

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL'S AND VISION 20:2020: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY IN SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study reports on the millennium development goal's and vision 20:2020 'critically appraising the success or failure and government's responsibility in accomplishing the demand for sustainable environmental development in Rivers State. This research work, was randomly selected based on the deductive and inductive paradigmatic concepts which relies on the massive philosophical and logical positivism of such an open empirical observation, that the outcome of the United nation millennium summit (Mdg's) and the vision 20:2020 agenda, if not dead then it is in a moribund state of survival as interpreted in Igbo as "Odindu-onwu ka Nma". In Nigeria, this is true as the possible changes expected in transforming and eliminating poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, still triggers higher in Rivers state, irrespective of surplus oil and production industry within her community. Available farm land have been covered with oil pipeline, while several top soil and manure meant to boost crops production, have all been excavated, only to favor a pipeline laying, this is not even supplemented with artificial N.P.K. fertilizer application to ameliorate the soil fertility and nutrients of the soil, but yet vision 2020 agenda, is pronounced and spread by media houses daily. Three major district in Rivers state namely North district, rivers south east and the Rivers South west district respectively. The empirical data showed that the government responsibility both in environmental restoration facility/loan grants, illiteracy, poverty, poor healthcare delivery system is still lacking in Rivers state, especially in some towns and villages in Emohua local government area of Rivers State, where several forms of vertical and horizontal gas flaring is carried out daily, so also in Gokana Local government area of Rivers State, a case in point is Bomu Community, whose farm land have been destroyed, so also in Kula Area in Buguma-Asari Toru Local Government area of Rivers state, and Ogba-Egbema Local Government area of rivers state, with special emphasis in Egi Clan, Obite, Obagi and Obuboro Community etc. This observation and physical identification was tested using the chi-squared (X^2) test statistics vis-à-vis, other modes like direct interview to the Chairman of Community Development committee (CDC), the liaisons officer and chiefs/youths leaders of respective host community in several local government mentioned above. The differences found were observed significant, and was substantiated using the coefficients of chi-squared

residuals (R). Based on the findings, the study highlighted the limiting factors responsible, in poor implementation and actualization of the millennium development goal's objective and the vision 20; 2020 and its back hunches of retardation on sustainable environmental development in Rivers State.

Key word: Millennium, Development Goals, Vision 2020, environmental, sustainable, Rivers State.

Introduction

Millennium Development Goal (MDG'S) are eight international development goals that all 192 United Nations members states and at least 23 international organization have agreed to achieve by the year 2015, every aspect of the human endeavor's toiling with poverty, illiteracy, food shortage, environmental degradation/pollution, poor health care delivery and general housing problems etc. Toure (2010). While the term vision represent a clear mental picture of the future, which in this perception, must represent a significant improvement on the current state; this shall cover improvement in good health care delivery system devoid of poor out patients bed spaces, as obtainable in the specialist hospital Abuja (Maternity Ward), where expectant pregnant mother, cannot be provided for a bed space, the improvement on the level of gas flaring, whether vertical or horizontal gas flaring, as obtaining in some Niger Delta Community in Nigeria, improvement in the level of leadership styles devoid of continuous experimentation democracy, which is characterized with severe molestation, corruption, erroneous funds diversification, bribery, political assassins, favoritism and chorus Godfatherism in our government. It shall however be supported by a clear and realistic path to its realization and requires consistent and sustained effort for its achievement.

According to NPOFED (2008), the key vision for 2020 (Vision statement), is that by 2020, Nigeria will be one of the 20 largest economies in the world that shall be able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa and established itself as a significant player in the global economic and political arena, but the question is will this policy statement of vision 2020 and millennium development goal's agenda considered sustainable? Following the leadership culture of our great nation, it is clear that the:

“Absent of any policy maker or leaders, whether by death, dethronement/overthrow, and expulsion from an office, always mark the end and the collapsed of such an ideology”.

If I may flashback and reminiscence several policies formulated by our past leaders such as General Tunde Idiagbom: War Against indiscipline, General Olusegun Obasanjor Green Revolution (operation feed the nation), late Umaru Musa Yaradua poverty alleviation programme, and the policy favoring the establishment of monthly sanitation activities etc where all established to better the lives of the Nigerian populace, the question that look rhetorical, is can we sustains and maintain these policies, for instance now that President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua is late?

