

## **NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NIGER DELTA REGION**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Nigeria has on daily basis experienced an upsurge of activities that threatens and endangers its national security. In recent times, the Nigerian nation suddenly metamorphosed into an abode of insecurity. The Niger Delta region which is the centre of Nigeria's oil wealth has been the scene of protest, conflict and violence. Despite its abundant oil wealth, there has been unimaginable level of poverty, unemployment, inequality, poor infrastructure, lack of social amenities and negligible development in the region. In view of this scenario, the paper basically analyses and ascertains the impact of national security challenges on sustainable development in Nigeria with a particular focus on the Niger Delta region and the responses by successive governments in tackling them. Findings from the paper reveal among others that, the security challenges in Nigeria have long historical antecedence and the crises and conflicts in the Niger Delta region are the consequences of several years of exploitation, neglect and deliberate abandonment of the region which is the economic base of the nation, by successive governments and oil multinationals. The paper therefore concludes and recommends amongst others, the formulation and effective implementation of policies capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria and that more efforts should be made by the federal government and oil companies to improve the quality of human lives in the region and the nation at large. Qualitative and descriptive methods of data analysis were adopted for this study. The paper used secondary data in which conclusion and recommendations were derived.*

**KEYWORDS:** National Security, Security, Insecurity, Challenges, Nigeria, Niger Delta, Development, Sustainable Development.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The symbiotic relationship between national security and sustainable economic development cannot be undermined. The interplay between the environment and the economy remains at the heart of sustainable development (Pearce & Barbier, 2000). Prior to, during, and after independence, the agricultural industry in Nigeria was the backbone of the economy and a major employer of the active labour force. However, with the discovery of oil, agricultural activities were abandoned. Nigeria today is the World's 6<sup>th</sup> largest oil producer and the 8<sup>th</sup> largest exporter of crude oil. Petroleum alone provides up to 70% of Nigeria's foreign exchange. Nigeria is known as the giant of Africa for its wealth, influence and population. At independence and several years after, the country was perceived as a relatively secured nation in the West African sub-region because of its steady economic growth and leadership role in the Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS). However, the sudden discovery of crude oil truncated the nation's steady drive towards sustainable development, as the focus of Federal government shifted from commercial agriculture to crude oil exploration and exploitation. Unfortunately, the massive oil revenues have added little to the living standard of Nigerians (Dode, 2011, Adebakin, 2012:2).

Nigeria is faced with a lot of security and developmental challenges such as high rate of poverty, income inequality, unemployment, conflict, and violence among others with about 70% of its population living in poverty (Akhemonkhan et al., 2012). Nigeria is at the brink of state failure despite its wealth, both in natural resources and human capital. Domestically, there is overdependence on the oil economy, high youth unemployment, increasing insecurity, and underdevelopment evidenced by poor infrastructure among several others. The youth unemployment rate for 2011 was 41.6%. Currently, 70% of the population lives below the poverty line, this has increased in stark from the 2004 figure of 54%. These factors persist despite tremendous oil wealth. In 2003, the International Monetary Fund ranked Nigeria 58<sup>th</sup> out of the 88 poorest countries in the world. About 85% of oil revenues earned overtime is shared among the influential political elites, who constitute only one 1% of the population, with the possibility that 40% or more of the national wealth accumulated overtime might have been stolen by the ruling elites, technocrats and policy bureaucrats. The picture of mismanagement of the nation's oil wealth as painted above, justifies the assertion that Nigeria is experiencing economic growth, but no sustainable development (Orji, 2012). The age long peace and security that the nation enjoyed started waning because of threats to national security orchestrated by militant groups. In 2007, the deplorable security situation in Nigeria along with other environmental components was rated 62.69%, as against 49.49% in 2010. This represents a significant fall in national security rating by 13.2% (Adebakin, 2012:3).

One of the major challenges in Nigeria nationhood is the Niger Delta issues predicated on resource control, conflicts, armed struggle, hostage takings, pipelines vandalization, militarization, oil spillage among others. These issues had taken centre stage in our national and international discourse over the years. The most contentious issues that have engaged the attention of Nigeria especially since 1999 is the problems of crude oil exploration and exploitation which account for about 90% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. Niger Delta is a region in Nigeria with abundant crude oil resources but the poorest because it has not benefited from the oil wealth derived from oil production (Onigbinde, 2008). Indeed, oil Wealth from the Niger Delta region is largely responsible for sustaining Nigeria but despite fuelling much of Nigeria's economic growth with this vast amount of natural resources, the Niger Delta is somewhat marginalized from Nigeria's national development and the region remains a paradox of poverty, in the midst of plenty, as little of this wealth is distributed within the Niger Delta or to the Nigerian people as a whole. A significant feature of the Niger Delta region is its general state of underemployment, extreme poverty, disrepair, and inadequate infrastructure, which has led to the deterioration of both political and social cohesion. However, the Niger Delta Region has continued to generate interest locally and internationally given its continued threat to peace and security and the corporate existence of Nigeria (Aghalino, 2012, Nnamani & Eboh, 2011).

In Nigeria, several decades of neglect has created restiveness among various groups (Onigbinde, 2008). However, a fight for their rights against the multinational companies and the federal government has resulted in large-scale violence, crises, social tension, hostage-taking, manslaughter, kidnapping and other social vices in the region and beyond. The aftermath of these vices is the high degree of insecurity in the region which has led to the withdrawal of major oil-producing companies from the Nigerian state (Ikelegbe, 2008, Fidelis & Egbere, 2013:87, 88 & 96). These crises which are the consequences of several years of exploitation, neglect and deliberate abandonment of the region which is the economic base of the nation by successive governments (both federal, regional and states) have brought about militant agitations, protests, violent demonstrations, communal crisis, proliferation of arms,

attack on oil and gas infrastructure and personnel, seizure of drilling rigs, kidnapping of industry personnel among. In 2002, an international observation proclaimed the Niger Delta as one of the most volatile regions in the world. The region from one decade to another has witnessed unprecedented crisis which revolve round political and most importantly economic factors. The Niger Delta crisis poses serious and enduring threat to the fragile nature of Nigerian democracy and the ever volatile national security (Ekumaoko, 2013). Crises in Niger-Delta had been characterized by extreme violence, militarization, unemployment and environmental pollution. Other manifestations of threat to national security include attacks on oil pipe installation, pipelines vandalization, hostage taking, kidnapping and Genocide killing of people, drug trafficking, human trafficking, human sacrifice, ritual killing, sectarian violence, political violence, communal strife, natural disasters and pervasive acts of normlessness (Adebakin, 2012:3). Nigeria is also confronted with daunting developmental challenges which pose serious threat to socio-economic development and national security of the nation. These developmental challenges include endemic rural and urban poverty, high rate of unemployment, debilitating youth unemployment, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, very large domestic debt, and rising stock of external debt. Indeed, Nigeria has witnessed various forms of militancy, violence and crime including (Adegeko, nd: 205).

