only from the discharge of oil contaminated water into the inland and coastal waters in the Niger Delta thus: “the environment is also degraded by the discharge of oil contaminated water into the inland and coaster waters. One barrel of oil is produced along with every two barrels of water. This was mixed with oil and chemicals and poorly treated before being discharged into the environment. For Nigeria's two million barrels of oil per day, one million of contaminated water is discharge into the environment”.

This is an impartial World Bank source which substantially agrees with the outcry of the Chiefs of the former Rivers State to the World Conference of Indigenous people on Environment and Development at Rio Earth Summit in June 1992. The Chiefs lamented in their memorandum to the Summit that: “apart from air pollution from the oil industry's emissions and flares day and night, producing poisonous gases that are silently and

systematically wiping out venerable air borne biota and otherwise endangering the life of plants, game and man himself, we have widespread water pollution and soil... pollution that respectively result in the death of most aquatic eggs at juvenile stages of life of fin-fish and shell fish and sensible animals like Oysters on the one hand, whilst on the other hand agricultural land contaminated with oil spills because it is dangerous for farming, even where they continued to produce any significant yields...confrontations and anger in the oil producing areas occasionally explode into calamities”(Tempo Magazine, 1995: 9).

## 2.2 Understanding Insecurity and the Niger Delta Struggles

The struggles over oil, especially the zeal to close up the gap created between the desires or what the citizens of the region believe is their right and/or entitlement and what they actually get is the bane of all the struggles in the region, which accumulated as a result of frustration to actualize their heart desires. The resultant effect of the accumulation of frustration over years is aggression which later gave birth to many offspring in the region amongst whom are insecurity, violence, conflict, kidnapping, hostage taking, maiming, abduction, oil pipeline vandalism, ethnic militias, crude oil theft, organized crime etc., has made the region become one of the deadliest and fearful regions to thread. Obi (2010: 219) opined that the quest to correct the injustice created by beneficiaries of the profit from oil production, commercialization and the Nigerian ruling elites on the one hand and those of the local indigenous inhabitants whose land and waters the oil is extracted led to the violence agitations in the Niger Delta region. It is a fact that the careless oil exploration activities by multinational corporations have bedeviled the region with environmental degradation, poverty and oppression. However, the role played by the elites from the region by converting the large chunk of money allocated to the developmental needs of the region into personal use, receiving bribes and gratifications from the multinationals did not in any way help the development of the region which rendered the local inhabitants to continue to languish in abject poverty and oppression.

The earliest recorded post – independence arm struggle was led by 27 year-old Ijaw man from Kaiama, Isaac Adaka Boro, and General Officer Commanding the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS). On the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February, 1966, 40 days after the historic January 15<sup>th</sup> 1966 *coup d'état*, Adaka Boro, and his associates declared an Independent Niger Delta Peoples Republic (NDPR):

*Today is a great day, not only in your lives, but also in the history of the Niger Delta. Perhaps, it will be the greatest day for a very long time. This is not because we are going to bring the heavens down, but because we are going to demonstrate to the whole world what and how we feel about oppression... Remember your 70-year-old grandmother who still farms before she eats; remember also your poverty – stricken people; remember, too, your petroleum which is being pumped out daily from your veins; and then fight for your freedom (www.adakaboro.org).*

Those were the words Adaka Boro, an ex-Police Inspector, former President of the Students' Union Government of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and a fresh graduate of Chemistry when he called the attention of the world to the fact that the inhabitants of the Niger Delta were feeling very uncomfortable with their fate in Nigeria. During his address, Boro opined that they should examine with some latitude whether the state of development is to any extent commensurate with a unit of the bulk of already tapped mineral and agricultural resources (Tebakaema, 1982). On the 27<sup>th</sup> May 1967, Rivers State was created and Lt. Commander Diете Spiff, an Ijaw man was made the governor to reduce the tension of the struggles. It was a dream comes true for Boro, the NDVS and the people of the region (en.wikipedia.com). Three days later on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1967, Lt. Col. Odumegu Ojukwu, the then governor of Eastern Nigeria declared the Republic of Biafra to secede from Nigeria, less than five weeks later on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1967, the civil war broke out in Nigeria and the federal troops advanced towards Biafra in order to foil the secession of the oil rich region. Boro and almost all members of his troop were recruited into the Nigerian army. Boro gladly accepted to serve as a Major in the Nigerian army to fight the Biafran troops because they were not consulted before the Niger Delta was carved into the map of Biafra Republic which Boro saw as an affront which would also lead to enslavement. Boro was killed by the Nigerian troop on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, 1968 near Port Harcourt (www.saharareporter.com).

