

# Civil society statement on the process to implement the UN Environment Programme's 2011 assessment of Ogoniland

On September 16<sup>th</sup> 2014 the Ministry of Petroleum of Nigeria held a multi-stakeholder workshop on the implementation of the UN Environment Programme's 2011 assessment of Ogoniland.

We, the undersigned organisations –, while welcoming a process to address the oil pollution in Ogoniland and the economic, environmental and health effects of this pollution – believe that in order for it to be effective and to ensure the trust of the affected communities, the following core principles should apply:

- **Effective participation of the affected communities:** Over three years after the publication of the UNEP report, and after many decades of oil pollution in the Niger Delta, trust in the willingness of key actors to deliver full and effective clean-up and remediation of the Niger Delta is low. In order to build the trust of the affected communities in this process and to ensure outcomes which successfully address the needs of the communities, the full and effective participation of the communities in all the deliberations of the process is essential.
- **Transparency of the process:** In order to build trust in this process it is vital that it is fully transparent to the affected communities and the people of Nigeria. At a minimum this means disclosure of how the process is funded, who is participating and how participants are selected, the nature, time-frame and substantive aspects of the proceedings, and outcomes of each step of the process. Clean-up, remediation and verification processes should also be completely transparent.
- **Independence from the oil industry:** In order to deliver effective clean-up and remediation and effectively address the problems arising from oil pollution it is important that this process, and any system established as a result of the process, is independent of and also *seen to be* independent from the oil industry. In particular;
  - The Environmental Restoration Fund should be managed and governed entirely independently from those involved in the oil industry.
  - The process of clean up and remediation should be carried out by contractors who are completely independent from the oil industry and be based on best practice international standards.
  - Monitoring of the clean-up and remediation must be monitored by an independent actor such as UNEP.
  - Verification that the clean-up and remediation has been done properly and in accordance with best international standards has to be done by an independent third party actor without links to the oil industry.
- **Urgency of action:** To build confidence in this process it is vital that it delivers demonstrable benefits for communities in the coming months and that clean-up of spill sites based on best-practice international standards happens without delay.



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