From the foregoing, threat to Nigeria's national security is real, as the international community has declared Nigeria a failing state in several circles as well as in policy papers. For instance, the Fund for Peace (FFP) in its 2012 report, ranked Nigeria as one of the top 10 failed states in Africa and 14th in the world because of growing wave of insecurity and endemic violence (Adebakin, 2012: 3). Evidence that lends credence to the fact that security situation is nose-diving in Nigeria can be found in the 2010 survey report published by the Business Environment in Nigerian State, which highlights the deplorable security situation in Nigeria along with other environment components. For 2007, the survey rated national security in Nigeria 62.69%, as against 49.49% in 2010 report. This represents a significant fall in national security rating by 13.2% (Adebakin, 2012:3). To address the threat to national security and combat the increasing waves of crime, the federal government in the 2013 budget made a huge allocation to security, and the national assembly passed the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011 (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014: 41). Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high, and a confirmation of this is the low ranking of Nigeria in the Global Peace Index (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014:41). Despite the plethora of security measures taken to address the daunting challenges of insecurity in Nigeria, government efforts have not produced the desired positive result.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Concept of National Security**

For decades, issues relating to security were on the front burner in the development discourse. Several attempts have been made since the cold war ended to redefine the concept of security. At the heart of this debate there have been attempts to deepen and widen the concept of security from the level of the states to societies and individuals, and from military to non-military issues (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013, Ewetan & Urhie, 2014:42-43). According to Williams, (2008:6), security as an essential concept is commonly associated with the alleviation of threats to cherished values, especially the survival of individuals, groups or objects in the near future. Adebakin, (2012:8) however defines security as activities that ensures protection of a country,

persons, properties of the community against future threats, danger, mishaps and all other forms of perils. Babangida (2011) on the other hand views national security “as the physical protection and defence of our citizens and our territorial integrity and also the promotion of the economic wellbeing and prosperity of Nigerians in a safe and secure environment that promotes the attainment of our national interests and those of our foreign partners.” Furthermore, Otto and Ukpere (2012: 67) and Adebakin, (2012:9) asserts that “security means protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or communities. Security must be related to the presence of peace, safety, happiness and the protection of human and physical resources or the absence of crisis, threats to human injury among others”. Security is considered as any mechanism deliberately fashioned to alleviate the most serious and immediate threats that prevent people from pursuing their cherished values (Chris, 2012). Orji, (2012: 199) posits that pivotal to the survival of any society is its law and order which are predicated on national security. National security must be broadened to accommodate economic, environmental and demographic issues as they are important in understanding the new causes of intra-state conflicts. Other dangers that serve as threat to national security include pollution, poverty, crime, and underdevelopment all of which fuel conflicts (Onigbinde, 2008). The United Nations Development Programme (1994 & 1996) posits that human security (an aspect of national security) refers to “freedom from fear and freedom from want” and “safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities.” National security can summarily be describes as “protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards” (UNDP, 1994: 229, UNDP, 1996). The national security of any nation encompasses other vital areas such as environmental protection, social and food security and more especially the prevalence of internal peace. Without adequate security of lives and property, the system will be rife with lawlessness, chaos and eventual disintegration. It might be military, economic, ideological or cultural (Nwolise, 2006:352, Omede, 2011:92). The people must not only be secured from external attacks but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals, unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation and pollution cum socio-economic injustices. Security is vital for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development. It is therefore apparent that national security is a desideratum, sine qua non for economic growth and development of any country (Oladeji & Folorunso, 2007, Ewetan & Urhie, 2014: 43)

### **The Concept Sustainable Development**

According to Todaro development refers to the multidimensional changes involving progress or improvements in structures, institutions, the general aspects of life of a given people. This entails the acceleration of economic growth, decline of poverty, and the reduction of inequality. Growth theorists argued that development is an outcome of economic growth while other scholars like Rostow & Harrod-Domar (Todaro, 1982, Rostow, 1952, & Harrod-Domar, 1957 cited in Ewetan & Urhie, 2014:44) posited that economic development and growth result from structural changes, savings and investments in an economy. Socio-economic development is measured with indicators, such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013, Ewetan & Urhie, 2014: 44-45). Ugoh & Ukpere, (2010:1167), views national development as a qualitative and quantitative improvement in the living conditions of people of a state in line with national objectives, as indicated in its national development plans. According to him, other key objectives of the development plans include: Reduction in the level of unemployment; equitable distribution of income; reduction in the



incidence of poverty; improvement in the quality of life of the people; more employment opportunities; greater access to and ownership of houses; and access to basic necessities of life such as qualitative health services, potable water, education and electricity. It is when these objectives are achieved that one can talk of national development. Development is a process of bringing about fundamental and sustainable changes within society. He notes that development transcends as well as encompasses growth and embraces aspects of quality of life such as social justice, equal opportunity for all citizens, equitable distribution of income and democratization of the development process.

