

# Concept Note



## Niger Delta Renaissance

Building Sustainable Partnerships for Peace, Social Inclusion  
and Accelerated Development in the Niger Delta

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## 1. Background

### 1.1 Preamble

The history of the current tension in the Niger Delta has its roots in the discovery and exploitation of Oil and Gas in the area over the last four decades. During the period before the 1970s over 70% of Nigeria's national income came from agriculture before Oil came into the national economy equation. At the time, while the rest of the country was contributing various products (Groundnut pyramids in the North, Cocoa in the West, and Cassava in the East) to the national food basket, the Niger Delta contributed Rubber, Oil Palm, Fish and Shrimp.

The sustained Oil Exploration and Exploitation activities (especially in relation to health and safety threats from spillage) in the area however were not monitored strictly, and the Oil companies continued to mismanage the effects of Oil spills and thereby leaving the marine life barren. The main stay of the Niger Delta economy used to be fishing and with the loss of the revenue resulting from aquatic life decay, the people were left with no alternative than to seek their future in Oil. Unfortunately, the past leadership thought otherwise, and left the area in neglect. There were some efforts to intervene but with poor management, those efforts had limited impact.

The youth and people of the Niger Delta continued to watch helplessly as their land was systematically depleted with no commensurate compensation for the loss of income from their traditional fish farming. Even basic facilities such as Roads, Electricity and Portable Water were not provided. Little wonder the youth are now up-in-arms. The importance of restoring peace to the Niger Delta cannot be over-emphasised given the proportion of the National income (over 90%) generated from the drilling activities in the area.

### 1.2 Progressive Government Efforts to Address Challenges in the Niger Delta

The Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), established in 1992 and 2000 respectively, together represent past governments' efforts to intervene in the Niger Delta.

OMPADEC and NDDC have been linked with a lot of controversy and mismanagement of funds that were meant for the development of the region. The commissions have a record of being in the middle of political maneuvers that act as hindrances to their ability to deliver on their mandates.

Any meaningful intervention in the area must now be an all-stakeholder affair (Government-federal, state, and Local; Civil Society; Academia; and the people of the Niger Delta. Consensus building is the key. It may be helpful to escalate the management of the Niger Delta Renaissance to a global level, in other words, international development partners should be

engaged to act as mediators, moderators, supporters and project managers. It may be worthy to mention that developments in the area have affected the world price of Oil and caused uncertainties about world supply. It is against this backdrop that international intervention is being recommended.

### 1.3 Yar'Adua Government Strategic Resolve and the Role of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs

The Present Government in recognition of the gravity of the situation has declared the development of the Niger Delta as a National Priority. Indeed the Government's 7-point agenda includes the Niger Delta.

To underscore the foregoing, the government has established a Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs. The Ministry has already commenced activities in earnest, calling for consultants to assist with the planning and programming of intervention programs in a recent newspaper publication of Request for Proposals (RFPs).

The immediate challenge facing the Ministry will be how to manage or supervise the highly political NDDC and ensure synergy in their activities.

## 2. Stakeholders and Goals

### 2.1 Stakeholder Forum/Steering Committee

In the past, arrangements involving stakeholders have been less formal involving non-standing committees. It is the opinion of the author that for ensuring lasting peace in the area, there is a desperate need for a standing and representative stakeholder Forum/Steering Committee for promoting, consolidating and managing Consensus Building. The committee should comprise the people of the Niger Delta, Government, Civil Society, Private Sector (primarily, Oil and Gas), International Development Community, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), etc.

The idea is that if the various issues are raised at such a forum and addressed by all the parties, it is unlikely that when an agreement has been met collectively, any move by dissidents will be receiving any wide support. The likelihood is that such attempts will be resisted even by the youth themselves.

2.2 Establish Realistic Goals: Lasting Peace; Value Re-orientation; Social Inclusion; Participatory Dialogue and Engagement; Robust Infrastructure, Human Capacity, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development.

