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**AFRICA AND ASIA JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT
SCIENCES, HUMANITIES, EDUCATION AND LEGAL STUDIES:
SAN JOSE OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, PHILIPPINES**

**PUBLISHED BY AFRICA AND ASIA JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT
SCIENCES, HUMANITIES, EDUCATION AND LEGAL STUDIES: SAN JOSE
OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, PHILIPPINES**

ISSN: 2955-0548

An Assessment of the Federal Government's Interventions: The Case of Niger Delta Region of Nigeria Since Independence

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Abstract

This paper evaluates the contributions of the Federal Government of Nigeria in the Niger Delta region. It is an investigation into the numerous allegations that the Federal Government of Nigeria completely abandoned the region that represent Nigeria's geese that lays the golden egg. It is further an investigation into reports of huge investment by the Federal Government directed at the region. It equally further examines the activities of states, local governments, chiefs, youths and communities of oil-producing states in the Niger Delta who, over the years, are believed to have failed to, not only utilize the state structure, as well as resources, providing them to develop their states and region. Using primary and secondary sources subjected to historical analysis, it is found that the people proliferated and allowed factional and criminal interests affect the development efforts of the Federal Government. It concludes that, to some extent, the problem of underdevelopment in the region is not a consequence of the unavailability of monetary, political or social contribution by the Federal Government to the Niger Delta rather the region's very poor state is a product of sabotage by some stakeholders. It is recommended that all stakeholders in the region must shun all forms of divisive and selfish interest and work together if development of the region is to be achieved.

Keywords: Niger Delta, Federal Government, Oil, Development, Region

¶ INTRODUCTION

This paper is an assessment of the development efforts of the Federal Government in the Niger Delta. Before now, several reports emanating have not discussed other contradictions in the internal issues going on in the Niger Delta which impede development efforts of the government. The mistreatment that is assumed to exist within the oil-producing communities because of their outcry against neglect and marginalization by the Federal Government is an embodiment of contradictions in respect of development. Developmental challenges facing the Niger Delta can be linked to strange patterns of violent conflict and internal forces operating in the region, so far as majority of the political discourse throughout the Niger Delta often centers on the same allegations that the Federal Government and the International Oil Companies have conspired to abuse impoverish and marginalize the region's population. Observably, scholars must also dwell reasonably to assess if this blanket statement is correct in its entirety. For instance, while Shell, for its part, claims that it has made considerable investments in communities throughout the Niger Delta, in this paper several Federal Government interventions will be espoused because the developmental challenges facing the Niger Delta are still with them.

Irrespective of the above statements it may not be out rightly unsupported saying that the oil-producing region, has allowed internal forces within to frustrate development efforts from both the Federal Government and the International Oil Companies targeted at impacting positively on the region. Is it justifiable that the Federal Government together with International oil companies, are the real deprivors of development in the Niger Delta region, even when the traditional rulers, chiefs, the youths, non-state actors and communities have been indicted with unpatriotic actions such that promote conflict and underdeveloped the region?

The Federal Government have customary public institutions whose duty is to aid the development of Nigeria's Niger Delta Region. Among the critical institutions in an effort to bring development to the region has been the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation (ENDC). According to Nwabughuogu, the Eastern Regional Development Corporation which later became the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation in 1960 contributed substantially to the socio-economic growth of the region.¹ Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), Niger Delta River Basin Development Authority (NDRBDA), Ministry of Petroleum, Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) are among the established Federal government institutions saddled with the responsibility of attracting development to the Niger Delta.

