

**State Creation:
Hope Rises for
Ogoni, Neighbours**



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OGONI STAR

VOICE OF NIGER DELTA PEOPLE

Vol. 10, No 10. December 1 - 13, 2009

ISSN 2006-2389

N100.00

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MOSOP Hotlines

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MOSOP Calls for Meaningful Projects in Ogoni

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, MOSOP, has reiterated the need for the execution of only projects that meet the people's priority needs and aspirations in Ogoni.

Speaking during this year's Ogoni Martyrs Remembrance Day on November 10 in Bori, the MOSOP President, Ledum Mitee said as the Movement continues the process of engagement of political leaders, it is important to caution against tendencies which may suggest that government or those in government alone know everything, including the needs of the people.

The MOSOP President said Ogoni people must not allow their position to stagger them to the false belief that

political leadership imbues them with the superior knowledge of what is best for their people without consultations.

MOSOP also reminded those in political office not to be tempted to insist on 'projects' like army barracks or other constructions where there are obvious attendant long term problems and discernible real benefits are hard to find.

The people believed that genuine development is one where the benefits to those residing in the area is obvious and sustainable beyond the immediate gains to the developer, adding that they have stood by the principle that there is hardly ever any reason to deprive the people for their ancestral lands unwillingly.

The Movement also

appealed to the entire Ogoni people to embrace its accountability initiative as they make even hesitant steps in improving how those in political office take into account the voices of the people.

This laudable programme, it said had commenced with the participation of the Deputy speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Hon. Dum Deekor, adding that it will continue with the appearance of other elected and appointed leaders.

Acknowledging that the Ogoni Struggle, encapsulated in the Ogoni Bill of Rights, was also to ensure that the political environment ensured the peoples' participation as of right and guarantees their autonomy within the Nigerian Federation, the MOSOP

President disclosed that the Ogoni peoples quest for an Ogoni State will soon receive attention at the National Assembly.

According to him, "I can state here that our quest for an Ogoni State, now renamed Bori State to accommodate some of our willing neighbours, has progressed to

the level where, as I speak, arrangements are being concluded for the formal submission of the demand for the state to the National Assembly within the next few days".

Similarly, MOSOP also described as a welcome initiative the recent government's decision to concede 10% equity to oil

communities.

MOSOP noted that if well implemented together with other needed interventions the 10% equity would help in bringing about the desired results, adding that it is a fitting testament to the success of the ideas championed by the Ogonis and for which their heroes died.

Chief Nsane Honoured

A prominent Chieftancy title holder, an academician, and justice of peace, Chief Daniel Nsane had again been honoured by the Church of Christ.

Chief Nsane who is also an Executive Committee Member of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, MOSOP and the wife Mrs. Gift Nsane have been elected into the Sacred Order of the Knight of St.

Christopher (KSC) and the lady of St. Mary (KSM) respectively.

Their election took place at the recently concluded Knighthood investiture of the Diocese of Ogoni at the All Saint Anglican Church Cathedral, Bori by his Lord Bishop, Rt. Rev. Solomon Sunagelo Gberegbara (JP).

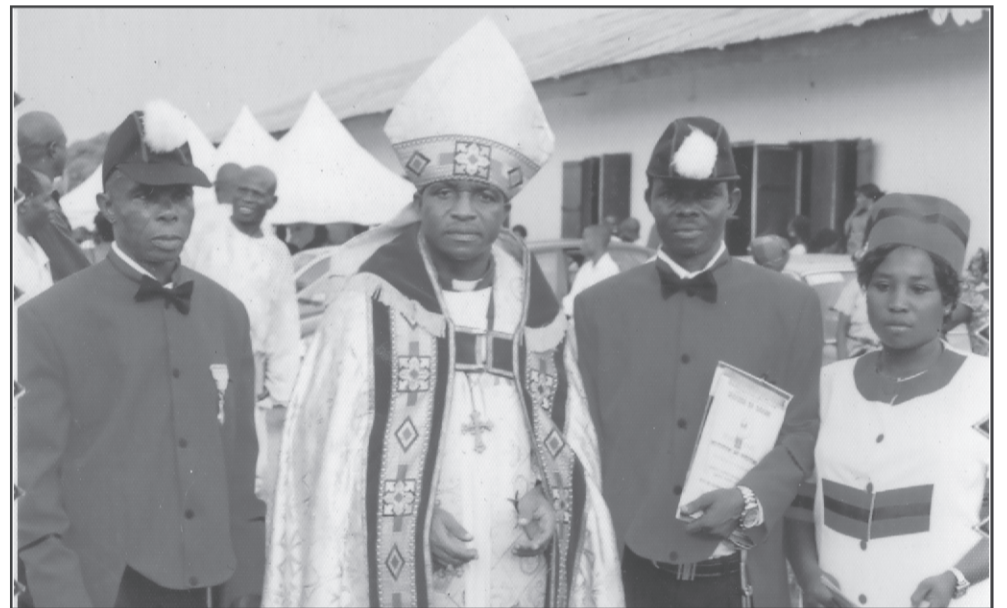
Meanwhile, Sir, Daniel Nsane (JP) and Lady Gift Nsane have congratulated

his Lord Bishop, Rt. Rev. S.S. Gberegbara (JP) on the successful hosting of the Knighthood, ladies and Dame exercise.

Sir, Daniel Nsane noted that Rt. Rev. Gberegbara (JP), the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Ogoni, has demonstrated that he is truly an Ambassador of Peace, adding, "This was a brilliant achievement since the inauguration of the Diocese in 2005.



Prof. (Ambassador) J. Bawa Salka Chairman, National working Committee Conference of Special Advisers to State Governors of Nigeria, speaking during National Conference in Port Harcourt recently



Sir, Daniel Nsane (JP) and wife Lady Gift Nsane pose for the press with Bishop Gberegbara after the induction

National Conferences:

Special Advisers Review Roles, Call for Better Environment to Deliver - *Olawale Lamina and Sylver Ejike*

Special advisers to the governors from the 36 states of the country, including the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, have risen from a three-day national conference demanding access to contribute more meaningfully into governance in line with section 196 of the 1999 constitution.

This was the summation of the communiqué issued after the three-day 3rd Biannual National Conference held at Hotel Presidential in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

The State governor's special advisers had as their conference theme: Dividends of Democracy and Service Delivery in the Face of Present Economic Recession: The Role of Special Advisers. The group was unanimous that, for the state Chief Executives to drive maximum benefits from the appointment of the Special Advisers, there is the need for

the state governors in the country to provide them the enabling atmosphere for the performance of their responsibilities.

The communiqué which was signed by the duo of the group's Chairman National Working Committee, Professor (Ambassador) Bawa Salka and the Secretary, National Working Committee, Hon. Batom Mitee, made available to journalists also recognized the fact that although the governors are not bound by the advice they may receive from their bosses, such input would no doubt add quality to decision-making process and thereby improve the service delivery capacity of the government at the state level.

Of concern to the conference was the recurring rivalry between the special advisers and the state commissioners over issues bothering on constitutional responsibility, while inadequate access to their

state chief executives were said to be responsible for the low impact of their contributions. They argued that the non-delineation of their roles was "akin to power without responsibility.

But they agree that in the face of the global economic melt down, an aspect related to the conference theme, there is the need for them to be proactive in the discharge of their functions by ensuring that state governors are prudent in the way they utilize available resources. According to them, this can be made possible by "blocking leakages in the financial management systems, streamlining of democratic structure, as well as originate idea that will increase the revenue profile of the states.

After a critical look at areas that constituted real challenges to their relevance and responsibilities, participants recommended periodic meeting between the special advisers and their state

chief executives as a way of containing lack of access.

To mitigate tension arising from inter-lapping roles, participants called for assignment of specific job schedules to the special advisers. They added that each state should establish its own special advisers' council; especially where none exists in order to promote interpersonal discussions with the governors.

While commending the governor of Rivers State for the supports extended to the participants in the state, the conference advised the special advisers to develop framework to access grants from international financial institutions, as part of efforts to stem the tide of a depressed economy in the country. The conference also called on state governors all over the country to support the Forum of Special Advisers because of its potentials to promote national unity and exchange of ideas.

Earlier, Chairman of the occasion, Justice Karibi-Whyte, note that with the volume of work before the state executives in the country, there is the need for them to be assisted, adding that despite their exalted office, the governors are servants of the people. He observed that the special advisers possessed an edge to do their work better, since they interface with the people, noting that democracy is anchored on delivery of quality service to the people. He tasked the advisers to give advice that can enhance national prosperity. "Let the citizens be proud of your services," said the retired eminent jurist.

In his own address, the guest speaker at the conference, Barrister Ledum Mitee said that service delivery by political office holders had generated hard debate in political circle in Nigeria when viewed against the public expectation. He advised against using political consideration as the basis for the appointment of Nigerian special advisers, rather he

noted that the choice must be based on competence. He argued in support of the continued existence of the office of the special advisers in the country, stating that it is one of the demands of the modern democracy as it was in the medieval era. He urged the advisers to use their offices to save costs. According to him, for the governors to get better results they should give room to their advisers to deliver, even by allowing them to have input into policy formulation as "there cannot be powers without responsibility."

Representative of the governor of Rivers State, Rt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi, the Secretary to the State Government, Hon. Magnus Abe stated that the forum had helped the special adviser to cross-fertilize ideas on issues of common interest. He lamented the absence of the state executives all over the country, saying that the benefits of the conference would be far reaching in governance.

State Creation: Hope Rises for Ogoni, Neighbours

* As Ogoni Remember Heroes

It is expected that if actions are taken according to plan, the National Assembly will soon receive, and commence debates on the proposal for the creation of Bori State.

There are high feelings and emotions in the Ogoni area as moves by the Ogoni leaders on the agitation for the creation of state intensify.

As stated on November 10, 2009 by the MOSOP President, Ledum Mitee during the 14th Anniversary of the Remembrance of Ogoni Heroes at the All Saints Anglican Church Cathedral Bori, the quest for the creation of an Ogoni or Bori State is on top gear.

Following the undeterred efforts made by the Ogoni leaders, the MOSOP President said the state creation agitation had progressed to the level where arrangements had been concluded for the formal submission to the National Assembly of the demand for the Bori State.

He explained that the name Bori State was unanimously taken to accommodate those he called

good and willing neighbours which include, the Opobos and the Andonis.

Mitee further disclosed that all elected representatives from the areas involved have endorsed the state creation proposal as required in a democratic political dispensation, emphasizing that the environment which the Ogoni leaders fought and died for was not restricted to the physical environment but to ensure that the political environment ensured the peoples participation as of rights and guarantees their autonomy within the Nigerian Federation.

It was, he said, in this respect, that MOSOP has remained committed to the actualization of that component of the Ogoni Bill of Rights.

Speaking on the significance of the day, the MOSOP President said the day is marked in commemoration of the fate that befell many people in the course of the Ogoni Struggle and that this year's memorial is being dedicated not just to the heroic sacrifices of the

Ogoni 13 but to all those who sacrificed their lives, properties, inconveniences; the many who lost all they had, the women and children who were beaten, tortured and detained by soldiers maintained and armed from the resources of their land.

The MOSOP President had commenced his speech with a call for a minute silence in honour of late Chief Gani Fawehinmi who also sacrificed his resources for the Ogoni course.