### Create the right environment to promote Peace

As suggested earlier, the existence of a standing forum automatically ensures that grievances can be addressed collectively before they escalate to unmanageable proportions.

The government at local, state, and federal levels should maintain an open door policy with an avenue for reporting grievances. The Oil companies should be encouraged to promote programs that endear them to the communities within which they operate. Such programs should be recognized with awards of excellence by government.

#### Actively promote Participatory Dialogue and Engagement

Continuous engagement and dialogue to review progress of integration within the operating communities with government as a referee must be encouraged. When issues cannot be handled between the erring companies and the communities then government can intervene as mediator and chief negotiator.

#### Provide incentives to catalyse Value Re-orientation

The government and operating companies should plan programs and activities that would reward 'laying down of arms' and encourage value re-orientation. It may be helpful to set up centres of excellence for talent contests and development. For example, develop programs like Music and Acting (to feed the Nigerian Movie Industry-Noliwood) talent discovery. Entrepreneurship development is another approach to positively rehabilitate and re-engage the youth.

#### Social Inclusion must be the guiding principle for good governance

Government needs to design intervention programs to empower the most disadvantaged in the communities. Women and the youth from extremely poor homes deserve opportunities for fighting poverty. Inability to meet basic needs drive people to desperation.

The social inclusion programs must be planned by an all-stakeholder engagement process. The target beneficiaries need to participate in crafting activities and programs that would significantly change their indigent lot.

#### Provide Robust enabling Infrastructure (ICT and Traditional Infrastructure).

ICT has become established globally as an enabler, enhancer, empowerment opportunities provider, poverty eradicator, to mention some of its unique qualities. Unlike traditional Infrastructure, which is by no means avoidable, or indeed constitutes necessary conditions for economic progress, ICT has a pervasive impact on performance in all sectors of an economy. It acts as a catalyst, efficiency driver, and multiplier. The Niger Delta is overdue for good roads, reliable power, and portable water. However, the need for a high speed wireless internet infrastructure (infra), such as Korea's Wibro (because of the marshy terrain) cannot be over-emphasised. E-Government, E-Health, E-Education (and E-learning), E-Agriculture, E-Talents Development, VOIP, and IPTV all become possible in the area. Of particular advantage will be the reduction in the risk of physical commuting within the area and thus exposure to various forms of aggressive activities by the dissident few. Stakeholder meetings can be held via video-conferencing. Negotiations and peace-building programs will be enhanced as well without physical engagement.

Promote good Healthcare and Develop Human Capacity for the digital era

Following from the implementation of reliable ICT infra, in addition to existing healthcare centers, access to high speed internet will offer opportunities for improved medical care from electronic links to medical experts, their location becoming less of a hindrance.

As mentioned earlier, Human capacity building takes a whole new dimension. Access to the Global Open University Initiative (through GUS/Nigeria) and a host of non-profit E-Educational and E-learning initiatives (such as the Cisco Networking Academy Online Curriculum and the new University of the People Initiative) becomes a reality.

Aggressively promote Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development in alignment with local, national, regional and global development goals.

Education and Training without Entrepreneurship development cannot be expected to give a profound effect on eradicating poverty. A strategic plan to develop local entrepreneurs beyond just job skills development is paramount. ICT again offers a wide latitude for small and medium sized enterprise development through hardware support services, Network Management, Software development, Outsourcing services, and probably the most important being local content development.

Build partnerships for sustainable development crafted in line with the goals of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), World Summit on the information Society (WSIS), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (as well as Public Private Partnerships) have continued to gain momentum as the way forward in infrastructure provision and poverty eradication in developing countries. It is therefore not surprising that the 8<sup>th</sup> Millennium Development Goal is to "Develop a Global Partnership for Development".

All activities and programs of intervention in the Niger Delta must by induction be based on a multi-stakeholder (or indeed all-stakeholder) strategy.

