

## Review

# Peace and development in Nigeria: The amnesty experience in the Niger Delta of Nigeria

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Resulting from the harsh federal government policies since the discovery of crude oil in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria in 1956, about 20 separate militant groups emerged to disrupt oil pipelines and kidnapped the oil workers. It peaked in 2008 and literally “forced” the government to reverse its policy of counter-insurgency to that of amnesty on 4 October, 2009 for the Niger Delta militants. The amnesty programme has been described by scholars as one of the most pragmatic strategies and procedures for conflict resolution, peace-building and sustainable development in the region. The programme entails granting of official pardon to the militants and training them to adjust to normal civil life. The training commenced on 5 July, 2010 and to lasted for 13 months, after which, the final phased of re-integration commenced. The programme has been criticized for being too slow and expensive, but has achieved relative peace for government to launch a road map for massive infrastructural and human capital development. Applying Jean-Francois Bayart theory on legitimacy “that the utility of violence has its limitations and diminishes with time when prolonged”, the paper analyzed the impact of the programme on sustainable peace and development in the region. It adopts the secondary method of data collection and complements it with personal interview; and finds that the amnesty programme has been beneficial to the two principal stakeholders – government, and oil companies, but not the host communities and the repentant militants. It concludes with a suggestion for Nigerians to support it, and draws four important lessons for the future, especially that of developing political will to address the ‘12 evils’ confronting Nigeria.

**Key words:** Amnesty, peace-building, safety, sustainable development.

## INTRODUCTION

The federal government’s amnesty programme in October, 2009 was borne out of the “doctrine of necessity” resulting from the militants’ disruption of crude oil and gas installations, and kidnapping of foreign oil company workers. The militants prosecuted the war within the plains, forests and creeks in the region. Their activities crippled the daily output of crude oil production from 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2004 to about 0.80 million bpd in the first quarter of 2009. This adversely affected revenue for the oil-dependent country. Kerner (1969) recaptured a similar scenario in the United States (US) during Lyndon Baines Johnson, the 36th President of the US (1963 to 1969) Administration and how the social conflict received renewed emphasis in his *Address to the Nation* on 27 July, 1967. He said:

*The only genuine, long-range solution for what has happened lies in an attack – mounted at every level – upon the conditions that breed despair and violence. All of us know what those conditions are: ignorance, discrimination, slums, poverty, disease, not enough jobs. We should (as a matter of urgency) attack these conditions – not because we are frightened by conflict, but because we are fired by conscience. We should attack them because there is simply no other way to achieve a decent and orderly society in America.*

He then suggested pro-active programmes and projects to address the problem. For President Shehu Musa Yar’Adua of Nigeria, the programme was amnesty. The amnesty programme has four major phases, beginning

with pardoning the militants for them to voluntarily renounce violence, followed by disarmament, rehabilitation, and re-integration (DRR). The phases are designed to change the mind-set of the militants and facilitate their adjustment to normal civil life. Thus, they were trained in different areas of skills and entrepreneurship in the Orientation and Rehabilitation Camp in Obubra in Cross River state, Nigeria in batches. The training started on 1 June, 2010 and lasted for 13 months (George, 2006).

The programme has brought about relative peace in the region and President Goodluck Jonathan (successor of Yar'Adua) has utilized the opportunity of the prevailing peace to pronounce some key sustainable development programmes and projects in the region (Weber, 1918). This paper assesses the implications of the amnesty programme on peace and development in the region and the country, as well as make suggestions on how to strengthen it to serve as a model in other developing countries.

The paper is divided into five parts, beginning with this introduction. This is followed by clarification of relevant concepts applied in the paper, especially that of peace, security, and development, and discussed the events that led to the declaration of amnesty on 4 October, 2009. The paper went on to assess the impacts of the programme on peace and development and concludes with the suggestion that Nigerians should massively support the programme to succeed.

## CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

Although the concept of peace seems clear to the generality of people, it requires clarification. Ibeanu (in Best, 2006), for example, defines "peace as the absence of war" and by logical extension, war is the absence of peace. He went further to state that whereas this simplistic understanding of peace is attractive, it is still inadequate for appreciating the true meaning and nature of peace, thereby necessitating the need to explore other interpretations, especially those of instrumentalists, functionalists, sociologists and philosophers.