Mitee noted that "the Universality of the message of our struggle and its centrality to the national question makes us to use this period to also remember great allies and patriots in the struggle for justice in the country who had also passed on, the most notable of whom is the national icon, Chief Gani Fawehinmi".

He observed that the Ogoni Struggle is increasingly being recognized as a symbol, a metaphor and model for peaceful agitation for justice in the Niger Delta region and beyond. While remarking that the Ogoni heroes did not and must not die in vain, the

Ogoni leader urged all Ogoni people to reflect on the fact that the underlying issue of the struggle for which they gave their lives is the natural and social environment.

Similarly, the presiding minister of the anniversary, Rt. Rev. S.S. Gberegbara (JP) said the day was organized to celebrate the Ogoni Martyrs, as people who laid down their lives for the emancipation of their land.

Bishop Gberegbara who is the Chairman of Ogoni Council of Churches (OCC) also said they gathered together to worship the Almighty God who alone can execute righteous judgement for the oppressed indigenous and minority peoples of the world.

While delivering the sermon, Rt. Rev. Gberegbara (JP) admonished the people not to be deceived or be weary as God is in charge of the struggle.

He warned against all acts of idolatry and non commitment to things of God, saying God answers all those that genuinely call upon him.

Prayers were offered for the Ogoni Struggle, the



people, MOSOP leadership, the church and the nation.

The 14th Anniversary programmed also had officiating ministers of God which included, Rt. Rev. (Dr) W.A. Yobe of the Methodist Church, Rev. E.O. Adewara of the Baptist Church, Rev. Richard Biragbara, who was the service conductor, Rev. Mike Alelo and other men of God.

The first scriptural lesson was read by Mr. Harry Wiwa from Isaiah 43: 1-6, while the second lesson from John 10:1-

5 was read by the MOSOP President, Ledum Mitee.

It would be recalled that nine Ogoni patriots were murdered by the Nigeria State on November 10, 1995 while four distinguished leaders were earlier killed on May 21, 1994.

Following the reconciliation in Ogoni, the people resolved to mark as an annuity, a commemorative event for the late Ogonis, tagged Ogoni 13 on November 10, which now referred to as "Ogoni Heroes Day".

MOSOP Accountability Programme

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) has again stated unequivocally that the ongoing Leadership Accountability Programme organized as part of its Democracy and Good Governance initiative does not have any political affiliation or aimed at enhancing any political position.

Making this clarification during the presentation of her constitutional stewardship by the Senator representing Rivers South-East Senatorial District Senator, Lee Ledogo Meaba at the Ogoni Peace and Freedom Centre Bori the MOSOP President, Mr. Ledum Mitee and the programme officer Barrister, Cynthia Onwuka said the Movement is not unaware of the interest, feelings and speculations the forum has

Stewardship Forum Not Political - MOSOP

generated, particularly among the various political affiliations in Ogoni and the State in general.

They said MOSOP is not a political organization and does not provide political platform for any individual or group and should not be seen as projecting any political ambition in the execution of her constitutional programmes and activities.

The MOSOP President emphasized that the programme was designed to offer equal opportunity to all elected and appointed government officials of Ogoni extraction to interact with the electorate.

Also, the MOSOP programme officer reminded the people that the accountability initiative

commenced earlier in Taabaa with the presentation by the Deputy Speaker and member representing Khana Constituency II in the Rivers State House of Assembly, Hon. Dumnamene Deekor.

The MOSOP official said the initiative and series of interactive fora between elected representatives and their electorate, particularly in the Ogoni area of Rivers State was to deepen democracy by encouraging accountable leaderships and popular participation in governance.

They called on all elected representatives to take advantage of the programme by participating its adding that all elected government officials in the Ogoni area would be invited, no matter the political party and interest,

to give stewardship of service to the people, noting that one of the major challenges has been a convenient date for the politicians who have always shown themselves as being so tight with their schedules. "but we would ensure that everyone of them is contacted again and try to get convenient time and date from them," the MOSOP President said.

Speaking in a closing remark, the President of MOSOP, Ledum Mitee noted that one thing evident from the event is that, once again, the Ogonis have set the pace. The Ogonis drawing the Ogoni Bill of Rights 19 years ago made demands for resource control. Today, the government seemingly appears to be reviewing and

looking at those demands. This indicates that the Ogonis are living nineteen (19) years ahead of Nigeria. The 10% equity profit and other benefits for host-communities in the Petroleum Industry Bill before the National Assembly is a clear indication to that effect. This indicates that the Ogonis are living nineteen (19) years ahead of Nigeria. The President of MOSOP, Ledum Mitee thanked the people, including traditional rulers, members of the House of Assembly, academicians, representatives of civil society organizations, the media and kingdom coordinators of MOSOP, for being part of the program. He urged other elected representatives to take a cue from Senator Lee Maeba and

Hon. Dumnamene Deekor who on the 17th of October 2009 responded positively to a home-call to interact with the electorate in their constituencies.

Meanwhile, the MOSOP accountability programme has been described as good for democracy. A women leader Mrs Mercy Gokah made this observation in Bori during the presentation by Senator Lee Maeba on Sunday November 22, 2009.

Mrs. Gokah who said she is a member of the Amnesty committee said with forum, the nation's democracy will be strengthened and the people will begin to appreciate the benefits of their votes and participation in the electoral activities.

MOSOP Leadership Gov. Amaechi Warns Diigbo

The Executive Governor of Rivers State, Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi has strongly warned Mr. Goodluck Diigbo, who is illegally laying claims to the MOSOP Presidency to retract his actions; otherwise he would order his (Diigbo) arrest and would be prosecuted accordingly.

It is heartwarming to note that on Friday, November 27, 2009, the Chief Executive Officer of Rivers State, Governor

* Threatens to Arrest Him Over illegal, Divisive Actions

Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi, interacted with the electorate in the core MOSOP focus areas, particularly, Good Governance and Accountability in the Niger Delta. The forum, which was held at the Khana Council Headquarters in Bori, was indeed the first of its kind in Ogoni since the inception of his leadership.

Governor Amaechi passionately deplored the

conflict generated by Mr. Goodluck Diigbo's self-styled leadership claims, and strongly emphasized that it is wrong for anyone to impose himself as a leader of any group or people when he has not been given such mandate.

Governor Amaechi said Diigbo should desist from parading himself as 'MOSOP President' as this has continuously generated conflict in Ogoni.

He cautioned, in very strong terms, that he (Gov. Amaechi) may have to arrest Goodluck Diigbo if he continues in that apparently destabilizing attitude.

During the plenary session, issues that were notably re-echoed by the electorate, at the interactive session, bordered on the need for unity of purpose and cohesion among Ogoni leaders, environmental

remediation, women participation in governance, assessment of performance of the Chairmen in the Ogoni Local Government Areas, Goodluck Diigbo's self-imposition on Ogoni people and relocation of Bori Camp to Ogoni kingdom among others.

On the relocation of Bori Camp to Ogoni kingdom, the Governor was quite emphatic and insistent that

he would not go back on the plan. He hinted that government would not take kindly to any plans to destabilize this arrangement on the relocation. He cautioned that if Ogoni people attack him personally, being from Ikwerre, because of the planned relocation, the Ikwerre community may react to the attack and this might degenerate to

Amaechi Wants NNPC, Oil Firms Relocated to Niger Delta

By **Ahamefula Ogbu**

Governor Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State has canvassed for the relocation of the headquarters of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and

other oil companies in the country to the Niger Delta region.

He said it was necessary since the region is where the business takes place and questioned on the rationale behind citing offices of oil-

related businesses away from the region where the business takes place.

He stated this when the Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Mr. Ibrahim Bakindo, paid him a courtesy visit at Government House

in Port Harcourt. He observed that while applying other measures in achieving peace and stability in the region, there was need to insist that oil companies stay in their operational areas.

Amaechi reasoned that it will help buoy up economic activities that will impact positively on the people as well as help create employment for the

reformed militants who need to be engaged.

He further condemned any policy decision that supports moving the oil economy out of the Niger Delta, pointing out that redressing the injustices of the past would not be possible without correcting such neglect.

Barkindo in this speech commended Amaechi for the

role he played in ensuring that militancy was stamped out of the region which accounts for the peace that is being enjoyed in the region.

He said activities in the oil sector was picking up with improved production of oil and gas, adding that all hands should be on deck to ensure that peace lasts.

Gani - Remembered in America

By **Charles Ajunwa**

The former Ambassador of the United States to Nigeria, Walter Carrington has lamented the rate at which Nigeria is decaying, saying Nigerians must take the passing away of the late legal icon and human rights activist, Chief Gani Fawehinmi (SAN) as a challenge and work for the greatness of country. Also, former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu has challenged Nigerians to unleash the Gani in them in order to fight anti-democratic and corrupt leadership in Nigeria.

Both Carrington and Ribadu, made the calls last weekend during the celebration of life of late Fawehinmi organized by the National Conscience Party (NCP), Washington, DC Metropolitan area, which took place at Ogbeni Lanre Banjo's residence in Maryland, U.S. THISDAY was told that the former Ambassador cancelled all his engagements to attend the two-day event in honour late Fawehinmi.

Carrington, who spoke about how proud he was when he first visited the University of Ibadan in the late 50s, said when he went back to Nigeria 20 years later, the lack of maintenance was more pronounced. Carrington reminded the guests of the day a reception was organized for him by the human rights community in Nigeria and the Abacha Junta disrupted it.

He said Gani dared the military who wanted to shoot by jumping in front of the gun and asked the military to shoot him. The Ambassador said that Nigeria has lost the noblest protector of its laws, its indefatigable conscience. The poor, according to him, have lost their most passionate advocate. "Arese and I have lost a friend whom we deeply admired and who made me proud and humble to have been a member of the legal profession which he so glorified," Carrington said.

According to Ribadu, "Given the extraordinary talent available in Nigeria and the potent of democratic forces, something must be done urgently. We have to say enough is enough!

Enough is enough of insecurity, corruption, robberies, religious intolerant and bigotry, 419, failed policies and government institutions" he said.

Ribadu also said that "Gani fought for the supremacy of the rule of law, and should therefore be called "the father of modern day Nigeria. We must set a time line to make Nigeria great again and realize the vision of Gani. We have wasted so much time already and we can't afford to waste any more time. I want to celebrate Gani because he lived a fulfilled life. We are all sick and tired, but it is time to be sick and tired of being sick and tired." Ribadu declared.

Dr Iheanacho Emeruwa, a specialist in Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, who flew in from Riverside California said that late Chief Fawehinmi stayed in Nigeria all through our dark days. "His legacy in my view was in his courage, consistency and persistence," he said. While Alhaji Ademola Ariwoola, Finance Director, City of Ellensburg, Washington State, who also flew in from Washington State, urged Nigerians not to cry for Chief Fawehinmi. "Let's take the death of our brother, comrade, father, and hero as a wake-up call to action. It is only when we do this would his sufferings not be in vain," he said.

Professor Segun Gbadegesin in address titled "For justice and development: toward a coalition of the willing" which was published in the brochure for the event said that Gani was the champion of the dispossessed.

"The reaction, in high and low places, to the transition of Chief Gani Fawehinmi is a powerful testimony that Nigerians know their heroes and even when such heroes are denied the opportunity of political office where they can demonstrate their compassionate leadership skill, they are assured of the respect and adoration of a grateful people. Even if the calabash designer is no more, his original designs will always be around to speak to his skills," Gbadegesin said.

