



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
HYDROCARBON POLLUTION REMEDIATION PROJECT
HYPREP...Remediating the Environment and Restoring Livelihoods

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OGONI POWER PROJECT: ELECTRICAL PARTS ARRIVE FROM CHINA...



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**HYPREP
HERALD
NOT
TO BE
SOLD**

THE PC'S DESK



PROF. NENIBARINI ZABBEY
PROJECT COORDINATOR
(HYPREP)

Two weeks ago, the Project Coordination Office (PCO) took delivery of twenty-five containers of conductors, optical ground wire, and disconnector materials, which are part of the electrical fittings and equipment for the Ogoni Power Project that the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) is constructing in Ogoniland. Recall that the Federal Government, through HYPREP, has awarded the contract to construct a 62km 132kv (Double Circuit) transmission line (traversing the four LGAs of Ogoni) and two 60 MVA substations, one each in Bodo and Wiiyaakara. When completed, the project will connect Ogoni to the national grid. The twenty-five containers of the offshore items of the Ogoni Power Project were cleared at the Onne Port and transported to the substation at Wiiyaakara in Ogoni. The arrival of the electrical parts from China and India will expedite the installation of the transmission line and the construction of the substations.

Barely four days ago (Thursday, 27 March 2025), ten new containers (40ft each) of power equipment arrived at Onne Port. The equipment in the new containers includes capacitor voltage transformers (CVT), current transformers (CT), and power transformers (PT), which Mehru Electrical in India manufactured. As I

mentioned to stakeholders in the January 2025 newsletter (HYPREP Herald), the design and manufacturing of the power equipment are project-specific. Therefore, various overseas companies manufactured different equipment for the Ogoni Power Project transmission and substations according to the designs approved by the HYPREP supervision consultant. Regarding the equipment manufacturing, we have reached the end of the gestation period, and the equipment are being shipped in batches following the HYPREP-contractor-supervision consultant factory acceptance test (FAT). The FAT is conducted to confirm that the equipment is fit for purpose.

Our approach is holistic and integrative. As the FAT continues and the offshore equipment arrives steadily, we have completed the geospatial survey of the transmission lines' right-of-way and valued the assets, economic trees, and crops along the route in the four Local Government Areas of Ogoni. Efforts are in top gear to compensate the property owners along the power right-of-way.

The Ogoni Power Project was conceived to ensure an improved power supply in Ogoni, provide electricity for homes, and boost industrialization in the area. The artisans and skilled workers trained through our sustainable livelihood programme (e.g., argon welders) will have reliable power to pursue their trades and catalyze a chain of productive ventures. This will make them self-reliant and productive as well as employers of labour. Our numerous legacy projects, such as the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration, potable water schemes, the Ogoni Specialist Hospital, and the Buan Cottage Hospital, will benefit from the improved energy supply that the Ogoni Power Project will provide. An improved electricity supply will amplify their sustainability. Concurrently, we have pre-qualified

bids for the Ogoni power distribution network study. The essence is to have a precise scope of the distribution network while the transmission stage is ongoing to foster a back-to-back start of the distribution phase.

Needless to say, hundreds of new jobs will be created during and after the construction of the Ogoni Power Project. It will significantly contribute to achieving peace and stability in Ogoniland, which falls within HYPREP's mandate. Recall that in 2024, HYPREP trained a critical mass of Ogoni youths and women in electricity maintenance. The skills acquired will come in handy during and after the construction phase of the Ogoni Power Project.

A few days ago, I met with former artisanal oil refiners, and our discussions focused on preventing the re-pollution of sites we have remediated. We continue to intensify our campaigns and community sensitization among the youth to dissuade them from tampering with oil facilities and installations, aiming to prevent spills that degrade the environment. Protecting HYPREP facilities is a crucial responsibility of the communities. As assemblies of good citizens, communities must take a firm stance to safeguard the facilities provided by HYPREP against vandalism or theft. Ensuring the security of the power facilities and avoiding unnecessary interruptions in the flow of work along the power project right-of-way and at the substations will contribute to timely delivery for the common good.