Ensure responsible environmental management by the Oil and Gas operators.

The Oil and Gas Operators need to exercise care, caution and show commitment in the prevention and handling of Oil Spillage and associated hazards in the business of Oil exploration and production.

Even when spills unavoidably occur, actually involving the local communities in the cleaning-up exercise is probably the wisest choice to make. It empowers them economically, and gives them a chance to work closely with the erring operator.

## 2.3 Goals Re-enforcement from UNDP Niger Delta HDR 2006 Proposal<sup>4</sup>

### Agenda One:

*Promote peace as the foundation for development.* No meaningful development is sustainable without peace.

### Agenda Two:

*Make local governance effective and responsive to the needs of the people.* Governance is crucial to achieving sustainable developmental outcomes.

### Agenda Three:

*Improve and diversify the economy.* The Niger Delta region offers enormous latitude for growth in both human development and economic activity, given the reservoir of immense resources.

### Agenda Four:

*Promote social inclusion and improved access to social services.* Marginal Living is synonymous with life in the Niger Delta. Social Exclusion fans unrest.

### Agenda Five:

*Promote environmental sustainability to preserve the means of people's sustainable livelihoods.* Pass Environmental Laws and standards to conserve natural resources, especially protection from pollution resulting from oil spillage and gas flares.

### Agenda Six:

*Take an integrated approach to HIV&AIDS.* Quality of Healthcare and Awareness campaigns about the dangers posed by the spread of HIV/AIDS must be given top priority

### Agenda Seven:

*Build sustainable partnerships for the advancement of human development.* An all-inclusive stakeholder approach for dialogue, engagement, consensus building, needs analysis, needs prioritization, and a sustainable development agenda.

## 3. Intervention Models

### 3.1 EGovernment and eGovernance (Backbone Infrastructure, Services and e-Participation) Models (United Nations University International Institute for Software Technology-Centre for Electronic Governance)

#### eGovernment Program Planning and Implementation:

Participatory/Interactive Government Leads to Good Governance (UNU-IIST, Centre for Electronic Governance). Planning the implementation of E-Government in the states of the Niger Delta and linking them into a Niger-Delta-wide E-Government Infrastructure will provide a convenient co-ordination and management structure for the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs

to deliver on its mandate; for NDDC to track its intervention activities and programs, and other interested stakeholders to participate in the various initiatives targeted at ensuring a **Niger Delta Renaissance**. In the main, the following will be expected logically:

- ▣ Robust Backbone Infrastructure ensures high bandwidth availability and reliability. Mixed Infrastructure deployment (including Wireless Broadband).
- ▣ Universal Access/Ubiquitous Services ensure widespread penetration, equity and fairness in service delivery.
- ▣ ICT/eGovernment Entrepreneurship Opportunities; ICT as a credible economic sector (Software-India, Hardware-Korea and Japan).
- ▣ Knowledge Management (within government and across industry) as an Economic Development Strategy.
- ▣ Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D); ICT as a catalyst for development
- ▣ EGovernment Partnerships for Accelerated Development.

### 3.2 Global University System/Peace Gaming/Energy Modelling/Process Simulation Training for Human Capacity Building [2,3]

In his own words, the founder of the Global University System, Professor Takeshi Utsumi (TAK) describes the initiative as follows,

*“The ultimate goal of our project is to attain global peace as promoting mutual understanding among young would-be decision-makers, as having them engage in Peace Gaming for conflict resolution of various environmental issues in local, regional and global scale with the extensive use of most advanced Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Education of youngsters/adults on a global scale is the **best** future investment for global peace and progress. Senator Fulbright once said that learning together and working together are the first steps toward world peace. We will also foster creativity of youngsters around the world as enabling them in developing countries co-work with colleagues in advanced countries to perform joint collaborative research with use of virtual laboratories for hands-on experiential/constructive learning and creation of knowledge through the global GRID technology, thus forming Globally Collaborative Innovation Network (GCIN)”.*