Earlier in his welcome address, Ogun State NCP gubernatorial candidate in 2003 and 2007 elections, Ogbeni Lanre Banjo took a swipe at former military dictators and their agents whom he said had wanted Gani dead before his time.

"The lives of former military leaders - General Yakubu Gowon, Olusegun Obasanjo and Ibrahim Babangida all of whom imprisoned Chief Gani Fawehinmi were apparently spared for regret. Their lives are spared to witness how someone who fought for the people and suffered for the people will be celebrated."

He quoted Chief Awolowo's allocutus in 1963 "Indeed in this dock, and in the entire Federation of Nigeria, the spirit of a new Nigeria is already active and at work. This spirit, working through constitutional means which I have spent the whole of my lifetime to advocate, is sure to prevail, before very long, to the delight, freedom and prosperity of all and sundry." He said that spirit which has hunted many including Ken Saro wiwa is now hunting the likes of Nuhu Ribadu and El-Rufai.

Banjo wondered what kind of a country would chase the likes of Chief Anthony Enahoro to those that he made a motion against to leave his country. He also called for immediate arrest of the decadence that is stifling our country vowing to fight for the poor, the cheated and the dispossessed until he breathes his last.

The high point of the occasion was the Yoruba cultural dance, poem and Ewi (Yoruba traditional poem), which were brilliantly performed in honour of the late human rights crusader.

There was also cultural performance by Sankofa Ensemble led by a Ghanaian. On the screen was the video of Chief Gani Fawehinmi in a glass coffin with the title: Eja nla lo lomi. A video clip of Gani' was also shown where he was addressing INEC agents and reporters when he wanted to register to vote in 2002, and he was told that the registration materials were not ready.

Senator Maeba Offers Stewardship, says "I Represent Transparency"

The Senator Representing Rivers South-East Senatorial District and Chairman Senate Committee on Petroleum and Gas, Senator Lee Ledogo Maeba has assured the people of his Senatorial District that he will not be a part of any shady deal that will deprive the people of the area their God-given resources and other benefits accruing to them as Oil producing communities.

Senator Lee Maeba made this declaration while rendering his Stewardship as an elected representative at a "Leadership Accountability Forum" organized by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) penultimate week at the Ken Saro Wiwa memorial conference centre, Bori.

The Senator, while recounting his effort in ensuring that the Oil mineral development bill which grants 10% equity in profit of the number of barrels of oil explored to the host communities, lamented that the Niger Delta would have been a peaceful place if the host communities had some level of participation in the petroleum exploration and development sector as they would see oil facilities as

their own and would want to protect it.

He furthered that as the Chairman, Senate Committee on Petroleum and Gas, he had not collected any money either from the NNPC, Ministry of Petroleum resources or even the Oil Companies. In his words the Senator said "If I had collected or involved myself in the sharing of monies coming from NNPC or ministry of petroleum resources or any oil company, by now you would have seen the EFCC running after me. But I don't take any share from the budget accruing to the federal ministry of petroleum resources".

He continued that sharing public funds will amount to betraying the confidence reposed in him by the electorate and challenged anyone with fact to come out if he had ever collected money from any of the offices named.

Senator Lee Maeba encouraged the people to be patient as the petroleum development bill when passed into law will benefit the Oil producing communities and will also put an end to the era when host communities of Oil producing companies were

not considered for by the government and the companies operating in the area.

He said as a senator he had not forgotten the fact that he represents a people therefore transparency is his watch word and he will not neglect issues that will impact on the lives of the people of the Rivers South-East Senatorial district.

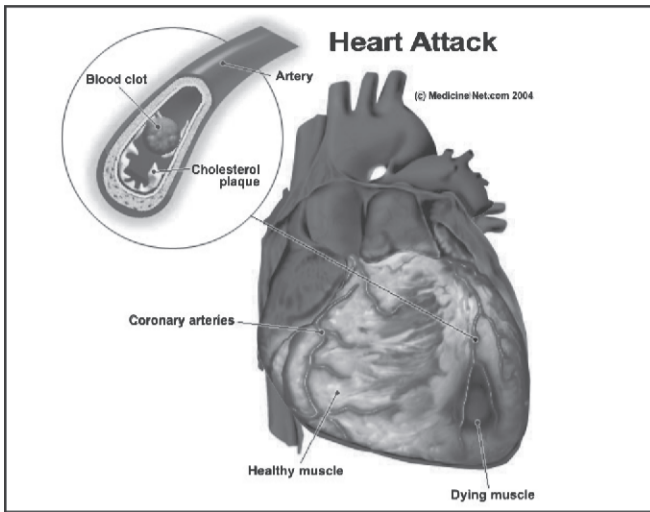
Senator Maeba also spoke of his moves to pressurise the Federal Government to upgrade the Rivers State Polytechnic Bori to a Federal Institution. He maintained that while there is no federal presence in Ogoni, the upgrading of the institution will help in building the confidence of the people in the Yar'adua's administration.

He further said that on completion the Gas training Instituted sited at Bonny, Rivers State will help the people of the Rivers South-East Senatorial District in the area of Manpower development. "When we have the required manpower the Oil Companies cannot bring in expatriate they must employ our people first before bringing in expatriates", said the aggrieved senator.

Change of Name

LEGBARA: I, formerly known, called and addressed as **MISS KPOONAATUA PEARL LEGBARA**, henceforth wish to be known, called and addressed as **MRS. DORCAS KPOONAATUA TOMBARI FIRIMA**. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. Rivers State College of Education, Ndele Campus, and the general public, please note.
MRS. DORCAS KPOONAATUA TOMBARI FIRIMA

Heart Attacks And Drinking Warm Water



This is a very good article. Not only about the warm water after your meal, but about Heart Attacks. The Chinese and Japanese drink hot tea with their meals, not cold water, maybe it is time we adopt their drinking habit while eating.

For those who like to drink cold water, this article is

applicable to you. It is nice to have a cup of cold drink after a meal. However, the cold water will solidify the oily stuff that you have just consumed. It will slow down the digestion. Once this 'sludge' reacts with the acid, it will break down and be absorbed by the intestine faster than the solid food. It will line the intestine. Very soon, this will turn into fats and lead to cancer. It is best to drink hot soup or warm water after a meal.

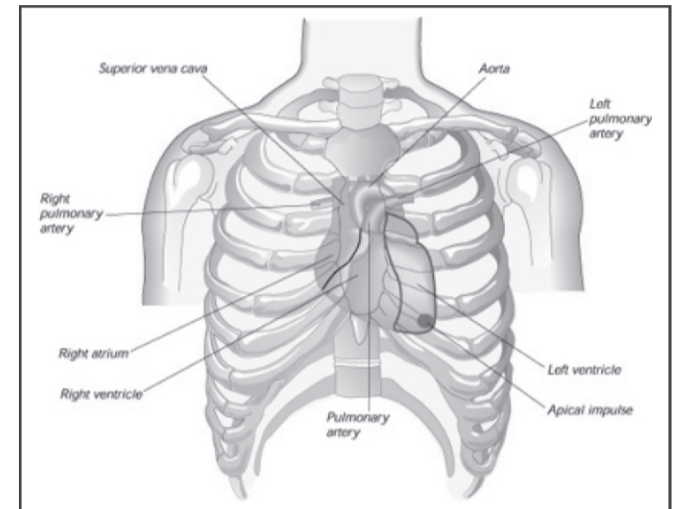
Common Symptoms Of Heart Attack...

A serious note about heart attacks - You should know that not every heart attack symptom is going to be the left arm hurting. Be aware of intense pain in the jaw line. You may never have the first chest pain during the course of a heart attack. Nausea and intense sweating are also common symptoms. 60% of people who have a heart attack while they are asleep do not wake up.. Pain in the jaw can wake you from a sound sleep. Let's be careful and be aware. The more we know, the better chance we could survive.

A cardiologist says if everyone who reads this message sends it to 10 people, you can be sure that we'll

save at least one life. Read this & Send to a friend. It could save a life... So, please be a true friend and send this article to all your friends you care about.

I JUST DID



Opinion

Shell(ing) Ogoni

By Tombari Dumka Kote

History" they say is the compilation of the past, with the present to plan for the future. While the past is what actually happened, the present refers to what is going on and the future amending the mistakes that accrued to avoid their reputations. Yet every good history student will agree with me that a tactical review of oil activities in the Niger Delta of Nigeria and Ogoni in particular contradicts this fact. Universally oral tradition and historical remains discovered through archeological findings are two major

sources of history. No wonder Ogoni's still have "Tales by Gas light" even when just a little out of many was inserted into book's for the generation unborn.

Shell on arrival in the Niger Delta in 1956 backed by the colonial government and its polite and military had seized farming and fishing settlements, chased men, women and children from their ancestral homes and bulldozed communities to build oil locations and flow stations. The natives were left at the mercy of nature under the clouded believe that they were been patriotic by obeying

government (Shell) orders. Little did they know that the occupying military and economic force were no government, but monsters.

30 year's after, the oil company and the government had nothing to show for the billions of dollars explored from the Land but rather left it polluted and devastated. An area unconducive for habitation by man and other living things. Gas was flared with no restriction and the people of the area bathed from acid rains and drank polluted streams. Electric light was strange to children as (S)hell light kept burning and chasing away

wildlife. The flora and funa cannot be remembered as the river banks are marked by spilled crudes.

The Ogoni like every Niger Delta Community, usually hostile and ready to agitate for their right through the courageous efforts of Ken Saro-Wiwa by 1993 had called to question the reason for the continuous existence of the man if his environmental which remains his first right to life is violated by some economic wolf's and their alien partners called oil multinationals. The Ogoni's in a non-violent manner resisted Shell and succeeded in hating the company operations in Ogoniland but the Nigerian government in a genocidal manner visited the Ogoni resistance with brute military force again killing

men, women and children. The anger of the Ogoni Struggle been championed by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) led by Ken Saro-Wiwa was battering the image of the country abroad and preventing those at the helm of state affairs who corruptly enrich themselves from accessing more petrol dollars. Much more blood was spilled and Ken Saro Wiwa and other prominent Ogoni Son's were executed on trumped-up charges.

Shell petroleum Development company (SPDC) have been indicted on several occasions as been the key sponsors of the military that took occupation of Ogoniland and killed several hundreds of Ogoni men, women and children. Shell is guilty as charged. The company through it's recent payment to families of the slain Ogoni hero's never disputed this fact. But sad enough Shell is about sponsoring another killing spray in Ogoniland and in the Niger Delta. This time "Operation kill oil wells". Someone said kill the remaining Ogoni's.

I want to agree with Senator Lee Meaba that "why should Shell be in a haste to clamp oil wells not" after it failed to do so for fifteen years since it was sacked from Ogoniland. Shell has brought into K-Dere and other Ogoni communities soldiers under the guise of the Joint Task Force (JTF). The company seems to be having another hiding agenda. Probably to kill all Ogoni's possess their land and resume oil operations in the area. The forceful

invasion of K-Dere community by Shell aided by three armoured personnel carriers and about twenty five JTF patrol vans under the pretence of clamping oil wells is a true replica of the 1993 Deeyor incidence. In the latest onslaught Ogoni's people are not allowed to rest well at nights as the military force in occupation continues to shoot sporadically. Thousands of military and police check points now exists were driver are made to pay between N50 N200, thereby forcing up transport fair in Ogoni Land. The situation at Gokana at present were people are forced to unboard their commercial motorcycle before crossing some of the check-points only existed when a state of emergency was declared in Port Harcourt. Today such situations are no longer in existence in even politically troubled states of the country.