The instrumentalists define peace as the means to an end. This concept is popular amongst the federal government and multinational oil companies (MNOCs) and is often applied in dealing with over 3,000 crude oil and gas producing/bearing communities in the region. To effectively pursue this concept, the federal government introduced the "military option" in 2005 and formed a special military unit, known as, Joint Military Task Force (JTF) to crush any agitation that was perceived to interrupt steady flow of oil and gas in the region (Burgess, 1985). The functionalists, on the other hand, see peace as playing crucial social functions that serves the orderly operations of social institutions in the country, like political parties, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), court system, State and National

Assemblies or school system in the country. This implies that these institutions and structures would not function properly without peace. Thus, for the Niger Delta and Nigeria to develop, there has to be enduring peace, and the concept is popular amongst politicians and social activists (Maoz, 1982).

The philosophers define peace as a state of perfection and earthly expression of God's kingdom that is not corrupt. Adherents to this interpretation argue that this was the original aim of God in creating human beings, that is, to live in perfect peace with one another, including nature. St. Augustine (in Sabine and Thorson, 1973) took the argument further by distinguishing two Kingdoms that is, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of man (earth).

In the Kingdom of God, there is liberty and perfection, absence of violent conflicts and wars. The Kingdom of man, on the other hand, refers to where there is exploitation, neglect, backwardness, and perennial conflicts as is the case of the Niger Delta. Thomas Hobbes describes this kingdom as the 'State of Nature' characterized by 'perennial conflicts and wars' where the strong takes advantage of the weak. In an effort to bring about peace, men and women, boys and girls resolved to create a social contract in which each person gives up some of his or her rights to form and defend a leviathan that is, powerful federal government to, which all are subjected. The philosophical concept is popular amongst the churches and mosques that continue to persuade their adherents to pursue the Kingdom of God (heaven), instead of the kingdom of man (conflict).

The sociologists interpret peace as a condition of social harmony where the 250 ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, along with about 3,000 oil producing/bearing communities in the Niger Delta would peacefully co-exist amongst themselves and MNOCs. The peaceful co-existence is expected to take place when and where the needs (wants) of individuals and groups, in the Niger Delta are adequately met. "This would happen", Karl Marx puts it "when there is an efficient and effective system of production and distribution of private and public goods and services" in the state (Nigeria). The sociologists' concept dovetailed to that of the political scientists, who see peace as political conditions that makes justice possible. This means' "peace gives political structures values and stability" (Miller, 2003). Adherents of this perspective argue that the federal government should use military and security personnel to handle civil conflicts only in extreme cases. It should, instead, emphasize 'constructive dialogue' promoted by people like Harold Dappa-Biriye, Yakubu Gowon, Aminu Kano, etc, over the years.

The concept of security is basically about the condition of feeling safe from harm or danger; the defense, protection, and preservation of core-values of the people. For the Niger Delta people, security goes beyond these to that of survival and the conditions of their existence (Blakeley, 1995). It has three dimensions, namely:

traditional, military, and non-military (Williams, 2006). For a brief overview, the traditional security focuses on threat and the use of regular police force; military security on the other hand is on protection of the country's territorial integrity; while non-military security focuses on environmental issues, ethnicity, religion, poverty, and human rights. Incidentally, the non-military security is the main concern in the region as the Niger Delta environment is continually degraded by the activities of MNOCs.

The third concept is development. Development, like peace, has varied interpretations. From the classical point of view, development means, to expand or realize the potentialities, and gradually bring to pass a programme or project that would better the well being of the people. It also means to elaborate or enlarge existing programmes and projects. The classical thinker's associate development with physical expansion of infrastructure, such as roads, buildings, industrial development, etc and the perspective dominated the formulation of the First to the Fourth National Development, as well as Rolling Plans in Nigeria, between 1960 and 2009 (Table 1).

Interpreting development from the perspective of physical expansion of social infrastructure is too restrictive, and liberal scholars have expanded it to incorporate "good governance, human rights, economic and political freedom, human capital enhancement, and rule of law" (Smith, 1969; Ake, 1993). Thus, while pursuing massive infrastructural development (Table 1), the people demands human capital development to sustain their present needs without undue adverse effects on the opportunities of the future (that is, sustainable development). (Akpan and Etekpe, 2007) It is probably for this reason that James Madison, the 4th President of America said, 'knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and the people who want to be their own governors should arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.' In analyzing James Madison's hypothesis on knowledge, Alexander Pope, one of the foremost British poets wrote, 'little learning (knowledge) is a dangerous thing' and urged people who wants to superintend over the affairs of others to appreciate the concept of development in its entirety.

