



Feminist task force
Gender Equality to End poverty

Feminist Task Force (FTF) of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)

NIGER-DELTA WOMEN TRIBUNAL CONCLUSIONS

Name of Tribunal:

Niger-Delta Women Tribunal public Hearing on women, Poverty and climate Justice.

Responsible Organization:

Niger-Delta Women's Movement for peace and Development (NDWPD)

Main Coordinators and contact info:

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Location of Tribunal:

Day One: Odi Town Hall, Bayelsa State Nigeria.

Day Two: Jesse Community Hall, Jesse, Delta State Nigeria.

1. What were the cases presented at the Tribunal?

The cases presented at the Various Tribunal relate to the adverse impact of Global climate change and the peculiar cases of environmental pollution on the rural women of Odi in Bayelsa State and Jesse in Delta State Nigeria.

In odi lack of potable water and pollution of River Nun, which is the only source of water in Odi town, has adversely effected the living standard of women and

children as well as the exacerbated poverty, ill health, wealth creation and infant mortality. The following witnesses testified to these prevailing deplorable conditions.

Case presenter

1. Pastor Patrick E. is a religious leader and a representative of Rural Women and youth Development Initiative (RWAYDI) based in cross River State.

Witness 1, Mrs. **Eneye Iwebokiden** a rural fish farmer in Odi Bayelsa State.

Witness 2. Mrs. Molina Wariebiwei, a rural farmer in Odi Bayelsa State

Witness 3. Mrs. Modupe Isuofaha,

Witness 4, Mrs. Odomakararie Aniso, 37 years Old women from Odi town

Witness 5, Mrs. Rose Peleseimo, a 62 years old fish farmer from Odi

Expert witness- Mrs. Mary Fuludu President/ Coordinator of the Niger-Delta Women Forum. Delta State.

AT JESSE TOWN.

Case: poverty and climate change. Analyzing the effect of climate change on women and the poverty caused by the Jesse fire inferno. Over one thousand women and children perished in Jesse on October 17, 1998 as 32 communities were thrown into unprecedented mourning when pipeline carrying petrol exploded and killed the people.

Case presenter

Mrs. Mary Fuludu President/ Coordinator of the Niger-Delta Women Forum. Delta State.

Witness 1, Mrs. Dora Onekpo, 50 years of age and a farmer lives in Jesse.

Witness 2, Mrs. Arigo Victor, Speaker of Jesse women council. And lives in Jesse town Delta State Nigeria.

Witness 3, Mrs. Margaret Ijegbe, 70years old, lives in Jesse town Delta State Nigeria. Began farming some 40years ago and specialized in production of yams, cocoa-yam, plantain etc.

Expert witness: Mrs. Juliet Ohominin, Co-coordinator of Goshen Farmers multipurpose Co-operative society based in Mosogar Delta State.

In which broad area (s) did the tribunal focus?

The Tribunal focused on water, crop production, soil fertility and general environmental pollution.

How many primary witnesses?

There were eight primary witnesses, five in Odi Bayelsa State three in Jesse, Delta State.

If there were expert witness, how many took part?

There are two expert witnesses.

Mrs. Mary Fuludu of the Niger-Delta Women Forum Testified of Odi and gave graphic account of the reliance of Odi in time past a the food basket of the Niger Delta regain prior to server oil pollution and hoshlities that led to military invasive of Odi by the armed force of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which resulted in the death of several thousands of men and women of Odi.

Mrs. Juliet Ohomiwim of Goshen farmer Multi-purpose co-operative society gave insight into the food production capacity in Jesse town prior to the explosion of oil pipeline Jesse in October 1998 which claimed several lives, polluted vast farm lands and acated poverty and hardship across the Jesse communities.

How many jurists took part in the Niger-Delta women tribunal?

There were seven Jurists in the Tribunal and they are persons drawn from among legal practitioner/Attorney, journalists, rights activist, women societies, organizations, religious leaders.

1. Barrister Kelechi Nnadi is a legal practitioner based in Asba Delta State, He has had experiences in Human rights law and Jury in Odi and Jesse community in Nigeria.
2. Pastor Patrick E. is a religious leader and a representative of Rural Women and youth Development Initiative (RWAYDI) based in Cross River State.
3. Mr. Wariebiwei B.O. is a community leader and the chairman of the community Development Center in Odi, Bayelsa state. He has been in Odi since birth and has first hand Information on the sorry tales of the Odi saga.
4. Mrs. Mary Fuludu is a woman activists Based in Kiagbodo Delta State, she is grassroot based, and the president of the Niger-Delta Women Forum.
5. Comrade Prince Ekirika is the Secretary of the Ijaw youth Council, Western Zone in experience on grassroots mobilization.
6. Deaconess R.E. Eyanohonre is a religious leader and the representative of the National Council of Women Societies.
7. Rev. T. Obominuru is the coordinator of Community Support Network an NGO based in Mosogar. Delta State.

