Natural Resource Management and its Implications on National and Sub-regional Security: The Case of the Niger Delta.

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Introduction

Resources such as oil and diamonds are important commodities on the international market and for many countries these resources keep the economy going and satisfy many human needs. The increasing demands for these resources and the shortage in supply make it a necessity for many consumers. For countries that possess large deposits of these resources, the wealth accrued from their production and exportation increases their national income and improves their economy and so there is a high reliance on these resources. Africa has been blessed with numerous resources all of which contribute to its growth and economic development. With this vast amount of resources and the wealth amassed from their trade, resource management is very important. The concept of resource management is closely tied to that of resource control[2].These resources when managed properly should bring economic development, reduce poverty and improve the economy of the country. Proper natural resource management also involves accountability on how these resources and the wealth are used. Proper resource management ensures that everyone in the country benefits from the oil wealth in a fair and equitable manner. Resources are therefore a blessing for the countries that possess them only if properly managed.

In Africa however, these resources have been a blessing for some and a curse for others – the latter specifically for the population and the region where these resources are extracted from. These resources[3] are a curse for these regions because they remain in abject poverty, experience poor economic growth and a generally lower standard of living in comparison to other parts of the country that enjoy the bulk of this wealth. This problem can be attributed to poor resource management.

Poor resource management is a problem in many resource-rich countries in Africa. The argument that the more resources a country has will lead to increased economic growth and prosperity does not hold true when one examines these countries.   Nigeria as the world's eleventh largest oil exporter with immense wealth coming from annual oil production and trade continues to suffer from poor resource management. This is manifest specifically in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. The Niger Delta is the largest oil producing region in the country but the poorest because it has not benefited from the oil wealth derived from oil production. Poor resource management is one of the prominent reasons behind the crisis in the region. Similar cases can be found with oil in Angola, diamonds in Congo and Sierra Leone; these countries being very poor and the most violent of African countries.

The focus of this paper is poor resource management and the impact on the political, economic and environmental situations. At the root of most of the

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[2] Resource control largely deals with the need to "regain ownership, control, use and management of resources primarily for the benefit of the communities and the people on whose land the resources originate and secondarily for the good governance and development of the entire country". Oronto Douglas et al., "Alienation and Militancy in the Niger Delta: A Response to CSIS on Petroleum, Politics and Democracy in Nigeria," (Silver City, NM & Washington, DC: Foreign Policy in Focus, July 2003), 7.

[3] Resources are not limited to oil and gas, but for the indigenes of the region this mean land for agriculture, waters for fishing, forests for harvesting, and air for breathing, as well as other physical and spiritual biota.[3] Oronto Douglas et al., "Alienation and Militancy in the Niger Delta: A Response to CSIS on Petroleum, Politics and Democracy in Nigeria,"

violent conflicts in history has been the competition for territory and resources[4], and specifically seen in Africa this competition is based on the lack of resources to benefit all of the population. Examples of these conflicts can be seen in the resource-rich countries of Congo, Angola, and Sudan all of whom have been affected by civil wars. These countries are rich in natural resources but are often poor, because of government's constant exploitation of these resources and this has created "corrupt and repressive government and armed conflict[5]" Another example is Sierra Leone which has experienced a decade of civil war and intense over control of its diamond fields.

Poor resource management has huge implications for peace and security in the region and Nigeria, therefore, the need to address it becomes prominent. The notion of natural resource curse is closely linked to poor resource management as it creates "stagnation and conflict, rather than economic growth and development"[6]. Conflicts will continue to increase as long as there is a huge reliance on resources; the resources remain scarce; the demand for it increases and the challenge that some do not profit from the wealth.

In Africa, conflicts over natural resources occur in large scale. It therefore shows that "for marginalized groups seeking to redress injustices or inequities in resource distribution, conflict is an inherent feature of their struggle for change and can provide the leverage needed to assert their claims".[7] In Nigeria, several decades of neglect has created restiveness among various groups. Conflicts are evident through clashes between the government, militia groups and other significant actors vying for ownership and control of the resources. Even though groups use conflict as a medium to promote their demands, it has led to more political instability and the increasing loss of lives. The challenge therefore is about how such important resources can be used to improve the standard of living of the oil producing population so that the security of the region and the country is maintained.

Redefining National Security

Over the decades and with the end of the Cold War, there has been a tremendous shift from the traditional notion of security where the state and its institutions were at the centre of national and international security considerations. This Cold-War idea of national security focuses on the state as the primary referent actor and the "security of citizens is acknowledged and warranted by the state; and those who stand outside it represent potential or actual threats"[8]. With the dilemma of failed states and the current rise in intra ethnic conflicts, the need to redefine national security becomes critical especially when threats to the state come more from within than without. In many of the intra-state conflicts on the continent, the security of a sitting government is

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[4] Richard H. Ullman, "Redefining Security," International Security 8, no.1 (Summer, 1983):139.

[5] George Soros. "Nigeria: Lifting the resource curse". Daily Times March 31, 2005.

6 Thomas I. Palley, "Lifting the Natural Resource Curse By Foreign Service Journal, Global Policy Forum, December 2003; Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://globalpolicy.igc.org/security/natres/generaldebate/2003/12curse.htm

[7]The International Development Centre, "Cultivating Peace: From Conflict to Collaboration in Natural Resource Management., IDRC Briefing, Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-5591-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

[8] Keith Krause and Michael Williams, "Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods," Mershon International Studies Review 40 no.2 (October 1996):232.

equated with the state implying that governments can perpetuate the slaughter of a section of their nationals under the guise of securing the state and its sovereignty. Halting this hapless tend requires that the individual is placed at the centre of the discussions on national security as being championed by the United National Develop Programme (UNDP)[9]. Thus the individual rather than the state becomes our unit of analysis and in that order must be given priority in security discourse. In addition, the formation of groups based on ethnic, nationalist, religious ideals have increased the number of actors working within the state borders[10]. The state no longer holds the paramount reference of security. If the individual is the main focus, then an examination of national security must focus on the ability and role of the state to provide security to its citizens. States, therefore, have the primary responsibility for the security of persons under their jurisdiction and international law gives states freedom to adopt measures to protect these persons.

Such threats could also emanate from man's constant exploration of natural resources creating an environment for competition and conflict. In this context, when resources are scarce and the demand is high, conflict increases. Reconceptualising national security in Africa involves looking inside the borders of a country and finding out what factors continue to remain a threat to its peace and stability and that of the individual within its confines.

The presence of ever growing threats also require a redefinition of national security based also on the fact that security is not focused solely on military issues but on economic, environmental and demographic issues. National security must be broadened to accommodate economic, environmental and demographic issues as they are important in understanding the new causes of intra-state conflicts. The focus on military is, therefore, deceptive and very dangerous as it leads states to concentrate on military threats and ignore other harmful dangers affecting their security.[11] These other dangers include pollution, poverty, crime, and underdevelopment all of which fuel conflicts.