Arokoyu (2004:17) trace the origin of the concept of sustainability to development debates of the 1980s, which arose out of the environmental revolution of the 1980s. There was increased awareness when the United Nations General Assembly resolution created a World Commission on Environment and Development in autumn of 1983. One of the foremost international bodies advocating economic and environmental sustainability across the globe is the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). The body defines sustainable development “as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The WCED (1987) concluded that economic development and environmental conditions were inextricably intertwined. In other words, sustainable development is a new form of development perspective, which integrates production process with resources conservation and environmental enhancement to tackle the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Similarly, Chandler, (2007), Oyeshola, (2008:161), Nwanegbo & Odigbo, (2013) describes sustainable development as a construct, which envisions development as meeting the needs of a present generation without compromising the needs of a future generation. It implies that while development meets the needs of the present, it does not compromise the ability of a future generation in order to meet their own needs. Scholars have identified strong links between security and sustainable development since the cold war ended. Development cannot be achieved in any nation where there are conflicts, crisis and war. There is a consensus in the literature that security and development are two different and inseparable concepts that affect each other, and this has naturally triggered debates on security-development nexus. Viewed against the backdrop of the Brundtland report, its application to the peculiar condition of the Niger Delta territory becomes critical. The exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the Niger Delta poses great environmental hazards. The basic problem in the Niger Delta region is lack of development (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2010). All these point to the fact that sustainable development implies, improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. Despite the economically strategic nature of the Niger Delta, the area is reputed to have one of the highest incidences of environmental disasters in the world. A recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on the Niger Delta, describes the region as “suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructures and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty, filth and squalor and endemic conflict (UNDP, 2006).

## **An Overview of the State of Security Situation in the Niger Delta Region**

### **Origin and Causes/Sources of Conflict in the Niger Delta Region**

Historians have traced the era of militancy in the Niger Delta to the time of Jaja of Opobo, Ovonramwem Ogbaisi of Benin establishing that the British interest in the Niger Delta or Oil Rivers goes back to 1851 earlier before the 1885 proclamation of the region as a British protectorate. The militancy at this era was the resistance of British dominance and control of

the oil palm trade by noble Delta kings like Jaja of Opobo. However, the British dominated the Niger Delta trade without developing the region owing to its fragile, delicate and swampy topography. The Niger Deltans have used a plethora of means to decry their plight which include petitions, civil agitations and now militant agitation. As a result, Adaka Boro resorted to revolts and nationalism in order to seize the state power to effect the development of Niger Delta. On February 23, 1966 he went far miles to declare the Niger Delta Republic which the federal government declared war against him, wrestled and conquered the insurrection within twelve days (Ekumaoko, 2013:2). Right from the 1970s, crude oil formed the mainstay of the Nigerian economy. British conquest and eventual domination led to the amalgamation of the diverse ethnic groups under what came to be known as Nigeria. The ethnic communities that made up the Niger Delta region felt marginalized in the new arrangement (Adebakin, 2012). With the creation of the nation-state, Nigeria, these minority ethnic groups felt short-changed in the power equation. The people of the Niger Delta Region, right from time, felt not only marginalized but alienated in the national development process (Orji, 2012).

To orchestrate their deep-seated disillusionment arising from perceived alienation, some prominent traditional rulers and elders of the Region took their position to the London Constitutional Conference of May 23, 1957. The delegation yielded some dividends as in 1958 the Conference recommended the creation of the Niger Delta Development Board. Even at independence and subsequently not much has changed in the area of national integration vis-a-vis the minority ethnic groups of the Niger Delta (Adebakin, 2012). The origins of the Niger Delta crisis can also be traced back to Independence in 1960 and the Civil War of 1967. The failed attempt at secession did not stop the rift between the federal government and the oil-producing regions. Another important event that triggered the Niger Delta crisis was the “two million march” in March 1998, when the government of Sani Abacha transported large numbers of people from the Niger Delta region to the capital Abuja, paying them to support his bid for another term in office. This was the first time many inhabitants of the Niger Delta saw at first-hand, the high level of development and infrastructure in the capital. The realization of how underdeveloped their region was in contrast to the highly developed capital city despite the oil wealth triggered the Niger Delta problem and the increased militancy in the region. The exclusion of minority ethnic groups such as the Ijaw, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Isoko, Andoni and Ogoni, from discussions on oil wealth and ownership has worsened the Niger Delta crisis. The demands of these groups have been mainly for partial control of oil resources and development assistance.

Multinational corporations who are anxious to get out of the business of community development in Nigeria play a huge role in the Niger Delta crisis. These corporations make billions of dollars a year from oil production and sale and have failed to develop the regions where they operate. Corporate social responsibility remains very low despite calls from various advocacy and human rights groups. A gloomy portrait of the Region is painted by the UNDP report of 2006 cited in that the critical issue in the Niger Delta is not only the increasing incidence of poverty, but also the intense feeling among the people of region that they ought to do far better. This is based on the considerable level of resources in their midst and the brazen display and celebration of ill-gotten wealth in Nigeria, most of which derives from crude oil wealth (UNDP, 2006). Most communities have come to what seems like a logical conclusion that the only way to extract settlement from multinational corporations is by engaging them in running battles. In the 1990s, the emergence of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the activities of his group, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) gave a much leeway to the conflict. For Ken Saro-Wiwa, it was a struggle and quest for self-determination as Ekumaoko, (2013: 2-3)

argue in similar view that the crisis is a struggle against colonialism and minority agitation for a fair deal in a negatively skewed federalism. The arrest and death of the author Ken Saro-Wiwa gave the Niger Delta struggle an international status and instead of deterring others, myriad of militant groups started emerging.