What agenda has Shell this time. The President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's government must be careful enough to withdraw its military from falling prey to the latest antics by Shell to use the military against the people. The government must resist all attempts by Shell to Sponsor another round of crisis in the Niger Delta region especially if the amnesty programme is to be sustained. On their part Shell as a company should tow the part of the societal marketing concept and place it's host communities as partners in progress. Shell must avoid it's divide and rule tactics and avid another military Shelling of Ogoniland. Kote writers in from Port Harcourt.

Senator Warns Shell On Ogoni

The Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) has been warned by the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to suspend all activities aimed at clamping and killing of Oil wells in Ogoniland or be ready to take responsibility should there be any breach of peace in the area.

The Chairman, Senate Committee on Petroleum and Gas, Senator Lee Maeba made this known while making a public presentation at the "Leadership Accountability Forum" for elected representatives organized by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) at Bori.

Senator Lee Maeba, who represents Rivers South-East Senatorial district in the upper chamber of the National Assembly regretted that while the

Federal Government was doing everything possible to ensure a successful implementation of the Post-Amnesty Programme and returning peace to the Niger Delta region, the company's activities in K-Dere and other Ogoni communities in recent time's remain questionable and warned Shell to desist from the implementation of such questionable programmes.

"For fifteen years Shell's operations were halted in Ogoniland, the company never deemed it necessary to clamp oil wells, it is now that the governments is talking about reviewing the Oil milling license (OML) that Shell had suddenly become busy trying to clamp oil wells in the area. Why now? The distinguished Senator questioned.

He stated that when the petroleum development and

milling bill is passed into law the host communities will not want to attack oil facilities as they will be partners in the exploration and development of resources in their area.

Senator Maeba furthered that since the demand of the people to get a fair share of their resources, when this is provided for them as enshrined in the new bill, as stakeholder's no one will want to disrupt oil operations again.

The Senator however, lamented the invasion of K-Dere community in Gokana local government area by Shell backed with heavily armed military personnel which almost resulted into an attack of protesting community youths and villagers, if not for the timely intervention of the President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni

People (MOSOP), Mr. Ledum Mitee.

Senator Lee Maeba said government will not hesitate to hold the company responsible in case there is any crisis resulting from its recent activities in the area.

It would be recalled that Shell workers, under three armoured personnel carriers forced themselves into Oil locations in K-Dere in abid to kill the oil wells against the wish of the people. Attempts by villagers to resist the company workers was met with the stationing of heavy military presence in the area. A replica of the Deeyor incidence of 1993 when Shell invited military personnel to kill Ogoni protesters for trying to prevent its workers from laying pipeline across their farmlands, without an adequate compensation.

In continuation of MOSOP Programme on Democracy and Good Governance, a forum which offers an opportunity to elected representatives of Ogoni extraction to interact with, and give stewardship to the electorate, was on November 22, held at the Ogoni Peace and freedom Centre, Bori during which the Senator representing Rivers South-East Senatorial District, Senator Lee Maeba accounted to the people what he has done with the people's mandate. See pic below.



Senator Lee Maeba presenting Stewardship to the Electorate in Bori recently



Senator Maeba in a chat with MOSOP President, Ledum Mitee



An Electorate asking a question at the occasion



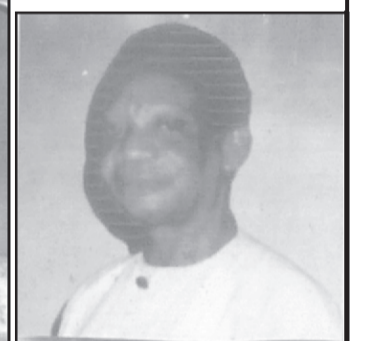
Cross Section of Electorate at the Senator's presentation in Bori

Our Fallen Heros

“We shall never forget your sacrifices”



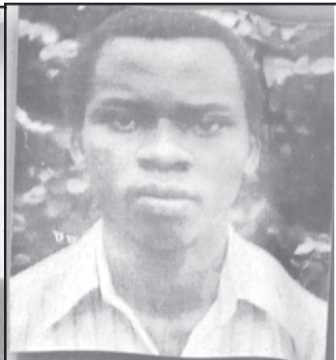
KEN SARO-WIWA



TOMSON ORAGE



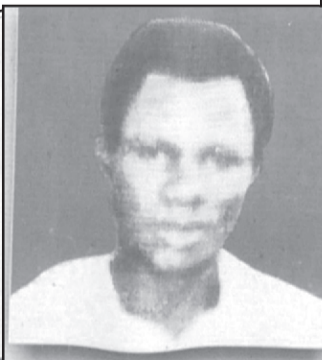
MR EDWARD KOBANI



PAUL LEVURA



DANIEL GBOKOKO



DR. BARINEM KIOBEL



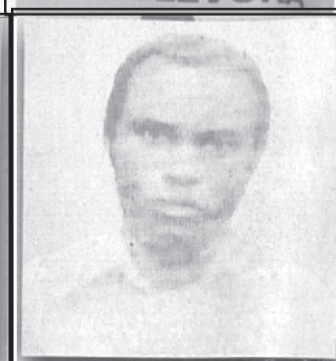
JOHN KPUINEN



FELIX NUATE



MR A. T. BADEY



SATURDAY DOBEE



BARIBOR BERA



SAM ORAGE



NORDU EAWO

**Other
unsung
Heroes**

The Bori Declaration On Women's Human Rights And

Gender Equality

Preamble

We, the representatives of Ogoni women drawn from various communities and organizations working on issues of Women's Human Rights and gender Equality in Ogoni, assembled at a workshop commemorating the opening of this year's global campaign for women's human rights entitled "16days of Activism Against Gender Violence" organized by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in collaboration with the Federation of Ogoni Women's Associations (FOWA) in Bori, Ogoni on the 25 November 2009.

Appreciating the overall contributions and role of the Ogoni women in advancing the struggle for the recognition of the rights of the Ogoni People

Welcoming the recognition of the promotion of gender equality as a key principle and goal of MOSOP

Acknowledging

- . The opportunity for the participation of Ogoni women in the activities of the organization
- . The gradual implementation of the Principle of 40% gender representation in the activities of MOSOP
- . The ongoing discussions on the development of a gender policy

Concerned that:

- . Despite efforts by MOSOP and some community leaders in mainstreaming gender and women's human rights, most communities and our local government areas are yet to join the trend
- . No provision currently exists for a mechanism dealing with gender and women's human rights issues in our communities, local government areas and even in the state
- . There is the absence of a mechanism for dialogue between women's organizations in the key decision-making processes of the Ogoni communities and the local government councils;
- . The continuing under-representation of Ogoni women in the leadership of our communities, local governments and State remains worrisome
- . The rate of maternal and infant mortalities in our communities remain high;

- . Certain harmful traditional and cultural practices continue to worsen the high incidence of HIV/AIDS especially amongst our women and girls;
- . That the destruction of our environment through long years of reckless oil exploitation has destroyed agriculture and imperiled our livelihoods
- . That there is an increasing level of poverty amongst our women compared with the rest of the country
- . That we are still subjected to grueling conditionalities which makes access to loans and micro-credits from financial institutions almost impossible
- . That we are still lagging behind in the ongoing revolution in the information, communication and technology sector
- . That the ongoing demolitions of houses being embarked upon by the Rivers State Government without any regard for its human rights implications and adequate compensation has thrown most of us, our daughters and families into destitution, disrupted our children education and affected our livelihoods
- . That we remain the greatest victims of politically motivated violence and communal conflicts in the area which amongst other impacts destroys our means of livelihood and dislocates our families

Recognizing the need for sensitization on gender issues and women's human rights throughout Ogoni and the realization that the cause to safeguard the rights of Ogoni women cannot be achieved in isolation, we reaffirm our resolve to continue to engage and partner with all stakeholders in our communities, local governments, Rivers State and the country as a whole. In this spirit, we hereby recommend the following

- . Recognizing that the Ogoni Goddess is a woman, we call on the leadership of all Ogoni Communities to ensure that at least three women representatives are made members of the council of chiefs and elders in our respective communities
- . That we call on the leadership of the local government councils to ensure the effective representation of

women in the leadership of the four Ogoni local government areas

- . That we call on the leadership of all Ogoni communities to key into and support the gender mainstreaming strategy being developed by MOSOP
- . That we call on the leadership of all Ogoni Communities to define a clear strategy for HIV/AIDS Awareness Programme
- . That we call on the leadership of the communities to dedicate some community resources to addressing the issues of women
- . That a high level mechanism is provided for dialogue between our women and their organizations and the key decision making organs in the communities
- . That all stakeholders particularly the Ogoni local government councils and the Rivers State government commit adequate financial resources to health care services and measures aimed at reducing maternal mortality in Ogoni
- . That all Ogoni communities embark on measures to eradicate discriminatory and harmful practices against women.
- . That our local government councils and the Rivers state government implement policies and legislation that guarantees our women equal access and ownership of land
- . That the leadership of our communities, local government areas and the Rivers State government introduces of measures to facilitate our women's access to loans and micro-credit
- . That the state and local governments undertake capacity-building programmes aimed at strengthening the capacities and skills of our women in information, communication and technology
- . That we call on the government and all other actors to ensure the remediation of the Ogoni environment in a manner that assures transparency, adequate consultation, effective participation of all relevant stakeholders particularly our women
- . That we call on the government to embark on electoral reform process which would enhance the participation of our women in the political process

Done at Bori, Ogoni on 25 November 2009.

Senate Moves to Amend Land Use Acts

It was vintage Senator Ledogo Lee Maeba that addressed his fellow Ogoni people and other people of the Rivers South-East Senatorial district at a Town Hall meeting prompted by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, MOSOP in Bori recently. The programme tagged 'Democracy and Good governance, according to Ledum Mitee, MOSOP President, is MOSOP idea of bridging the widening gap between Government officials and the electorates. Senator Maeba is the second Political figure from Ogoni to render a stewardship in a mouth interval, after Hon. Dumnamene Deekor, deputy speaker Rivers State House of Assembly at Taabaa.

The Young Senator talked of the overbearing magnitude of politics in a pluralistic state like Nigeria, a country that labours varying discontent by the components groups in it.

But inspite of the tumultuous nature of

By our Reporter

politics especially at the Senate, which is the apex legislative body in Nigeria, Senator Maeba said he had been able to brave the storm as a Senator of the federal Republic of Nigeria.

Senator Maeba's Political strategy as a Senator is centred on a tripartite agenda; economic empowerment, attraction of development projects to Ogoni and Rivers State and legislative activism for development of indigenous participation in Nigeria oil and Gas industry. The height of Senator Maeba's Stewardship which received thunderous ovation was when he disclosed Senate moves to amend the controversial land use act which disposed the people of the Niger Delta of Nigeria.

Unveiling the Nigeria oil and Gas Industry content Development Bill sponsored by him, Senator Maeba, said a constitution review committee had been set up by the Senate to re-examine the land use act and he represents Rivers State on that committee. By this development, Senator

Maeba assured that he would not rest on his oars to see to an adroit review to correct the injustices that are the prevailing ethos of politics in Nigeria.