Box 1.2: Human Security versus State Security

Separating human security and state security has been the subject of numerous debates. Both state and human security are interdependent thus it becomes difficult to determine which takes precedence. State security on the one hand focuses on historical views of society, seeing the state as the main referent object of security. Human security however puts focus on the individual within the state. On the one side are proponents that state security continues to take prominence and the dynamics in the international scene calls for this focus. Human security proponents focus on the new economic, social and environmental threats to the individual that supersede state boundaries. The argument for state security is that there are still external threats to the state and this can be seen with countries' developing nuclear capabilities and the September 11 attack on

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[9] See UNDP Human Development Index report in 1994 which initiated discussions on the concept of human security: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1994_en_contents.pdf (accessed: 16 October 2008)

[10] Michael T. Klare, "Redefining Security: The New Global Schisms," Feature Article Current History, November 1996. Accessed on September 24, 2007; available from http://www.currenthistory.com/archivenov96/klare.html.

[11] Ullman, 129.

the United States. A focus on human security is very important as states have become threats to the economic, social and environmental rights of the individuals within them. More and more states are unable to ensure that the needs of the citizens are being met. This challenges the traditional notion of the state as the one referent. Increasingly, the well-being of individual and species are becoming more important than national interest and sovereignty.[12] One can therefore argue that individual security is more important than state security as the individual within the state is increasingly under attack.

For example, in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, environmental degradation has reduced the economic viability of the region thereby ridding many of its inhabitants of their livelihood; mainly fishing and agriculture. The effects of oil on the Niger Delta community is very detrimental to human life as "anything that is seen to obstruct or have the semblance of obstructing the free flow of oil is uprooted and destroyed, whether it is a human being, a community or a stream".[13] As Bilgin put acknowledges, "state-based approaches do not allow us to examine the insecurities of individuals and communities within state borders, thereby glossing over a range of suffering in security analyses"[14].

Origins of the Niger Delta Crisis

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria spans across the nine states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers in the Southeastern region of Nigeria. These states make up the richest region of the country having large oil and gas deposits. Oil production in the region accounts for 95 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and according to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, in 2003, an estimate showed recoverable crude oil reserves at 34 billion barrels. In addition, Nigeria is becoming a major supplier in the global liquefied natural gas (LNG) also coming from the Niger Delta. The economic advantage of the Niger Delta cannot be denied with oil being an important global commodity and a large source of revenue for the country. The strategic importance of the Niger Delta is obvious as Nigeria is "Africa's largest oil producer, the world's eleventh largest producer, and the fifth largest supplier of America's crude oil imports"[15].

The origins of the Niger Delta crisis can be traced back to Independence in 1960 and the Civil War of 1967. The Civil war was largely caused by the desire of the Eastern region (where the Niger Delta is situated) led by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu[16] to secede from the rest of the country. The reasons for secession were due to the fact that many people in the region wanted more control over oil resources and more revenue allocated to them. This desire for resource control

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[12] Krause and Williams, 233.

[13] Joel Bisina, "Oil and Corporate Recklessness in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region," Pambazuka News, Global Policy Forum, 29 July, 2004. 3. Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/natres/oil/2004/0729reckless.html.

[14] Pinar Bilgin, "Individual and Societal Dimensions of Security", International Studies Review 5 (2003): 208.

[15] Chinwe Esimai, "Nigeria's Defining Moment," Current History, May 2006, 234.

[16] Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu was the leader of the state of Biafra in Nigeria (1967–1970), during the Nigerian Civil War, and was previously Military Governor of the Eastern Region of Nigeria.

and revenue was further exacerbated by the fact that the federal government which had sole ownership of the oil resources and the wealth derived from it was ruled mostly by the Yoruba and Hausa, the two largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. With the failure of a summit to resolve that conflict at Aburi in Ghana, in which Shell and the Nigerian government were on one side against the Eastern region, the scene was set for secession attempts and the subsequent Civil War (Biafran War) of 1967[17]. In spite of the failure of the Eastern region to secede, Nigeria's economic and political structure was heavily affected by the war. The failed attempt at secession did not stop the rift between the federal government and the oil-producing regions.

Another important event that triggered the Niger Delta crisis was the "two million march" in March 1998, when the government of Sani Abacha transported large numbers of people from the Niger Delta region to the capital Abuja, paying them to support his bid for another term in office. This was the first time many inhabitants of the Niger Delta saw at first-hand, the high level of development and infrastructure in the capital. For many of the youth from the Niger Delta, "the sight of highway overpasses in a city with no rivers was a revelation"[18]. The realization of how underdeveloped their region was in contrast to the highly developed capital city despite the oil wealth triggered the Niger Delta problem and the increased militancy in the region. As of late, the exclusion of minority ethnic groups such as the Ijaw, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Isoko, Andoni and Ogoni, from discussions on oil wealth and ownership has worsened the Niger Delta crisis.

The demands of these groups have been mainly for partial control of oil resources and development assistance. In the Nigerian case, these demands are hindered by the government as they own the oil in the region and determine how it affects the livelihoods of the people. Shell which had begun exploration in the late 1950s took part in a joint venture with the Nigerian government in oil production leading to a fifty-fifty sharing agreement between both parties, with nothing left for landowners. Oil companies continue to deal directly with Abuja (the capital) and local owners are not aware that the government has given these oil companies permits to their land[19]. In many cases, the state and local governments are cut off from the people and they do not deal directly with them.[20] The fact that the federal government was given full and absolute control over oil resources in the country due to the Petroleum Act of 1969 has not been accepted by the Niger Delta residents. Before the promulgation of the Land Use Act of 1978[21], oil companies had to obtain mining rights from the government and permission for right of access to the land from the oil-bearing/land-owning communities.[22] This was successful as these groups participated in decisions regarding oil exploration

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[17] The Aburi Summit ended with the agreement that Nigeria would become a confederation with each region being autonomous and the military governors controlling the areas under their regions. The Aburi agreements failed because the federal government failed to live up to its commitments under the agreement.

[18] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", Africa Report No. 115, 3 August 2006, 24.

[19] Interview with staff at the Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility (CSCR) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, February 2008.

[20] Interview with staff at the Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility (CSCR) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, February 2008.

[21] The 1978 Land Use Act gives the federal government sole ownership of all lands.

[22] Kaniye S. Ebeku, "Oil and the Niger Delta People: The Injustice of the Land Use Act," The Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy Journal, 9 14)18 November 2001). Accessed on September 6, 2007; available from http://www.dundee.ac.uk/cepmlp/journal/html/vol9/article9-14.html

and production and in addition received compensation for granting access to these companies and for any damage to land and any surface rights thereon[23]. However, the situation has changed. Federal laws are such that the title to any land where oil is found is automatically transferred to the federal government without adequate compensation to the landowners.[24]

There are also limitations allowing the inhabitants of the region to have legitimate access to these oil resources and use them for their own benefit. The problem of resource control is coupled with the fact that the economic, social, and environmental issues in the region have been neglected in these host communities. Historically, they have been shut out of negotiations and decisions made between the federal government and multinational companies operating in the region. The economic and social rights of the people have not been encouraged and the resort to violence has become the norm. The communities and the people of the Niger Delta are no better off than they were in 1958.[25]

Multi-national corporations who are "anxious to get out of the business of community development in Nigeria"[26], play a huge role in the Niger Delta crisis. By the end of 1974 about 19 companies – 11 United States, one British-Dutch, 1 French, 1 German, one Italian, 1 Japanese and three Nigerian were involved in oil exploration.[27] Currently giant corporations like Mobil, Chevron, Shell, Elf and Agip are the dominant actors in the region. These organizations make billions of dollars a year from oil production and sale and have failed to develop the regions where they operate. The fact that people make a living by fishing while oil wells owned by the foreign companies pump billions of dollars' worth of oil a year around them" [28], does not help the reputation of these corporations. Corporations are now beginning to make some effort but it has been late and still considerably slow.[29] The regions remain highly underdeveloped and lands are no more available due to the fact that pipelines take up land space and gas flaring leads to the burning of farmlands and forests and oil spillages cause large fires that spread very quickly when lighted. Companies interact with the host and impacted communities but the terms of this relationship are dictated by the former taking the form of a master-servant relationship.[30] The use of claim agents to represent the communities that make claims to the oil companies has not been honest as these claim agents are

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[23] Kaniye S. Ebeku, "Oil and the Niger Delta People: The Injustice of the Land Use Act," The Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy Journal, 9 14)18 November 2001). Accessed on September 6, 2007; available from http://www.dundee.ac.uk/cepmlp/journal/html/vol9/article9-14.html

[24] Joel Bisina, "Oil and Corporate Recklessness in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region," Pambazuka News, Global Policy Forum, 29 July, 2004. Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/natres/oil/2004/0729reckless.html.