From the beginning, it might not be correct to say that Federal Government had not been giving attention to the Niger Delta in terms of the course of action taken so far.² The importance of the Niger Delta Region to Nigeria's future was never ignored because the area hosts abundant petroleum and natural gas, including many oil wells in Nigeria. Before independence in 1960, Government either set up or encouraged the setting up of investment companies in the old Eastern Nigerian which comprised the major part of the present Niger Delta. One of these was the Industrial and Agricultural Company Limited, established in 1959 and owned jointly by the Colonial Development Corporation and the Eastern Nigerian Government.³ For example in the area of communication in the Niger Delta, a few trunk roads were completed as early as 1960. These were the Calabar Manfe road 65 miles out of the total length of 76 miles of which was tarred; the Onitsha-Aba-Oron road 110 out of 175 miles tarred; and the Uyo-Nwaniba road. The government also built a bridge, the Sombreiro river at Ahoda and constructed a new landing ferry terminal, at Oron. In addition, telephone and telegraphs were connected to Uyo and Abak, and Uyo and Itu. The government also developed the ports and inland waterways and a radio

telephone service was opened particularly between Port Harcourt and Akasa there was also the lighting of Bonny River from Davies Island to Port Harcourt, resounding of bars at Opobo, and the dredging of the Omu Creek and the Opobo Eket Creek.⁴

Federal Government since independence has continued to invest in the region in the areas of agriculture, urban expansion, water supply, industrial expansion, health sector, transport and communication. For instance, it was the huge investments of the government into the old urban centres of Calabar and Port Harcourt which resulted in new emerging layouts as early as 1960. These included Oron Town in Calabar and Trans-Amadi Industrial Layout in Port Harcourt.⁵ Seven urban-size water works were completed between 1958 and 1962 located at Aba, Abakaliki, Calabar, Enugu, Onitsha, Port Harcourt and Umuahia. Together they were supplying about five million gallons of water per day.⁶ In the area of industries, the Niger Delta was not left out in the Government's effort to industrialize the region. In some areas like Ikot Ekpene, Government encouraged specialized craftsmen who made toys, masks and household articles of all kinds.⁷ Similarly, Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation revealed that by 1960, the total investment in industry in Eastern Nigeria which the Niger Delta remained a critical part of was well over Sixty Five Million Pounds (65,000,000) with more than three hundred (300) industrial units registered in the region.⁸ Suffice it to say that federal government introduced incentives; drew a number of investments into the Niger Delta region. Amongst the key developmental projects introduced were the Nigerian Tobacco Company (owned by the British American Tobacco Company) which established its factory in Port Harcourt. Similarly, the firm of Williams and Williams (Nigeria) Limited was founded in Port Harcourt to manufacture metal doors and windows. It was owned jointly by the Eastern Regional Government which controlled 49 percent of the shares while Williams and Williams controlled 51 percent of the shares.⁹ In the area of agriculture and employment, the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation

(ENDC) by 1962 had established and commissioned 96 pioneer oil mills employing over 1858 workers. For example, Government maintained over 44,626 acres of oil palm plantation at Kwa Falls, Calaro, Elele, Eket and base with a total work force of 2,649 workers; 1,000 acres of coconut plantation was established at Bonny with 145 workers and a cattle ranch at Obudu Plateau in Ogoja Province of present-day Cross River state with 3,000 heads of cattle were also established.¹⁰

Despite these efforts, the Willink Commission is important for being the first of numerous Federal Government efforts to recognize the problem of the Niger Delta as a national problem.¹¹ Otite and Umukoro report that it is in an attempt by the Federal Government to yield to the demands of the Niger Delta for appropriate development, that the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) was established in 1960 to serve in advisory capacity and provide Federal Government with information that would lead to the alleviation of the plight of the area in conjunction with the Development Act of 1961.¹² Similarly, Amendment No 2 Order in Council of 1959, grant that in order to justify the willingness of the Federal Government to address the Developmental challenges in the Niger Delta, the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) was provided for in the Independence Constitution of 1960.¹³ Roberts noted that “the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB), although entrenched in the Constitution, was easily ‘smouldered’ by political deception.”¹⁴ Other information confirms that the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) died with the first republic as a result of the military intervention of 1966.¹⁵ On the contrary, the Federal Government as early as 1963 continued to attempt to address the Niger Delta demands for political autonomy, with the creation of the Mid-Western state as the fourth region of Nigeria.

