

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE POLICY DIALOGUE ON THE CLEAN UP OF Ogoni Land: THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE UNEP REPORT HELD AT EASTLAKE HOTEL, PORT HARCOURT, JULY 16, 2019**

**PREAMBLE**

*A One-Day Policy Dialogue on the Clean Up of Ogoni Land: The Role of Stakeholders in the UNEP Report* was organized by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) with support from Cordaid. The workshop was conceptualized to draw the attention and to re-examine the roles of stakeholders in the UNEP report including; Government, Communities, oil companies, CSOs and the Media to chart and arrive at a nuanced and holistic approach that could speed up the clean-up and ultimately bring a new lease of life to the Niger Delta and the country as a whole. The dialogue was attended by several stakeholders including; Office of the Vice President, HYPREP, NOSDRA, Traditional rulers, Women & Youth groups, Civil Society Organizations and the Media.

**OBSERVATIONS**

At the workshop, the following observations were made:

1. Participants commended the Federal Government for embracing the UNEP report and the subsequent set up of Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) as special purpose vehicle to oversee the cleanup of Ogoni land and indeed the Niger Delta.
2. Whereas the UNEP report identified several stakeholders as strategic to the clean-up with roles clearly delineated to them, the stakeholders appear to be working in silos rather than working in synergy.
3. The UNEP report is a product of a multi-stakeholder engagement and everything to be done with respect to the clean-up must be from that perspective.
4. The issue of re-pollution happening in communities is worrisome and is traceable to the preponderance of artisanal refining.
5. The clean-up is an idol to the Ogoni people, and they depend on it with sentiments because it has capacity to deliver them from an uncertain future.

6. The Ogoni clean-up is a test case as there are no examples anywhere that can be referenced by HYPREP as template and therefore the need to be painstaking in relation to the processes is critical.
7. The set up of the Central Representative Advisory Committee (CRAC) by HYPREP as an interface between community and HYPREP is commendable.
8. Whereas increased community engagement is critical to advance the clean-up, HYPREP should not mistake visit to traditional rulers for community sensitization.
9. Needs assessment is an issue in the design of the livelihood programmes.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the foregoing observations, the following recommendations were made;

1. Stakeholders called for the need for a multi-stakeholder implementation approach in dealing with issues raised in the course of the Ogoni cleanup.
2. Government, Communities and the security agencies, must adopt an effective and holistic strategy to stop acts that further cause re-pollution such as artisanal refining, patronage of illegal products and adopt professional destruction of seized petroleum products.
3. Stakeholders tasked the Federal government and its agencies to put in place the necessary framework that would speed up the clean-up process while sustaining the advocacy efforts which gave rise to the UNEP Assessment in the first place.
4. Right and qualified agents and contractors should be engaged for the clean-up to meet international standards.
5. Government should ensure that anything limiting the clean-up process are removed and insulate HYPREP from the challenges of red tapeism.
6. Community engagement should be advanced to elicit the buy-in and co-operation of the communities in the implementation of the UNEP Report and Clean-up.
7. The communities should avoid legal bottlenecks in seeking financial compensation for their land rather they should focus on the outcome of remediation of the environment.
8. HYPREP should put in place a multi-stakeholder implementation plan which can be accessed and used for monitoring by stakeholders, carry out needs assessment prior to the implementation of its livelihood programmes, and set up complaint desk to aid liaison with the office.

## **CONCLUSION**

Participants at the policy dialogue commended Centre LSD for organizing the dialogue on the role of stakeholders to speed up the clean up process of the Ogoni land and the Niger Delta. Participants enjoined all stakeholders in their various capacities to do the needful and ensure that the targets for the clean-up is achieved.

Signed:

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- 2) Engr. Melvis Odoobo - NOSDRA Port Harcourt, Rivers State
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