Hon. Maeba who said he had earlier spoken to KAGOTE, another elitist social-cultural organisation in Ogoni recently, said the people should keep faith with democracy and support their elective representatives for effective representation. In further explanation of the oil and Gas Industry content Development Bill, he said the oil producing communities stands a better chance to benefit from the resources. The cardinal hubs of the bill is that content Monitoring Board will be created in the Niger Delta to implement the Nigeria content. Before embarking on any project oil firms will also submit Nigeria content plan, while the project Head Quarters will be cited in the Host Communities. Community Participation will also be enhanced as it is expected of the companies to train community people in functional skills to be part of the projects. Part of the

recommendations of the bill is the 10% equity profit for oil producing comities. To further promote indigenous participation in the oil and gas industry, the bill also stipulates that community projects would be part of conditions for award of oil license.

Senator Maeba also disclosed that within his tenure as a Senator, he had been able to influence the award of scholarships to Ogoni Indigenous and others in the senatorial district through the Petroleum Development fund inspite of stiff conditions placed on the scholarship to the disadvantage of our people. Apart from the National Technical Institute Bonny, in which he played a pivotal role in its sitting, Senator Maeba said moves are also on the way to upgrade the Rivers State Polytechnic Bori, to a Federal Polytechnic. The Planned upgrading of the Bori Polytechnic is to accord if Federal Government attention in terms of funding and accessibilities to federal

benefit and to elevate the status of the Polytechnic to degree awarding Institution.

Senator Maeba also took a swipe at the derivation policy, especially in the disbursement of the 13% derivation to the Niger Delta. He advised that states should set up derivation commission to administer the 13% derivation and not to lump it with federal allocation.

As an interactive session, anxious electorates, did not fail to take full advantage of the opportunity provided at the instance of MOSOP to get informed information from their Senator. Several critical issues of development where placed before the Senator for explanation. Such issues bordered on electricity, employment, roads, constituency among other problems of development neglect in the area.

In his explanation, Senator Maeba said development projects were the constitutional responsibilities of the executive aim of

Government as, Legislators were primary concerned about making of laws.

However, Senator Maeba said he had initiated a foundation, through he intends to lend a helping hand, to widows, indigent but intelligent students in Tertiary Institutions.

Within his years as a Senator, Senator Maeba had been reputed for his staunch disposition in legislative business, especially in oil and gas development. His daring postures had severally pitched him against vested authorities in the Nigeria oil and gas sector.

On state creation, the Senator told the people that he is in support of moves of MOSOP or any other group for the creation of the new state that would accommodate the Ogonis, Authority and the Opopo's who are will to live together in a state of their own.

We hope that other elected and appointed officials will continue to embrace the MOSOP initiative at least, to make the sacrifices of our departed heroes not go in vain.

Amnesty, Youths And a New Beginning - *By Ifeatu Agbu*

At last, we are beginning to see glimpses of a blue sky over the Niger Delta region. The stormy clouds have lifted; the blinding lightening has ceased and the clattering thunder has died down. This clement condition is possible largely because of the unconditional amnesty that President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua granted repentant militants.

It came as a big relief when the likes of Henry Okah, Ebikabowei Ben [alias Boyloaf], Ateke Tom, Government Ekpemupolo (a.k.a Tompolo) and other militants accepted the amnesty programme. This development is a remarkable breakthrough for the government as sceptics never gave the pacification strategy any chance of success.

Indeed, the success that the amnesty initiative has recorded so far marks a turning point in the effort of President Yar'Adua to translate one of his seven-point agenda into reality. This much was acknowledged by the Director General of the European Union, Mr. Stefano Manservigi, while disclosing that his organisation has set aside 90 million Euros to support the post-amnesty programme. He said: "This is indeed a very important turning point and we welcome it very much. We at the EC will urge the government of Nigeria to continue the effort of sustainable rehabilitation and reintegration of the former militants". One cannot but agree.

The President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Mr. Ledum Mitee also captured the essence when he said that the amnesty "should be a process and not a one-off thing." The major task now is to change the mindset of the youths who have become accustomed to using violence to achieve their goals. They must be made to appreciate the virtues of dialogue in conflict resolution. In addition, they must also recognise that there is dignity in embracing decent means of livelihood.

This cannot be achieved by giving the repentant militants red carpet reception in Aso Rock. Flying them into Abuja with Presidential jets gives the impression that the government is glamorising militancy. Yes, the militants need to be appeased but it is wrong to cast them in the mould of regional role models. According to a former oil minister, Prof. Tam David-West, "the entire process was too 'razzmatazzed' and politicized to give the profound event a real soul."

Again, we must not lose sight of the fact that amnesty is only a prelude to finding satisfactory solutions to the main cause of the crisis in the region, which is lack of development. It must, therefore, be followed with several programmes that would rapidly and significantly transform the oil-bearing communities. The needed massive development should go alongside a well organised re-orientation, training and re-

training programmes for the youths. Their bursting energies and world view should be properly channelled towards productive ventures.

The steps taken so far towards addressing the anomalous situation in the oil-rich Niger Delta seem to focus only on repentant militants or those who claim to be the "kings of the creeks." Unfortunately, this approach is defective and in fact counter-productive, as the army of unemployed youths in the region may be tempted to enlist into militant camps just to attract attention.

Of course, they would aspire to be accorded presidential attention and royal treatment as is currently being given to the ex-militant leaders. To guard against another resurgence of militancy, there should be an all-inclusive re-orientation and empowerment of the youths irrespective of whether they were former militants or those who have always embraced the peace alternative.

Indeed, the re-orientation should not be limited to seminars and workshops in high-brow venues such as Abuja, Lagos, or other cities in the Niger Delta. To reach the youths at the grassroots, the training and re-training programmes should be taken to the schools, churches, town hall meetings and market squares in the villages and creeks.

The recent post amnesty seminar organised by the Bayelsa State government in Kaduna, though well-intentioned, took place in a wrong location. Obviously, that event was not meant for the youths of the Niger Delta, who should constitute the target audience of such a gathering. It can best be described as an ill-advised political jamboree, mainly for political heavyweights, especially those of northern extraction. It nevertheless provided a platform for the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Dimeji Bankole to take swipes at Niger Delta political leaders, whom he accused of conspiring to squander the resources entrusted to them.

What the Niger Delta youths need now are programmes that would reshape them and make them better human beings. They should not just be trained and left to grope in the dark alleys of the unemployment market. They should be mentored to fully imbibe the habits of managing their own businesses successfully. This is very important as the President of National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, Chief Lugard Aimuwu explains: "while training is just about knowledge, mentoring takes care of the total human being. It moulds and shapes the person's beliefs and values. You use mentoring to lift the person to another level of confidence."

The youths of the region should be made to see achievement-oriented and honest leaders of the region as their

role models. Certainly not the militant leaders, some of who have used violent means to traumatise the nation. Yes, some of the ex-militant "generals" had good intentions when they started the struggle, which is to draw attention to the neglect of their region. Even then, they don't have to spill the blood of fellow Niger Deltans to achieve their goal.

Credit must be given to the Non-Violence Training Programme for Youths initiated by the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, in 2008. The scheme, which was introduced as part of the strategies adopted by a Think Tank on the Niger Delta, is aimed at reforming the youths who may have resorted to anti-social activities as a result of unemployment.

What has been gained through the non-violence training must be sustained to ensure that the youths do not relapse into another round of violent behaviour. This can be achieved by making sure that they are gainfully employed. There is no faulting the adage that the devil finds work for the idle hand.

The post-amnesty era requires a change of strategy to make sure that the gains of the struggle are sustainable so as to benefit the people in the creeks. Blowing up of pipelines inflicts more pains on the ordinary people, destroys the ecosystem and renders Niger Delta farmers and fishermen jobless as well as increase the level of diseases and other environmental hazards.

It is not the kind of struggle the people bargained for. We want a struggle that will enhance the living standard of our people, a struggle that is intellectually-driven as exemplified by the late Ken Saro-Wiwa.

As has been generally acknowledged, the economic well-being of Nigeria rests squarely on the Niger Delta. President Yar'Adua puts it succinctly: "If government must succeed in its bid to secure the country, it must first secure the Niger Delta region". And that is exactly what he has striven to do through the amnesty.

He was right when he said at a stakeholder's forum last year that "If the people can see that their leaders are honest, they will understand, but once they see that their leaders are in power to make money, then there will be a problem". Now, where are these Niger Delta political leaders, who can confidently and honestly thump their chest and say "I am in government not to make money but to serve my people?"

Leaders of the Niger Delta should not only talk about selfless service but should be seen by all to truly render such. That way, the youths of the region will look up to them as leaders worthy of emulation instead of regarding ex-militant leaders as their role models in the light of the special treatment they are receiving from the President.

Lagos On the Niger Delta, there is a critical convergence of interests and calculations in current efforts at stabilization. That convergence, quite contrary to advertised intentions, seems programmed to deliver an easily recognizable political outcome in the country in 2011.

The challenge for the Niger Delta itself, however, is to discover itself and leverage its new geo-strategic prominence to ensure a political trajectory that guarantees its peculiar group interest beyond 2011. Between the short term political calculations of today's power merchants and the long term interests of a region that has borne the burden of Nigeria's inequitable federalism, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua is riding a grisly tiger. I would be surprised if the president's unusual interest in the stability of the Niger Delta region is not more than in the line of his duty as president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The president, I presume like all honest Nigerians, is interested in peace, justice and equity in the Niger Delta. His place as chief security officer of the nation demands no less. Nigeria's national security similarly dictates that much. Our trading and development partners expect that as a minimum. The international community, especially those with a strategic stake in global energy security and the place of the Gulf of Guinea in that calculus also have an overriding interest in the matter.

The state governments in the region need the calm to advance their development efforts. The Nigerian public needs peace and quiet in the region to be able to distinguish between governors in the region who are serious about development and those who have fed on the excuse of militancy and instability to hoodwink their own people. The ordinary people of the region and other Nigerians who live and work in the area deserve some respite from a recent past marred by all too frequent episodes of violence and sometimes induced insecurity.

President Yar'Adua may not possess an abundance of the magic of transformative leadership that the challenges of the moment in our national life demand. Some would argue that he cares little about the rudiments of smart governance in its contemporary meaning to the degree that most enlightened Nigerians expect. His gift of the garb is even more debatable.

Niger Delta And Politics Hereafter

By Chidi Amuta

Nor would he score too highly on the scale of charisma.

Increasingly, however, what may not be easily taken away from him are certain arcane and acute sense of the political and the dynamics of power. The man knows where his power comes from, what he needs to do to keep it and precisely what the essential kits are for survival in the brackish waters of Nigerian politics. He also knows those he needs to stay in power. In a bad place, the man of power needs bad guys to stay afloat. Those intent on choosing friends for the president had better take this lesson to heart.

The core states of the Niger Delta receive between them nearly 50 per cent of the national budget of N3 trillion with only a population of less than 20 million of our estimated 150 million. All the core Niger Delta states are solidly Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). As the amnesty process has made obvious, the area also harbours the largest pool of illegal arms in the hands of an assortment of criminal and semi criminal gangs. In terms of possession of arms, the region, maybe accidentally, ranks only next to the combined official armed forces in terms of volume of small and medium arms possession.