Details obtained from a vanguard newspaper, revealed that the oil producing states of Akwa-Ibom, Rivers, Delta, Cross River, Edo, and Bayelsa, received Government

allocations from 1999 to 2003, N360.4 billion. N1.338 trillion was paid to the states between 2004 and 2007; 2008 to 2011 saw the states receive N2.36 trillion, while from 2012 to 2015, the states received N2.947 trillion.¹⁶ Similarly, recent studies by Nextier Advisory estimate that, between 2010 and 2014 alone, Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) channeled over N7.8 trillion (US\$39.5 billion) into the Niger Delta Region.¹⁷ Therefore it would be erroneous to assume that the political demands that have been emanating from the Niger Delta part of the country over time were ignored in support of the opinions which insist that, ‘the devaluation of indigenous institutions that began during the British colonial rule increased after independence, under civilian or military regimes, and reached a high point in the area of petroleum and Gas’.¹⁸

Characteristics of Government Interventions

After political independence in 1960, successive post-colonial Governments initially prepared mostly, medium-term development plans, namely 1962-1968, 1970-1974, 1975-1980 and 1981-1985.¹⁹

Added to this are the Millennium Development Goals of the Federal Government and Vision 2010, 2020-20. Therefore, the evidence that the Federal Government at the centre have since the country’s independence in 1960, put in place certain actions intended at solving the problem of underdevelopment that has seemingly become a permanent feature of the Niger Delta Region (NDR) cannot be over emphasized. According to a high-ranking Federal Government official interviewed, the greatest problem with the Niger Delta has been that,

It is not because money has not gone in; inter-agency researches that we have done show that over \$40 billion have gone into the Niger Delta in a period of just over 15 years. So what we are trying to do is working under the office of the Vice President, we are working in conjunction with the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Niger Delta Development Commission, Nigerian

National Petroleum Corporation, International Oil companies and everybody to see what everybody's budget was and what we needed to do. It will amaze you to note that what we have found invested into the region ran into trillions.²⁰

Federal Government's efforts in the Niger Delta have also tended to be of three kinds:

- (i) Repression by Government security agents of all internally driven unauthorized and prohibited forces as well as introduction of new laws;
- (ii) (ii) renegotiation of the proportion of revenue to be retained by oil producing states; and
- (iii) (iii) the creation of new institutions with the ostensible aim of developing the region.²¹

To achieve development in the Niger Delta, Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), a Federal Government initiative, aside from inheriting a net credit balance of N1,001,166,458.12 from the Task Force, being statutory allocations from the Federation Account for June, July and August 1992, was also allocated three percent of the Federation Account in line with the ratio of oil produced in each state to address the development challenges in the Niger Delta region. It also found that in addition, a take-off grant of N85 million was provided at the time of its inauguration in October 1992 for the same purpose.²² The Federal Government continues to consciously devote huge resources in the region and a case in point, the Niger Delta Development Commission's revenue received for the five years commencing from 1st January, 2007 to 31st December, 2011 is analyzed below:

Table 3.1 Overview of the total revenue received by the NDDC 2007 -2011

Source	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	N	N	N	N	N
Federal Government	24,000,000,000	40,570,000,000	51,317,566,107	44,937,757,491	56,076,920,534
IOC's	40,531,352,200	43,942,473,000	89,927,822,349	89,773,376,789	111,576,195,210
Sundry (Other Incomes)	189,832,000	277,491,000	329,529,734	385,391,640	125,064,883
Total	64,721,184,200	84,789,964,000	141,574,918,190	135,096,525,920	167,778,180,627

Source: NEITI SIAO 2013 Report on 2010 Oil Companies Contribution to –Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) 26-27.²³