### **Security Situation in the Niger Delta Region**

National security has been weakened by the conflict in the Niger Delta as militant groups continue to challenge the government. Some of these groups are not satisfied with the government's response and neglect and so violence is used to pressurize the government to quicken its response to their demands for resource control, development assistance and poverty alleviation. Since the 1990s armed groups have intensified violence in the region. Security in the region is very poor as wide scale fighting between the federal government soldiers, militant groups and private security firms is regular. These groups such as the Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF) led by Ateke Tom, the Bush Boys, the Martyrs Brigade, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Niger Delta Volunteer People's Force (NDVPF) led by Asari Dokubo, and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Henry Okah which claim to defend the rights of the Niger Delta peoples have been the dominant groups in the Niger Delta acting as umbrella groups for smaller factions. The MOSOP, a prominent group created under the leadership of Ken Saro Wiwa, represents the rights of the Ogoni tribe. The Ogoni uprising of 1990 saw a violent outbreak of conflict in the region as a move to address the major environmental degradation and economic injustices carried out by the federal government (Onigbinde, 2008). The long years of neglect and deprivation, coupled with insensitivity of successive governments and the oil companies, had by the late 1990s created a volatile atmosphere characterized by protests, agitations and conflicts. According to Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, (2013:8), the restiveness which started on a mild not as pockets of peaceful demonstrations to the offices of multinational oil companies by community development committees of various host communities, soon degenerated into lock-ins and seizures of oil installations. By 1998, the Niger Delta region had become a lawless zone. In 2004, the Niger-Delta crisis came to a head with the proclamations by the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) to destroy the oil wells and pipelines in the region. The group threatened to launch a war in the region if the government failed to comply with calls by the host communities for a greater control of the region's rich oil resources. This declaration disrupted oil production sending oil prices higher. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) continues to make known the environmental devastation and poor living conditions in the region. On July 12, 2006, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) combatants killed four naval personnel and injured three soldiers who were escorting a Chevron oil tanker along Chomoni creeks in the Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State. In April 14, 2007, armed militants attacked the Mini-Okoro, Elenwo Police Stations, killing many police officers during the attack. On Tuesday, January 1, 2008, the Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF) led by Ateke Tom attacked two Police Stations and a five star hotel in Port Harcourt. The list of attacks is long and seemingly endless. The latest being the bomb blast on Eagle Square in Abuja on October 1, 2010 was caused by MEND. Hostage taking and kidnapping are other operational activities of militant groups in the region (Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013:8 - 9). Interactions between multinational oil companies and local communities have often led to more conflict (Onigbinde, 2008).

### **Impact of National Security Challenges on Sustainable Development in Nigeria: The Niger Delta Experience**

Underdevelopment and insecurity are the nation's key challenges at the moment. It is these factors that points to state failure of the nation, which has significant implications. From the facts unveiled above, it is appropriate to investigate the effect of national security challenges on sustainable development. This is justified because the socio-economic development of a nation is evaluated on the basis of the enduring security, peace and stability. Furthermore, the nuance called sustainable development is inextricably tied to the level of national security.

### **Conflict, Militancy and Violence**

The activities of various militia groups consequently resulted in low income of government from oil revenue, low GDP rate, and low participation of local and foreign investors in economic development, insecurity of lives and property of the citizens, among others (Orji, 2012, Chukuezi, nd). The aftermath of these vices is the high degree of insecurity in the region which has led to the withdrawal of major oil-producing companies from the Nigerian state. The low level of oil production as a result of insecurity of lives and properties in the region has a strong negative impact on the Nigerian economy (Ikelegbe, 2008, Fidelis & Egbere, 2013: 87, 88 & 96). The mismanagement of resources coupled with the constant neglect of the region by the government has created huge economic problems for the region. These problems include heightened poverty and gross underdevelopment. The violence in the Niger Delta has posed a bigger loss for the Nigerian economy. Annually approximately 300,000 barrels of oil, worth 18 million dollars per day is wasted. The GDP is falling at 2.79% every year. Onshore oil production had reduced by 25% (600,000) barrels a day, costing the Nigerian government \$1bn a month. The instability in the region is forcing many oil companies to move to other countries such as Angola and Gabon for oil production as they are less dangerous. Oil companies are moving their workers out of the country due to the huge costs incurred from the constant attack on their facilities and their employees. The constant vandalization of oil pipelines has led to the replacement of pipelines by oil tankers to transport oil around the country. These tankers in many cases are not functioning properly and have been the cause of many ghastly accidents across the country. In addition, the increase in black markets and the constant short supply of oil in the country has led to an increase in oil prices for many Nigerians. It should be the norm that a country with vast amount of oil resources meets national demands before external demands but the reverse is the case. This has affected Nigeria's position as a reliable oil producer in the global market. The increased reliance on oil is felt as federal policies have displaced the non-oil producing areas incentives to generate alternative sources to enhance their respective fiscal capacity and also make a fair and equitable contribution to the national treasury. The increased focus on oil as the sole source of Nigeria's economy is not beneficial for the nation and for the oil region as there is pressure to increase oil exploration which ends up destroying the environment (Onigbinde, 2008).

Conflict and violent agitations in Niger Delta have claimed many lives, others displaced and inestimable properties have been destroyed rendering the region one of the most dangerous zones to live in Nigeria today. The resultant loss of lives, rising budgetary spending for security and destruction of valuable government facilities portend devastating consequences for sustainable development in the country. It has also resulted in economic misfortune in Nigeria through loss of oil revenue as a result of shortfall in crude oil exports by the oil companies occasioned by disruption of oil exploration activities by the. It led to breakdown of social and political order and an increasing un-governability in the region (Lubeck, Watts & Lipschutz, 2007). The creeks, riverine and coastal areas are becoming ungovernable. The crisis cut oil output by about 40% between 2003 and 2004 and about 33% in early 2006. In April 2004,



Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) cut production by about 370,000 bpd in the Western Delta (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013:90). Several multinational firms have out rightly relocated their employees to Lagos from the turbulent region. Worse still, the Niger-Delta crisis affected a number of businesses as they lost large number of clients, suppliers, dealers and customers because they have been constrained by environmental exigencies to close their business premises earlier than normal in order to avoid being attacked or hit by bullets of militants (Enterprise Resilience, 2008). The lingering Niger-Delta crisis is making Nigeria lose money. Nigeria lost an estimated \$58.3 billion between 1998 and 2007. The country is still losing more daily. Conflicts consume a large portion of national resources. The government is spending a large amount of money in maintaining the peace-keeping forces. These are resources that can be used to improve Nigeria but are now diverted into servicing violence. The Niger-Delta conflict is destroying Nigeria's unity as the communities in the Niger-Delta think that they are being destroyed to build up the other parts of Nigeria. Their assumptions challenge the building of the nation (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013:94). As a result of militancy in the Niger-Delta region, SPDC retrenched 3,500 workers in September 2007. Indorama Petrochemical Company shut down its operations, thereby rendering over 3,000 youths jobless and aggravating the unemployment situation. Restiveness has reduced growth in the business sector. As a consequence of militant activities, Royal Dutch Shell has seen its production dropping from one million bpd to about 380,000 bpd. Nigeria is already suffering from production slowdown due to militancy. Currently, the Niger-Delta is only exporting 1.8 million bpd compared with a targeted 2.2 million bpd. In Rivers State, over 80% of the companies have stopped operations as expatriates have either gone to their home countries or relocated to safer environments. MTN had 43 base-stations shutdown as militant activities made them inaccessible (Punch Newspapers, 2007). Human suffering, destruction of livelihood, constant displacement, fear and acute insecurity disturbs the individual's peace. The present situation is disrupting their economies and multiplying their woes.