Similarly, one of the most significant geo-political developments that has taken place in recent Nigerian history is the rise of the South-south zone as an area of great political and economic power. Its growing influence spans the major strategic sectors of the new economy. Media: AIT, Ray power, Silverbird, Channels, THISDAY, The Guardian, Vanguard, Independent That is over 75 per cent of print run and privately-owned electronic media audience. Aviation: Aero Contractors and Arik - both control a modern fleet that is more than 65 per cent of the total domestic airline operations. Banking: Zenith, UBA, Oceanic, FinBank, BankPHB, Springbank etc. were, until very recently, arguably mostly South-south in control and critical stakes.

We are therefore dealing with an emergent zone of immense power and prosperity, complete with power elite, home to the most strategic national resources, strategic

natural location, a militant force (military wing), considerable economic and media power and an increasingly trenchant public relations presence that resonates internationally. In terms of the major indices of power identified by that eccentric philosopher, Bertrand Russel, the Niger Delta possesses a critical majority.

Therefore, no enlightened Nigerian sovereign can afford the luxury of taking this region for granted any more. Nor can any political calculations on the future of the country make sense without factoring in the Niger Delta as a key determinant of outcomes. Therefore, a certain degree of engagement with the Niger Delta and the South-south region is integral to any enlightened exercise of power in the new Nigerian federation. And that is what Yar'Adua is currently doing. The reality of this engagement has never been lost on recent Nigerian leaderships. The only divergence is that leaders have related to the emerging importance of the region differently according to their relative enlightenment.

Gen. Ibrahim Babangida recognized the importance of the region to the economic continuation of the Nigerian federation and established OMPADEC while opening national debate on an appropriate revenue charge to accommodate the special ecological needs of the region. I suspect that the idea of the National Guard as a counter insurgency low intensity force which his administration embarked upon in its dying days may have been informed by a recognition of the security needs of the region among other flash points across the nation.

On the contrary, Gen. Sani Abacha related to the region from the supremacist ethos of a conqueror, jackboots and bayonets. Through the agency of a special military task force and the war like military administration of Dauda Komo, Abacha sought to shock the region into submission. The ultimate shock treatment was perhaps the criminal wasting of my friend Ken Saro Wiwa and his compatriots as well as the effective garrisoning of the region by ferocious troops. That adversarial relationship violated the rules of engagement between the northern power elite and the region, the unstated

Post-Amnesty: Mitee, Anya Advise FG By Jimitota Onoyume

GOVERNMENT S at all levels in the country have been urged to treat youths as major stakeholders in project Nigeria.

In their separate speeches at a one-day workshop on, Niger-Delta Youth Beyond the Amnesty, organised by the Niger Delta

Development Commission (NDDC) in Port-Harcourt, weekend, Barrister Ledum Mitee and Professor Anya O. Anya said youths constitute a major part of the nation's population and should, therefore, be part of any development process in the country.

Describing them as major

stakeholders in the country's future, Prof Anya in his paper, *Exchanging Guns With Opportunities*, enjoined governments in the country to come up with programmes and policies that would inspire the youths to dream great dreams for the country.

He said failures, as a nation in the past, were

mainly caused by the poor attitude of past leadership in the country to the needs of youths.

Anya took time to laud steps so far taken by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua to douse tension in the Niger Delta.

He also called for more opportunities to be created for youths in the country, so they could realise their potentials.

On his part, Ledum Mitee, President, Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), who spoke on, *Preparing the Niger-Delta Youths for Socio-Economic Relevance*, called for creation of no fewer than 20,000 jobs for youths in each of the core Niger-Delta states as one way

out of the challenges in the region.

Noting that the Federal Government should fully implement recommendations of the defunct Niger Delta Technical Committee which he chaired, Mitee also enjoined government and development institutions in the region to harmonise their development projects and programmes to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts.

According to him, situations were government and development institutions continue to burn energy on the same project amounted to waste of funds.

Earlier in his opening address, the Managing

Director, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Mr. Chibuzor Ugwoha, said the commission will take full advantage of the peace brought about by the amnesty to aggressively pursue its development programmes in the region.

Ugwoha, who was represented by the commission's Executive Director, Project, Mr. Esoetok Ekong Ikong Etteh, thanked the Federal Government for granting the commission's request to award contracts to the tune of N187 billion, an amount he described as the highest single award in the history of the commission.

Sack Niger Delta Ministers - Representatives By Ini Ekott

THE two ministers of the Niger Delta ministry should be sacked. This is the verdict of the House of Representatives' committee that oversees the region.

The committee said recently that the ministers have failed Nigerians and the region.

Ufot Ekaette who is the minister and Godwin Orubebe, the minister of state, came under thorough criticisms at a budget performance meeting of the committee, constituted mainly by lawmakers from the oil producing region.

Damning verdict

The lawmakers told Mr. Ekaette and Mr. Orubebe, that they had both failed the intentions of the present administration in setting up the ministry, which is to help attend to the needs of the disturbing region. The committee members said they were planning to seek audience with President Umaru Yar'Adua to examine the achievements of the ministry more than one year after its creation.

In details of performance documents presented before the committee, the ministry officials gave an update on the programmes the Ministry had initiated since April 2009 when it finally commenced operations to include new and ongoing 73 projects, spread across the nine oil producing states.

Most of the projects were uncompleted, with those having to do with procurement of vehicles recording 100%, according to the lawmakers.

The records too showed that the officials spent more funds on consultants who undertook preliminary technical services, rather than the real contractors who are supposed to execute the projects.

The consultants carry out designs, costing and survey, while the contractors execute the main details of the contract. In one case, of a N100 million project, Mr. Ekaette, a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, approved the payment of N24 million to the consultants, while the contractor was paid only N6 million.

"The Minister can score

himself any mark, but on the ground, it is very clear that the Ministry has failed woefully," said Igo Aguma, a member of the committee. "Sadly, this ministry is headed by people from the Niger Delta, yet, why are you paying consultants on projects that have not taken off? In fact, there are no concerted efforts on the part of the ministry to develop Niger Delta, Mr. Chairman, this score card by my brother is far from the aspiration of the people of Niger Delta," he said.

Off the target

Daemi Kunaiyi-Akpana said the ministry had deviated from the programmes submitted to the National Assembly.

Ita Enang, another member of the committee described the report of the ministry as a "charade and a shame".

They, however, directed the minister to furnish the committee with the profile of the consultants, the financial disclosure of what was approved, what was collected and how it was distributed, as well as the scope of work by each contractor.

But Mr. Ekaette explained that engaging the consultants was necessary since many of the projects were awarded without proper costing before the ministry was given a minister.

Our source learnt from a reliable source in the ministry about how against the desire of the president for mega projects, many lawmakers from the region, included their constituency projects and projects already executed by the state governments and the Niger Delta Development Commission.

The lawmakers from the Senate and the House of Representatives chose projects that were clearly unachievable and unrealistic so as to get kickbacks, the source alleged.

For instance, before the ministers were appointed, the lawmakers had allocated only N300 million in the budget for the construction of the over 700-kilometre Niger Delta Coastal Road, while N250 million was allocated for the over 27-kilometre long Ikot Ekwere-Ndukpo Ise-Ikot Eyo-Ikot Ntung road (with a bridge). Governments in the area

say, averagely, they spend N1 to N1.5 billion to construct a kilometre of road due to the difficult terrain.

Before the meeting, Mr. Enang was said to have argued that whether the president's vision of the development had changed or not, the implementation of the projects must be as contained in the approved budget.

The Special Assistant, Media to the minister, Soni Daniel, told newsmen in an interview yesterday that the ministry did nothing unusual in engaging the services of the consultants.

"In this age and time," he said. "It is not possible for any person to construct a house, road, bridge or embark on any project without first, having a design and knowing the cost. If the lawmakers, who inserted these projects in the budget, had done the design and costing, the ministry would not have gone into all that."

"The Ministry has not done anything unusual to have undertaken the design and production of bill of quantities for the projects. Is it feasible for the lawmakers to have made token provisions for mega projects to turn around the region?"

Contd. From page 3

communal crisis. The Governor encouraged the people to wholeheartedly accept the planned relocation.

On the issue of imposition of 'elected representatives' on Ogoni people by the government, the Governor Amaechi assured the people that if he had done that in the past, he would not do it again. He further called on the Ogoni leaders of thought to make effort to reconcile their differences in order to achieve greater feats for their people.

On the assessment of performance of the Chairmen in the Ogoni Local Government Areas, the Governor decried the low rating of the Chairmen of Khana and Tai Local Government Councils, and commended the rating of Gokana and Eleme Local

Niger Delta Ministry will Work within Guidelines - Minister

Those who criticise the performance of the newly-created Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs have been told the ministry will carry out its functions only within the prescribed guidelines.

Ufot Ekaette, the Minister of Niger Delta affairs gave the assurance on Sunday in Eket at the end of a three-day inspection tour of projects in the Niger Delta region.

"I want to assure you that the ministry is methodical in performing its assignments. We have not gone out of our way to do anything outside the guidelines," he said.

He, however, observed that some of the projects inserted into the budget by the National Assembly lacked adequate funds to execute them.

The Minister, who said

that he explained this at a session in the National Assembly, added that some of the projects would also be difficult to implement because they had "no designs, no drawings and no costing".

"But that notwithstanding we went out of our way to invite consultants to look at those projects, design them, do the costing for us to implement. But it turned out that most of the figures inserted in the budget for these projects could not even pay 15 per cent down payment required by law" he said.

The minister of state in the Ministry, Godsway Orubebe, also said the ministry would not be deterred from fulfilling the aims and objectives for which it was established.

"The vision of President Umaru Yar'Adua for the ministry is very clear and so the Ministry of Niger Delta

cannot be blackmailed into doing things in an improper form.

"We are determined to develop Niger Delta, no blackmail, no amount of pushing us to do the unusual will make us to stagger from the vision that Mr President has for the Niger Delta.

"We have had a lot of failed commissions in the past and people are saying, 'what is Niger Delta doing?' Niger delta will not be dragged to go back to do the those things other commissions used to do and failed.

"We will go according to our programmes. This ministry is not meant to do small projects. The president expects the Ministry of Niger Delta to do mega projects," Mr. Orubebe said.

Gov. Amaechi Warns Diigbo

Government Council Chairmen. He went ahead to call on the Chairmen of the Councils to give account of their performance to the people.

Whereas the Khana Local Government Chairman could record that he has achieved security in Bori, the Governor promised that the State Government would partner with the Eleme and Gokana Local Government Chairmen.

He advised the Khana and Tai Local Government Chairmen to re-evaluate their development focus as the State Government can only partner with Council Chairmen who have track-records of obvious development projects in their councils.

Governor Amaechi also directed all council chairmen and government officials to be focused and to use public

funds on the development of the people.

The Governor lauded MOSOP on the non-violent approach for the struggle for the emancipation of the Ogoni and other Niger Delta peoples. He pointed out that after Isaac Adaka Boro, Ken Saro-Wiwa broadened the struggle of the Niger Delta.

He said his deliberate intention to develop Bori born out of this fact that the Ogonis had loosed eminent sons and daughters in the struggle.

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People has indeed been pro-active in its initiative towards taking governance to the grassroot in Rivers State.