According to Orime (2007), the increasing factors to poor environmental law implementation and application to suit its legal/constitutional obligation of environmental security/safety, is corruption, he added that cases of environmental degradation and pollution, is always aired over the media, but is given a deaf ear by government, because the exploration/exploitation license permitting the Shell Nigeria Limited, Elf Joint Ventures unlimited Agip etc to explore oil, is always shared by government and their stakeholders that is why when the issues that relates to environmental degradation is raised, the government step on it, until the litigants/complaints become tired.

Orime (2007) added that, the entire system have being rendered moribund, such that the policy that would have made the environment more sustainable, is today unsustainable both to biotic factors, abiotic factors in an ideal ecosystem especially in Rivers State.

The United Nation millennium development summit which was attended by all head of states, representative, was deeply rooted in making all necessary efforts as flash back again:

- To eradicate poverty
- To fight against hunger
- To fight against environmental degradation, e.g. oil spillage in both terrestrial land surface of a viable farm land, gas flaring, disposal of hazardous waste untreated, continuous pipe laying in our farm land, with environmental impact assessment survey etc have all made the policies once more really unsustainable.

Hence the term *sustainable development* simply represents a development that shall take place without harm to the present and future generation and even the unknown generation yet to come. But yet policies and the 1999 constitution chapter 2 section 20, provided for environmental safety and the right to living environment, good water, good food and good houses etc.

From the World Health Organization (WHO) point of view, the term health simply means a state of a complete wellbeing of an individual, physically, mentally, morally, socially and spiritually, but not merely the absence of diseases or infirmities; while Orime (2007), defined the term diseases as any form of abnormality / ill health detected from the body systems after several stages of diagnosis.

Orime (2007) added that the state of Nigerian Health when viewed physically, does not even require the use of any medical stetoscope, spigmometer, or even thermometer to confirm with the medical examination or that the investigated result proves them to be ill or sick; he added that the increase in environmental deterioration and degradation in Niger Delta, especially in Rivers state have rendered most host communities to be victims of one form of endemic and epidemic diseases exposures to yearly. Orime (2007), further flash backed the episode of cholera outbreak in Agba-Ndele in 2009, contact dermatitis skin rashes in Ovele-Ovokohia Community in Rumuekpe in 2008 Asthma/Pneumonia cases in Imogu and Obele

Ibaa, drought/skin dehydration in Eleme, Death of fishes both in Soku, Tema, Abalama, Ido; Ekpeye, Abua Odual Otari Community. Specifically, sharing a common boundary with Agba-Ndele Community through a natural geographical boundary of an ephemeral River Channel called Sombrero creek, etc have caused several economic hardship and decline in Biodiversity, this is a major factors responsible in biodiversity crises today in Niger Delta; but yet millennium development goals and vision 20:2020 is still considered the best policy with the solution approach to Niger Delta people.

Orime (2007), further added that policy when formulated may not actualize its desired objectives, in an economy filled with stylish criminals, who intentional and erroneously motivates and design the best cash diversification approach. He added that though Nigerian claimed to be the giant of Africa, but yet is still gathering all political specimens to continuously carrying out her experimental democracy filled with corruption and blind policies considered detrimental to the nations rules of law. Orime (2007) defined the term environment as an aggregate system which is composed of land, water and air, which exit in an interconnected and interrelated manner. He added that the environment is a determining factor both for success or failure of any business set up, industrial establishment, commercial setup, residential areas and agricultural engagement, therefore needed to be safe for a development on it to be sustainable.

*'In the spirit of acrimony/rancor no meaningful
Progress/development can be achieved, true of false?'*

This is purely a rhetoric question, but the fact remains bitter to the mind of the *environmental terrorist*", who are always in an antagonistic/ antithesis cheating struggles.

Development of Agriculture and Oil Business in Rivers State

Rivers state since her creation in 1967, have sustained the global nation, both in export of agricultural products, export of oil products, and the importation of several goods to Nigeria, but yet receives very infinitesimal quota of the Nations wealth, beside that oil exports contributes substantial windfalls to Nigeria's economy, crude oil export earns over \$400 billion (about N60 trillion), since the commencement of oil exploration and production activities in the country. But this large in flow of foreign currency from the sale of crude oil fails to stimulate development in Rivers State, which lays the beautiful golden eggs (Okowa, 2005). Also since the Rivers State environment have been degraded due to unfriendly exploration/exploitation activities in the hydrocarbon industries, the food and cash crops in their soil cannot also do well, compared to the past, the Rivers which have also provided several self demonstrated employment in "operation help yourself policy", have all been polluted with thick aromatic hydrocarbon and oily slicks crude, then what is the faith of the coastal dwellers. Orime (2007), according to (Hassan, 2010:15), since large inflow of foreign currency from the sale of crude oils,

should be transferred to farm land in Rivers State.