The table above presents a summary of the revenue distribution by sources over the reviewed period. The opinion on the state of relationship that exists between Nigerian Government and the Niger Delta Region, as suggested by Omotola and many other writers, posits that ‘the Government’s response had always been one of indifference, double talk and arm-twisting, and moved from the peaceful and positive to the negative and violent responses’,²⁴ ‘there was no time the Government’s answer to the development needs in the region was one of lack of interest, unresponsiveness, double talk and arm-twisting’.²⁵

The 1958 Nigeria Constitutional Conference agreed that a Niger Delta Development Board should be established, and provision for its establishment was made in the Nigeria Constitution.²⁶ Also, Dappa-Biriye, agrees that the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was established in 1960 in response by the Nigerian Federal Government, to the Niger Delta demands.²⁷ Since independence, some policies and programmes within national development plans have been formulated to address the minority status, agitations and perceived marginalization of the people of the Niger Delta.²⁸

Prime Minister Balewa established the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) as an immediate post-independence government action aimed at implementing Willink's Report. The Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) managed the developmental needs and challenges of the region.²⁹ The Niger Delta Development Board received British Government contributions and continued colonial policy by focusing chiefly on agricultural development. By 1966 it had met few of its aims except for the outbreak of the civil war which beset its activities as previously stated in this chapter. What necessitated the Federal Government development attention to the area? For Alagoa, it was the fear of completely losing the remaining vestiges of their pristine sovereignty to bigger Nigerian groups, the Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani³⁰ that necessitated the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board, the Nigerian Government through the Niger Delta Development Board laid the foundation for the development of the Niger Delta Region as enunciated in the Willink's Report.

The motivation, not only to harness natural resources in the Niger Delta, but to address developmental deficits in the region drew the Government to introduce and pass essential clauses ever to be enacted in Nigerian laws as it relates to oil mineral explorations which remains strategic to the Niger Delta region in terms of ownership,

derivation, service to the people, control, and utilization of mineral and land resources available on the Nigerian environment particularly in the Niger-Delta Region of the country says Adolph Briggs in an interview.³¹ Foremost is the 1963 Constitution, in Section 158(1), which formally vested absolute rights of ownership and control of mineral and land resources solely on the President on behalf of the Federal Government and sovereign People of Nigeria.³²

Similarly, another attempt of the Federal Government in the Niger Delta Region was the enactment of the 1969 Mineral/Petroleum Decree. This law effectively regulated the income from oil minerals, processing and exploration of oil production and even made it more effective and profitable to the benefit of the Government as it desperately needed to address the Niger Delta challenges. One would ask what this law entailed, in practical terms; this law transferred all energy earnings to the Nigerian Federal Government.³³ Correspondingly, the Exclusive Economic Zone Act and the Offshore Oil Revenues Act (1969) under Gowon regime which deprived the coastal oil-producing States the right to the oil resources found in their communities, but provides that “the entire ownership and control of all petroleum in, under or upon any lands to which this section applies shall be vested in the country”.³⁴ became another contribution of the Federal Government in the Niger Delta towards cautious accounting of funds accruable from oil in the Niger Delta for National Development. The Federal Government of Nigeria under Lt Col Gowon subsequently joined the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries, and imposed OPEC terms on the Oil companies operating in Nigeria, ensuring that much greater royalties were paid to the Federal Government.³⁵

The Federal Government during Murtala/Obasanjo administration introduced River Basins Development Authorities decree no 25 of 15th June 1976 and the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority Decree no 37 of 3rd August 1976.³⁶ The Niger Delta Basin

Development Authority was later to be reviewed to turn into more effective organization and became River Basins Development Authorities Act CAP. 1987 No. 35, during General Ibrahim Babangida's regime as a service-oriented organization that is positioned to meet the water requirements of stakeholders in the most satisfactory and cost-efficient manner, while ensuring good quality and sanitation and paying adequate attention to the preservation of the ecosystem, using proven technology and a well-motivated workforce.³⁷ This Federal Government initiative also aims at bringing to bear on the people of Niger Delta the Federal Ministry of Water Resources vision which is to harness efficiently and effectively the nation's water resources for multi-purpose uses in an integrated and sustainable manner to meet present and future needs, particularly as it affects the Authority's area of jurisdiction, Niger Delta Basin.