[25] Oronto Douglas et al., "Alienation and Militancy in the Niger Delta: A Response to CSIS on Petroleum, Politics and Democracy in Nigeria," (Silver City, NM & Washington, DC: Foreign Policy in Focus, July 2003), 7.

[26] Oronto Douglas et al., "Alienation and Militancy in the Niger Delta: A Response to CSIS on Petroleum, Politics and Democracy in Nigeria," (Silver City, NM & Washington, DC: Foreign Policy in Focus, July 2003), 8.

[27] S.A. Madujibeya S.A. Oil and Nigeria's Economic Development," African Affairs 75, no. 300 (July 1976, 285.

[28] Sebastian Junger, "Crude Awakening (Part One)," 15 April, 2007. Accessed on September 10, 2007; available from http://www.doublestandards.org/text/junger1.html.

[29] Interview with a staff of the Niger Delta Wetlands Centre (NDWC) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria February 2008.

[30] Interview with staff at the Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility (CSCR) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, February 2008.

usually registered under and are acquaintances of these oil companies and so they literally dupe the communities.[31]

An interesting dimension to this is the fact that the facilities of oil companies are protected by the Nigerian police, army and navy and these oil companies have provided "monthly pay and perks"[32] to ensure that the military protect their installations. Oil companies have the attitude of getting things done, forcing their way and using military means[33]. Corporate social responsibility remains very low despite calls from various advocacy and human rights groups. The companies' activities include "exploration, seismic surveys, test drillings, development drilling, and the provision of production facilities such as flow stations, pipelines, export terminals and offshore platforms and jetties"[34], however they neglect to develop other areas in the region in which they work; this continues to be a hindrance to its peace and security.

Security Situation of the Niger Delta

National security has been weakened by the conflict in the Niger Delta as cults and militant groups continue to challenge the government. Some of these groups are not satisfied with the government's response and neglect and so violence is used to pressurize the government to quicken its response to their demands for resource control, development assistance and poverty alleviation. Since the 1990s armed groups have intensified violence and now, "a new form of guerrilla-style conflict has emerged"[35] in the region. Security in the region is very poor as wide scale fighting between the federal government soldiers, militant groups and private security firms is regular.

These groups such as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Niger Delta Volunteer People's Force (NDVPF), and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) which claim to defend the rights of the Niger Delta peoples have been the dominant groups in the Niger Delta acting as umbrella groups for smaller factions. The MOSOP, a prominent group created under the leadership of Ken Saro Wiwa[36], represents the rights of the Ogoni tribe. The Ogoni uprising of 1990 saw a violent outbreak of conflict in the region as a move to address the major environmental degradation and economic injustices carried out by the federal government. This militant approach initially developed by the MOSOP, to respond to the activities of the government has been weakened due to internal divisions and "it has never recovered from its former strength however it continues to press for political and economic reforms.[37]

In 2004, the Niger-Delta crisis came to a head with the proclamations by the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) to destroy the oil wells and pipelines

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[31] Interview with staff at the Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility (CSCR) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, February 2008.

[32] International Crisis Group, "Fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis", 5.

[33] Interview with staff at the Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility (CSCR) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, February 2008.

[34] Madujibeya, 285.

[35] International Crisis Group, "Fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis" i.

[36] Ken Saro-Wiwa was a prominent author and playwright killed under General Sani Abacha's regime for stirring widespread non-violent protest against Shell's harmful role in destroying the region.

[37] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", 5.

in the region. The NDPVF is a separatist group led by Dokubo Asari who threatened to launch a war in the region if the government failed to comply with calls by the host communities for a greater control of the region's rich oil resources. This declaration disrupted oil production sending oil prices higher. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), a group that continues to make known the environmental devastation and poor living conditions in the region, has a far-reaching influence. It is an umbrella organization for a loose affiliation of rebel groups in the Delta region[38]. MEND in the past has "fought with government forces, sabotaged oil installations, taken foreign oil workers hostage and carried out two lethal bombings"[39]. They have been known for destroying pipelines, killing at least 29 security force members and a strike on the Shell's Benisede flow station damaging the facility and killing 14 soldiers and 2 civilian contractors in January 15 2006[40].

Evidently the "militancy and criminality are the convergent streams of the popular resistance"[41]. Activities used by these groups have ranged from kidnapping and hostage taking to vandalization of oil facilities and arson. The increase in organized crime and oil bunkering[42] has also increased. The oil fields, refineries, processing plants, pipelines, pumping stations, distribution points and corporate offices and employees of oil companies have been attacked. Approximately thirty militants killed eight Nigerian soldiers and successfully robbed a bank in January 2006.[43] Cult groups and gangs have also increased in the Niger Delta and they not only fight government forces but each other as they compete for supremacy and control and "territory, oil bunkering networks, or other sources of revenue and influence"[44]. According to a Civil Liberties Report in January 2008, the booming arms market and the growing influence of these groups among other factors have shown that a minimum of 100 cult groups exist just in Port Harcourt.[45] These groups thought that they could represent the interests of the local communities but currently this has not been the case as they are thinking of personal gains and their priority is not improving the people in the local communities.[46] The main goal has been to ensure that they have enough wealth to continue furnishing their rich lifestyles and so there is a "greedy tilt to it and everyone is trying to make money"[47].

In August 2007, the conflict in the region took a new turn in the city of Port Harcourt as different armed gangs carried out battles on the streets and destroyed many communities in the process. According to a public statement by Amnesty

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[38] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", i.

[39] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", i.

[40] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", 1.

[41] International Crisis Group, "Fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis" i.

[42] Oil bunkering is referred to the practice of stealing crude oil directly from pipelines and loading it onto barges or larger vessels for illegal transport onto the international market. International Crisis Group, "Nigeria: Want in the Midst of Plenty", Africa Report No 113, 19 July 2006, 3.

[43] Junger, Crude Awakening (Part One).

[44] An armed conflict between Asari's NDPVF and Ateke's ND took place in late 200 leading to the death of hundreds and the fleeing of thousands from their homes and communities destroyed. An account of this can be found in the Human Rights Watch Report in 2004 titled "Rivers and Blood". Human Rights Watch, Criminal Politics: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria October 9, 2007, Volume 19, No. 16(A) 83.

[45] Ugwu, Damian. "Niger Delta: Decimated by Violence", Civil Liberties Organization Report. January 2008, 23.