### **Corruption and Bad Governance (Mismanagement, Lack of Accountability and Transparency)**

Another impetus that threatens national security apart from militancy is corruption and bad governance. This is a twin evil and hydra-headed monster that has held the Nigerian state captive. Insecurity for lives and properties increased in the country because corruption has entered the management of the nation's security budgets (defence spending, internal security votes etc.). National security has suddenly become a big-time business, as bureaucrats and military officials diverted security votes and expenditure on defence to personal coffers. They tactically fuel insecurity in different parts of the country to get more funding from all levels of government (Orji, 2012). Corruption increases cost of goods and services, promotes unproductive investments, and leads to a decline in quality of public and private service. Indeed, the heaviest cost of corruption is not in the bribes themselves, but rather in the underlying economic distortions they trigger. This has contributed to government failure and breakdown of institutional infrastructures. The state of insecurity in Nigeria is greatly a function of government failure, traceable to systemic and political corruption. It has added another dimension of violent conflicts which has eroded national values (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013). Corruption hampers economic growth, disproportionately burdens the poor and undermines the effectiveness of investment and aid (Iyare, 2008). The Niger Delta region is riddle with bad governance and corruption on the side of political office holders from the zone in the federal, state and local government level. It has been argued that if government functionaries in the region prudently utilized their monthly allocations they could have better

the lots of ordinary citizens in the area through job creation and infrastructural development. The jumbo monthly allocations are spent on frivolous things that have no corresponding bearing on the lives of the people. President Obasanjo decried the situation in the region despite 13% derivation revenues accrued from on-shore-offshore oil fields with less impact made on the living standards of ordinary people in the region. The access to the national wealth by government officials without any checks or accountability has made it easier for corruption. The corruption in the country cannot be denied as since independence in 1960, reports show that \$300 - \$400bn of oil revenue has been stolen or misspent by corrupt government officials – an amount of money approaching all the western aid received by Africa in those years. This corruption not only occurs at the federal level but also at the state and local government level. As of 2006, \$6bn comprising of both 50% of national oil revenue and 13% derivation principle allocated for the nine-oil producing states sufficient for providing basic social services is never used for these communities and disappear from the governor's office (Onigbinde, 2008).

### **Unemployment**

Unemployment is very high among Nigerians and the people of the Niger-Delta in particular. Unemployment level is about 70%. According to Adagba et al (2012) unemployment among Nigerians, especially the youths is a major cause of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria. In particular youth's unemployment has contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. The youths from the Niger-Delta do not benefit from the presence of the transnational corporations, especially the oil companies operating in their communities. Less than 5% of the people from the Niger-Delta work in the companies while women from the region working with the oil companies are less than 1%, those who benefit through employment by the oil companies are from the non-oil producing parts of Nigeria (Fidelis & Egberere, 2013: 91-92). According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's unemployment rate increased to 23.9% in 2011 compared with 21.1% in 2010 and 19.7% in 2009. The country has a youth population of 80 million, representing about 60% of the total population with a growth rate of 2.6% per year, and the national demography suggests that the youth population remains vibrant with an average annual entrant to the labour force at 1.8 million between 2006 and 2011. In 2011, 37.7% of Nigerian was aged 15-24 years and 22.4% of those between ages 25 and 44 were willing to work but did not get job (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014:41-42). According to Adagba et al (2012) unemployment/poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths is a major cause of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria. In particular, youth's unemployment has contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria and the Niger Delta in particular. Efforts in 2004 to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate members of the armed groups failed as over 2000 youths were provided with technical skills training however these programmes did not provide a job for them. Many have lost their source of livelihoods, especially in a region made up of mostly farmers and fisherman. With the constant oil spillage that occurs, the fishes are destroyed and the soil is not workable thus wiping out the economy of these communities. Due to these problems, there is a high rise of criminality such as kidnapping ransoms (Onigbinde, 2008). In the absence of job opportunities for the youth, the standard of living in the region has dwindled (Adegeko, nd: 207- 209).

### **Poverty**

Nigeria is a relatively large country and the most populous black African nation, with abundant human and natural resources; but it has a high rate of income inequality, with about 70% of its population living in poverty. The UNDP Human Development Report (2003) ranked Nigeria 58<sup>th</sup> out of the 88<sup>th</sup> poorest countries in the World. Numerous debates by development experts

and policy makers about the human development dilemma have been raised and tried to explore why the abundance of human and natural resources in the Niger Delta region has had very little impact on poverty (UNDP, 2006). Poverty in Nigeria, in all forms, is rising at an increasingly fast rate (Ashiomanedu, 2008:162). A measure of inequality and poverty indicates that the poverty gap is widening, with a greater proportion of the nation's wealth being concentrated in the hands of the wealthiest 20% of the population (Ashiomanedu, 2008:156-159). Every day, Nigeria loses about 2,300 under-five year olds and 145 women of childbearing age, making the country the second largest contributor to the under-five and maternal mortality rates in the world (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014: 41 - 42). Despite over forty (40) years of oil production in Nigeria and hundreds of billions of dollars of oil revenue, the inhabitants of the Niger-Delta region, remain in abject poverty. Poverty level is about 70% (Oronto et al, 2003, Fidelis & Egbere, 2013: 91). Fidelis & Egbere, (2013: 91) opines that in the Niger-Delta region, scenes of abject poverty pervade the area, very similar to what you find in a refugee camp. Currently, 70% of the population lives below the poverty line. This is an increase in stark from the 2004 figure of 54%. These factors persist despite tremendous oil wealth. Poverty remains pervasive in this oil-rich region. Given the abject poverty in the Niger Delta, there is a strong basis for demands for a greater share of the regions vast oil revenues, particularly as the region bears the full burden of environmental degradation caused by the oil industry (UNDP, 2006). Also, one of the major causes of insecurity in the country is the failure of successive administration to address challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic atonalities (Adagba et al, 2012).