Some of the achievements of the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority under quality water control included the establishment of 160 No. water schemes developed in the Authority's area of operation. Details of some are listed below and the locations include:

(A) Quality Water Control Projects Executed

1. Rivers State:

Bunu-Tai, Ngo, Omademe, Iloma, Abuloma, Afam-Ukwu, Iriebe, Green's Town, Ogbulu-Ama, Akpajo, Izeoma-Asa, Rumuowha, Sogho, Elem-Bekinkiri, Ohiagu, Abissa, Umuajuloke, Amadi-Ama, Idama, Gure, Krakrama, Offeh, Rumuesara, Akinima, Ngbola-Ndele, Isiokpo, Ebubu, Ogbo, etc.

2. Bayelsa State:

Okipiri, Opokuma, Okokokiri, Aleibiri, Eguema, Ayamasa, Ekperikiri, Akassa, Agbere, Akaibiri, Kainyanbiri, Ekeowe, Sabatoru, Bolo-Orua, Yeneka, Gbaraun, Ogodobiri,

Onuebum, Okordi, Isampou, Anyama-Ogbia, Kiama, Eteama, Azuzu Ama, Emeyal, Otuogigdi, etc.

3. Delta State:

Iyede, Ukpude, Enekorogha, Edherie, Uro, Bomadi, Onhwe Enhwe, Mozei, Igbide, Esanma, Bethel, Ivrogbo, Tamigbe Adobuo, Ivori, Orere, Ada-Ivory, Ode-Itsekiri, Olomoro, Agolomo, Okpe, Burutu, Ogheye, Okoloba, Kpakana etc.

4. Within the 1980s a fully equipped laboratory was established within the NDBDA Headquarters in Port Harcourt, where water samples were collected and analyzed in the effort to achieve a quality water control.³⁸

(B) Flood and Erosion Control Projects Executed

Federal government through the NDBDA have played a key role in the area of reclamation of coastal areas and protection of farmlands from erosion, carrying out of flood and erosion studies and designs, reclamation, dredging, canalization and the construction of drainages in identified locations in Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States.

Creation of States

Another of the Federal Government's response to the demands of the Niger Delta was the creation of separate Federal States for the Niger Delta people. The government at the center has sought to appease the demands of the different minority groups by the creation of new states and local government areas.

According to Ebeku, the Nigerian Federal Government perceived the creation of States as a means of solving minority problems, as well as a 'vehicle for economic development from 1970.³⁹ Danmole and Aghalino's work further elucidate that, 'states were created to facilitate grassroots development as well as to eliminate majority domination.⁴⁰ Thus, the Federal Government responded to the demands of the region with

the creation of more states. Gowon's regime created twelve state systems, which came into effect in April 1968, Cross River and River states, were from the Niger Delta. On February 1976, almost a decade later, Gen Murtala Mohammed would re-create seven states by carving from the existing twelve states. None of the seven new states came from the Niger Delta.⁴¹ This administration can best be said to have scrapped the derivation principle of Gowon and midwifed the theory of "federal character" through the 1979 Constitution.

Table 3.4 Obasanjo/1979 Constitution Revenue Formula.