The Ijaws and the Ogonis have one thing in common – oil. While oil was first struck in Ijaw territory of Oloibiri in 1956, it was discovered in commercial quantity in the Ogoni territory of Kegbaradere (K-dere), known as Bomu Oil Field in 1958. Against this background, in 1990, the Ogonis formed the Movement for Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) under the leadership of Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa, founded on the principles of non violence and equality. Thereafter, they proclaimed the Ogoni Bill of Rights while re-affirming their wish to remain a part of the Nigerian polity; the Ogoni demanded seven basic guarantees from Nigeria predicated on “political autonomy” to participate in the affairs of Nigeria as a distinct and separate unit by whatever name

called ([www.adakaboro.org](http://www.adakaboro.org)). Consequently, the Federal government arrested Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists, they were hurriedly tried, condemned to death and hanged on November 10, 1995 against the pleas of world leaders at the time under the Military Head of State of Late Gen. Sani Abacha, an act which has been described as judicial murder (Ibid). From that time onward till today, the struggles against oppression in the Niger Delta took a new approach from the peaceful demands and agitation to a more violent disposition through guerilla warfare, pipeline vandalism, kidnapping, maiming, organized crimes etc. with the emergence of different groups like the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), the Egbesu Boys of Africa(EBA), the Movement for the Survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSIEN), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta(MEND), Community Rights Initiative (CORI), Niger Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ), Chicco Movement, Ijaw National Congress(INC), Niger Delta Freedom Fighters(NDFF), Niger Delta Vigilante(NGV), Itsekiri Nationality Patriots(INP), Niger Delta Peoples' Volunteer Force(NDPVF), Egbema National Congress(ENC) amongst others. These groups have continued to criticize the government, terrorise the multinational corporations and made the region a terrain of insecurity and ethnic militias. The appalling state of affairs that led to the emergence of insecurity in the region was captured by Saro-Wiwa(1998) thus:

*I looked at Ogoni and found that the entire place was now a wasteland; and that we are victims of an ecological war that is very serious and unconventional. It is unconventional because no bones are broken, no one is maimed. People are not alarmed because they can't see what is happening. But human beings are at risk, plants and animals are at risk. The air and water are poisoned. Finally, the land itself dies. Oil has brought nothing but disaster to our people.*

From this lament by the late renounced Environmentalist, one can glean the neglect and failure of the Nigerian State who is the direct beneficiary of oil proceeds in addressing the environmental challenge, which has hitherto bedevilled the people of the region. If the water and the air are poisoned and the land is dead, which means the land can no longer bring forth agricultural produce for food to survive, and then what hope and future is left which the people live for? The age long neglect, deceit by the political class in connivance with the state and the multinationals to oppress the peasant farmers and indigent citizens, to exploit their resources, destroy their ecosystem is a worthwhile cry.

Watts (2008) asserted that with increase in revenue generation to the federal, state and local governments, the poverty level in Nigeria however continues to increase. Almost 90 per cent of the local inhabitants of the Niger Delta fall below the poverty line of \$1 Dollar per day as they depended on the aquatic resources for their livelihoods. Yet, the aquatic resources they depended on for their daily livelihood has been destroyed and continues to go extinct. Human Rights Watch (2007) also lend credence to the voice of the people, corroborated and labelled the frustration as "resource curse", the "devil's excreta", or the source of the "Dutch Disease". The oil rather than bring blessings and improve the standard of living of the people, its exploitation have resulted in impoverishing the common masses and creates violence and insecurity in the geographical space of the Niger Delta. Although, the federal government of Nigeria initiated several developmental projects in order to resolve the problems peculiar to the region to enhance their socio-economic development such as the creation of additional federal states of Akwa Ibom in 1987, Delta in 1991 and Bayelsa in 1996; the establishment of Niger Delta Development Commission(NDDC), Niger Delta Development Board(NDDDB), Oil Mineral Producing Development Commission(OMPADEC), Federal Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs; increase in the percentage of revenue allocation based on derivation from 1.5% to 3% in 1992 and 13% in 1999 (Osagie, 2008:189); the installation of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan GCFR, an Ijaw man as the Vice President in 2007, same as President in May 2010 after the death of the incumbent President Umar Yar'Adua on May 5, 2010 and his subsequent election as the substantive President under the Peoples' Democratic Party(PDP) on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2011 among others. Ukiwo (2011) opined that some of these initiatives are laudable and need to be strengthened; they have however not been able to achieve enduring peace in the region because they have failed to address the remote causes of the problems and agitations in the Niger Delta region.