My dear sisters and brothers, I urge you to continue to support HYPREP's efforts to transform the socio-ecological landscape of Ogoniland. Together, let us strive to make Ogoni rich in human capital through our intentional and structured capacity-development even as the remediated environment will restore the people's livelihood and support sustainable development.

In this Issue

The Ogoni Power Project is a strategic project of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project conceived to bring sustainability to all the other legacy projects and to boost economic development in Ogoni. This month's edition of the HYPREP Herald leads with the news of the arrival of the first batch of electrical parts for the Power Project. They arrived in twenty-five containers delivered through the Onne Ports with more to arrive in the coming weeks.

The success story of HYPREP has continued to spread across the globe and to stakeholders who out of curiosity have one after the other come to the Project Coordination Office to verify the report. The latest high-profile visitor to the HYPREP office in Port Harcourt, Rivers State is the Belgian Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency Pieter Leenknecht who was excited at the level of progress the Project has recorded in all thematic areas especially shoreline clean and mangrove restoration. His mission was to identify areas his country could be of support to the Project. The foreign envoy's visit coincided with the visit of renowned mangrove expert, Emeritus Professor Olof Linden and a member of Post UNEP Team, Mr. Mike Cowing. Their visit culminated with a tour of HYPREP mangrove restoration sites in Bomu.

The Technical Planning Committee set up by the Project Coordination Office last year to design an operational framework for the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration under construction had completed their task and thus submitted their report to the Project

Coordinator of HYPREP, Prof. Nenibarini Zabbey. One of their recommendations is the need to give legal backing to the Centre by way of legislation that will properly establish it as an Institution of the Federal Government.

Re-pollution is a major threat to the remediation work that HYPREP is doing in Ogoni and to mitigate this danger, the Project Coordinator, Prof. Zabbey had a meeting with the leadership of Ogoni Ex-Artisanal Refiner Forum on ways to adequately sensitize youths in the communities on the need to stay off illegal bunkering and artisanal oil refining that pollute the environment with its attendant effects on human health.

Similarly, the Project Coordination Office received Officers from the Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) Jubilee. The visit was aimed at fostering collaboration between HYPREP and the Navy to maintain peace in Ogoni and especially around HYPREP sites. HYPREP continues to provide a training ground for young environmental scientists by availing them of its remediation sites for excursion and training. To this end students of the Nigerian Maritime

University, Delta State were on excursion to HYPREP shoreline clean-up sites to add practical knowledge to their classroom work.

The Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Prof. Zabbey led the project to celebrate this year's World Water Day with a visit to HYPREP water stations under construction. The Director, Technical Services, HYPREP, Prof. Damian Aguiyi was among personalities who were conferred Fellowship by the Nigerian Mining and Geosciences Society at this year's annual conference in Abuja.

In this edition, we also bring you a report of a tour of HYPREP projects by some senior journalists and newspaper columnists. The first is the feature by Suyi Ayodele on 'A Journey Through Ogoni, the Titusville of Nigeria', which was first published in the Nigerian Tribune. Other features by the visiting journalists will be serialized in subsequent editions of the HYPREP Herald.

Our newly introduced corner, 'Mangrove and Dishes' is maintained and so is our 'Poetry Corner'. We hope you find this edition interesting and informative as always.

Editorial Crew

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Project News

OGONI POWER PROJECT:

ELECTRICAL PARTS ARRIVE FROM CHINA...

The first batch of twenty-five containers of electrical parts for the Ogoni Power Project has arrived from China and India and safely transported to the Power Substation site in Wiiyaakara, Khana Local Government Area.

The Ogoni Power Project was one of the three legacy projects flagged off for construction on 28th April 2023 by former President Muhammadu Buhari under the Ogoni Clean-up Project that the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) is implementing.

The other two projects flagged off for construction on the same day were the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration that is now

80% completed, and the Ogoni Specialist Hospital that is expected to be completed and commissioned this year.