But the major challenge to agricultural development and poverty alleviation in Nigeria at large and Rivers State in particular is the problem of poor soil fertility, hence organism have been killed by the aromatic hydrocarbon, making aerobic and anaerobic decomposition processes very hard to accomplished by nature. Orime (2007) added that all that is dissolved into the soil in a soluble state, even through the network of water runoff, which is to be absorbed by root hairs, adventitious root, fibrous roots of a plant, are all contaminated, and polluted by the running crude oil during spillage, this is not eco-friendly according to him. Orime (2007), viewed it from toxicological point of view, this will result to acclimatization requiring a compensatory forward movement adjustment. It is highly noticed at that juncture, where organism sensing toxicity poison is expected to run away from that ecosystem to another ecosystem for their dear life, at the end creating artificial exploration caused scarcity and decline in biodiversity. Orime (2007), added that, this is what have made many fishermen unable to catch any fish in their river in most cases, thereby resulting to the problem of environmental crisis, environmental unrest mob action and seasonal kidnapping in most Riverrine areas. When this is frequently noticed in Rivers State, do we assess the government responsibility digressive or progressive, when they owes all indigenes and her populace an adequate rights to sustainable living, farming, working and learning environment, yet the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria in section 20 chapter 2 provided for the right to good living, right to sustainable living environment, so also the human right declaration in their charter, governing the operation and activities of human environment and its biosphere, terrestrials, biotic and abiotic factors. Orime (2007), added that the most funny thing of its all, is that all environmental sensitive areas, is destroyed, such as coral reef ecosystem, mesh land habitat, forest reserves centre, mangrove habitat, geophysical structures such as the artesian, aquifer due to soil porosity, vibrations, seismic oil drilling, have deposited several quantities of drilling mud such as bentonite, bicarbonate materials and all other anticorrosive chemicals applied to the pipes body during the oil pipeline seismic prospection of crude oil. Orime (2007), further added that the most eco solution and environmental restoration/remediation approaches is denied, which is meant that conservation methodology is lacking, but yet the environment still witness series of development at her detriment.

Orime (2007), further added that the beautiful and colour pleasing birds in our immediate ecosystem, according to the ornithologist who study about birds, have declare some species missing in our immediate ecosystem, due to environmental pollution and degradation daily.

Government, Development and Environmental Conservation Policy

The term governments have been defined as a body of persons or institution which makes laws for a particular state or country. Anyaele (1994), defined government as an agency or machinery through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed

and attained. He added that government as a body vested with the power and authority for maintaining security, peace and stability by making and enforcing conventional and fundamental laws in a given state or society have not met up with its obligations.

This is done through the formulation and implementation of policies in the state, government as a process, do these to cater for the large population, rather than group, on carry go and carry come syndrome. According to Orime (2007) the highest government business and responsibilities is meant to Provide social services ranging from good health care system, good health insurance/social services, devoid of profit oriented, maternity of surplus out patient bed spaces, pediatrics units for our children, as the leaders of the vision of the future tomorrow etc.

Safety of lives and property: The government owes her citizen, the duty of ensuring that their lives, properties are safe, for a sustainable business, sustainable agricultural practices, sustainable learning system, sustainable industrial operation and sustainable governance etc; not frequent violent, unrest, burning of business premises, oil spillage/environmental degradation, flaring activities etc

Economic function, Nigerian Economic system must create an evenly spreading and generation of wealth, rather than un-even market segmentation and distinguishable type of restricted entry and restricted exist, where certain class of person is access able to certain kind of food, fish, housing and employment and street to live. For instance, it is not a crime for the ministers of the federal republic of Nigeria to live with their children in high densities of Nigerian cities, rather than the preferable choice of living in government residential area (GRA), because we are creatures of two eyes, two ears and of one year physically. Orime added that this inequality /disequilibrium in wealth means of life etc have caused a wide social gap and interactions holes uncovered in the society, which have always end up in aggressive defense, agitation, envy, gossips and unstable living relationship, between the higher class planning to be using the high densities urban sprawl/decayed city dwellers characterized with poor housing numbers e.g. Bundu Water Side, Njemanze Dan-Blow water side and Timber in Rivers State, while they are used and dumped as a political tug, the used and dumped high density dwellers, also plan on how to recover some excess illegally acquired wealth from the government funds through Kidnapping/hostage taking, oil bunkering, car snatching, property displacement, mob action/unrest etc. his is what the government must avoid when issues about economic development planning is put into consideration