### **2.3 Human Rights Abuse and Violations in the Niger Delta**

The Niger Delta region records incidences of human rights abuse and violations by the Nigerian State who tries to suppress the cries and voices of the people in protest against oppression against the State and the multinationals, since the latter became a *de facto law superiors* with the backing of the State which continued to encourage incidences of insecurity and continued violence in the Niger Delta. The murder and public hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in November, 1995 and the subsequent detention and torture of other members of MOSOP are among the earliest recorded cases of human rights violations (Adeola, 2001:209). The first year of the administration of President

Olusegun Obasanjo witnessed the deployment of troops to volatile areas in the region. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1999, Odi, an oil producing community in Bayelsa witnessed a violent pogrom on the order of President Obasanjo with a record of about 2,483 deaths and several properties levelled to the ground. The invasion was attributed to the murder of nine Police Officers in the community (Human Rights Watch, 1999). The Odi pogrom was followed by the raid of Odioma in 2005, Egbema, Olugbobiri and Ikebiri in 2004, Okerenkoko in 2006, Agge in 2008, Gbaramatu in 2009, and Ayakoromo in 2010 (Okumagba, 2012:32).

Amnesty International (2011) reports that the Joint Task Force (JTF) constituted by all members of the security forces in Nigeria, police operations in the region remained characterized by human rights violations. Hundreds of people were unlawfully killed in cold blood before or during arrests on the streets or in the creeks. Others were tortured to death in police detention; many disappeared from police custody without a trace with few police officers being held accountable, leaving the relatives of the victims without justice. The Police increasingly wore plain clothes without identification; which makes it more difficult for the people to identify and complain about individual officers. All these killings may have constituted extra judicial killings (Ibid).

The Special Task Forces, including the Special Anti Robbery Squad and SOS, committed a wide range of human rights violations in the Niger Delta. In the early 2011, the Bayelsa State government set up Operation Famou Tangbe – “kill and throw away” in the local language to fight crime. Many Officers linked to the operation reportedly killed unlawfully, tortured, arbitrarily arrested and detained innocent citizens. Suspects in detention reportedly had no access to their lawyers or relatives (Amnesty International Report: 2012). On 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February 2011, Dietemepreye Ezonasa, a student aged 22, was arrested by Operation Famou Tangbe and taken to a police station. On 27 February, the police denied that he was in their custody. His whereabouts have since remained unknown. On 11 May, Tochukwu Ozokwu, 25, was arrested by Operation Famou Tangbe. The next day the police told him to jump into the river or be shot. He could not swim and he drowned. No investigation was carried out (Ibid). In September 2011, the Federal Government stopped Operation Famou Tangbe. The human rights violations committed while it was active were not investigated. Domestic violence, rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls by state officials and individuals remained rife. The authorities consistently failed to prevent and address sexual violence, or to hold perpetrators to account. Human Rights Watch (2013) noted, inter alia: “the failure of Nigeria’s government to address deeply entrenched human rights problems, such as widespread poverty, government corruption, police abuse, and longstanding impunity for a wide range of crimes has created fertile ground for violent militancy throughout the country.