Though the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration is a recommendation in the famous United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report on Ogoni, that of the Ogoni Power Project and the Ogoni Specialist Hospital are initiatives of HYPREP to boost the socio-economic life of the Ogoni people.

The Ogoni Power Project upon completion will bring sustainability to the Potable Water Schemes, Livelihood Programmes, Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration, the Specialist Hospital

and the Buan Cottage Hospital and will also catalyze the creation of job opportunities for artisans and enhance entrepreneurial growth.

The offshore components of the Ogoni Power Project which arrived through the Onne Ports in Rivers State comprise conductors, optical ground wire and disconnector materials. Before the arrival of the first batch of the offshore components, a team of HYPREP officials, the project consultant – Oska-Jo & Partners Ltd, and the contractor - Energovod Engineering Limited went for a Factory Acceptance Test (FAT) in China and India in December 2024 for tests and inspection processes. The received materials will be used in the three key deliverable phases of the project which are transmission, the construction of the Bodo and Wiiyaakara substations, and distribution.

HYPREP has progressed with work in the phase 1 of the power project which involves charting the way for the transmission lines that cut across twenty-four (24) communities in the four (4) Local Government Areas of Ogoni, enumeration and valuation of economic trees, crops, and other assets for which payment of compensation has been made to some asset owners and others to be paid soon. Phase 2 is the distribution phase and that will cut across the entire Ogoniland.

The arrival of the remaining offshore components of the power project is expected in the second quarter of the year.



Cables for Ogoni Power Project



Containers of Electrical Parts for the Ogoni Power Project being Transported from Onne Ports to Wiiyaakara Sub Station

BELGIAN AMBASSADOR ACKNOWLEDGES PROGRESS ON OGONI CLEAN-UP PROJECT

The Belgian Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency Pieter Leenknecht has acknowledged the progress that the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) had made in the remediation of oil polluted sites in Ogoni and the restoration of livelihoods of impacted communities. Leenknecht made the submission when he paid a courtesy call on the Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Prof. Nenibarini Zabbey in Port Harcourt. The Ambassador who came in the company of the first Secretary of the Embassy of Belgium, Dorien Laewnen said the visit was to assess the level of progress made on the Ogoni Clean-up Project as well as identify areas his country can support HYPREP.

He stated that HYPREP's effort at addressing livelihood and environmental challenges in Ogoni



Belgian Ambassador to Nigeria, HE. Pieter Leenknecht in a Handshake with HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey during the Former's Visit to HYPREP

and the larger Niger Delta region together with other interventions is a concerted “approach to caring for biodiversity while also caring for the communities that live with those and making them also custodians of the environment.”

In his response, the Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Prof. Zabbey noted that the Project looks forward to partnerships that foster development even as it is contributing to other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 1,2,6,13,14,17 and more) and stated that the Project is mobilizing stakeholders towards achieving sustainable clean-up and working with partners that can be of help to the Project in terms of

experience sharing, funding, mobilization of community support, etc.

Prof. Zabbey also played host to another high-profile visitor, a renowned mangrove expert and Emeritus Professor, Olof Linden who came alongside Mr. Mike Cowing of the Post UNEP team and joined the HYPREP Project Coordinator on a trip to inspect the shoreline clean-up and mangrove restoration projects going on in Bomu.

Prof. Zabbey stated that the Project is fostering biodiversity recovery in the once degraded shoreline and mangrove areas with over 1.3 million mangrove seedlings planted and 38% of shoreline clean-up works done.

The HYPREP Project Coordinator told his guests that the Project is at a critical stage where the several works of HYPREP are impacting positively on the local communities and their livelihoods and that the various projects are driven by community people.

He expressed optimism that more jobs will be created with the Project progressing significantly as more projects are to be commissioned this year namely the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration (CEER), the Buan Cottage Hospital, the Ogoni Specialist Hospital and more potable water schemes among others.