Others are:

Mr. Andrew Ejabefio – Manager Goldmine Hotels and social Activists.

Mrs. Blessing Joseph – Finance Officer NDWPD

Mr. Joe Ogbodu – Media (Nigerian Compass)

Mr. Kingdom Tammy- Media (DAAR Communications Plc)
Mr. Amour Udemude- Media (Niger-Delta Standard)

What responsibilities/ Recommendations were identified?

The oil multinational operating in the Niger-Delta region as well as the federal government of Nigeria contributed in no small measure to the deplorable poverty situation and the area effect of climate change in the Niger-Delta communities.

It is therefore recommended that concerted efforts should be made by both the federal government of Nigeria and the multinational oil companies operating in Odi, Jesse and the entire oil Niger-Delta region to provide potable water in Odi, clean up the environment continually polluted by the diverse and devious oil exploration and exploration activities by these multinational

It is specifically recommended that river embankments be castrate at Odi town to forestall further erosion of the river bank and save further loss of lives directing Homes and save the farmlands the river. Dredging of the river Nun may be helpful in the circumstance.

The construction of skills acquisition centers, provision of electricity and/ or increased power supply to these communities is also recommended for arresting the poverty and economic hardship empowered the women in these communities.

It is severely recommended that global action should be taken in the form of policy formulation and development which well serve as a blueprint environmental recovery

Which were the main conclusions and recommendations of the tribunal?

The main conclusion of the Tribunal is that poverty and economic hardship is real in these community and infect steps ought to be taken to address the issues of climate change and oil pollution that has exacerbated these phenomenon.

Which were the main conclusions and recommendations of the tribunal?

There are no policies in existence in Nigeria state and the idea appears to be novel in Nigeria. Climate change is not within the contemplation of the region in providing policies making.

What was the general sentiment at the tribunal?

The sentiment at the tribunal was a mixture of anger, frustration and resentment by the women. The women however appreciated the visit of the tribunal in their

various towns and are hopeful of a brighter future arising from the recommendation of the tribunal.

In which ways, if any, did participating at the tribunal assist women or the community in dealing with their particular cases and issues?

The tribunal has assisted the women in providing a platform to effectively express themselves and highlight the various issues that adversely affect them which they have had no opportunity of ventilating. The Tribunal has inevitably led to further plan action to achieve the goal of poverty reduction and climate change.

This we come in form of project monitoring and evaluation to achieve the desired objective based on the set goals.

In Odi attention has been drum to lack of portable water, the pollution of River Nun and the grinding effect of poverty and climate change caused by a catalogue of other issues relating to the activities of oil multi nationals which resulted in extermination of aquatic life (such as fishes in the river which is their chief occupation) and soil infertility.

In Jesse, the tribunal created the platform and opportunity to hear from the women who directly bear the impact of climate change and polluted farmlands which has led to low crop yield and impoverishment of the people (Women and children).

Also for further plan actions like communiqué, legislation to the government and multinational co-operations has been proposed, while rural mobilization, advocacy and awareness campaign on climate change is planed for the rural areas with a town hall meting at the affected communities in the Niger-Delta region Nigeria.

Please state what, if any, political impact the tribunal might have had on a local, regional, national level?

The Tribunal has raised the stakes to the knowledge of the people and created awareness among the political class and the community leader. It will also help to alert the intentional community of the server neglect buy exercised by the rural women in these communities.

What government officials present at the tribunal?

Government officials were invited and did not turn up as they see the tribunal as a threat and a way of exposing the current state of Affairs.

How Many participants (public) can you estimate attended your tribunal?

In Odi 74 participants attended while in Jesses 94 and attended. Women saw the tribunal as an avenue for their voices to be heard and they turned out enmass. (See attached attendance list).

How was this tribunal documented?

This tribunal was documented on videos photos and we had print and electronic media and were concluded with a press briefing on Saturday 14th November, 2009.

NIGER-DELTA WOMEN TRIBUNAL CONCLUSIONS

TESTIMONIES OF WITNESSES

ODI

In Odi lack of potable water and pollution of River Nun, which is the only source of water in Odi town, has adversely effected the living standard of women and children as well as the exacerbated poverty, ill health, wealth creation and infant mortality. The following witnesses testified to these prevailing deplorable conditions.

Witness 1, Mrs. **Eneye Iwebokiden** a rural fish farmer in Odi Bayelsa State. Gave graphic account of the pollution of the only source of water in Odi Town, the River Nun. She attributed the pollution to the incidence of Oil spillages from the oil pipeline of the oil multinational and the year 2000 invasion of Odi town by the Nigeria armed forces which led to destruction of Odi Twon and loss of several thousands of lives in Odi.