Some components of the project are listed below:

- Global University System/GUS
  - E-Learning
  - E-Health

- Globally Collaborative Environmental Peace Gaming/GCEPG
  - Peace Modelling and Simulation
  - Energy Modelling and Simulation
- Energy Modeling using the Millennium Institute T21 System based on Vensim Tools

*Nigeria is a major Oil Producer and member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The country's economy is mostly dependent on Crude Oil, which is produced in the Niger Delta region. The challenges of the long term neglect of these Oil Producing Areas, is succinctly reported by Tom O'Neill, "**Curse of the Black Gold: Hope and Betrayal in the Niger Delta**," in the February 2007 edition of National Geographic. 40% of oil produced in the Niger Delta region is exported to the USA. Again about 40% of the electricity generated at the U.S. power plants utilizes Oil from Nigeria, because of its low sulphur content. Former Vice President and Nobel Peace Laureate, Mr. Al Gore recently proposed to replace fossil fuel with renewable energy to generate electricity in the USA in ten years <<http://tinyurl.com/66sk9d>>. If Mr. Gore's bold scheme were to succeed, most of the developed nations (among them Nigeria's Oil importers) would follow suit thereby leave Nigeria greatly exposed to the risk of lessening oil revenue. This project is focussed on modelling Nigeria's Energy Policy Response Dynamics, taking into account the ramifications of Mr. Gore's ambitious energy policy proposal; the impacts of highly unstable world oil prices; as well as the depleting levels of production as a result of the conflicts in the Niger Delta Region of the country*

- Chemical Engineering Process Simulation Training for Human Capacity Building in the Niger Delta

*This will involve the Construction of operator trainer of petroleum refinery and ethylene (or any other petrochemical) plants with process control simulation. For this to work the steps to follow include:*

*(a) To locate a suitable chemical engineering department of a university in*

*Niger Delta region, which is to be a member of GUS/Nigeria consortium,*

*(b) To make a fact finding and assessment trip to meet with the faculty of the*

*department – (TAK and a faculty of Polytechnic Institute of New York University),*

*(c) To have a mini-workshop for this project along with the workshop for establishing GUS/Nigeria,*

*(d) To construct a comprehensive project proposal by a task force team members*

*which is to be assigned at the aforementioned mini-workshop,*

(e) To submit this proposal to potential Funding Partners

Mini-scale units of petroleum/petrochemical plants (e.g, distillation column, pumps, compressors, thermal cracking furnace, filters, centrifuge, etc., etc.,) may be constructed at the chemical engineering department for their students' hands-on training. These units can be controlled by a laptop.

- Applying System Dynamics for Teaching Project Management and Economics

System Dynamics has become extensively used in enhancing intuition in the learning process. Feedback Loops re-enforce understanding of complex system behaviour. As the entire process of planning the intervention programs and their implementation will involve a series of complex projects, it is highly recommended to provide training In project management to willing stakeholders and more especially the Niger Delta Youth Leaders.

### 3.3 Universal Peace Federation (UPF) Training Program in Peace-building

These series of Workshops and training programs have been provided around the world in the Federation's effort to secure a world free from aggression with hope for integration of Cultures and religion.

Discussions have reached advanced stages to work with the Nigerian chapter of UPF to design tailor-made training programs for the Youth of the Niger Delta. The Policy makers are also targeted in the training programs on peace negotiation skills.

			
<a href="#">Learning to Be Good</a>	<a href="#">Building Successful Relationships</a>	<a href="#">Developing Leadership Skills</a>	<a href="#">Preparing for Life in Society</a>

### 3.4 Social Enterprise Models for Grassroots Development supported by Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives and Microfinance Banks.

The social enterprise model being referenced here is motivated by Professor Muhammad Yunus's work on Microfinance which developed into the Grameen Bank.