### **Marginalization, Inequality and Unfairness**

A major factor that contributes to insecurity in Nigeria is the growing awareness of inequalities, and disparities in life chances which lead to violent reactions by a large number of people. Marginalization triggers disaffection, resentment, and revolt (Achumba, et al., 2013). There are inequities in the country's economic structure as the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. These wealth disparities are also evident when one compares the oil producing communities to the non-oil producing communities. These social inequalities and wealth disparities have been the reasons behind clashes and divisions among local communities (Onigbinde, 2008). The oil-producing communities have basically remained dependent and underdeveloped, persistently disempowered, socio-culturally marginalized and psychologically alienated. The wealth derived from oil resource exploitation and exports benefit directly only the operators of the oil industry and the bureaucrats in government (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013: 91-93). The distribution of resources from the Federation Account has been another source of marginalization for the Niger-Delta region. Prior to 1999, the allocation to the Niger-Delta from the federation account of revenues from oil decreased progressively as Nigeria became more dependent on oil. In 1960, the allocation was 50%, then down to 45% in 1970, declining to 20% in 1982, down to 3% in 1992. It was raised to 13% following persistent agitations from the Niger- Deltans" (Ikelegbe, 2006).

### **Weak Security System and Porous Border, Proliferation of Arms and Light Weapons**

Weak security system is one of the major contributory factors to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. According to Olonisakin (2008), the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1 per 450 people which falls below the standard set by the United Nations. The implication of this is that Nigeria is grossly under policed and this partly explains the inability of the Nigerian Police Force to effectively combat crimes and criminality in the country. Achumba et al. (2013) observe that, the porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely

untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the porous borders there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality. Available data show that Nigeria host over 70% of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). Poor border made it easy for terrorists, human traffickers and drug barons to infiltrate the country and perpetrate heinous crimes and acts of terrorism (Edeko, 2011). There is endemic violence in Nigeria because of availability of, and access to weapons of various type (Onuoha, 2006). These weapons are not normally withdrawn from them and as such, they possess ready tools for kidnapping (Adegeko, nd: 209).

### **Kidnapping, Abduction and Hostage-taking**

Kidnapping is the crime of seizing and taking away a person by force, often with a demand for ransom. Kidnapping as a national challenge has resulted in unquantifiable loss of lives and property and has also affected economic development especially in the Niger Delta and in Nigeria generally (Ikpang, 2008, Adegoke, nd: 205-207). Nigeria is one country where kidnapping has become a daily occurrence in the recent past is Nigeria and, particularly, the Niger Delta region (Adegoke, nd: 206). However, high incidence of poverty, absence of infrastructure and alienation of the local oil communities has engendered kidnapping. As a result of kidnapping, many would be investors declined doing business with the country and in fact many investors have moved out of the region with adverse effect on the economic development of the country. The thought about kidnapping is very frightening; the experience of the crime is traumatic to the victims and their relatives. Its effect on the psyche of the people and it poses serious challenge to various levels of government (Ikpang, 2008, Adegoke, nd: 207). The rate of kidnapping has taken a new and alarming dimension in Nigeria such that it has spread from the Niger Delta to all the Eastern parts of Nigeria and the whole country (Adegoke, nd:208). Cases of kidnapping in the Niger Delta Region have resulted in serious injuries, both for civilians, and soldiers. Medical records in the government hospitals show the level and extent of harm inflicted on the kidnapped. The total amount of ransoms paid in Nigeria between 2006 and 2008 exceeded \$100 million. One of the causes of kidnapping in Nigeria is widespread poverty and unemployment. Kidnapping scares away foreign investors. Some foreign multinational companies in the oil, construction and production sectors have closed shops and offices in the Niger Delta region and relocated to other parts of Nigeria or abroad. Kidnapping creates fear and insecurity. People live in fear of crime. It reduces the freedom of movement of the people in the affected areas. The social lives of the people has dramatically changed because many who consider themselves as potential victims now shun social outings or patronage of relaxation centres. It reduces the income from the oil as a source of revenue for Federal Government of Nigeria. As early as 2006, it was estimated that with the price of oil at \$58 per barrel, Nigeria will lose about \$6 million a day due to the closure of the Shell Exploration Production Company (SEPCO) facility (Emmanuel 2006). Many Nigerian are not sleeping with their two eyes. It succeeded in scaring away potential development partners and robbed the Nigerian state of the benefits of such development alliances and opportunities. The state of insecurity has led to a reduced volume of productivity, investments and capital flow to the region (Akpan, 2010).

### **Poor Basic Amenities and Infrastructural Development (Infrastructural Decay)**

The Niger Deltans live without even the most basic amenities such as, good roads, pipe-borne water and electricity (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013: 91). Whittington describes the economic dilemma that apart from the city centres, there is no access roads, electricity, water and telephone facilities. The under development problem is so severe that youths of the region are



the hardest hit by this ugly situation. A greater proportion of the population do not have access to pipe borne water, health care facilities, electricity and affordable quality education. Although Nigeria is a signatory to the UN resolution on the MDG goals the attainment of these goals by 2015 remains elusive and doubtful. The poor state of infrastructure in the oil producing communities has ignited all sorts of criminalities and brigandage. (Nnamani & Eboh, 2011: 53)