Amaechi (2013) said the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in Rivers State holds dire consequence for Rivers, Niger Delta and Nigeria. Rotimi Amaechi, the governor of Rivers State who petitioned the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), to investigate the “grave and deteriorating human rights situations” that he alleged were orchestrated by the State’s Commissioner of Police, Joseph Mbu. The petition, dated October 1, 2013 and addressed to the Chairman of NHRC, Chidi Odinkalu, compares the security situation in Rivers State to that of Baga, in Maidugiri, where scores of people were allegedly killed by soldiers pursuing members of the terrorist group, Boko Haram. Governor Amaechi, therefore called on the NHRC to replicate its “groundbreaking engagement” of the Baga massacre to investigate the security concerns in the state. He further declared: “I believe and assert that the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in Rivers State if not urgently addressed, holds dire consequence not just for the over 5 million citizens in the state but the whole Niger Delta and indeed Nigeria as a whole(Ibid).

#### **2.4 Human Security and its Antecedent Drivers in the Niger Delta**

Human Security focuses primarily on protecting people while promoting peace and assuring sustainable continuous development. It emphasizes aiding individuals by using a people centered approach for resolving inequalities that affect security. The rate of insecurity presently in the Niger Delta, especially the guerrilla warfare has reduced because of amnesty initiative of the Federal government and the negotiation with Militant Warlords in the region. Yet, the forces that drive insecurity remain persistent and pervasive. Some of the drivers of insecurity includes: Oil pollution, extreme poverty, lack of good governance, social and family dislocation, bad and corrupt leadership, high sense of injustice resulting from the imbalance between the “haves” and “have not”, high levels of youth unemployment, perceived discriminatory employment practices against locals by oil companies and socioeconomic and political marginalisation and neglect by successive administrations constitutes the main grievances against oil companies and the government. These complaints have a long history connected to the view of the ethnic minority groups in the Niger Delta that they are being ‘cheated’ out of a fair share of oil revenues because they are politically marginalised by a federal government that is dominated by bigger (non-oil producing) ethnic groups, in partnership with multinationals to exploit their region, take their lands and expose them to oil pollution and environmental degradation, while the indigenes and owners of the

land do not benefit from the billions of dollars generated from their region, nor do they get adequate compensation for the destruction of their livelihoods or the loss of their lands (Okonta, 2008). Based on environmental and minority rights, the Niger Delta Resistant Movements in the 1990s framed their protests and demanded in political and environmental terms. On the other hand, the government sees the activities of the protesting oil communities and the armed militias as acts of economic sabotage to the main source of national revenues and a challenge to its power in the Niger Delta. The activities of some of the armed groups are also interpreted as acts of criminality as well as a threat to national stability and security. Since Nigeria is an oil-dependent nation, with oil accounting for over 80 per cent of national revenues and 95 per cent of foreign exchange earnings, any act capable of resulting in the disruption of oil production is perceived as a threat to the survival and wellbeing of the country (Obi, 2008). On the other hand, Western Oil Multinationals (Anglo Dutch Shell, Exxon Mobil, Chevron Texaco, Agip - ENI and Total) which operate in partnership with the Nigerian state oil corporation, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), sees community agitation and attacks on them as a threat to their business interests (Ibid).

### 3.1 Sustainable Peace and Development in the Niger Delta

Sustainable peace and development involves the transformation of the social and political environment that is responsible for inequality and endangers historical grievances. This will mean the development of social, political, and economic infrastructure that tackles inequality and prevent violence and crisis. Saba (1994:1) defined sustainable development as the development that meets the needs and aspirations of the current generations without compromising the ability to meet those of future generations. It is also mean improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems (Ajai, 1995:41). Section 14(2)b of the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* provides that: “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government (CFRN, 1999). In applying this provision to the fact in issue, one can say that the government, both at states and the Federal had failed to safeguard the welfare and the security of the Niger Delta region. But, because of criticisms, international and various human rights presence in the region, the government started making concerted efforts geared towards correcting the impression, after deadly decays which hitherto, has only reduced the tempo of insecurity, but has failed to bring the impasse to an abrupt end. It is our position that if the welfare of the people is well taking care of, there will be peace, if there is peace insecurity will be history; it is also when there is peace that development can thrive.