1979 Constitution Revenue Formula	Federal	States	LGA's
	76%	21%	3%

Source: HRW, 1999, 45.⁴²

The newly introduced Federal Character of the Nigerian Federal Government is not far from finding a solution to sustaining peace among all the ethnic groups in the federation. Federal character by implication meant that "there shall be no special treatment to the Niger Delta region or predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in the federal government or in any of its agencies."⁴³ It also entailed that majority ethnic groups will not be tolerated by the Federal Government to overlook or debase the minority groups. State creation continued with the Military junta in 23 September 1987 announcing the creation of Akwa Ibom state from Cross River State in response to the prolonged struggle by the people of the region for an additional state. General Ibrahim Babangida on August 27, 1991, increased the number of states to thirty by creating other states. Thus the Federal Government in response to the Niger

Delta created two states, Edo and Delta states from the Niger Delta. Going by the agitations for state creation and with the recommendation of the National Constitutional Conference, Gen Sani Abacha created more six states on 1st October 1996 to the existing thirty states thereby making the number of states in Nigeria thirty six states. Of the newly created six states only Bayelsa state carved out of Rivers came from the Niger Delta making the total number of states in the Niger Delta six.

The Federal Government also set up under the Shagari administration a Presidential Task Force on Niger Delta Development (PTFNDD) to formulate solutions to the problems of the delta region, leading to the “1.5 Percent Commission,” a body that had modest funds and little development impact.⁴⁴ Succinctly add that it is in a submission to respond to the precarious situation of the Niger Delta that the Federal Government accepted to review the 1979 Constitution uniform revenue sharing formula after much political debate and conflict. Aghalino confirmed it this way, it was because of the clear manifestation of potential threat to national security by anti-oil protest that some serious attention was paid to the Niger Delta question.⁴⁵ The new formula introduced by this civilian administration in 1982 granted the following shares of revenue to the component parts:

Table 3.5 Shagari Administration 1982 Revenue sharing formula

1982 Federal Government Allocation Formula	Federal Government	State Government	Local Government
	55%	30.5%	10%

Source: Revenue Allocation Act No. 1 of 1982.⁴⁶

The same Act approved a concession of 4.5 percent of the Federal Government totally generated revenue with the exclusion of revenue from offshore oil production, to the demands of the oil rich states as a substitute to the previously abolished derivations. They are as follows:

Table 3.6 Shagari Administration 1982 Revenue sharing formula.

Allocation of Revenue Act of 1982	Ecological problems	Derivation for Oil producing states	Development of oil producing states
	1%	2%	1.5%

Source: Revenue Allocation Act No. 1 of 1982.⁴⁷

The effort of the Federal Government to develop the Niger Delta Region won't be complete without pointing out that government describes the internal crisis, protest and uneasiness in the Niger Delta as identical to the secessionist movement and that it poses a risk to the corporate existence of Nigeria. Thus, it is not true that Federal Government responded to the Niger Delta by way of suppression, blackmail, and by churning out misleading information to the public on the issues of the development of the region. For instance, the Federal Government interventions in the Niger Delta Region during previous administrations such that compels the indigenes of the region to stick to law and order through the deployment of force as a remedy to the handling of oil minorities' demand in ways that emphasized federal power was easily misconstrued, despite being a development strategy.

Emmanuel Aziken of Vanguard newspaper acknowledged that, 'the Federal Government during Babangida administration, became the first to make public the use of funds meant for the special development of oil-producing areas.'⁴⁸

In 1987, the Federal Government set up a committee within the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) headed by Major-General Paul Omu to investigate the 1.5% special fund for oil-producing communities and recommend an effective method of disbursing and utilizing the fund. Major-General Omu's committee did a brilliant job which led to the setting up of a Presidential Implementation Committee (PIC), in 1988 headed by Nura Iman, an Air Vice Marshal and Minister of Mines, Power and Steel. The Nura Iman committee swung into action and disbursed money for specific projects in oil-producing communities. His words: 'The Federal Government is determined absolutely to ensure that the mineral producing areas no longer suffer.'⁴⁹

The Federal Government under the Babangida regime, I suppose understood what, Andrew R. Cecil, in his book *Individualism and Social Responsibility* described as social conscience which stated thus:

Social conscience vests in the government the responsibility to preserve the lives of the members of our communities and to protect them against physical violence, as well as against natural agents that threaten their health, such as floods, epidemics and crippling diseases. When faced with unemployment, the proliferation of slums, and the deterioration of our cities and of the natural environment, social conscience calls for some form of government intervention.⁵⁰

From June 1992, disturbed by the mounting agitations in oil-producing communities, the Federal Government determined to counter the challenge head on by establishing the Alfa Belgore Commission, which toured the delta to study first-hand about the people's grievances. In response, a River State Judicial Panel of Enquiry was also set up to investigate the Umuechem incident and make recommendations.⁵¹

Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)

In July 10, 1992, the Federal Government promulgated the Decree No 23 of 1992 appropriately called the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC).⁵² This Federal Government initiative represents the boldest move of the Babangida regime to address the problems of oil-producing communities within presidential- control. On October 19, 1992, true to his words to the people of Rivers State and other oil producing states, President Babangida inaugurated OMPADEC with Chief Albert K. Horsfall, a Kalabari indigene and former Director-General of the State Security Service (SSS) as Chairman with key mandates.⁵³

The Federal Government through OMPADEC resolved the issue of the Onshore/Offshore dichotomy in derivation revenue. It states categorically that the sums received by the commission under subsection 1(a) of this section shall be used for the rehabilitation and development of the oil mineral producing areas on the basis of the ratio of the oil produced in the particular State, Local Government Area or Community and not on the basis of the dichotomy of onshore or offshore oil production.⁵⁴ Babangida administration allayed the fears of all coastal communities Zone Act and the Offshore Oil Revenues Act (1971) which hitherto deprived them which had Offshore oil production facilities and wells with the removal of the Exclusive Economic coastal oil-producing States the right to the oil resources found in their communities.⁵⁵

Primarily, Obasanjo civilian administration implemented the 13% increase on derivation to the Niger Delta states from 3%, passed in 2000 by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.⁵⁶ A preview of his May 29, 1999 inaugural address attested to this very fact where he promised to forward a bill within weeks of the inception of his administration to the national assembly, for a law providing for 13 per cent derivation to be paid to the oil producing states of the Niger Delta to be used for ecological rehabilitation, infrastructural and other development.⁵⁷

Other informal state policy directives towards the region in search of an amicable resolution began with, an Okrika Community Peace Committee (OCPC) led by Professor Tekena Tamuno with fifteen other members employed to win over much dreaded Ateke Tom and other fire-spitting Militants operating there to peace between October 2005 and October 2006.⁵⁸ There was also a Peace Mission, led by Dr Godknows Igali, then adviser to President Obasanjo on Niger Delta Affairs, which comprised Professor Sotonye

Amakiri and others, who engaged militant leaders in a two-week camp-by-camp tour of the affected areas in early April 2007.⁵⁹

Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

Another Federal Government policy in dealing with the Niger Delta development crisis was the presentation of a bill to the National Assembly in 1999 for the establishment of a body called Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).⁶⁰ The National Assembly in accordance with section 58 (a) and 5 of the 1999 Constitution subsequently passed the bill establishing the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC),⁶¹

The Niger Delta Development Commission was established in 2000 by the NDDC Establishment Act. This Act repealed the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Commission decree 1998, and among other things, it also established the Niger Delta Development Commission with a re-organized administrative structure for increased effectiveness in the development of the region. The NDDC is financed, under the Act, from four sources:

- (i) 15 percent of the monthly federal statutory allocations due to the oil producing states;
- (ii) 3 percent of the operating budgets of the oil and gas-producing companies;
- (iii) 50 percent of the Ecological Fund due to the Niger Delta States; and
- (iv) Any foreign aid or other private sector contributions.⁶²