Muhammed (2010) argues that "developed and developing economies like Nigeria has to transit through three stages of development, that is, agrarian, industrial, and information. The transition through these stages is not easy as it requires painful sacrifices and researches." It should be emphasized that in the case of Nigeria, the role of effective leadership in the transition cannot be over-emphasized. A leader has to put in place a plan to serve as an alternative model to that of 'modernization and dependency' theories of development. China, for example, has emerged as a manufacturing and trading power house in the world because of its leader – Chairman Mao's Great Leap Forward, which was designed as an alternative to Soviet Union's model of governance and development.

Due to poor leadership, Nigeria has over the past 50 years been battling with political, economic, social, and institutional crises. And as such, issues of peace and development have not received the desired attention. It is therefore, imperative for the Nigerian political class, policy formulators and executors to adopt what is termed here as three-way development model. The model is anchored on simultaneous development of the agricultural sector, small-and-medium scale industries, and human capital (AIHC). This will engender the agricultural sector to be invigorated and propel the emergence of small scale industrialization that would, in turn, place the country in a position to take advantage of the vast opportunities offered by globalization.

The AIHC strategy proposes that Nigeria adopt Chairman Mao's model of 'agriculturalization, industrialization and collectivization'. For this to happen, there has to be a paradigm shift from the prevailing emphasis on urban development to rural development. The rural development has to be tied to agriculture. The beauty of the AIHC model is that, it assigns responsibilities to the four key agents of development, as follows:

1. Financial institutions and private sector investors – the financiers;
2. Federal, State and Local Governments – guarantors of fund to be provided by the financiers;
3. Local communities – provision of land and other logistics; and
4. Peasant farmers, artisans, etc – provision of labour to actually execute and benefit from the programme and projects.

The theoretical issue here is "whether or not conflict is resolvable?" (Isaac, 2005). This brings us to the Aristotelian theory that 'the history of man is the history of war'. This framework may not be accurate, because even at that period man was not satisfied with war, the human and material cost of war, and the transient nature of victory over another. Thus, man protested against the Hobbesian "State of Nature" (Leibniz, 1973) and strove hard to realize common interests by organizing themselves to form a government (Levithan). In the Hobbesian state (Sabina and Thorson, 1973), the people surrendered some of their privileges to the state (government) and retained the inalienable rights for purposes of what, Isaac (2005) refers to as "large scale conflagration for collective economic and/or territorial expansionist interest."

The framework is akin to the post-amnesty programme where the militants have surrendered their rights to self-determination to government by voluntarily renouncing violence and at the same time retaining certain fundamental rights. The government, on its part, has abandoned the policy of 'military option' for that of 'constructive dialogue or mediation'.

The framework is different from Darwinian (1892/1958) thesis on the "evolution". The evolutionary thesis is

**Table 1.** Economic development plans in Nigeria, 1960 to 2008.

S/N	Year	Framework	Amount (M)	Initiator
1	1962 to 1968	First National Development Plan (Import Substitution Industrial Development)	N2,090	Nnamdi Azikiwe – Tafawa Belewa
2	1970 to 1974	Second National Development Plan (accelerating Post-Civil War reconstruction)	N3,190	General Yakubu Gowon
3	1975 to 1980	Third National Development Plan (jump-start industrial development through the strategy of import substitution)	N42,000	General Yakubu Gowon
4	1981 to 1985	Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) (free trade and attracting foreign investments)	N82,000	General Ibrahim B. Babagida
5	1990 to 1992	National Rolling Plan (to consolidate on SAP and address the problems that still hindered economic recovery and development)	-	IBB
6	1995 to 1998	Vision 2010 (short-medium-long term comprehensive economic development plan)	-	General Sani Abacha
7	1999 to 2007	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy [(NEEDS) (Comprehensive economic plan that transverse states (SEEDS) and local government (LEEDS)]	-	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo
8	2008	Vision 20:2020 (to position Nigerian as one of the 20th industrialized economies of the world.	-	Umaru Yar' Adua

propounded at the Galapagos Island in Britain. The argument is that man has evolved beyond that level to the “contemporary state of struggling for scarce resources and social change” (Himmes, 1980). It should be emphasized that Watson and Cricks’ classical work has equally debunked Darwin’s theory of evolution and agrees with Isaac’s mathematical model that conflicts are resolvable.