### **Environmental Challenges (Pollution, Degradation, Oil Spillage & Gas Flaring)**

The unbridled exploitation of crude oil and natural gas beneath the lands of the Niger-Delta has caused indescribable and irredeemable ecological devastation of the Niger-Delta land. The Niger-Delta is in the throes of becoming an environmental wastebasket. From the oil spills to gas flares and effluents from industrial wastes, the fragile ecosystem of the Niger-Delta is under constant assault (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013:94). Fidelis & Egbere, (2013:92-93) sums up the environmental impact of the oil industry in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria as land deprivation, soil quality alteration, destruction of aquatic ecosystem and air pollution. It causes waste of aquatic ecosystem. The chemicals from the oil industries cause grave consequences such as surface and ground water quality deterioration in terms of portability, destruction and reduction of fish life and fishery among others (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013:92-93). The amount of damages by the activities of oil companies on crude oil exploration caused pollution and environmental degradation. This led to low agricultural yields, destruction of aquatic life and home displacement (Nnamani & Eboh, 2011). Onuoha (2008:1032) cites the report of the United States Department of Energy which reveals that over 4000 oil spills discharging more than 2 million barrels of crude oil occurred in the Niger Delta since 1960. The statistical data further reveals that corrosion accounts for 50% of the oil spills, sabotage is responsible for 28%, 21% arises from normal oil production operation while engineering drills is responsible for 1%. These oil spills impact negatively on the environment as it depletes the mangrove trees and pollute the streams and rivers with grave implications for aquatic life and portable water. Soil quality alteration is another environmental problem that the Niger-Delta contends with as a result of the oil industry. It is estimated that as at 2002, about eight thousand, five hundred and eighty one (8,581) oil-spills involving nearly twenty eight (28) million barrels of oil have occurred in the Niger-Delta (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013:92-93). The social and environmental cost of oil production have been extensive, the destruction of wild life and biodiversity, loss of fertile soil, pollution of air and drinking water, degradation of farmlands and damage to aquatic ecosystem has caused health hazards for the inhabitant of areas surrounding oil zones. The rural people can no longer go to farm and fishing as their major occupation (Nnamani & Eboh, 2011). It is also argued that the chemical emissions from the flaring contribute to acid rain, trigger skin diseases and the quick corrosion of roofing sheets in the Niger Delta area - a common sight in this region (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013:92-93). The environmental degradation being carried out by the oil companies in the Niger-Delta as a result of their non-compliance with internationally-recognized environmental standards are damages that their consequences cannot be limited by time. Unfortunately, available evidence shows that the trend is worsening as the government lacks the political will to ensure compliance to rules by the oil companies (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013:93).

### **Illegal Bunkering Activities**

Illegal bunkering is a way of life and a source of fund for militants operating in the creeks of Niger Delta. Nigeria lose billions of naira as a result of these illegal bunkering. It has economically empowered militants to buy weapons. Illegal bunkering raises funds for anti-government militant groups. The activities of these bunkers are a serious threat to the security

wellbeing of Nigerian state (Nnamani & Eboh, 2011). Illegal oil-bunkering has become a major source of funding for the operations of the militants in the Niger-Delta (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013:94). Fidelis & Egbere, (2013:94) remarks that the NNPC lost products worth ₦10.2 billion in 2001 as a result of pipelines vandalism. It has made it impossible for security agencies to adequately cover locations of various oil facilities. This has created a veritable ground for illegal oil-bunkering to thrive in the region.

### **Impact on Agriculture**

However, the agrarian communities which constitute over 50% (1) of the inhabitants have been most disadvantaged in terms of prospect for agricultural growth, transformation and development. What this potent to the Niger-Delta populace is a bleak in the future of agriculture which hitherto is the people's occupation, business, tradition and way of life prior to the discovery of oil in the region. The process involved in the exploration, extraction, distillation, and transportation of oil products has left no one in doubt as to the socio-economic and agricultural impact and devastation. Animal and aquatic lives are exterminated or killed due to their exposures to toxic and hazardous substances to water and atmosphere. Hence heavy metals such as iron and calcium in solution lead to toxic concentration causing damages to roots of plants, dead of mycorrhizas and poor microbial proliferations. Toxic substances alter the soil mineral composition leading to soil nutrient deficiencies – a situation which predisposes plants to diseases condition, wilting and poor fruits, seeds and root crop production. Oil spillage predisposes land to fragility and ecological instability of the landscape. It causes soil erosion aggravated by flooding. Ekpo corroborated the above facts when he noted that the Niger-Delta is an area where animals and aquatic lives are threatened due to exposure to toxic and hazardous substances, and that deforestation, erosion and destruction of farm lands are the main signpost that greets visitors to Niger-Delta communities. Movements of agricultural goods in the Niger-Delta are extremely difficult. This leads to distortion in the consumption pattern and high cost of consumer goods. Water contamination results in typhoid, diarrhea, jaundice, fever, haepathitice, noise pollution, heat rashes etc. (Ekpo, 2004). No nation can sufficiently and optimally develop without putting in place adequate security arrangement that will guarantee the well-being and protection of its citizens (Iyayi, 2008). Since this oil is produced from the Niger-Delta, it is most important that agitations in the Niger-Delta be quickly resolved so that the country is not destroyed (Fidelis & Egbere, 2013).

### **The Nigerian Government and the Developmental Initiatives in the Niger Delta Region**

Development planning in Nigeria dates back to the formative 10 year development plan for 1946-1955 (UNDP Annual Departmental Reports, 2006 cited in Ashiomanedu, 2008:159). Since the colonial era, policies and programs within the national development plans have been formulated to address the minority status, agitations and perceived marginalization of the people of the Niger Delta. The Willink's Commission of Inquiry, in 1957, made the first major attempt to address these grievances. The commissions' report in 1958 stated that "the needs of those who live in the creeks and swamps of the Niger Delta are very different from those of the interior" (UNDP, 2006). The commission concluded that a feeling of neglect and lack of understanding was widespread. This unfortunately is still the case today in the region. When it turned in its report in 1958, it recommended that the Niger Delta deserved special attention and should be made a special area for development. Based on the commission's report, the federal government established the Niger Delta Development Board, (NDDDB) in 1961 to cater for the unique developmental need of the area. The Niger Delta Development Board was at best moribund and did not achieve the lofty objective for which it was established (Aghalino, 2004:

119-120). Failure of the NDDB to solve the problems highlighted in the Sir Henry Willink's report led to the setting of agencies, such as the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) in 1976 and the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992. These agencies also failed in their mandates. One of the main reasons given for the failure of the NDBDA was a result of organizational problems in which none of the board members appointed by the federal government to run the Authority came from the Niger Delta. Also, it was felt that these agencies were used by the government for political gratification (Chukuezi, nd).