Orime (2007), added that development planning could be for a short time duration and long term duration, infrastructural projects, that are capital intensive should be diversified and development considered decentralized, rather than concentration within the city core, he added that when these dwellers of high density zones, satellite towns dwellers and those continuously witnessing ruralization yearly, are not seeing the wealth of the nation, they will consider the development not favorable sustainable, therefore will always act on opposition and antagonistic direction to those in leadership position, at the end causing havocs and unrest.

Aims and objectives

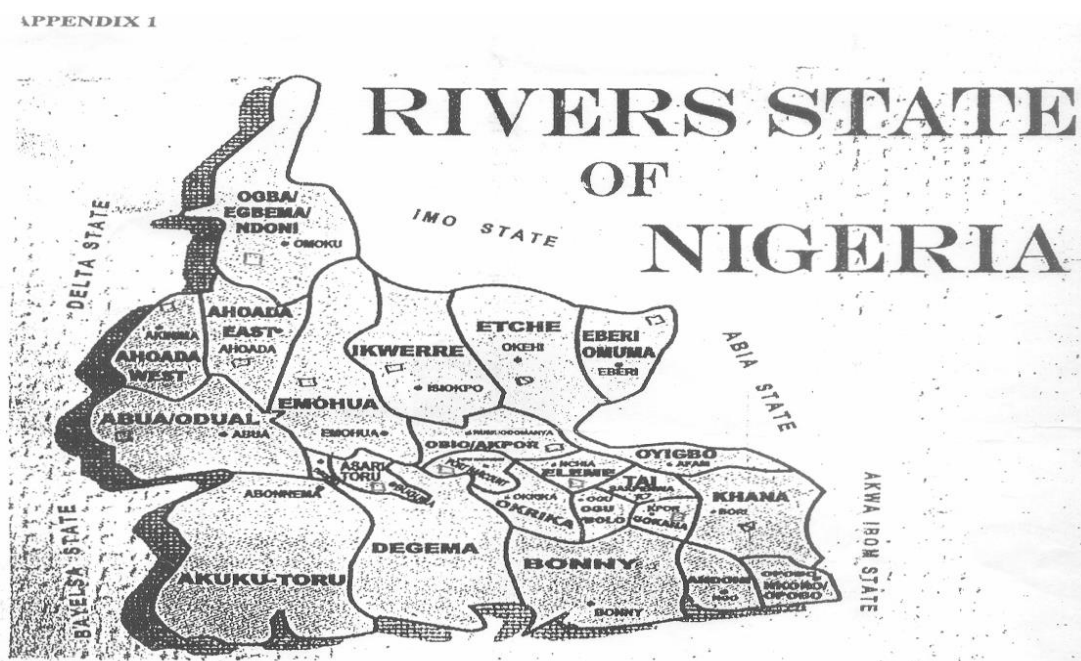
- I. To critically appraised and assed the level of achievement recorded by the millennium development goals and vision 2020 policies of Nigeria over the year.
- II. To foster out plans on how to cater the less privileged considered as the high densities (urban squatter settlers), who are agitating for even distribution of the nations wealth will be empowered.
- III. To encourage and inculcates the spirit of eco solution and bio restoration spirit of environmental conservation in Rivers State.
- IV. To educate the Rivers people on environmental conservation, eco ethics, eco justice and environmental safety ideology

To recommend and suggest an environmentally friendly method of carrying out exploration/exploitation of natural resources, so that the Rivers Coral Reef, mesh land, mangrove habitat, geophysical areas, all considered as the environmentally sensitive areas will be conserved for sustainable living and development in Rivers State.

Study Area

The study areas covers most local government areas in Rivers State, such as Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State (Bomu Community) witnessing several cases of environmental degradation, the Emohua Local Government area covering the following communities: (a) Agba-Nale, Rumuekpe, Obelle Ibaa etc; Asari-Toru Local Government of Rivers State; covering (a) Iforko and Ido Community, others are the Ogba-Egbema Local Government Area of Rivers State; specifically the researcher visited areas suffering gas flaring (vertical and horizontal gas flaring) like; Obagi, Egi Clan, Oboburo, Egbema, Obirikom etc. the above mentioned community can be conveniently be located in the map of Rivers State attached hereunder.