[46] Interview with a representative of CEDSI

[47] Interview with a representative of CEDSI

International, this clash also involved random shootings of civilians, leading to 30 deaths and 70 injured. In addition, an intervention by the Nigerian Joint Task Force a few days later led to the death of 32 individuals made up of gang members, security forces and bystanders[48]. The reason behind these battles was fuelled by efforts of these gangs to claim political patronage including money and oil bunkering routes from the state government.[49]

The activities of the Nigerian military and police in the Niger Delta also contribute greatly to the insecurity in the region. The Nigerian government has reacted to various militant attacks by grazing down complete villages in attempts to stop any violent attacks on them which have led to the deaths of many innocent villagers. According to the Civil Liberties Organization's report on the violence in the Niger Delta, "scores of people including women and girls have been arrested, tortured, and killed extra judicially by the members of the security force in the guise of fighting armed groups".[50] In addition, law enforcement officers have been known to use excessive force when maintaining the peace. Many towns and villages do not have permanent police detachments, and on the other hand, security forces are known to protect the oil installations that surround the region[51]. The failure of the state to protect its own has increased popular dissatisfaction with the government especially as civilians in the region are under constant threat and "civilian protection is seen to be a secondary concern at best".[52]

Militant groups, cults and gangs are increasingly becoming a stronger force as many are a product of state governors creating them to incite violence, threaten voters during elections and destroy political opponents. The rise of these criminal godfathers, who sponsor and fund such groups, has increased instability in the region and the country as a whole. The fact that the government defends security crackdowns have embittered locals, making them easy targets to be recruited by groups such as MEND"[53]. In addition to gaining recruits, the "threat of violence is exacerbated by international arms dealers who continue to find Nigeria a lucrative market"[54]. Politicians have also provided these groups with guns and promises of jobs especially during elections so the latter can incite violence and assist them in wining the elections but after the elections these groups keep the guns and weapons but promises of jobs are unfulfilled. These weapons therefore made them much stronger and made it easier to resort to violence to make money. An interview was conducted by *Human Rights Watch* in which a former gang leader stated that "if the government would pass a law preventing the politicians from giving arms to our people, it would help Rivers a lot".[55] The easy access to arms, the availability of funds and increased recruitment will continue to worsen the security situation in the country.

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[48] Amnesty International, "Nigeria: Violence in Port Harcourt escalates," News Service No: 162 22 August 2007.

[49] George Soboma is another powerful gang leader of one of the many gangs in Port Harcourt known as the Icelanders.

[50] Ugwu, Damian. "Niger Delta: Decimated by Violence", Civil Liberties Organization Report. January 2008,

[51] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest",5

[52] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest",5

[53] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest",5

[54] Dorine Bekoe, "Strategies for Peace in the Niger Delta." United States Institute of Peace Briefing, December 2005. Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2005/1219_nigerdelta.html

[55] A Human Rights Watch Interview conducted in April 12, 2007. Human Rights Watch, Criminal Politics: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria" 89.

Interactions between multinational oil companies and local communities have often led to more conflict. Companies have tended to look for the strongest group in the community (the strongest being a dubious armed group, gang of ruffians) and award them contracts and money and in turn these groups protect their own interests as well as that of Shell.[56] Groups are therefore competing constantly to remain the most dominant and strongest group in the community as this guarantees support from Shell. Clashes have occurred also over where to put water towers in these local communities. At the local level, there are many youth cult groups and gangs in many villages and communities who use violence to get economic gains.

Residents continue to bear the brunt of this violence as they are constantly caught in between clashes and these have resulted in the loss of lives. According to *Human Rights Watch* since late 2003, tens of thousands of Nigerians have been driven from their homes and forced to live with families and friends, townspeople and villagers have experienced unparalleled levels of insecurity as armed groups and schools have been forced to close down, economic activities halted and the homes and property of already desperately poor Nigerians have been destroyed[57]. Communities noticed that violent not peaceful behaviour is rewarded[58], as the violent and militant groups are the one's benefiting most. Their use of violence, the millions of dollars made from kidnapping as well as funding from politicians, have benefited them immensely. It is therefore easier to use violent means as they have shown to reap huge financial returns.

Implications for National Security

Poor resource management has an impact on the political, economic, and environmental security in Nigeria. It also has implications for inter-ethnic relations. These aspects of Nigerian society are a cause for concern especially with the effects they have on national security. On the national front, the negative impacts of this could lead to another civil war, another attempt at secession and increased economic decay and instability.

Political and Inter-Ethnic Implications

The nature and role of the Nigerian government in the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta have exacerbated violence in the region. The government's feeble effort to promote development and thus ensure peace and security has largely failed. The government is therefore "trying to plug holes in what is an increasingly leaky dam"[59]. It is also disturbing that the state and the police have carried out repressive activities like killings, harassing, arresting, and detaining individuals. It holds true that the "incapacity of the state to peacefully engage leads it to use the dominant power approach to deal with its citizens.[60]" Even though civilian governments have been in power, the military legacy has continuously tightened

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[56] Interview with a Staff of the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, Port Harcourt, January 2008.

[57] Human Rights Watch, Criminal Violence and Human Rights Abuses against the Local Population in 2004, Background Report, January 2005.

[58] Luc Zandvliet and Akachukwu Nwankpo, "Corporate Engagement Project; Elf Petroleum Nigeria Limited (EPNL) Field Visit to Nigeria: 30 June-13 July 2004", August 2004 cited in [58] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", 11.

[59] International Crisis Group, "Fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis", 2.

[60] Author's Notes, Domestic Terrorism in Africa; Ontology of an Old War in New Trenches, ISS and KAIPTC Conference, 2007.

its control over oil fields and the wealth generated from it. In addition to this is the fact that the colonial legacy is still embedded in how the country is governed. This has created a huge divide between the Nigerian government and the people.

Nigeria is the world's fifth largest federation however this remains in principle and not in practice. Centralized power is such that power of decision-making on resource control and wealth is left to the top-echelons of government. Nigeria is divided among 250 ethnic groups, with the 3 main ethnic groups the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo occupying the west, north and eastern regions. The tribes of the Niger Delta such as the Ijaw, Ogoni and Itsekiri, Urhobo make up some of the minority groups in Nigeria. The Niger Delta tribes are found in the swampy deltaic terrain, completely cut off from development, modern industries and social infrastructure[61], unlike the other regions of the country. The centralization of power in Nigeria has impeded cordial ethnic relations as the Nigeria's top positions such as that of the President and Vice President have been occupied by the major ethnic groups (Yoruba and Hausa) without representation from the Niger Delta. As these majority tribes are not located in the Niger Delta they have created a "formula for sharing the revenues from oil production favouring other regions, and increasing the poverty in the delta, which creates anger and conflict between the delta tribes themselves."[62] The recent appointment of Jonathan Goodluck (from the Niger Delta region) as Vice President[63] is a sigh of relief in regard to the configuration of the top positions in Nigerian politics.

The centralization of power continues to leave sub-units out of the political process and in the context of oil control, "whoever dominates the state necessarily controls the means to displace rival contenders for a disproportionate share of the oil bonanza",[64] which has created an arena of perpetual political conflict. Thus the Niger Delta conflict is exacerbated due to the general failure of the Nigerian state to address the problems in the delta and the fact that the problem lies with the government, oil companies as well as wealthy politicians who fuel these conflicts to rid the region of all its ample resources. Most of the civil wars have been fuelled by their "leaders' hunger to cling to the resources that they control as well as the motivation of the prospects of amassing personal wealth"[65], and this has led to political leaders supplying arms and encouraging conflict so they can continue to control this wealth.