Management and Staff of HYPREP Pose with Belgian Ambassador to Nigeria, HE. Pieter Leenknecht during his Visit to HYPREP Project Coordination Office in Port Harcourt

TECHNICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE ON CEER SUBMITS REPORT TO HYPREP

-Recommends Legal Framework for its Establishment

The Technical Planning Committee set up last year by the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) last year to plan and design the operational framework for the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration, (CEER) as well as advise on the core curriculum framework for the Centre has submitted its report to the Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Prof. Nenibarini Zabbey.

The report was handed over to the Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Prof. Zabbey by the Chairman of the Technical Planning Committee on CEER and former Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt, Prof. Don Baridam. One of the key recommendations of the report is the need for a clear legal framework for the Centre of Excellence to function as an independent institution.

In the meantime, the Committee recommended that HYPREP should oversee the CEER's operations under the existing 2016 Federal Ministry of Environment Gazette on the establishment of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project.

Members of the Committee said the Centre of Excellence will have a great impact on Ogoniland, Nigeria and the global community as it can handle any kind of international research on environmental pollution.

A former Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt and member of the Committee, Prof. Joseph Ajienka, explained that part of the sustainability plan for the Centre is to ensure that products of research are commercialized.

“Once the world knows, there is a

centre like this for environmental remediation, there is going to be a lot of international collaboration and partnership in research, publication and developing products out of the research and these will put the centre in the map.”

Another member of the Committee and former Vice Chancellor of the Rivers State University, Prof. Barineme Fakae stated that “the facility is the first of its kind in this part of the world and it is good enough to host any kind of international research on environment and pollution.”

Receiving the report, the Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Professor Zabbey commended the 13-man committee on commitment, expertise and hard work deployed in developing the report which outlines a

comprehensive plan for the establishment and operationalization of the CEER.

According to Professor Zabbey, the CEER is a monumental step forward in the remediation of hydrocarbon pollution in Ogoniland and beyond. “This Centre will serve as a hub for innovative research, skill development, and environmental management, prevention, control, and ecosystem restoration solutions”, he explained.

He stated that the benefits of the Centre of Excellence would be far-reaching, with significant impact on Ogoniland and the nation. “For Ogoniland, this means a cleaner environment, improved public health, and opportunities for economic empowerment through skills training



Chairman, Technical Planning C'ttee on CEER, Prof. Don Baridam (left), Presents Copies of their Report to HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey

and employment. Nationally, the Centre will position Nigeria as a leader in environmental remediation and restoration, fostering innovation and best practices in pollution management primarily through the Integrated Contaminated Soil Management Centre housed in the CEER.”

In line with the Federal Government's directive that HYPREP should contribute to national food security, Professor Zabbey announced that the project will expand the Centre's original remediation-related laboratories to include biotechnology, which he explained will enhance phytoremediation studies and crop improvement research to contribute to national food security.

Prof. Zabbey stated that the report will be submitted formally to the Governing Council for review and consideration and thanked the

Honourable Minister of Environment and Chairman, Governing Council of HYPREP, Balarabe Abbas Lawal for his guidance and support for the Ogoni clean-up project. He also thanked the members of the Technical Planning Committee, partners, stakeholders and supporters for their contributions to the success of HYPREP.

“Once again, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Technical Planning Committee for their dedication and excellent work. Your contributions will leave a lasting impact on the restoration efforts in Ogoniland and the nation at large.”

The Officer Overseeing the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration (CEER), Professor Ibisime Etela presented a brief on the report, highlighting the key deliverables and recommendations for the CEER.

"These deliverables include the

development of an advisory document on a Bill for CEER, core curricula, and Governing Council recommendations, as well as an advisory document on co-financing, collaborations with institutions, and sustainability."

Professor Etela explained that the report proposes core curricula frameworks, including assessment surveys for environmental restoration, environmental restoration project planning and design, environmental remediation project implementation, environmental remediation project management, environmental economics and management, and development studies.