Map showing Rivers State and various Local Governments and Towns



Sampling Method

Two sets of questionnaires were designed for the purpose of this research study. Those living nearer to the pipe lines and those whose farm land are situated toward the direction of the Agip/Elf well heads were all interviewed, especially the Obirikom, Egi, Obagi and Obuboru Community in Ogba-Egbema Ndoni Local Government of Rivers State. Those living within the Onne oil Free Zone I area in Tai Local Government area, whose major farm land have been converted as an oil tankers/assembling ground for the onward loading and off loading of petroleum products form Onne Ports Plc.

Besides that a total of fifty questionnaires was designed and channeled to this host communities, duly given a representative data sampling method, the research also employed an empirical observation, followed by a supportive interview, the researcher showed that residents within oil producing communities are displaced, some are sick while several kind of stress (emotional and psychological stress) were also noted based on their response, following their experience over the years of accommodating oil companies, while some CDC leaders and liaison officer interviewed, said, the discovery of oil in their place, have caused them evil than the expected good, bitterly complaining about their fishing traps.

Some when asked about the millennium development goals policy and the Vision 20:2020, package in alleviating poverty, if actually, they are benefiting, the mass response is capital NO, and that few PDP members hijack the whole thing for the interest of the party, with a common slogan “if you no belong NO way”. Most data Collected were represented using; table, chart, graph were necessary in this paper.

Tom-Ekine (2010), also viewed the failure of millennium development goals and Vision 20:2020, right from corruption to wrong distribution and redistribution channel, which he called *forward linkages and backward linkages* of the Nation abundant wealth. He added that, the vision 20:2020 is aiming in mobilizing all the sectors that shall eliminate poverty, especially agricultural sector, through credit facility, are under actualized and as such those *bilateral assistance and unilateral assistance*, that would have decongest that total dependence on oil cash to agriculture, have been erroneously mis-diversified. This is what would have made the economy more sustainable, if Malaysia can boldly tell Nigeria about her initial take off palm produce to set experiment, today they have achieved much; on alternative energy resources, with less environmental pollution cases. **Table 1: Illustrating the targeted goals of MDGs**

s/n	Millennium development goals	Challenges	Targets
1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.	One billion people live on less than USD \$ 1 per day	Cut in half the number of people who live on less

		854 million people are chronically hungry and one child dies from hunger every 5 seconds	than \$1 per day. Cut in half the number of hungry people
2	Achieve universal primary education	Approximately 77 million children do not attend primary school	Ensure that girls and boys everywhere are able to complete primary school
3.	Promote gender equality and empower women	96 million young women aged 15-24 in developing countries cannot read or write	Eliminate discrimination against women in education
4.	Reduce child mortality	26000 children under 5 die every day, many from preventable illnesses	Reduce by two-thirds the number of children who die before age 5
5	Improve maternal health	Approximately 500000 women die every year from complications due to pregnancy and	Reduce by 75% the number of women who die as a result of pregnancy and childbirth
6.	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases	14000 new HIV/AIDS infections are diagnosed every day One million people die each year from malaria — an easily Preventable disease. 14000 new HIV/AIDS infections are diagnosed every day	Stop the spread of these diseases and see a decline in death rates
7.	Ensure environmental sustainability	1 billion people — one-fifth of the worlds population— do not have access to clean water within a 1 5-minute walk from	Cut in half the number of people without access to safe drinking water

		their home. Forests worldwide are shrinking at an unprecedented rate.	Reverse the loss of natural resources by practicing sustainable development
8.	Develop a global partnership for development	Unfair trade systems, crippling debt and limited access to markets prevent growth and opportunity for all people	Improve levels of development assistance, promote good governance, provide access to markets, offer solutions for indebted countries

Source: Field Survey 2010

Conclusion and Recommendation

The research showed that many Rivers people are still living in abject poverty, meaning that some inhabitant of the state cannot afford two times meals, lack access to good pipe borne water, lack access to primary education, no health care delivery system nor agricultural soft loan motivating facility, irrespective of several policies ranging from:

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- Vision 20:2020
- Operation feed the nation
- Sustainable environmental development policy.
- Health for all programmes (good immunization, antenatal, postnatal, and neonatal health cares) is all lacking.