The close ties between religious differences and ethnic backgrounds are very clear because "religious differences in Nigeria inescapably translate into ethnic tensions between Christian Igbo and Muslim Hausa" [66] and this makes Nigeria's case very interesting. This interface of religion and ethnicity brings out a new face of conflict in Nigeria and is largely affected by the conflict in the Niger-Delta. The majority of the Muslim dominated North also continues to enjoy more

[61] Joel Bisina, "Oil and Corporate Recklessness in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region," Pambazuka News, Global Policy Forum, 29 July, 2004. 3. Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/natres/oil/2004/0729reckless.html.

[62] Joel Bisina, "Oil and Corporate Recklessness in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region," Pambazuka News, Global Policy Forum, 29 July, 2004. 3. Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/natres/oil/2004/0729reckless.html.

[63]Jonathan Goodluck hails from Bayelsa state and was the former governor of the same state, a major oil producer in the Niger Delta.

[64] Ike Okonta, "Nigeria: Chronicle of a Dying State," Current History (May 2005):205.

[65] George Lwanda, "Conflict, Diamonds and the Resource Curse" Conflict Trends 4/2003.

[66] Esimai, 236.

benefits from the oil wealth than the Christian South which fuels further the animosity between both regions.

Elections which are meant to be peaceful political and democratic processes have been the cause of deaths and violence in many areas of the region. The rise of militant groups supported by state governors and used as enforcers has become a popular practice. Close alliances have been established between political aspirants and militant groups as the former reward these groups to use violence to intimidate political opponents and rig elections.[67] In addition, political leaders provide arms to these groups further inciting political unrest. Electoral rigging and malpractice has become customary as individuals and parties use all resources and efforts to ensure that they win. Rivers State, the largest oil producing state in Nigeria has immense wealth; however, this has created a "high -stakes of political competition and a resulting level of political violence that considerably exceeds even the nationwide norm"[68]. The 2003 elections was a major example of this as it was "more violent and more brazenly rigged than in other parts of the country".[69] Close alliances between the candidates and oil companies such as Shell have been established.

A principal cause of the rise of these cults and groups has been the failure of the federal government to address their grievances. Past governments have failed to actively address the problems in the region[70]. The creation of the NDDC by the government of Olusegun Obasanjo was given the mandate to investigate the situation in the Niger Delta region and provide key recommendations. This commission faced many challenges in its operations as its mandate was weak coupled with the constant accusations of corruption and mismanagement which in the end limited its work making it inefficient. Currently, the NDDC does not lack human resources, however, it still continues to face financial challenges.[71]The government of Obasanjo did not pay NDDC the sum of N230 billion to assist it in carrying out its work in the Niger Delta. NNPC a body charged with coordinating Nigeria's control in oil production since 1973 has been fuelled by constant reports of corruption. These institutions remain but are very weak and ineffective.

The access to the national wealth by government officials without any checks or accountability has made it easier for corruption. In Nigeria, leaders are not accountable to anybody but they are accountable to themselves[72].The corruption in the country cannot be denied as since Independence in 1960, reports show that "$300-$400bn of oil revenue has been stolen or misspent by corrupt government officials – an amount of money approaching all the western aid received by Africa in those years".[73] This corruption not only occurs at the federal level but also at the state and local government level. The federal government has stated the fact that "historical grievances overshadow the fact that the Niger

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[67] Dorine Bekoe, "Strategies for Peace in the Niger Delta." <u>United States Institute of Peace Briefing,</u> December 2005. Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2005/1219_nigerdelta.html. Examples of these alliances are the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Asari Dokubo and the Niger Delta Vigilante (ndv) led by Ateke Tom used by the PDP to use violence to rig the 2003 polls.

[68] Human Rights Watch, <u>Criminal Politics</u>: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria, 80.

[69] Human Rights Watch, <u>Criminal Politics</u>: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria, 80.

[70] Ibrahim Babangida was the military ruler of Nigeria from 1985 until 1993.

[71] Interview with an official of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), January 2008.

[72] Interview with an official of the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, January 2008.

[73] Junger. Crude Awakening (Part One)

Delta states have been the recipient of monthly government allocations since military rule ended in 1999 - equivalent to 13 percent of funds derived from mineral resources"[74]. As of 2006, $6bn comprising of both 50 percent of national oil revenue and 13% derivation principle allocated for the nine-oil producing states sufficient for providing basic social services is never used for these communities and disappear from the governor's office. [75] These funds in many cases are not trickled down to the local government or smaller communities but instead remain in the capital cities such as Calabar and Port Harcourt. The absence of accountability and transparency has increased corruption.

      Local communities have been disengaged from local, state and federal dialogue on initiatives and policies regarding development, resource control and resource allocation. Accesses to the creeks are hard and people are forgotten and invisible and they have no political will. The many offers of development by the government have failed due to the absence of the consent or involvement of the broader Delta population[76]. This exclusionary politics has led leaders of the region to "accuse the ethnic majority groups of using oil wealth to develop their areas at the expense of the areas in which oil is derived".[77] This nature of exclusionary politics is also present at the state level. In this instance, the Ogoni's exclusion from state politics with the continued social and economic underdevelopment of their land has led to an increased fight for justice.[78] Divided factions usually according to ethnic lines are prone to hinder unity within the state or government structure. These groups are becoming stronger political players and are increasingly challenging the state which could further divide the country.

Economic

      A wide range of grievances exist at the root of the Niger Delta agenda one of which is the economically backward state the region continues to remain in. The mismanagement of resources coupled with the constant neglect of the region by the government has created huge economic problems for the region. These problems include heightened poverty and gross underdevelopment. The fact that more than $400 billion has been accrued from oil revenue since the early 1970s"[79] creates a picture of a corrupt, inefficient resource management system. In spite of the vast wealth brought in by oil there is still a void in the Niger Delta when it comes to economic development. In most cases, government officials are corrupt and in other cases, multinational companies pay militant groups, payments which are "disguised either as oil servicing or community development contracts or as customary payments to communities"[80].

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[74] Between June 1999 and July 2004, Akwa Ibom received $979 million, Bayelsa $900 million, Delta $1.5 billion and Rivers $1.04 billion in comparison to Lagos, a non –oil producing state that got $614 million. International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", 24.
[75] Junger, "Crude Awakening (Part One)"
[76] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", 2.
[77] Osaghae, 325.
[78] Osaghae, 329.
[79] International Crisis Group, "Nigeria: Want in the Midst of Plenty", 3.
[80] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest",10.

Efforts at development and poverty eradication by the government have been very poor and even though "corporate development has had some good results, failed, incomplete and unsustainable projects have become Delta landmarks"[81]. A hospital in Umuechem is not functioning and a water project in Oloibiri is not completed and the NDDC has not attended to it.[82] Borehole plants are there but many of them are not working[83]. The bad management of development projects and the failure to complete them have plagued current efforts in the region. A number of these projects (roads, bridges) have been neglected for too long and it is impossible to pick up again as they are fragile.