After reviewing the prevailing frameworks, what appears to be an ideal one for this work is that of Jean-Francois “theory of legitimacy (Bayart, 1993). The theory states that “the utility of violence has its limitations”, and “experiences diminishing returns when prolonged.” This means that violence is very effective in the short term, but over longer periods of time, it turns out to stimulate opposition and counter-violence. This was the scenario in the Niger Delta characterized by violence and counter-violence until the federal government proclaimed the amnesty programme; a policy shift warmly embraced by the militants and other stakeholders. Be that as it may, the

theory has to be applied with caution because it may not have a universal context. Ian Smith, for example, introduced a racist policy in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in 1965 and when Africans found out that Britain was not willing to bring down the illegitimate regime, the people took up arms against the regime, and dismantled it in 1980. This paved way for an election that brought an African, Robert Mugabe to power. In South Africa, the black people fought against the white supremacist government established in 1909 until the election of another black President, that is, Nelson Mandela in 1994. In both cases, the violence did not fizzle out over the long years until the objectives were achieved. In other countries like Nigeria and Morocco, violent protests were contained by the Governments after few days.

#### **MAPPING THE AMNESTY PROGRAM**

The people of the Niger Delta, like UNESCO, recognize that “since wars begin in the mind of men, it is the minds of men that the defense of

peace must be considered.” In pursuance of peaceful resolution of the crisis of under development, the people of the region, especially the Ijos (Ijaws) have “been subjected to intimidation, tortures and in some cases, death from the pre-Colonial (Akassa Raid in 1895), Ekwenga (Aba) Women Riot in 1929 to post colonial eras (Isaac Adaka Boro saga in 1966) (Ibaba, 2001; Ikelegbe, 2008). It should be pointed out that at post-independence, the non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) played prominent roles in the management and resolution of conflicts in the region. The NGOs received inspiration from Rotary Club which introduced the involvement of non- government bodies in peace operations in 1839. From that humble beginning, the number of international NGOs (INGOs) rose to about 1,082 in 2008. In terms of growth, Russia had about 277,000 and India 1,500,000.

The number of NGOs in Nigeria has equally grown from 61 at independence in 1960 to 6,000 in 2008; a quarter of these NGOs deal with socio-economic development. They are found in almost

all the 36 states of Nigeria, with Lagos and Ibadan metropolis having 5,250 - the largest number.

The few NGOs operating in the Niger Delta, namely, Academic Associates Peace Works (AAPW), SEMA, African Leadership Forum, and Yakubu Gowon Centre are controlled by non-indigenes. Thus, the efforts of *Peace Advocates*, an indigenous NGO in the region, chaired by Chief Jephath Kalaiti becomes important in the road map (search) for enduring peace. The *Peace Advocates* (PA), with the slogan, "Join us bring enduring peace to Bayelsa State" was established in 2007 at the peak of militancy in the region. Chief Kalaiti and his team went to the creeks of the Niger Delta to persuade the militants (Tables 1 and 2) to toe the line of dialogue long before the proclamation of amnesty in 2009. Seeing the fruitfulness of the efforts, Chief Timipre Sylva, Governor of Bayelsa State 2003 - 2007, established the *Niger Delta Peace and Reconciliation Committee* (NDPRC) in July 2007 to complement the efforts of *Peace Advocates*; and Chief Kalaiti was made a member of the Committee.

Kalaiti's team assured the militants that the state government was ready to impress on Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, the then Vice President, and now, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, to persuade his former boss, President Yar'Adua to redress the Niger Delta question if they renounced hostility. Yar'Adua eventually adopted it as one of the *7-Point Agenda*.

The other NGO that was instrumental in mapping peace in the region is the *Niger Delta Forum Study Group* (NDFSG), chaired by the author of the paper. The NDFSG is an off-shoot of the *Niger Delta Forum*, established in 1988 as a non-partisan organization committed to sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and equal participation in governance by indigenous communities in the region. The NDFSG is involved in primary and secondary researches and publications on issues of environment, good governance, and peace and security in the Niger Delta and Nigeria. The Study Group met with some of the militants (Tables 1 and 2) to document their grievances and presented to the appropriate government agencies for redress. It crisis-crossed the length and breadth of the Niger Delta collating cases and publishing them as a way of informing and educating the public on the main contending issues, that is, resource control and management in the Niger Delta crisis. In the process, the militants and government agencies understood each other's position and reduced suspicious that paved the way for unconditional acceptance of the amnesty programme (Etekpe, 2007).