When President Olusegun Obasanjo came into power in 1999, his administration commissioned a new body, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in December 2000, with the hope that it would offer a lasting solution to the socio-economic problems of the Niger Delta. In spite of its attempts to help catalyse economic and social development in the region, the NDDC has not made any positive impact on the people of the Niger Delta (Aghalino 2009, Aghalino, 2012:145). It took almost seven years before President Obasanjo launched the promised "Comprehensive Development for the Niger Delta". When he launched the plan on March 27 2007, two months to the end of his 8 -years rule, because of its timing or its doubtful motive, or both, the Niger Delta Regional Master Plan recently launched by the outgoing President Olusegun Obasanjo did not attract the expected enthusiasm both from its target beneficiaries and their compatriots in other parts of the country (Aghalino 2008, Aghalino, 2012:146). The Yar'Adua's administration assumed office in May 2007 and this offered fresh initiatives for the resolution of the Niger Delta crisis. As noted by Aghalino, (2012:145: 48), the creation of the Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee which mediated in peace agreements with militants in core states of the Niger delta in December 2007, a visit to the creeks by members of the Senate and a huge budget allocation to the region in 2009 are some of the confidence building measures by the administration. Other than the above, the administration established the Ministry of Niger Delta .The ministry created in September 2008 had a twin mandate focusing on infrastructure and youth empowerment. Indeed the ministry possesses a great potential in assisting to address the developmental problem in the area (Obiyan, 2009:268). To give bite to this, on June 25, the president granted amnesty to the militant with effect from August 6 and gave them 60 days within which to surrender their arms and renounce militancy (Aghalino, 2012:149). The programme required the militants to surrender their weapons and in return, they would receive a presidential pardon, education, training and access to a rehabilitation programme (Eregha, 2009, Aghalino, 2012:149). Goodluck Jonathan administration of May 29, 2007 opted for solution to security situation in the region as a matter of urgent national issue. He continued with the amnesty to this ethnic militia to surrender their arms with a promise to address the root causes of this malady with spirit of fairness, justice and cooperation. Two years after the Presidential mandate fail to address the issue amicably; the nation was plunge into endemic corruption, mismanagement, executive robbery among others. The outcome is nationwide kidnapping, political violence, state sponsored abuse by stage-manage security forces, extra-judicial killings, clash of military and militants and ethnic violence became the way of life (Nnamani & Eboh, 2011).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion, the abysmal failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address National security challenges and challenges of sustainable development such as poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities, ultimately resulted to anger,

agitation and violent crimes against the Nigerian state by some individuals and groups. An insight into the state of security in Nigeria reveals that the Niger Delta region poses a great danger. Right from colonial times, the people of the area have felt marginalized and alienated arising from years of neglect and abandonment in terms of development by the Nigerian government and multinational corporations. To further compound the problem, various development efforts by government merely paid lip-service to the situation leaving much to be desired. The recent wave has taken sordid tolls on lives and property with grave implication for sustainable development of the economy of the region and the entire country. It is hoped that the recent creation of a Federal Ministry of Niger Delta will tackle the hydra headed monster of underdevelopment from a holistic perspective by creating jobs for teeming number of unemployed youths and providing public utilities for the masses. The problem is perplexed and complex and the amnesty programme has not achieved much peace within the region. Unfortunately, the government has relaxed and felt accomplished creating a situation of possible reversion to open conflict. The real panacea for solving insecurity challenge in Nigeria is for government to accelerate the pace of development.

From the foregoing, in order for sustainable economic development to be achieved in Nigeria, it is recommended among others that, governments at all levels should ensure that rising poverty indices are reversed and a realistic social security programme is pursued and systematically implemented to ensure that the populace meets their basic needs. The Nigerian government should enhance capacities beyond the oil sector to include value creation sectors of the economy such as agriculture, combating corruption, reducing wasteful spending by government, fostering a greater sense of national identity, engaging in national dialogue on national development and security issues, address youth unemployment and making the nation's existing refineries functional. The three levels of government should ensure that the cost of administration is drastically reduced. Government should expedite action to provide direct and indirect employment opportunities to the restive and hopeless teeming unemployed youths in the region and the country at large in order to dissuade them from being recruited as militants, armed robbers and terrorists. The use of military action to confront militants appears to be very expensive and most often military confrontational approach escalates violence rather than douse tension. Principles of mediation, negotiation, arbitration, reconciliation are contemporary strategies for contemporary conflict resolution. All militants who accept reconciliation should be rehabilitated. Nigerian Government and other interest groups should develop sincere political will to implement the recommendations of several panels and committees set-up to investigate immediate and remote causes of violent, conflict and crisis in Nigeria. The widespread environmental degradation and abuse of the ecosystem in the Niger-Delta should be redressed through adequate compensation to host communities in order to empower many frustrated and unemployed able-bodied men who took up arms against the state and multinational oil companies. The government must provide accessible and quality education especially for the states in the Niger Delta Region and the entire country. The infrastructure such as good road network, good drinking water, stable power, free education among others should be provided in Niger Delta by the government and the multinational corporations as part of their corporate social responsibility. Mass education of the populace on the evils of kidnapping, violence, conflict and other crimes in our society should be vigorously pursued. Government should Increase spending on the agricultural sectors. The Amnesty Programme of 2009 emphasized skills training in the oil and gas sector in an attempt to combat youth unemployment in the Niger Delta. This demonstrates the government over reliance on a sector that only produces 4% of jobs. Emphasis should be placed on training youth in value creation sectors of the economy such as Agriculture, mining, manufacturing and information



communication technology. The government should be proactive and expedite action in fight against corruption and promote transparency through EFCC and ICPC. Government should embark on significant reform and revitalization of the nation's security agencies.

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