The origin of Grameen Bank can be traced back to 1976 when Professor Muhammad Yunus, a Fulbright scholar at Vanderbilt University and Professor at University of Chittagong, launched a research project to examine the possibility of designing a credit delivery system to provide banking services targeted to the rural poor. In October 1983, the Grameen Bank Project was transformed into an independent bank by government legislation. The organization and its founder, Muhammad Yunus, were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006; the organisation's Low-cost Housing Programme won a World Habitat Award in 1998. (Wikipedia, 2009):

Some local partnership models that can fit social enterprises are:

- Public Civil Society Partnership (PCSP)
- Public Community Based Organization Partnerships (PCBOP)
- Public Citizen Partnerships (PCP)

### 4. Partnerships for Development

In line with the 8<sup>th</sup> Millennium development Goal, we propose the development of Global Partnerships for development of the Niger Delta.

#### 4.1 Global/Multilateral/Bilateral Partnerships

- Global and Local Corporate Social Responsibility Partnerships and Initiatives (Zinox Technologies Limited, CISCO Networking Academy Program, Microsoft Training Partnerships, Oracle University, Global University System (GUS), etc )
- Partnerships involving the United Nations and its agencies, European Union, World Bank and its Agencies, International telecommunication Union, Commonwealth, World Summit on Information Society, New Partnerships for African Development (NEPAD), etc.
- Development Partnerships involving Country Agencies like USAID, DFID, CIDA, JICAD, KOICA, etc.

#### 4.2 National/Regional/ State/Local Government/Ward/Community Partnerships

Stepwise Goals Diffusion and Alignment to National Developmental Goals: The list below shows the percolation of developmental goals down to the Household level. Starting with the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, progressing through state and Local Empowerment

and development strategies to Ward and community strategies and finally to village and Household levels.

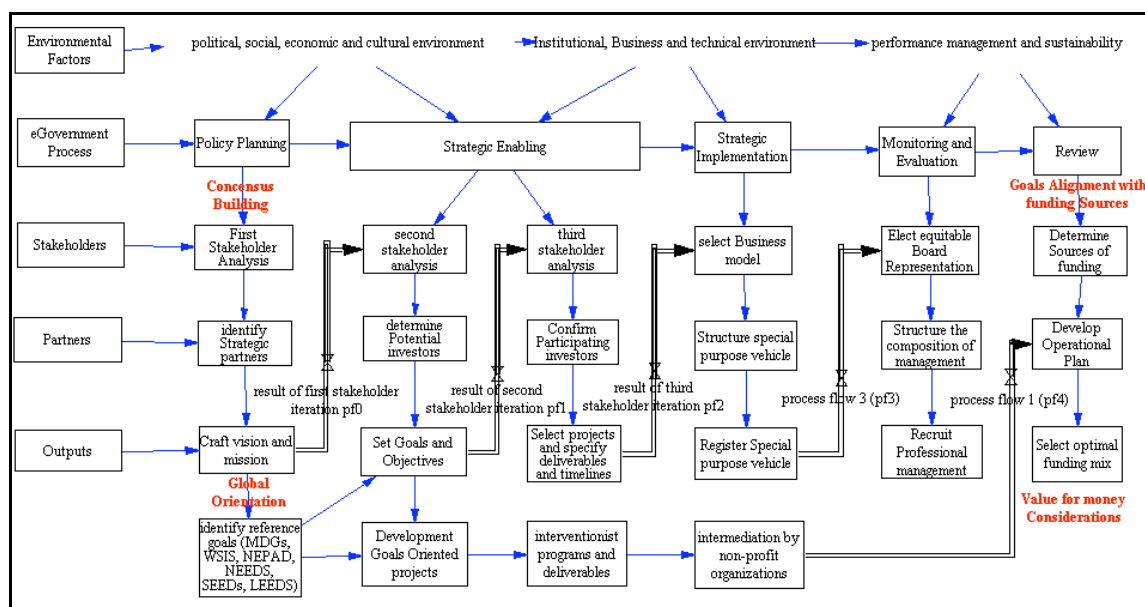
- NEEDS (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy)
- SEEDS (State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy)
- LEEDS (Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy)
- OLOP (One Local Government One product)
- OWOP (One Ward One Product)
- OCOP (One Community One product)
- OVOP (One Village One Product)
- OHOP (One Household One Product)