"The CEER will serve as a hub for research, innovation, training, and policy development, primarily dedicated to advancing the science and practice of environmental remediation and restoration."



Members of the Technical C'ttee on CEER after the Presentation of their Report to HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey

According to Professor Etela, the CEER's key objectives include serving as a repository of new knowledge in environmental protection, remediation, and restoration, including standardized scientific processes as well as conducting innovative research for solving societal problems in environmental sustainability, modelling for environmental remediation and restoration and promoting learning by organizing courses, workshops, seminars, and colloquia related to environmental remediation and restoration.

"The report made key recommendations, including the need for a clear legal framework for the establishment of the CEER as an

independent Centre of Excellence in Nigeria. The CEER should work within three pillars of training and research, namely environmental protection, remediation and restoration; livelihood support programmes for value chain actor; and supporting safe food including clean water production from restored areas for public health restoration."

The Technical Planning Committee for Environmental Restoration (TPC-CEER), inaugurated on May 31, 2024, comprises a distinguished team of experts, including former Vice Chancellors, renowned academics, and environmental specialists. The members are Prof. Don Baridam (Chairman), Prof. Joseph A. Ajienka, Ndowa E.S. Lale, Prof. Barineme Beke

Fakae, Prof. Chidi Ibe and Prof. Roseline Konya. Others are Prof. Iyenemi Ibimina Kakulu, Prof. Ben Naanen, Prof. Alubari Desmond Nbete, Prof. Eucharia O. Nwaichi, Dr Evidence Ep-aabari, Ms. Sornaatah Nubari Nke-ee and Prof. Ibisime Etela (Secretary).

The Centre of Excellence for Environmental Remediation is one of the recommendations contained in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report on Ogoniland submitted to the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2011. The flag-off of the construction of the Centre was performed in 2023 by former President Muhammadu Buhari and the complex is now 80% completed.

CURBING RE-POLLUTION: HYPREP DIALOGUES WITH EX-ARTISANAL REFINERS

The Management of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) has said it would continue to synergize with the Ogoni Ex-Artisanal Refiners Forum in the sensitization of community youths against re-pollution to sustain the gains recorded in the environmental clean-up of Ogoniland.

Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Professor Nenibarini Zabbey gave the assurance during a meeting with members of the Ogoni Ex-Artisanal Refiners Forum led by its President, Humphrey Domka at the Project Coordination Office (PCO) in Port Harcourt.

Professor Zabbey acknowledged that members of the group are critical stakeholders in consolidating on the gains of the clean-up in Ogoni, stressing that the Project is strategically engaging them through



Officials of the Ogoni Ex-Artisanal Refiners Forum in a Dialogue with HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey

the provision of alternative means of livelihood including training in special skill areas like commercial diving, underwater welding, seafaring among others.

The HYPREP Project Coordinator

said he is inspired by the gradual return of biodiversity in the creeks which is indicative of the progress recorded in the shoreline clean-up and mangrove restoration efforts of the Project and appealed that

communities and groups like the ex-artisanal refiners should share in the responsibility of discouraging potential polluters.

The facilitator of the Ogoni Ex-Artisanal Refiners Forum, Dr. Elvis

Ikoma pleaded with the Project Coordinator to prioritize the engagement and empowerment of ex-artisanal refiners and commended HYPREP on the sensitization seminar organized for the group across the four

Local Government Areas of Ogoni.

HYPREP has trained and given out starter packs to five thousand (5000) Ogoni women and youths as part of its sustainable livelihood programme.

NIGERIAN NAVY/HYPREP IN TALKS FOR SAFER OGOINI

In a move aimed at strengthening ties and fostering cooperation, the Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) Jubilee paid a courtesy visit to the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) as part of its efforts to support environmental restoration initiatives in the Niger Delta.

The visit, led by Commodore A. Abubakar Umar was a deliberate attempt to chart a new course for collaboration between the Nigerian Navy and HYPREP. According to Commodore Umar, the visit was necessary to improve relationships, enhance synergy, and foster effective communication between the Navy and HYPREP.