Basic infrastructure is missing with empty clinics and schools lacking staff or equipment, empty water towers with broken or missing pumps and pipes observed around the region which have affected productivity. The region is largely underdeveloped with the absence of electricity, roads, schools and potable water. Electricity is the 5th on the list of needs outlined by the Niger Delta local communities so there is light for children to study and the women to sew, and fans for breeze to keep the mosquitoes away.[84] There are no schools, clinics or social services in delta villages; there is no clean drinking water and virtually no paying jobs in the region.[85] Education for the children as well as health and good water were at the top of priority of the needs in the impacted areas.[86]

Unemployment rates are still very high especially as foreigners and expatriates are hired for jobs in the oil sector and local indigenous populations are ignored. In addition, the increase in capital intensive exploration has reduced the need for human capital. Youths in many of these communities have been neglected and they have no source of livelihoods. The attitude there is one of constantly looking for money and so any activity requiring youth involvement cannot be successful unless they are awarded money.[87] They are increasingly spoilt and are concerned about themselves and not the community.[88]

Efforts in 2004 to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate members of the armed groups failed as over 2000 youths were provided with technical skills training however these programs did not provide a job for them.[89] In addition, promises by politicians during the Rivers State 2003 election period to provide jobs for youth in exchange for carrying out electoral violence were not kept.[90] Many have lost their source of livelihoods, especially in a region made up of mostly farmers and fisherman. With the constant oil spillage that occurs, the fishes are destroyed and the soil is not workable thus wiping out the economy of these communities. Due to these problems, there is a high rise of criminality and explains the reason for kidnapping as ransoms are very high. The tourism and hospitality sector has been affected with the constant curfews being instigated;

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[81] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", 12.
[82] Interview with staff at the Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility (CSCR) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, February 2008.
[83] Interview with a staff of the Niger Delta Wetlands Centre (NDWC) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria February 2008.
[84] Interview with a staff of the Niger Delta Wetlands Centre (NDWC) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria February 2008.
[85] Sebastian Junger, Crude Awakening (Part One).
[86] Interview with a staff of the Niger Delta Wetlands Centre (NDWC) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria February 2008.
[87] Interview with a staff of the Niger Delta Wetlands Centre (NDWC) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria February 2008.
[88] Interview with a staff of the Niger Delta Wetlands Centre (NDWC) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria February 2008.
[89] Dorine Bekoe, "Strategies for Peace in the Niger Delta." United States Institute of Peace Briefing, December 2005. Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2005/1219_nigerdelta.html
[90] Human Rights Watch, Criminal Politics: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria, 81.

non-oil organizations and institutions are also closing down and leaving the region all of which increase the effects of the insecurity in the region.

There are inequities in the country's economic structure as the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. These wealth disparities are also evident when one compares the oil producing communities to the non-oil producing communities. Inequalities also exist within the region as some are more developed than others and "broken promises and favouritism"[91] have affected the relationship between oil companies and the oil producing communities. These social inequalities and wealth disparities have been the reasons behind clashes and divisions among local communities.

There cannot be long lasting peace in the region until there are signs of economic growth and sustainable development. Many gang members stated that poverty and unemployment were the sole factors for their participation in political violence and crime.[92] As long as economic deprivation exists and underdevelopment is prevalent throughout the region, any hopes of lasting peace remain unattainable. The lack of corporate social responsibility is also to blame for these problems.

The violence in the Niger Delta has posed a bigger loss for the Nigerian economy. Annually approximately 300,000 barrels of oil, worth 18 million dollars per day is wasted. The Gross Domestic Product is falling at 2.79% every year. As of September 2006, more than fifty oil workers had been kidnapped and released for ransom; onshore oil production had reduced by twenty five percent (600,000) barrels a day, costing the Nigerian government $1bn a month.[93] The instability in the region must be addressed as it is forcing many oil companies to move to other countries such as Angola and Gabon for oil production as they are less dangerous. Oil companies are moving their workers out of the country due to the huge costs incurred from the constant attack on their facilities and their employees.

The constant vandalization of oil pipelines has led to the replacement of pipelines by oil tankers to transport oil around the country. These tankers in many cases are not functioning properly and have been the cause of many ghastly accidents across the country. In addition, the increase in black markets and the constant short supply of oil in the country has led to an increase in oil prices for many Nigerians. It should be the norm that a country with vast amount of oil resources meets national demands before external demands but the reverse is the case. This has affected Nigeria's position as a reliable oil producer in the global market.

The increased reliance on oil is felt as federal policies have displaced the non oil-producing areas incentives to generate alternative sources to enhance their respective fiscal capacity and also make a fair and equitable contribution to the national treasury[94]. The increased focus on oil as the sole source of Nigeria's economy is not beneficial for the nation and for the oil region as there is pressure to increase oil exploration which ends up destroying the environment.

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[91] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest", 11.
[92] This response was culled from Human Rights Watch Interviews in August 2006 and April 2007, Human Rights Watch, Criminal Politics: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria, 81.
[93] Junger, "Crude Awakening (Part One),
[94] Augustine Ikein, "Socio-Economic and Environmental Challenges and the Quest for Sustainable Development in Nigeria's Oil Rich Niger Delta: A Commentary," Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa 6, no.1 (Spring 2004):4.

Environmental

Article 24 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights states that *"All peoples shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to their development".* In the Niger Delta, this element is missing as the lives and health of its population is at risk. The environmental impact of the oil industry on the oil producing community has become increasingly the subject of concern in national and international spheres. The federal government and oil companies such as Shell and BP have been brought under constant criticism as they have failed to address the effects of oil exploration in the region. The problem is further exacerbated by militant groups as they carry out oil bunkering which has led to oil spillages which has destroyed arable land and other natural resources.

True ownership of the resources and proper resource management would ensure that the exploration of oil does little or no harm to the environment and the lives of those living in exploration sites. This constant exploration of oil and the failure to protect the environment and livelihoods of the Niger delta is a current threat to environmental security. When oil production is intensified haphazardly, riverbank erosion results, gas flares occur frequently, forests are cut down while rivers and streams are dredged.[95] These are the typical features of the host communities in the Niger Delta. The government of Nigeria has always stated that gas flaring must stop and has passed laws to this effect but the situation has not changed.

Oil spillages have also been widespread and their effects detrimental. Oil spillages from pipelines have "destroyed farmlands and marine life"[96]. Sea animals are becoming extinct and so there is no source of food. A recent study showed that oil spills have affected the fishery sector of the Niger Delta to the point that fishes and crayfish have reduced largely and the few that are left taste of diesel and petroleum[97]. The constant production of oil and dredging has caused acid rain, contaminating the air and the water causing widespread and dramatic erosion.[98] In addition, oil companies are supposed to clear the oil spills immediately it happens but they have failed to do this.

The destruction to land has made it harder for farmers to cultivate their crops and this has led to conflict over control on remaining farmable land. Conflicts have also risen regarding access to these resources. The little availability of good lands has led to disputes among individuals and groups on who controls them. Lands are not left to recover from these damages but are constantly re-used until they cannot be used again for farming. Traditional livelihoods such as farming and fishing, a major source of livelihood and the main economy of the region are no longer viable due to these environmental effects, causing many to

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[95] Joel Bisina, "Oil and Corporate Recklessness in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region," Pambazuka News, Global Policy Forum, 29 July, 2004. 3. Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/natres/oil/2004/0729reckless.html.
[96] Osaghae, 330
[97] Interview with an official of the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, January 2008.
[98] Joel Bisina, "Oil and Corporate Recklessness in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region," Pambazuka News, Global Policy Forum, 29 July, 2004. 3. Accessed on October 17, 2007; available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/natres/oil/2004/0729reckless.html.

move around looking for more healthy living conditions. This has increased the number of displaced persons and the struggle of looking for new opportunities in other regions.