Witness 2. Mrs. Molina Wariebiowej, a rural farmer in Odi State thus: I am 53 years old and I have lived all my life in Odi. As a result of the pollution of the environment in Odi the crops in my farmer has continually witnessed low yield resulting in economic hardship. I could no longer afford the training of my children in school”

Witness 3. Mrs. Modupe Isuofaha, in her case state that as a result of the climate change, they have in recent time witnessed excessive heat and high temperature in Odi which has affected the fishes in the river, surge in the tides of the river, excessive flooding and landslide which has washed away several meters of the playground and consumed several dwelling houses of the indigenes of the community.

Witness 4, Mrs. Odomakararie Aniso, 37 years Old women from Odi town, she articulated the problem of climate change as manifesting in two dimension Viz:

- (a) Erosion/ Excessive flooding of the farmland and washing away of the river and embankment which has posed greater danger to the lives of the people who goes to the river daily to pas faeces, bath as well as fetch for their household needs.
- (b) Complex diseases and epidemic arising from the consumption of the polluted water from the only river at Odi.

Witness 5, Mrs. Rose Peleseimo, a 62 years old fish farmer from Odi in her testimony ascerted that the suffering and pains of the women and children in Odi has reached an alarming crescendo. She attributed the rising incidence of poverty in Odi to climate change, oil pollution in the water and arable land as well as the November 1999 invasion of Odi town by the Nigeria armed forces which led to several thousand of death and rendered so many others homeless.

She lamented that in the wake of the crises, soldiers raped their daughters, and abused the women and children, while the few surviving men fled the town for their safety and refused to return back.

Expert witness Mrs. Mary Fuludu President/ Coordinator of the Niger-Delta Women Forum in her testimony stated that she lived in Odi town for 20 years. She recalls that Odi used to be the food basket of the Niger-Delta region in term of production, fish, yams, cassava, plantain, banana etc, but today all that is history. There is serious hunger and hardship in Odi.

She contends that the hardship began some ten years ago as a result of oil spillages that occurred in Odi town from the diverse oil pipelines installations that criss-cross the community.

She further lamented the combined effect of the invasion of Odi town by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the climate change which has further plummeted the economic well being of the rural women who are mostly farmers and petty traders.

She asserts that in Odi town a sachet of water sells for N20.00 while it is sold for N5.00 in other parts of Nigeria because there is acute water shortage and as a result people are forced to consume the water from River Nun and the end result manifests in outbreak of diseases, epidemic, malaria, diarrhea etc which leads to death and exacerbate poverty.

Odi town in her testimony has no functional hospital, no resident Doctor or Nurse and makes health care very expensive and most times out of reach of the poor women and children in Odi. She also deplored the absence of electricity, potable water and other social amenities that well facilitate in job and wealth creation in Odi.

AT JESSE TOWN.

Case: poverty and climate change. Analyzing the effect of climate change on women and the poverty caused by the Jesse fire inferno. Over one thousand women and children perished in Jesse on October 17, 1998 as 32 communities were thrown into unprecedented mourning when pipeline carrying petrol exploded and killed the people.

Witness 1, Mrs. Dora Onekpo, 50 years of age and a farmer testified to the reality of poverty in Jesse town resulting from the October 17, 1998 fire disaster which consumes vast farm lands in Jesse. She effected to the fact that life has never been the same for the rural women farmer in Jesse.

Witness 2, Mrs. Arigo Victor, born on January 15, 1952 and lives in Jesse town Delta State Nigeria. She stated before the tribunal thus: “Before the pipeline fire disaster of October 17, 1998 I used have good crop yield from my farm, however

after the fire disaster the situation changed. I cannot meet the financial needs of my household due to losses and low profit from my farming activities and this situation is prevalent among the people in Jesse town today”.

Witness 3, Mrs. Magret Ijegbe, 70years old, began farming some 40years ago and specialized in production of yams, cocoa-yam, plantain etc. she stated that due to increased volume of oil spillage on the land the soil fertility has seriously depreciated. The situation was exacerbated by the pipeline explosion of October 17, 1998 which leads to several hundreds of deaths and social dislocation among the families in Jesse town. She affirms that they cannot effectively cater for their children due to financial hardship and poverty. She testified to serious climate change which as lead to flooding of the farm lands and other natural disasters.

Expert witness: Mrs. Juliet Ohominin, Co-coordinator of Goshen Farmers multipurpose Co-operative society based in Mosogar Delta State.

She has been into farming for more than 30years now and specialized in root crops, yams, tomatoes and pepper production.

States that as a result of environmental pollution by the oil multinational, soil fertility has been adversely impacted. That the climate change which is resulting in heavy rains in the months of October and November has affected the farming patterns thus calling for assistance and adaptive measures.

She concludes that the overall effects of these prevailing situations is the serious poverty and lack faced by the women and children in Jesse and other locality in the Niger-Delta Region where women bear the responsibility of children up bringing. She laments the absence of government policies to checkmate the ravaging poverty of Jesse and other parts of the state.