This is evident in its introduction of the use of community interactive sessions organized for elected representatives and their electorate, to deepen the

tenets of accountability and good governance in the Niger Delta region, particularly Rivers State.

Speaking at the event in Bori, Barrister Cynthia Onwuk of MOSOP's Democracy and Good Governance Programme, leading other committee members, who were also on ground to observe the session, said, MOSOP's advocacy for accountability and good governance and people-oriented leadership paying off.

The MOSOP Programme Officer made a clarion call to all elected representatives in Rivers State to ensure that they consult their constituencies regularly, stressing that grassroot people in the various constituencies have the right to be consulted by their elected representatives.

Of where? Should be the first question on the lips of my reader; never mind where, but be concerned about when. Did I hear you say dreamer! Over ambitious! I am not building castle in the air neither is it a white elephant project. Do not forget in a hurry that we are in a country where every thing is possible. In fact we deserve to be nicknamed God's own country because we exercise the every-thing-is-possible attribute of God. If in doubt remember the possibilities and miracles that has taken place in this country; a country where world acclaimed freest and fairest election got annulled but did not lead to civil war; Military heads of state metamorphose into civilian presidents just like that; Past heads of state and political leaders loot the national treasury with impunity and are now richer than their state if not the country; where supreme court can make me president even without contesting general election; where two big sea going vessels can get missing under the strict guard of the national securities. Are you still in doubt?

Anyway, you are entitled to your doubt after all I can be served an apple by some Indian waitress shortly after assuming office as president. What was I saying? Ehhee! When I become president, first I am suppose to declare my asset but unfortunately, I do not have. It does not mean I can not be richer than my state at the end of my four years in office. Next, I will relocate my family to high brow areas of the best cities of the world even if they become zombies due to the sharp contrast from what they were used to. Next, I will appease my sponsors and associates by dismantling agencies, policies and laws that tend to witch hunt them for very culpable and genuine crimes of corruption. After all they must have spent some of it on my nation wide electioneering campaign. Next, I will streamline the powers of some agencies so they can only bark but no longer can bite. These day's dogs do not seem to know its owner.

Since it has become fashionable to state agenda at the inception of tenure, I will set a 14 point agenda. These will include all the previous agenda and new ones that will specifically help to facilitate the earlier realization of all in record time. Abnormal! Record time? In this clime things are not done in record time. If unnecessary bureaucracy does not delay, it will be nepotism, tribalism, probe panels or better still tenure elongation ambition. Yes! If you finish the work now what will you promise in your next campaign- the idea is do some keep some, the reason we have a lot of abandoned projects. Hey I forgot appointment. By now lobbyist and party faithfuls would have located and lobbied my late great grandmother to help them influence me. Some will go to my pastor, some my community chief, some to even my primary school teachers who we naturally respect in Nigeria more out of sympathy for the economic parity between them and some of their students now in government whose annual allowance is more than a teacher's entire income from his or her life time teaching career.

As an expo, know now that all you require to qualify for appointments is to build your profile with credentials like jumped foreign bail before, distressed a bank before, forged certificates from foreign universities, abandoned projects after haven received more than fifty percent mobilization and importantly, have foreign collaborators for money laundering.

My Black Brother

You're in Europe
Toiling in sun and rain
The brain drain
The pain
To light up that lamp for another kind
Do I spill the burden on your mind?
Sweet harvest of bitter, bitter slavery
Sweet song after a sad, sad story
My lack brother

You're in America
With luggage strapped round your
arm
Sorry thoughts of your cassava farm
Gives you a desperate mindset
So you're set
To bustle from New York to Chicago
Off you go
Though prospects sometimes grow
dim
You keep ablaze your gold dream
My black brother

You're in Asia
Two of same plight
Working to put some light
In their darkest night
To have a face in the world's sight
My black brother

You're in Africa
Sometimes slicing cassava
Believing you'll survive however
Sometimes splitting firewood
Hoping conditions change for good
Sometimes cracking palm nuts
And the world feels you've gone nuts
But you're not
Just made to believe you're alone
In this place nature calls your home
Struggling and hoping
Suffering and smiling
My black brother

You're in my heart
Loving you like a couple on honeymoon
Locking out the memory of yesterday's
doom
Trust in this piece of poetry
Or let's wait for eternity
To prove I always stood by your side
Then you'll know my love for you never
died
My black brother

Annah Dornubari
(Choicepoet)

GenerationNext Agenda

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When I Become President

Bizarre! Is it? It should not be strange; after all it is the prevailing qualifications in governance. With these qualifications I will instruct the National Assembly leadership to confirm you without any rigorous checks else their funds for their smooth operations will under go rigorous checks. Besides they will only waste the available looting time because majority of them have the same qualifications. Haven done with the appointments, I will receive draft budgets for expenditure for the year from MDAs. This will take me eternity to present to my already compromised National Assembly. I know they will grudgingly manipulate, sneak in, alter or make some inputs which I may accept or reject. If I accent the budget by July it will narrow down the number of contract that can be awarded by the MDAs and in turn increase the volume of unspent funds returned back to the treasury. This is very constitutional but eco-developmentally crippling.

Of my key agenda, Power is paramount. I will first of all ban the importation of all electrical power generating set. Next I will order the removal of all in Government premises and the premises of all past and present political office holders. These, I think will make both patriots and saboteurs concert effort at solving the power problem of these country. What do you think? Next I will confiscate and sell properties of all those who had got something to do with power in Nigeria, realize the money and in additional to excess crude money, sponsor the joint taskforce in the war against Niger Delta "insurgence". These boys want to cripple the economy and make me a laughing stock among my colleague all over the world. But wait oh! Some of the pictures I see on communities in the oil rich region show that past Nigeria leaders have been very wicked to them. In spite of the petrol dollar, they still drink spills polluted water, have no access road and do not have electricity. Their children can not attend good schools and they don't have access to good medical facilities. But what were these past leaders thinking. Na waoh!

Anyway, somebody should tell them that when I become president, which is very soon, I will provide answers to our numerous problems. Those sponsoring illegal oil bunkering

will be appointed petroleum ministers because they already have illegal buyers. This National Assembly is becoming too nosy with oversight functions. I will appoint my kit and kin to oversee very sensitive committees and key national offices, my tribes men will benefit more than any other tribe and I will give out my daughters presidentially to political cronies. Hope you are not green with envy, it is a Nigeria thing and even rebranding may not change it. Governance is not easy at all but I will try though not in a hurry. As a servant leader, I need time to design my services to the nation. Two years into my tenure I will still be studying the nation's economy, studying reports of the various probe panels with some persons indicted by the probe having breakfast or dinner with me. I will even ask them what I should do with the report and panel members. You know, they are very experienced. After all they still have political structures in all the political zones that we may need for second tenure ambition and rigging. These are why past leaders didn't blow too hot.

Investment! I almost forgot, I will further privatize government establishments so that I can through my cronies buy majority interest, With presidential fiat, I can sell public assets and award juicy contracts to companies owned by my under age children who may still be in kindergarten. After all I pay the EFCC piper so I can also dictate the tune. Even if I leave office, my successor will make a show of transparency by probing me, EFCC may even arrest and arraign me but we all know the end. You become a celebrity, waving cameras and the press corps on you court days; thank God for Rule of Law. Why am I talking about when I leave office after all I can sponsor a constitutional review that may fetch me third term in office. Hmmm! Ruling this country called Nigeria is not easy. I have started haven symptoms of cardiac arrest from just thinking of governance. Any way it will afford me opportunity to globe troth in search of the best medical facilities since past leaders had shamelessly sought medical attention abroad with net expenses that can build several cottage hospitals in the most rural communities in the country.

I know that next I would be receiving delegations of bootlickers who obviously do not represent the interest of tribes and ethnicities who has axes to grind with government over years of neglect and deprivation; economic strangulations and political marginalization. Sometimes these sycophants think we in government are dummies. We know that no grievous tribe or ethnicity will award you chieftaincy title for doing nothing for them. However if they come I will play along like my predecessors and get coronated with chieftaincy titles that are very undeserving. Who does not like good thing? Another annoying thing is that these political jobbers in connivance with some gullible traditional rulers will shortly after lead another delegation to say that "**their people**" are asking me to continue in office. They will not get me. I swear by the constitution of Nigeria that I am even planning to leave before the expiration of my tenure. I will set a record I guess. Remember this is a country of possibilities. Let me stop to bore you with my manifesto as I hope to see you at the pooling centres for formalities. Do not forget that in this country we declare, swear in candidates and even throw parties before the election. In fact, sure to see you at presidential villa.

Contd., From page 8

Niger Delta And Politics Hereafter

understanding that the region would remain the effective bulwark against the tested ambition of their immediate South-east neighbours. More fundamentally, the Abacha approach was a flagrant abuse of the elementary social contract between the state and the citizenry even if that state was a despotic imposition. Once Abacha violated these unwritten codes, he further isolated and radicalized the region and forced them to re-think their relationship with their erstwhile patrons. There is a sense in which the militarisation of the zone is partially a response to the Abacha extremity.

Obasanjo's approach was classic Machiavellian. To achieve unchallenged dominance for his ruling party, he did not oppose the engagement of armed thugs to advance his party's political fortunes. When some of these thugs became daring as in the Odi episode, he staged a scorched earth tactic as a

reminder of the Abacha shock therapy. But at the same time, he moved quickly to establish the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) as a federal intervention agency to address the development needs of the region. When in spite of the NDDC, the political and youth leadership of the region remained restive; he convened the ill-fated constitutional conference to debate the future of the federation which was synonymous with his Third Term project. When the leadership for the Niger Delta insisted that a higher percentage of national oil revenue (25 per cent) should accrue to the region, Obasanjo quickly disbanded the conference and moved to the higher grounds of the National Assembly to press his project.

It is curious that the militancy problem that Yar'Adua inherited festered under Obasanjo, himself an army general with no want of

brutality. I have heard it argued in some quarters that Obasanjo turned a blind eye to militancy and violent instability in the Niger Delta in order to divert oil sector investment and operational control centres to his South-west zone, especially Lagos. Those who hold this view are ready to point to statistical increases in helicopter traffic between Lagos and the oil fields as well as the astronomical real estate demand and prices in the Victoria Island, Lekki and Epe axis of Lagos at the height of the militancy problem in the Niger Delta. The oil majors did move their operations and non-operational assets out of the Niger Delta at the height of the insurgency.

Enter President Yar'Adua. He has done some shooting in the area using the JTF if only to drive home the fact that the Nigerian state has the residual responsibility of enforcing the law if a soft approach fails.

Contd. Next Edition

Statement By Ledum Mitee, MOSOP President, On The Occasion Of The 14th Anniversary Of The Remembrance Of Ogoni Heroes On November 10, 2009

Following the murder of the Ogoni 13, and the attendant repression that enveloped Ogoni at the time, the United Nations sent a fact-finding team to Ogoni in 1996. To suppress evidence of its brutal repression, the military authorities forced the people of Giokoo village out of their homes and replaced them with imposters. One 70 year old woman, **Madam Nsaa Kors**, defied the guns and intimidation of the military and came out to speak the truth of the situation to the UN team. Despite her old age and frail state she was tortured to death by the soldiers of the Internal Security Task Force that occupied Ogoni at the time.