The Act sets out the mandate of the Commission which is to deploy allocations from the Federation Account for tackling ecological problems which rise from the exploration of oil minerals in the Niger-Delta area. As part of the Federal Government contributions to the region, the NDDC designed and launched in March 2007, the Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan, Nigeria's first integrated development plan based on extensive

participatory inputs from all local stakeholders. Thisday Newspaper reports it this way, “The Government launched the promised Comprehensive Development Master Plan for the Niger Delta”, precisely March 27, 2007.⁶³ The plan drew on expert analytical guidance in 25 sectors coalescing around the priorities of promoting economic growth, infrastructural development, community needs, and environmental preservation.⁶⁴

In order to accomplish the primary motive of the Commission in the Niger Delta, which is to initiate and coordinate development, an attempt to probe the Commission’s records, revealed that Government released a total sum of N155.365 billion, out of the total budgeted amount of N436 billion between 2001 and 2009.

Table 3.7 Federal Government Releases to NDDC, 2001-2009.

Year	Budget Allocation in Billion N	Actual FGN Release To NDDC N	Releases % Budget
2001	10,000 Billion	7,500 Billion	75%
2002	12,650	11,264	90%
2003	10,064	10,064	100%
2004	14,000	14,000	50%
2005	60,150	17,357	
2006	96,250	26,130	26%
2007	26,565	24,000	19%
2008	79,200	19,050	25%
2009	27,120	-	-
Total	426,000	136,243	36%

Sources: Expenditure Department of Federal Ministry of Finance, Abuja, June 2004 / Office of Chairman, Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Commission, Abuja, February 9, 2009.⁶⁵

Federal Government also invested heavily in capital projects through the Niger Delta Development Commission. The tables below reveal some of the programmes of the NDDC between 2007-2011 holistically as well as the areas of intervention in the Niger Delta states.

Table 3.13 Capital projects /achievements of the NDDC between 2007-2011

Programmes	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total	
	N,Bil	N,Bil	N,Bil	N,Bil	N,Bil	N Billion	%
Education	20,557	22,302	23,110	-	-	65,969	6.86%
Health	5,495	10,083	21,602			37,180	3.87%
Water Resources	10,216	14,084	16,463			40,763	4.24%
Electricity	11,304	32,349	42,298	-	-	85,951	8.94%
Agriculture		13,916	14,936			28,853	3.00%
Transportation		7,629.60	771.60				
Environment, Drainage, Sewages		7,120	7,209				
Land Jetty	17,863	31,684	51,396			100,943	10.49%
Road Bridges	69,202	96,490	122,166			287,858	29.92%
Housing, Civic Center, Town	568	1,278	1,667			3,513	0.37%

Hall							
Skilled Acquisition, Youth Dev	2,548	5,816	6,920			15,284	1.59%
Master Plan	3,623	3,984	3,847			11,454	1.19%
Project, Security, Logistics	-	5,459	6,025			11,483	1.19%
Others	22,797	7,221	7,088	102,325	133,262	272,693	28.35%
Total	164,173	259,416	325,498	102,325	133,262	961,943	
Annual Contribution %	17%	27%	34%	11%	14%		

Source: NEITI SIAO 2013 Report, 33.⁶⁶

A combination of the Federal Government, Oil Companies and sundry agencies locally and internationally invested a whopping 961,943 billion between 2007 and 2011 through the Niger Delta Development Commission in the region.⁶⁷

Summarily, this work has examined the characteristics of Federal government interventions in the Niger Delta region targeting every segment of the people, it also unraveled a purposive course of action followed by the federal government in dealing with development challenges in the Niger Delta, such as, the establishment of Eastern

Regional Development Corporation, Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) immediately after independence, Niger Delta River Basin Development Authority (NDRBDA), Creation of States, establishment of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, Niger Delta 2009 Amnesty, Federal Funded State Level Development agencies in the Niger Delta among other efforts of government.

This paper therefore posits that Federal government have taken a number of actions targeted towards the development of the Niger Delta region right from independence in 1960, and that the nature of government intervention also establishes the reality that the importance of Niger Delta region to the Federal government was never disregarded.

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