The Naval team was received by HYPREP's Chief Security Officer, AIG Emmanuel Effiom (Rtd.) who commended the Nigerian Navy on its efforts in securing the region.

AIG Effiom particularly appreciated the Navy's involvement in securing



The Visiting Officers of the Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) Jubilee with HYPREP Security Team

the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration (CEER), the Ogoni Specialist Hospital and other critical HYPREP projects in Ogoni.

The visit marks a significant milestone in the relationship between the

Nigerian Navy and HYPREP, paving the way for future collaborations and joint efforts at addressing environmental challenges in Ogoni and the Niger Delta.

NIGERIAN MARITIME UNIVERSITY STUDENTS VISIT HYPREP SITES

The soil remediation, shoreline clean-up and mangrove restoration projects of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project have continued to attract educational institutions of higher learning whose students are convinced that the project is delivering on its mandate as well as providing training ground for future

environmental scientists.

The latest visitors to HYPREP sites were students of the Nigerian Maritime University, Delta state who were on site to add practical knowledge to what they were taught in the classroom.

The students who were led on the excursion by one of their lecturers, Dr.

Amarachi Oyena explained that the visit was a basic requirement to their course of study and the most relevant place to come was HYPREP shoreline clean-up site.

“Every year they need to go to the field, different companies, industries, to actually practicalize what they have learned in class. So, we thought that oil



HYPREP SCAT Team Member Showing Students of Nigerian Maritime University Shoreline Clean-up Operations

pollution is one key pollution in the environment, and we intended that they could come and see how this oil is impacting the environment and basically the mangrove ecosystem.

You know, most of the time we only dwell on the theoretical aspect of the work. So, for today I was able to see the fencing in real time and how the sediments are being tilled, softened in order to gather and contain the oil. So, we're able to also see how in real time this oil has impacted the substratum. Basically, from looking at the water, you'll see that biodiversity is going to be limited to function here."

Dr. Oyena expressed appreciation to the Management of HYPREP for the opportunity to learn from its operations.

"We thank the HYPREP team and also the Project Coordinator who have given us this opportunity because in the last two years we were here. We checked the land contaminated sites and today we are so happy that we're

shifting base to shoreline clean-up and mangrove ecosystem restoration specifically. We hope that the next time we come we'll be able to see more remediation that has happened."

The Technical Assistant on Shoreline Clean-up, Peter Lenu who conducted the students round the sites stated that HYPREP is in the process of gathering and storing necessary data from its operations for research and development

"The students from Nigerian Maritime University, Delta state requested for a field trip and excursion sort of to know or have an idea of what's happening in the HYPREP shoreline cleanup. We took them around some of the sites where HYPREP shoreline and clean-up activities are ongoing. Here in Goi, and then from here we took them to Kpor also to show them the methodology that HYPREP adopts in carrying out the shoreline clean-up process, which is basically the low-pressure flushing to remove the

hydrocarbon bringing the sediment up to the surface of the water and then collect it using booms and then manually scoping for treatment.

Yes, HYPREP has that great plan. You must have heard of the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration that is being built in Wiiyaakara, Khana. So, it's going to be a research centre for environmental remediation and restoration in Nigeria. So, all the data, all the work that HYPREP is doing, the data gathered, will be used by researchers in that Institute. So, it's a great plan. In fact, the facility has gone over 80% completion as of today. So, before the end of the year, it will be commissioned and that process of documenting HYPREP's work will commence."

One of the students, Olamide David stated that the excursion was worthwhile given the volume of information gathered from the field operations of HYPREP.

HYPREP DTS, PROF. AGUIYI CONFERRED FELLOW OF NMGS

The Nigerian Mining and Geosciences Society (NMGS) has inaugurated the Director, Technical Services of HYPREP, Professor Damian-Paul Aguiyi as a fellow of the society at its 60th Annual International Conference and Exhibition held in Abuja.