SatÓ (2004) opined that human security theory offers theoretical support for peace - building. Hence, there is the need to lay the foundation for peace. Enu, et al (2004:256) in their contribution asserts that peace building is a situation in which peace is secured; peace without the presence of structural violence such as poverty and discrimination or a society which guarantees human security in which human rights and social justice are respected. Accordingly, if the seven dimensions of human security as contained in the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security are grossly undermined, sustainable peace and development cannot be guaranteed and achieved (UNDP, 1994). The UNDP proposal of 1995 at the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, confirmed that social development, social justice, and peace as well as security are inseparable. This underscores the UNDP theory of human security which regards social injustice as a structural problem threatening sustainable peace and development. It is expected that in the pursuit of human security, sustainable peace and development, the national institutions must be agents of change. They must also be sufficiently empowered and have the mandate to alter and direct the affairs for the desired positive change to occur. Therefore, to pursue human security is to enhance the national capacity to advance universal values among the people and enthrone sustainable development. The *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992* provided in *Principle 4* that: “in order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be isolated from it”. Article 10(a) of the *Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security*, signed by the Heads of States and Government of the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1999, provides that the Mediation and Security Council shall decide on all matters relating to peace and security. The above perspectives if considered carefully and addressed objectively, the quest for sustainable peace and development will be a done deal.

### 3.2 Challenges of Insecurity and Sustainable Peace in the Niger Delta

The bulk of the challenges lie in the Political elites and agents of the states. Aliu (2010:22) opined that the politicians bought the weapons and armed the boys to help them secure electoral victory. And when they have used them to achieve their desires, they dump them. When the boys no longer have access to them and they no longer measure up to the life they were living when they were getting money from the politicians, they start to threaten innocent people. Therefore, in a situation where a party to a problem is also a party to the solution, or

her agents are represented on the platform to the solution, she will ensure that her tracks are covered; at the end of it all, such recommended solutions will be a sham, outright deception and diversion of attention. A critical look into the activities of the Joint Task Force (JTF) comprising all the security agents in Nigeria, deployed by the Federal government to maintain peace and security in the Niger Delta are diplomatically or indirectly linked to the insecurity, killings and human rights abuse in the region, but tries to create a decoy impression that the militants and criminals are the perpetrators. They do that for their own selfish ends as directed by their principals who are the states, political gladiators and top government allies and the multinationals are not innocent too.

Onduke(2003) in his contribution is of the opinion that the root of conflicts is the clash of interests, values and goals, as conflict can only be resolved when these are eradicated. He observed that preventing and mitigating the impact of internal violent conflict are not sufficient to achieve peace and stability. He suggested the upholding of human rights, pursuing inclusive and equitable development, respecting human dignity and diversity as germane in the promotion of peace. He further said the preservation of human dignity as the core of human security, human rights and human development is more challenging, he said it requires the use of processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations; creation of political, social, environmental, military and cultural systems that gives the people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity. Raymer (2006) is of the opinion that sustaining peace must emphatically be comprehensive with four major components which he said is globally applicable as the development of education, health, social policy and security; the development of capacity to conduct census; the consolidation of constitutional democracy and the development of capacity to collect revenue. In the case of Niger Delta however, Enu, et al, (op. cit. 257-258) stated that the challenges to human security, sustainable peace and development in the region are the suppression of ineffective government agencies; the suppression of human rights; the marginalization of the minority by the majority ethnic groups; inability to secure oil installations; unequal distribution of oil revenue; and the failure to recompense for environmental degradation.

The United States Commission on Global Governance observed that security of the people must be regarded as a goal that is as important as the security of the state. On this premise, Abad (2000) observed that human security will always be threatened if there is no inter-state, inter-regional and inter ethnic peace and stability, because the promotion of regional security must remain a legitimate preoccupation of nation-states. Enu, et al (2011:257) asserted that as a function of security dilemma, national security, equilibrium and harmony do not just evolve by chance, they have to be conscientiously promoted and managed by credible and responsible leadership. The absence of this leadership quality in Nigeria is responsible for the sustained crisis in the Niger Delta. Our leaders have lost the culture of service and imbibed instead a culture of lordship. It is time we make them realize that leadership is a call to service. We need their objective commitment to the development of all endeavours of our society as specific and pragmatic efforts through patriotic building and solidarity are *sine qua non* to the promotion of peace and development.