Implications for Sub-Regional Security

The Niger-Delta is a very important case study for Africa especially as it provides a clear example of the link between poor resource management and protracted conflicts. The Nigerian case can be used as an example of resource-rich countries in Africa and the challenge they face once they start to incur wealth from resource production and trade. Countries like Ghana[99] have discovered resources such as oil and so there needs to be very close attention in ensuring that the Nigerian case does not repeat itself in these various countries. Without ensuring that resources are adequately managed to meet the needs of the resource producing region, the security of these nations are at risk.

Internal violence and civil wars in an African country does have massive implications for sub-regional security. In this regard, a stable Nigeria is important in ensuring the peace and security in the sub region and in Africa as a whole. Adversely, an unstable Nigeria will hinder efforts geared towards maintaining sub regional stability. This assumption is based on the fact that it is easy for conflicts in one country to spread to another very quickly, turning a national concern into a sub regional one.

The problem of the Niger Delta can increasingly spread especially as African borders remain weak and porous. The artificial and porous borders between African countries have made for easy transportation of arms across these countries and so through the activities of "states, arm brokers and mercenaries, thousands of weapons have been transferred into the Niger Delta region and used by state security forces, the security factions of oil companies and insurgent groups".[100] Weapons are also being cast-off into the Niger Delta from the Great Lakes Conflict.[101]" These examples show how serious the problem of porous borders in Africa is. It is possible to assume that if and when conflicts occur in other African countries; these same weapons will be delivered across from Nigeria to other warring factions in the sub-region.

In addition to porous borders, ethnic linkages cut across borders. Strong ties between families and ethnic groups across borders also create a new form of regional insecurity as it can accelerate the flow of arms and other illicit acts including mobilization for conflicts.

The Nigerian case could become a template for many other militant groups fighting for resource control. This could be through exchange of information, human capital and small arms and light weapons. This could increasingly link these groups together as they have similar goals and activities. The absence of strong

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[99] According to BBC News dated 18th June 2007, the United Kingdom firm Tullow Oil announced the discovery of 600 million barrels of light oil offshore from Ghana

[100] Godwin, Onuoha, "Contextualising the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Local and Global Intersections," African Security Review 15, no.2, 111.

[101] Godwin, Onuoha, "Contextualising the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Local and Global Intersections," African Security Review 15, no.2, 111.

intelligence between African countries makes it even more difficult to stop criminal activities across borders. Ethnic militant groups are now building networks and links that cut across borders and there are reports of links between militant groups in the Niger Delta and groups in Guinea and South Africa.

Nigeria's role as a strong contributor to diplomacy and African peacekeeping initiatives could be inhibited by the growing insecurity and conflict in the country with a shift of focus of its military from international stabilization onto domestic security issues. Economically, Nigeria as the largest and the most populous country in West Africa and its role as an oil provider to African nations such as Benin, Togo and Ghana is very critical because insecurity in the country will affect the supply and demand of oil.

Assessment

Much remains to be done to ensure that oil wealth is distributed adequately and used to develop the backward regions of the Niger Delta. The impacted people of the Niger Delta are enthusiastic to move from their present plight and improve their way of life but the companies and the government are slow in their efforts. Efforts must be aimed at developing best ways to manage the oil wealth, creating compensation mechanisms, and implementing development goals and strategies.

The government must engage these regions and their representatives in finding ways to share oil wealth, specifically addressing how much will be divided among landowners, the Nigerian government and multinational oil corporations. Since the issue of land ownership has been the cause of numerous conflicts, an arrangement has to be made that allows the state or local government to control these lands and provides adequate compensation to the residents of the communities living in these areas. Dialogue must focus on discovering what the needs of the region are and the best ways to meet these needs. Without unity and cohesion it will be difficult for any progress or development to be made in the region. Despite the fact that the multiplicity of actors and interests and the interface of allegiances make the Niger Delta case a very complicated one, national unity will help to sustain peace and security in the region and the country as a whole.

The significance for dialogue is very crucial in addressing the crisis in the Niger-Delta. Efforts have to be increased exponentially to ensure that the true and legitimate representatives of the peoples Niger-Delta are included in dialogue and negotiations and not those that collaborate with politicians or oil companies. The federal government must show that it is aware of the root causes of the conflict, mainly economic, and from there move on to dialogue with the various groups. Local groups within the states should have the capacity and the resources to address local grievances. This dialogue must become more frequent and more proactive with the goals of finding solutions and reaching agreements among actors. In conflict resolution, the role of the Nigerian state must be to mediate conflicts and disagreements between oil corporations and communities and groups, and not partner with one side or the other.

Box 1.2: Community Based Natural Resource Management

The discourse regarding the importance of community based natural resource management continues to gain ground. CBNRM is seen as a possible tool in cases where resources cause conflict. This concept largely deals with involving the local community in initiatives to manage resources found in their region with the end goal of meeting their economic, social and environmental needs. Many natural resource management initiatives continue to fail due to the absence of local participation, ownership and involvement. In addition, the absence of community development has led to the failure of any attempts at proper natural resource management. Community-based natural resource management must focus on developing the local communities of the oil producing regions. Local businesses and entrepreneurs must be able to grow and bring wealth to the region. Developing small scale initiatives that educate and employ the local population to bring wealth to the region and improve their local economies is a central part of this mandate. In Nigeria, the creation of the Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme (CBNRMP) for the Niger Delta region, a joint initiative by the Federal government and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), is a major step toward effective and longstanding resource management in the region. The mandate of this organization is to address poverty related issues and youth agitation in the region through community participation in development. The goal of CBNRMP is to improve the standard of living and quality of life improved for at least 400,000 rural poor people of the Niger Delta States with emphasis on women and youth.[102] Capacity building and institutional strengthening and community development are the two main components of this program. The main goal of community participation in resource management is to improve the standard of living of the inhabitants of the region. This programme is beneficial as it gives a special focus to economic and social challenges that these inhabitants face. An example of this approach was of the Akassa Kingdom in Bayelsa state where community members provided the necessary land, labour and materials with the financing coming from oil companies, donor governments, foundations and the European Union[103] The end goals should be to reduce poverty, increase employment opportunities, and empower the communities whilst managing the environment.

More peaceful means must be found to address the crisis in the region and the government should take a non-violent and non-repressive approach in doing so. It is also critical that short term measures involve the implementation of a cease-fire so that the violent parties involved can come to an agreement in sufficient time. The Nigerian Joint Task Force must be checked to ensure that they refrain from using violent and harsh measures on individuals and groups when dealing with the Niger Delta population such as the case with the Ogun Crisis and other cases from the Niger Delta experience. The traditional response by government has been to incarcerate these innocent civilians who speak out against government actions.

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[102] IFAD, Page 7.

[103] This program carried out by the Pro-Natura International (Nigeria), a small NGO with both Delta and foreign staff involved the participation of the communities which involved them identifying micro-projects costing less than $7,150 such as schools, health centres, skill-training units and micro-credit facilities. This has been extended to three other kingdoms. Africa Renewal, 8.