A case in point is the Bomu Community in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State, where poverty rate is still blowing much and higher trumpet to the indigenes in the area, while half of them still lives in the ancient red mud houses, and local bicycle conveniently used as the best sources of transportation in the area. So also, in Agba-Ndele, in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, where the primary school children still seat on bare floor while learning in the school, but yet the millennium development goals agenda is still in progress, as much funds/cash made for the agency to alleviate poverty, are criminally diverted to a different projects, mainly to actualize that criminal self intention in Nigeria. Also issues about oil sector total dependence as the greatest suppliers of external and internal returns in a surplus quantity, have been wrongly politicized, while due to corruption, bribery and artificial scarcity of the locally produced kerosene, fuel and diesel cannot be found, but are frequently being diverted daily, living the community that owns the land where the products is coming from in a perpetual darkness. The situation is highly pathetic, sarcastic and sardual when we talk of environmental pollution, biodiversity crises and oil pollution cases in Rivers State.

The oxford advanced learners dictionary defines the term “the poverty line as the official level of income that is necessary to be able to buy the basic things you need, such as food and clothes and to pay for a house to live; but it is unfortunate that at least a third numbers of the highest population is living in a slump, squalor, decayed zones and high urban densities, devoid of essential facilitates, but rather is considered a dumping site for sewage/sludges, arising from the low density area e.g. G.R.A. residential zones.

Also, Orime (2007), considered most Rivers State Communities as contaminated and effluents polluted environment, without good road, without central market, while urban and coastal flooding have become an old issues to be heard over the radio and other media houses; a case in point is at the Ogba-Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, where the activities of Elf and Agip Joint Venture have caused a lot of mere harm to their environment due to gas flaring. This have exposed their zones, metallic pillars, motor car body etc frequently been corroded by acid rain, while the farm land found nearer to the gas flaring site, have suffered for severe kind of drought and crops dehydration, thereby causing high rate of food and cash crops supply (food scarcity) in entire Rivers State. Their stream, lake, pond are every day reported polluted by oil spillage, without bioremediation and restoration, but rather are faced and molested with gun point mobile police men, when they protest for their environmental rights. Also, policy makers does not make sufficient laws that shall benefit the oil producing communities (host communities) but rather are given just a token, as the least National Assembly Law makers are paid below 1.6 million Naira, even beyond the salary of associate professors and confined professors in Nigerian university, why for such gaps? Yet we are hoping to be illuminated by the light of vision 20:2020 and millennium development goals.

Recommendation

To eliminate and possibly minimized this kind of in-equality, poverty and illiteracy arising from wrong diversification of funds in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria should re-intensify efforts by providing good social and poverty/life sustaining project. Such as public/primary health cares, good universal basic education programmes that shall be properly equipped with all modern facilities.

Also for the purpose of diversification, bilateral and unilateral credit facility in form of soft loan, should be given to the peasant/rural farmers in Rivers State, to boost their farming activities, hence it has been noticed that all their soil fertility, organic manure within the top soil, have being destroyed by the activities of oil spillage and oil exploitation and exploration in rivers State, so also their rivers, pond and lakes.

Also, millennium development goals and vision 20:2020 funds air marked by the federal government to alleviate poverty, should be used for the purpose upon which the cash is voted out for, rather than diverting it to other politically criminal selfish aims, since Nigeria is a signatory to the Millennium development goals

summit, they should take a close watch at their Malaysia and Australian Counter part, and apply the same to their own economy, hence no man is an island for himself.

Environmentally polluted and degraded soil, river should be bio remediate and bio restored, so that all renewable resources will not shift their harm to the standby biotic and a biotic resources, which may likely result to biodiversity crisis in Rivers State, therefore the clean associates of Nigeria (CAN), should be open and ready to carry out their environmental cleaning jobs, in a more eco-friendly manner, that worth's sustainable indeed.

Good employment opportunity be made available in Rivers State, so as to reward the youths with maximum spirit of belonging.

Also, environmental impact assessment devoid of a pseudo community based and motivated errors, should be avoided, so that the pre-impact assessment data (base line data) information, does not contradict the post impact environmental analysis, during third stage and fourth stage environmental audit assessment survey, this according to Orime (2007), have always been considered as the remote causes of mob action, unrest, crisis between the host community and the oil companies, in doing this, Rivers State will be more accommodating and sustainable for development.

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