The federal government also played a complementary role when it inaugurated the *National Peace and Reconciliation Committee* (NPRC) in 2008. The committee was headed by Senator David Brigidi from Bayelsa state. It was not effective, and the former President Yar'Adua has to dissolve it and proclaimed the amnesty programme on 24 June, 2009 to commence on 4 October, 2009. *Peace Advocates*, along with NDPRC and

NDFSG persuaded their different constituencies, that is, militant's camps, to come out of the creeks to embrace peace. But the militants refused to adhere as they thought it as a ploy to arrest and prosecute them. This is where the effort of Joshua McKiver, Commander of Olugbobiri (major) camp in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area (SILGA) is commendable as he broke the jinn to become the first violent leader to denounce militancy in the region. His courage spurred the other 20 genuine militant organizations (Table 2) to surrender.

Chief Jephatha Kalaiti applied several methods of conflict management and resolution, but the one that worked best for him was 'hybrid' method that is anchored on 'traditional oath taking'. The hybrid method encourages communities to resolve their problems without involving conventional security agents. The process usually ended up with 'traditional oath taking' that binds both parties to the peace accord. Cases, in which the method was successfully applied, included Opugbene and Ikibiri I and II in SILGA in Bayelsa state, where peace accords were signed on 12 and 15 December, 2007. The NDFSG, on the other hand, applied *multitrack diplomacy* to ensuring that all the stakeholders in a controversial situation are brought together and actively involved in the dialogue, negotiation, and mediation procedures. This method was tested in the region during the *Ogoni peace process* in Rivers state between 1997 and 2003 (Opukri and Etekpe, 2008), and it has become a standard operating procedure (SOP) in the region.

While these methods/efforts were going on, former President Yar'Adua's government inaugurated the *Technical Committee on the Niger Delta* (TCND), headed by Mitee Ledum to "prepare a clear plan of action to develop the region." The *Peace Advocates*, and NDFSG submitted independent position papers to the TCND and 'demanded' for a declaration of amnesty for the militants. Thereafter, the federal government should embark on massive infrastructural and human capital development in the region. The TCND examined these and other proposals and recommended "a voluntary amnesty programme, comprising disarmament, demobilization and re-integration (DDR) of militant groups in the region." (Ledum, 2008), and the Presidency adopted the recommendation. In essence, what started as an NGO experiment in Yenagoa in Bayelsa State at the peak of militancy in 2008 has metamorphosed into a successful national programme. (Etekpe, 2009).

It is also on record that Governor Timpre Sylva played an impressive role in the amnesty programme, especially, at the disarmament phase. As Onyekwere (2004) puts it:

*he sat quietly grinning intermittently. His sense of self accomplishment could not be hidden as he relished on the success of the event.... He successfully led 32 repentant militants from Bayelsa State into the Banquet Hall of the State House, Abuja penultimate Friday in response to the Presidential amnesty offer.*

**Table 2.** Militant Camps in Niger Delta as at 30 June, 2009.

S/N	Name of camp	Location	Status of camp	Leader(s)
1	Olugbobiri	Southern Ijaw (SILGA, Bayelsa State)	Major	Joshua Mckiver
2	Korokorosei	SILGA, Bayelsa State	Major	Africa Owei
3	Okiegbene/Ebrighbene (Ikebiri I and II)	SILGA, Bayelsa State	Major	Gidson Kala (Prince Igodo)
4	Robert Creek	Nembe, Bayelsa State	Major	Government Ekpemupolo (Tompolo) and Henry Okah
5	Cowthorne Channel	Nembe, Bayelsa State	Major	
6	Camp 5	Warri South, Delta State	Major	
7	Okerenkoko	Warri, Delta State	Major	
8	Opuraza	Warr, Delta State	Major	
9	Azuzuama	SILGA, Bayelsa State	Major	Jackson
10	Gbekenegbene	SILGA, Bayelsa State	Minor	Not Available
11	Ezetu	SILGA, Bayelsa State	Minor	Victor Ben Ebikabowei (Boyloaf)
12	Agge	SILGA, Bayelsa State	Minor	
13	Kurutiye, Forupa and Okubie	SILGA, Bayelsa State	Minor	Not Available
14	Ken Camp	Odi, Bayelsa State	Minor	Ken
15	Egbema Camp	Warri, Delta State	Minor	Kem Agbakara
16	Ubefan	Warri, Delta State	Minor	John Togo
17	Berger Camp	Warri, Delta State	Minor	Inilo Sinite
18	Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDFVF)	Akuku-Tori, Rivers State	Major	Alhaji Asari Dokubo
19	Niger Delta Volunteer Movement (NDVM)	Okirika, Rivers State	Major	Tom Ateke
20	Borokiri (Icelanders/Outlaw cult)	Borokiri, Port Harcourt, Rivers State	Minor	Soboma George
21	Yeghe	Bori, Ogoni, Rivers State	Minor	Solomon Ndigbara (Osama Bin Laden)