It is important to include resource management and efficient wealth distribution into negotiations and talks especially when attempting to resolve conflict based on resources. It is hard to expect armed factions to stop using violence if they are not guaranteed something in return. The necessity for political compromise, understanding, and cooperation becomes vital in reaching a peace process. The goal should not be eradicating criminal networks and terrorism from Nigeria but to delve into the underlying effects of poor resource management such as poverty, environmental insecurity, human rights violations and underdevelopment that propel these groups to use violent means to promote their cause. Resource management must be included in the structures and processes of negotiation and they must be included in peace agreements. The government must ensure that the developmental promises they make during negotiations are honoured.

It is imperative that local communities know and learn the importance of resource management. In this regard, people would be aware not to destroy or use up all resources in the region such as the forests and fishery but give them time to regenerate.[104] The Niger Delta population should not only be aware of the environmental damages of oil spillage and gas flaring to their communities but they also need to be aware of its impact on their health and the future development of their communities as these acts have played a role in worsening the environment. Many communities continue to believe that the illnesses they experience such as cancer, bronchitis are from their ancestors and are usually blamed on fetish and cultural factors.[105]

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) should be strengthened with the capacity and the finances to function effectively to deal with these developmental demands[106]. Their role which was meant to reverse the developmental crisis and create an environment and capital for sustainable development in the region must be enhanced. The records of individual members of these institutions should be checked to ensure that they have no records of corruption. NDDC officials must be held accountable and their activities remain transparent so that the problems of corruption and mismanagement of wealth are curtailed. In addition "if politics and the continued incidence of politicking from the centre is removed from the NDDC and those who are on ground are allowed to run the programs effectively and governors are held accountable"[107], then there is hope that the NDDC can be efficient. Monitoring bodies such as Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEMA) should be allowed to act independently from government bodies so that they can carry out informed and unbiased activities.

Measures to successfully disarm and reintegrate youth into society is very important and this involves finding alternatives to their livelihood and survival. Educational deficiencies need to be addressed in the North and also in the Niger

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[104] Interview with a staff of the Niger Delta Wetlands Centre (NDWC) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria February 2008.

[105] Interview with an official of the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, January 2008.

[106] A representative of the NDDC noted that it had begun training indigenes (including youth and women in particular) on micro-credit as a buffer and subsidies under the Agricultural Trust Fund to own their farms. They are also training women in high income yielding opportunities and alternative livelihoods such as rearing snails, piggery, mushrooms, grass cutter which do not require huge amounts of land. These initiatives are in place to assist them to generate income and employment as well as improve their living and make them sufficient.

[107] Interview with an official of the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, January 2008.

Delta. This will mean providing training in various jobs such as carpentry and electrical engineering for these individuals and for others providing secondary and tertiary education and developing their IT skills depending on what their desires and needs are. These skills that they will develop should be ones that are essential in their local community and whilst being valuable outside their communities. This will empower them to live peacefully in their community because they will be able to fend for themselves. The failure of past DDR initiatives was the fact that these youths were disarmed and trained but had no jobs. New initiatives should find alternate jobs for them in their local communities and this should involve developing the communities with the basic infrastructure and necessary services that will provide occupations. It cannot be denied that more money is made from carrying out violent and illegal activities such as kidnapping than from other income generating opportunities, but there is a need to also promote the message of non-violence and peacebuilding whilst providing alternative livelihoods for these young people. This cannot be successful without the sufficient monetary investment from the government.

The problem of corruption at the state and local government level in the oil-producing states must be addressed by the government. An important factor outlined by the *Human Rights Watch* Report[108] suggests that the federal government enacts and implements the Freedom of Information Bill where access is provided to government information as this would halt acts of impunity and ensure that government officials do not conceal the evidence of their misdeeds. The government should continue to bring to justice corrupt political candidates that are involved in rigging elections, sponsoring and carrying out violence as has been done through the EFCC[109]. Measures must be developed and put into place to hold these individuals such as governors and members of armed gangs accountable for their actions.

Strengthening governance institutions is very important in creating political consensus and making progress on various initiatives. Good governments must focus on creating consensus between the various armed factions and reaching a commonality of goals to make negotiations and compromises easier to reach. Conflict prevention and conflict resolution should be the goal of the different actors in the different levels of government. Security sector reforms such as creating stronger borders, holding security personnel accountable and ensuring that they are well paid and trained is very important. Reforms must try to reduce illegal arms importation by addressing the sources of supply and demand. It is important to get the youth involved and make them realize that they are the most important people in their communities or else programs will not be successful without their approval and support.

International partners such as the International Fund for Agriculture (IFAD) and the Earth's Right Institute, countries and international oil corporations need to contribute to finding a solution to the problem in the region. Pressures on the federal government from international partners should increase to ensure that it is

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[108] Human Rights Watch, <u>Criminal Politics</u>: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria, 4.
[109] The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is a Nigerian law enforcement agency that tackles financial corruption and has prosecuted and convicted top officials who have been involved in corruption.

able to bring to justice individuals who perpetrate violence directly or indirectly. Multinational giants like Shell and Total must investigate further into their role in exacerbating the conflict in the region and find short, medium and long term measures to solve these problems as well as implementing solid monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. They should also develop programs that will reduce constant exploration of land so that it can still be used for agriculture.

They also need to be fair and just in their treatment of host and impacted communities. The current challenge that remains is if they are willing and interested in taking these steps. The case of Canada is a good example of "joint ventures that control production to offer residents a substantial ownership stake[110]" and so "Aboriginal (a visible minority group) groups have been given the opportunity to be one-third owners of the region's first mega-project"[111]. Oil companies involved in this joint venture include multinational giants such as, Royal Dutch Shell, ExxonMobil and Conoco all of which are present in Nigeria. If such partnerships can be created in Canada then programs such as these should be replicated in Nigeria. Research should be focused on how to make these partnerships a working success. Corporate social responsibility should be encouraged by all levels of government in ensuring that oil companies are included in rehabilitation initiatives.

Non-Governmental Organisations in the Niger Delta are important actors that can provide assistance to the government and the NDDC in their developmental efforts because they are aware of the pressing challenges on the ground as they interact very closely with the communities. Efforts by the government should therefore bring these groups on board as any success in the region cannot be guaranteed without their constant involvement. In addition, governments, oil corporations should provide adequate funding as many of these civil society groups do not have enough resources to fund their staff, rent office space and to take care of other needs that might arise. Continuous dialogue with non governmental organizations should take precedence at the state and federal government levels. It is equally important to expose fake NGOs who do not represent the people as they may claim.

Many initiatives are possible for the Niger Delta, however, without the funds these are not achievable, therefore the oil wealth must be allocated to local governments while ensuring accountability that the wealth is used to develop and improve the region. The problem where allocations from the federal purse end at the state or local government level and never make it to the communities must be addressed. A needs based assessment at the community level is also very important to ensure that the goals of each community are included in this assessment. Long term goals involve creating developmental projects and the companies or institutions contracted to carry out these projects must be under heavy public scrutiny and ensure that they provide concrete and longstanding results.

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[110] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest, ii.

[111] International Crisis Group, "The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest, 2.

An immense challenge remains for current President Yar'Adua and his government as he tries to deal with the security dilemma in the Niger Delta. Even though the state is sometimes seen as part of the problem, it can equally play a bigger role as part of the solution.

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