The concept of encouraging the penetration of developmental goal orientation across the spectrum of society from the federal through to the household level ensures full participation by all concerned. This invariably lays a foundation for good governance.

### 5. Prescriptive Model for Selecting Partnership Strategy

The figure below represents the processes prescribed by the author for E-Government and other partnerships strategy selection. It outlines the steps and activities that should ensure success in partnership building for project implementation.

This process model was applied at the inception of the implementation of E-Government in Nigeria in 2004. It continues to be applied for subsequent projects. It is highly recommended for use in guiding the programs of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs.



## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Partnerships in their variety of configurations can be good strategies to accelerate the development process. They must however be approached methodically.

Overwhelming Political Will cannot be substituted by any other factor and the present government has left no one in doubt about its commitment to Niger Delta development.

All stakeholders must be involved in the planning process

Multilateral Agencies have a variety of support initiatives targeted at developing communities experiencing tension and unrest to restore peace in the areas

E-Government can be pivotal in driving the entire development process and can be an opportunity to reach out to the otherwise forgotten grassroots communities through universal access and metamorphosis to e-governance.

## 7. Policy Considerations:

Legal (Act), Regulatory (Body/Commission) and Operational (Department/Unit) Frameworks should be in place to ensure the gains from public private partnerships for development.

Incentives and special concessions are perceived driving forces to motivate private sector involvement in PPPs

Joint Operational Structures may offer the best consensus for addressing potential disputes.

In the era of Globalization and more specifically the importance of the Niger Delta in the National Economy Equation, together re-enforce the need for continuous, all-inclusive Stakeholder Dialogue and engagement both within and across national borders.

## 8. Reflections

The Niger Delta is well overdue for special attention and the present government has demonstrated its commitment by declaring the Delta as a priority zone to ensure lasting peace and accelerated development in the area.

The establishment of Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs is a clear testimony to government resolve to emancipate the people of the Niger Delta.

The Niger Delta Master Plan needs to be updated but with full stakeholder involvement in the entire process.

The mandatory contribution formula notwithstanding, there is need to provide incentives for the Oil and Gas Operators to evolve innovative forms of engagement with the local communities for sharing infrastructure and services to foster peace and harmony in the respective areas.

Reflecting on the past turbulent experiences, it is obvious that the downtime in operations, and by induction substantial revenue losses, would have been contained if only there had been continuous peaceful dialogue and engagement between the parties.

## 9. Way Forward

### Select Strategic Partners

- Consulting Partner/Program manger (Academia)
  - United Nations University-International Inst. Of Software Tech.
- International Agency lead partner (Funding)
  - United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- Private Sector Lead Partner (CSR Consideration)
  - Zinox Technologies Limited (ICT lead Partner)
  - Shell Nigeria (Oil Industry Lead Partner)
- Niger Delta Community representatives
- Civil Society (NGOs, CBOs, etc.)
  - Rosemary Taribi Foundation (Coordinating Charity)

Prioritize some potential Projects for immediate consideration such as:

- Wireless Broadband/Mobile WiMAX (Wibro, Korea)
- Multi-Purpose Tele-Centres (Zinox Virtual PCs)

Organise Stakeholders Conferences/Workshops to:

- To Build Consensus on Vision, Mission and Goals
- To further identify and specify some "quick fixes" and high impact pilot projects for immediate deployment.
- To identify potential partners for medium to long-term intervention initiatives.

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