Source: Etekpe (2009).

He inspired the handing over of arms in Table 3, and went with a group of 31 repentant militants leaders to the presidency. The commander of the militants was Victor Ben Ebikabowei-Boyloaf (Table 2). He was the first Niger Delta leader to

lead the first batch of militants that embraced the amnesty programme to the Presidency at Abuja, and the President was elated. In essence, without Governor Sylva's 'bold and risky' initiative to directly negotiate and bring them to the Presidency, the program would have failed.

It should also be emphasized that another son of the state and region, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, invigorated the programme by dissolving the former and inaugurating a fresh *Presidential Committee on Amnesty (PCA)* on 25 October, 2009. This was necessary as the former PCA

**Table 3.** Arms handed over to Government by Militants in Bayelsa and Rivers States 20 August, 2009.

Town/state	Quantity and categories of arms							
	Gun	Rifles	Mort. bombs	Gun boats	General purpose machine guns (GPMG)	Grenads	Rocket launchers	Others (Bullets, etc.)
Yenagoa, Bayelsa State	520	385	79	18	108	107	17	95,970
Port Harcourt, Rivers State	35	109	50	6	34	60	3	23,023
Total	555	494	129	24	142	167	20	118,993

Source: Poland Ogbonaya (2009). ThisDay, November 1:12, pp. 14 and 34.

**Table 4.** Amneste Militants in the Niger Delta, December 2009

S/No	States	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1.	Abia	155	8	163
2.	Bayelsa	8,900	117	9,017
3.	Rivers	8,963	89	9,052
4.	Akwa-Ibom	571	29	600
5.	Cross River	159	1	160
6.	Edo	450	0	450
7.	Delta	4,396	20	4,416
8.	Imo	297	3	300
9.	Ondo	2,198	2	2,200
	Total	26,089	272	26,361

Source: Amnesty Office, Abuja, 2010

Chaired by Godwin Abbe (then Minister of Defence) was ineffective and could not even keep accurate records on the repentant militants. He, for example, stated in his *Handover Note* that there were 15,260 militants whereas independent sources unveiled 26,361 (Table 4). In addition to the controversy over the actual number of repentant militants, the programme has suffered several setbacks, especially moving from the first phase of disarmament to the second phase of training and rehabilitation (Alli and Odunuga, 2010). Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, having become the President of Nigeria, capitalized on the relative peace, in the region and pronounced several projects meant to sustain the amnesty accord.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF AMNESTY PROGRAMME ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The projects (Ajaero, 2009) were:

- 1) Establishment of a Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas in Ekowe, Bayelsa State;
- 2) Upgrading of the Petroleum Training Institute (PTI), Effurun in Delta State to the status of University of Petroleum and Gas;
- 3) Dualization of the East-West high way;

- 4) Construction of an Atlantic Coastal high way;
- 5) Construction of East-West rail line running from Calabar through Uyo, Port Harcourt, Yenagoa, Warri, Benin to Lagos;
- 6) Development of the Inland Water way;
- 7) Clean up of oil spillages from the environment;
- 8) Commencement of massive land reclamation; and
- 9) Development of new towns while retaining the history and culture of the people.