Madam Kors represents the fate that befell many people in the course of our struggle that many are wont to forgetting. It is for this reason that this year's memorial is being dedicated not just to the heroic sacrifices of Ken Saro-Wiwa, Chief Edward Kobani, Chief Albert Badey, John Kpuinen, Chief Theophilus Orage, Chief S.N.Orage, Dr. Barinem Kiobel, Paul Levura, Nordu Eawo, Baribor Bera, Saturday Dobe, Daniel Gbokoo, and Felix Nuate but also the especial, not less important but sometimes forgotten contributions made by the Korsis of our struggle—all those who sacrificed their lives, properties, inconveniences; the many who lost all they had, the women and children who were beaten, tortured, detained; all the old and weak unable to flee to the forests for safety who died in consequence, and those who died from cold and infections as they ran into the bush in the face of the armed assault on their communities by soldiers maintained and armed from the resources of our land. These all, are the heroes of our struggle that we are remembering today.

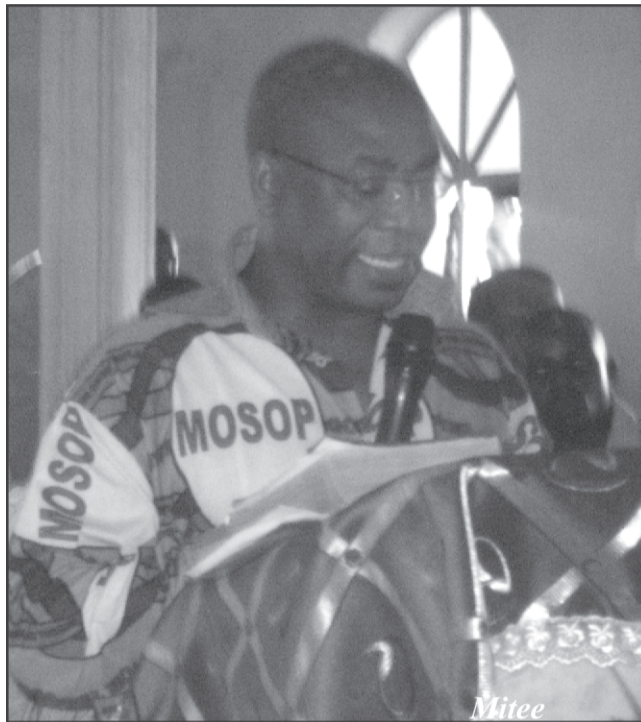
This remembrance is coming at a time that our struggle is increasingly being recognized as a symbol, a metaphor and model for peaceful agitation for justice in the Niger delta region and beyond. Just last Friday I was accosted by a group of Niger delta youths demanding a change of MOSOP from the 'Movement for the Survival of the **Ogoni** People' to 'Movement for the Survival of the **Ordinary** People!'. The universality of the message of our struggle and its centrality to the national question makes us to use this period to also remember great allies and patriots in the struggle for justice in the country who had also passed on, the most notable of whom is the national icon, Chief Gani Fawehinmi.

As we remember these great patriots of the struggle for justice on this particular occasion, I would urge us all to reflect on the fact that the underlying issue of the struggle for which they gave their lives is our natural and social environment. At the inception of the struggle we, led by our heroes, found that not only the devastation of our physical environment by the activities of Shell was threatening our very existence, but the social and political environment of the Niger delta were such that, unless reversed, would poison and undermine the stability of the country. It is for this reason that over the years we have mustered our courage and resources to see to the improvement of our environment and it is a tribute to our dogged determination, steadfastness and vision that today we have changed the course of national debate to how the physical, social and political environment of the Niger delta can be positively changed by non violent means.

On our physical environment, we have after several years of advocacy forced the realization that an environmental audit of Ogoni is not only essential but it is imperative that it be followed by a credible clean up. It is for this reason that, as we have repeatedly explained, MOSOP is not opposed to, and indeed supports the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) initiative in Ogoni, originally designed to do a study of the Ogoni environment and what remediation measures would be adequate.

However, to ensure that we derive the maximum

benefits from the programme we have continued, with other stakeholders, to robustly engage the initiative. In this respect, convinced that the Ogoni environment required much more than studies, it was gratifying that President Ya'Adua agreed with our suggestion for a process that links such UNEP studies with actual clean



up and remediation. We are concerned, however, that the Presidential directive since April this year for a revised work plan to include the cleanup has not been done till date. We have equally raised concern about questions about recruitment of our people on the UNEP project, community consultations and sensitization and the fact that even those of us who were appointed members of the Presidential Implementation Committee are not being consulted. Many people who heard of a \$10million (N1.5billion) UNEP project in Ogoni have been confronting us with their thinking that a significant part of that amount is being spent in or by Ogoni people but that is not the case. Be that as it may, I can assure that as we plan to be engaged in the days ahead on these issues, we hope to be in a position to give an update of the situation in the near future.

Perhaps another touchy environmental issue that requires explanation is the current initiative to cap oil wells in Ogoni abandoned by Shell. We have in the recent past subjected current initiatives to cap Ogoni oil wells to intense debate, analysis and discussions. Balanced against our resolve to see Shell out of our land, which has received the blessings of the Federal Government of Nigeria, and the risk posed by the exposure of these wells, the steering Committee of MOSOP have decided to support the capping of the oil wells. We have been convinced that the initiative have nothing to do with resumption of oil exploitation by Shell on our land. We, however, would insist and call for proper measures be put in place to check any possible environmental and social impact of the attendant operations in accordance with extant laws whilst MOSOP would continue to monitor the operations to ensure that nothing more than necessary is undertaken in the regard. We however, would warn against the repeat of events of the past days where Shell without consultations with local communities and even the local government moved with troops into one of our communities ostensibly to cap wells. A major crisis was only averted by our timely intervention in the face of protests by community youths and women. We condemn such actions as needless, provocative and insensitive attempts to precipitate a crisis reminiscent of the tactics that were used to exterminate the heroes we are remembering today.

I have stated above, the environment which our leaders fought and died for was not restricted to the

physical environment. Our struggle, encapsulated in the Ogoni Bill of Rights, was also to ensure that the political environment ensured our participation as of right and guarantees our autonomy within the Nigerian federation. To give vent to this I can state here that our quest for an Ogoni state, now renamed Bori state to accommodate some of our willing neighbours, has progressed to the level where, as I speak, arrangements are being concluded for the formal submission of the demand for the State to the National Assembly within the next few days.

Whilst that is being pursued with vigour, we have not lost sight of the fact that our heroes did not die for an unaccountable political leadership. In this respect, we have embarked on a series of town hall meetings where elected representatives meet and exchange views with the electorate. The maiden edition of the project which commenced with the Deputy Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly 2 weeks ago was a singular success. It will continue with the appearance of our distinguished senator and thereafter other elected and appointed leaders. We would have to appeal to our people to embrace the initiative as we make even hesitant steps in improving how those in political office take into account the voices of our people.

As we continue in this process of engagement of our political leaders, we must caution against tendencies which may suggest that government or those in government alone knows everything, including the needs of the people. We must not allow our positions to stagger us to the false belief that political leadership imbues us with the superior knowledge of what is best for our people without consultations. In this respect, we need to remind those in office not to be tempted to insist on 'projects' like army barracks or other constructions where there are obvious attendant long term problems and discernible real benefits are hard to find. In Ogoni we have stood by the principle that there is hardly ever any reason to deprive our people of their ancestral lands unwillingly, and that genuine development is one where the benefits to those residing in the area is obvious and sustainable beyond the immediate gains to the developer.

Progress without taking into account the concerns and needs of the people with the least resources is not progress at all. We have seen much talk of mega-projects for the Niger Delta and it is true that some large scale development is both necessary and potentially very positive. However, it distresses us when 'mega-projects' trample on the rights of indigenes and residents while smaller vital needs are neglected. It is for this reason that we join the call on the Rivers state government for a reconsideration of the fate of the over 200,000 people in Port Harcourt waterfronts. Many of these are undoubtedly Ogonis who may not necessarily be the compensated landlords, but residents all the same, whose children will be thrown out of school by any displacement that does not include some alternative provisions for them.

Our struggle was also for the improvement in our socio-economic environment and I think that the federal government is finally beginning to admit that it cannot continue to exploit oil in communities without granting them a stake in them. The recent government's decision to concede 10% equity to oil producing communities, a welcome initiative that if well implemented together with other needed interventions would help in bringing about the desired result, is a fitting testament to the success of the ideas championed by us and for which our heroes died. We must, after all, be consoled that our heroes did not and must not die in vain.

ENDS/...[Please Check Against Actual Delivery]

The Ogoni People have since after the gruesome Murder of their patriotic sons on November 10, 1995 and May 21, 1994 continued to remember and honour the departed heroes with a tag, 'Martyrs Day'.

This year's 'Martyrs' Day' Celebration was held as usual on November 10, as an interdenominational Church Service which took place at All Saint Anglican Church, Bori. An unpresidential Crowd attended the service, including prominent Ogoni sons and daughters and friends of the Ogoni. Pictures below capture scenes of the ceremony.



MOSOP President, Ledum Mitee and Wife, Leziga at the 2009 Nov. 10 Service in Bori



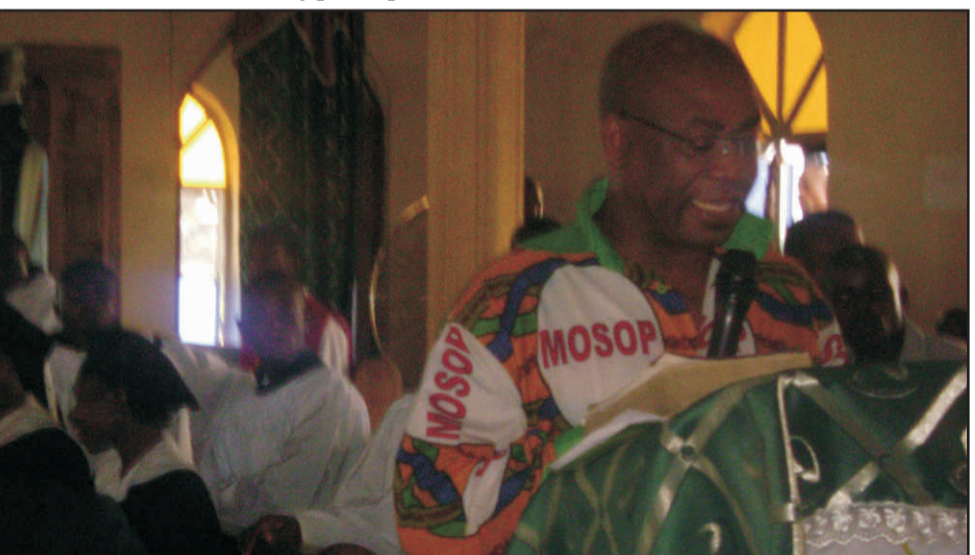
Bishop Gberegbara (JP) delivering sermon at the occasion



Cross Section of participants at the 2009 Nov. 10 Service in Bori



Cross Section of participants at the 2009 Nov. 10 Service in Bori



MOSOP President, Ledum Mitee presenting address at the 2009 Nov. 10 Service in Bori



Cross Section of participants at the 2009 Nov. 10 Service in Bori



Bishop Yorbe praying for Ogoni at the 2009 Nov. 10 Service in Bori



Cross Section of Choristers at the 2009 Nov. 10 Service in Bori