#### **4.1 Recommendations**

It is imperative to search for objective and effective paradigm for human security, sustainable peace and development in the Niger Delta region. The past and current ineffective efforts should either be strengthened or jettisoned with new ideas and innovations that conform to the current realities of the Millennium should be welcome on board. It is on this note that that this study suggests the following recommendations:

- ◆ The State should live up to its primary responsibility in accordance to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as amended, which is the grundnorm of all Nigerian Laws, by upholding the security and welfare of the Niger Delta people.
- ◆The Mediation and Security Council of ECOWAS should constitute a regional Security Maintenance, Sustainable Peace and Development Panel. The Panel should be constituted by none or few Nigerians and be headed by none Nigerian with the aim to restore security, ensure sustainable peace and lays the foundation for developmental needs of the region. The Panel should be granted a minimum of three (3-5) years to finish their mandate before handing over to the Nigerian State. The essence is to avoid state's intervention, apparatus and allies and to break the jinx of all godfatherisms and cabals in the region.
- ◆There should be a re-examination of the antecedent factors driving insecurity in the region, taking into consideration the root causes, yearnings and aspirations of the region.
- ◆Gas flaring and environmental pollution should be reduced to the barest minimum if not completely eradicated as applicable in developed oil producing nations of the world irrespective the cost of eradication.
- ◆The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act (NESREA), the principal agency vested with jurisdiction and authorized to enforce compliance with laws, guidelines, policies and standards of environment matters should be strengthened. Section 8(s) of NESREA Act 2007 specifically limit its jurisdiction by providing that the Agency can do such other things other than in the Oil and



#### Gas Sector.

- ◆ Human Security, Sustainable Peace and Development should be integrated as part of government policy, conflict management and governance agenda.
- ◆ There is the need for a reform in the Land Use Act 1978 which vests the ownership of land and its natural resources in the Federal government. This must be done with a view to preventing siphoning of oil proceeds meant for the development of the region into the hands of few elites and people close to the corridor of power. This will give the region a fair share and equitable distribution of their resources.
- ◆ The Amnesty initiative of the federal government to the militants and subsequent training of militants abroad is a welcome effort, but it is a temporary measure. The government should address all ecological problems; improve the standard of living far beyond \$1 per day. There should be a checkmate on Oil Producing communities to prevent monopoly of proceeds of resources over non – oil producing communities in the region.
- ◆ There should be a sustainable policy that will take care of the aged. Youth empowerment programs should be targeted at all youth. Education should be made compulsory and free from Primary to secondary school with at least 70% financial assistance up to the tertiary level. This will go a long way to eradicate poverty in the region.

#### 4.2 Conclusion

It is trite to say that any environment where insecurity and criminality flourishes, there is bound to be tension, anxiety and confusion. Ordinarily, conflicts can lead to clashes as socio-economic neglect can result to hatred, anger, and frustration against actors and competitors which can cause confusion in the society. The frustration-aggression hypothesis of conflict, as pioneered by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O.H. Mowrer, and Robert Sears in 1939 has been used as one of the dominant explanations of violence in the Niger Delta. Berkowitz (1989:59) explained the theory which contended that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presuppose the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always lead to some form of aggression. It is in this sense that the frustration-aggression theory asserts that individuals become aggressive when there is relative deprivation especially when there is a huge gap between their desired wants and what they actually get. Democracy is meaningless if people do not have access to the basic necessities of life.

An idle mind they say is the devil's workshop. The rate of poverty and unemployment in the region is appalling. The youths should be adequately trained and engaged at various levels with the multinationals, while some should be empowered to start off business after skill acquisition, which will make them engaged and have a sense of belonging. Albanese (2011) corroborated this where he used his company - Sohar Smelter, in Oman as a case study, in which about 90% of the workers were locally hired. He noted that the area was the hotspot in Oman for riots that took place in the Arab spring in 2011. And during the riots, the employees at Sohar went to the plant and stayed there to prevent the rioters from destroying the company's facilities, because they needed to protect their jobs. Getting the local inhabitants to identify with the oil multinationals operating in the region would not only help to provide jobs for the unemployed youths in the region, but will equally help to build the trust and confidence of the people in the Oil multinationals, protect the companies' facilities, protect their 'licence to operate' and ultimately bring about a sustainable peace and development in the region. Sustainable peace is a *sine qua non* to sustainable development.

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