There is no doubt that these projects would spur sustainable development in the region. It is therefore, expected that the federal government would continue to demonstrate the political will to redress what the Presidential Advisory Council (PAC) termed "the 12 evils that Jonathan must fight" (Adeyemo, 2010). The evils that are of particular concern to the region are darkness, dishonesty, idleness, injustice, insecurity, immobility, disease, fear, hunger, want, indiscipline, and corruption. Be that as it may, the nature and period of training would not sustain the tempo of the programme. For example, the 15,260 to 26,361 militants were to undergo two weeks of intensive training at the Orientation and Rehabilitation Camp in Obubra in CRS, Nigeria (Johnson, 2010, Onah and Igbodaro, 2010) in the areas of:

1. Parade and drilling;
2. Weekend fairs where they learn various vocations/ entrepreneurship;
3. Conflict resolution and peace building; and
4. Lectures to develop good behaviour

They are trained by military personnel and psychologists, and the first batch started with 2,000 trainees on 5 to 19 July, 2010. It was followed by the second batch of 670 and thereafter, 800 per batch. By this arrangement, 25 were trained over a period of 50 weeks or 13 months. This means, before the third phase – integration was completed; some of the trainees must have forgotten the lessons and gone back to other forms of criminality. The financial outlay is also heavy. Presently, the federal government pays each militant a minimum of N65,000/month. This amounts to N105 billion/month or N14 billion for the 13 months. This level of financial outlay must have negative effect on the other areas of national

development.

The initial two weeks of training is followed by another short course of six months duration at local and international institutions in business management, tailoring, hair dressing, welding, fabrication, oil/maritime services, etc. It is expected that at the end of the training, the professionals would be given starter pack while the rest of them would be gainfully employed. This is not happening, especially as the labour market is already saturated. Thus, some of the combatants are going back to the creeks, with its negative consequences on the development of the region. This shows that the repentant militants are not benefiting from the program (Ledum and Azubike, 2009).

Based on the fore-going, the paper has drawn three lessons for sustenance of the programme and accelerates the pace of development in the region. They are:

1. The quantity of crude oil production has jumped from 0.80 million bpd in 2008 to over 1.6 million bpd from second quarters of 2010. This invariably means more revenue is accruing to the federal government and there should be massive investment in human capital and infrastructure to fast-track sustainable development in the region and country;
2. Implementation the Electricity Power Sector Reform (EPSE) Act of 2005, that was suspended in 2007 by the former President Yar' Adua. This will engender small and medium scale industries to engage the repentant militants;
3. Revamp agricultural schemes and cottage industries in all the regions to enhance the on-going development of over 3,000 communities in the region. The scheme would serve as vocation for the repentant militants. There is the need to resuscitate the National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFund) to be responsive to the needs of the former militants for them to go into small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) instead of waiting for civil/public service jobs.

These lessons are important to create conducive economic environment to absorb the repentant militants. What this means is that if the foregoing catalysts are not in place to stimulate the local economy to create job opportunities, many other people would be lured to the creeks to resume the acts of insurgency and counter-insurgency.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

While the amnesty programme is beginning to yield positive impacts, the process is so slow that some smart young people are taking advantage of it by introducing other forms of criminality. According to Okocha (2010), "a gang of thieves who specialize in car snatching was apprehended on 30 August, 2010 by the Police in Delta State in the Niger Delta." The five thieves told the Police

Officer that they could not be arrested because they "were covered by the amnesty programme." This is one of the several atrocities committed by some of the former militants as the initial enthusiasm has waned due to excessive delays in rehabilitating them.

The second issue is on mismanagement of the program as the implementation is handled by people who lacked the experience and capacity for negotiation and mediation. Aside, the stakeholders have not been given enough opportunity to come together to discuss the best way to achieve DRR. Thus, they too feel alienated (Onyekwere, 2009).

The final issue is that of reward system raised by Booker T. Washington (1856 to 1915), an American educator. He said, 'no man who continues to add something to the material, intellectual, and moral well-being of the place in which he lives, is left for long without proper reward.' While the government, MNOCs, and host communities have their respective rewards, those of the former militants became an unrealistic stipend of US\$420 (N65,000) person/month. Although what they are being paid seems reasonable, PCA should realize that they were earning far more in the creeks. Thus, the earlier they are gainfully rehabilitated and re-integrated into the civil society the better for the region and the country. Based on the discussion and findings, we suggest:

1. That as the amnesty experience is pleasant; it requires the support of all Nigerians. This is important because if the programme fails, the region and country shall not be able to control another round of insurgency and counter-insurgency;
2. That the pace of implementation of the programme be increased to achieve the desired sustainable development; and
3. That there should be a well articulated short-medium-long term sustainable development plans in the Niger Delta, including respect for the environment and the people's rights.

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