The conferment of a fellow of the society is in recognition of enormous wealth of experience Professor Aguiyi has garnered over the years for which he is bringing to bear on the Ogoni cleanup project as the Director of Technical Services of HYPREP.

HYPREP featured prominently at the conference with its exhibition stand receiving the President of the Nigerian Mining and Geosciences Society, Prof. Akinade Olatunji and the Group Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian National Petroleum Company



Presentation of NMGS Fellowship to HYPREP DTS, Prof. Damian Aguiyi by NMGS President, Prof. Akinade Olatunji at NMGS Conference in Abuja

Limited (NNPCL), Mr. Mele Kyari and their entourage, offering them and other participants an opportunity to know about the projects and programmes of HYPREP in the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nation Environmental Programme (UNEP) Report on Ogoniland.

FEATURE

A JOURNEY THROUGH OGONI, THE TITUSVILLE OF NIGERIA

By: Suyi Ayodele

“I AM happy the mangroves are coming back. I feel happy because for a long time now, we haven't had fish, no crabs; life has not been easy. But today, I can walk through that (pointing at the river in Goi) to fetch this gionudor (a palm tree-like stump) that serves as our firewood. Before now, the river was covered by oil. Everything in it died. Now, aquatic life is coming back gradually. I am happy and I know many of our people are happy.”

The above are the words of 65-year-old Godwin Kirijio a retired civil servant, as he waded through the shallow end of the Ogoni River in Goi, Gokana Local Government of Rivers State. I engaged the retired civil servant by the bank of the river.

At a time when the Rivers of Crisis is threatening to overflow its bank, I was

on a tour of the creeks of Ogoniland.

My beat is the South-South and the South-East as Regional Editor of the Nigerian Tribune. I had heard stories of poisoned soil and dead fishes and wanted a feel of the dead environment. Then, I had an opportunity through an agency of the Government called HYPREP (Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project) which is charged with cleaning up the polluted soil and water of Ogoniland. The Dr. Peterside Dakuku-led Media Voices for Accountability extended the opportunity to me which I grabbed without hesitation. I wish there was a political equivalent of that agency HYPREP. If there was, we would empower it to detoxify our politics, clean up the beds of Rivers and make the people live again.

The two-day voyage in Ogoniland

opened my eyes to the effects of the damages caused in that locality by the activities of the International Oil Companies (IOCs), which have operated in Ogoniland for over six decades. I saw what many may never see.

Remember Titusville, Pennsylvania, United States of America? It is the 'Oil Creek Valley', where Edwin L. Drake first struck oil in commercial quantity on August 27, 1859. The story of the once booming creek-turned city presents for every good student of petroleum history, the evil associated with the wealth obtained from the black substance known as crude oil.

The unfortunate story of Titusville has nothing to do with the fact that the first oil explorer, Drake, died as a poor prisoner in 1880. The tragedy of Titusville lies in the environmental

degradation caused by the oil exploration activities that have affected the environment and the people.

The most unfortunate account of the misfortune of oil exploration in Titusville is contained in what petroleum experts call 'Orphaned Oil Wells', a euphemism for abandoned oil wells that have passed their usefulness. Those once-prosperous oil wells, now abandoned, cause unmitigated environmental damages. The American Environmental Protection Agency (EPA,) states that over three million 'Orphaned Oil Wells', which "have not been properly plugged and decommissioned", are scattered all over the country with "over nine million Americans living within a mile of the abandoned oil wells!"

The implications, according to the EPA, are that: "When an oil well is abandoned, it may emit toxins and pollution that contaminate groundwater, affecting local communities and the environment. Abandoned and orphaned wells are also considered major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions... Improperly plugged or decommissioned oil and gas wells are essentially open holes in the ground. They may release toxins like methane, arsenic, benzene, and hydrogen sulphide into the environment, even when they are no longer productive. They can cause fires and explosions. Even a small leak from a single well could have a tremendous impact over years or decades, affecting the soil and groundwater and causing air pollution."

As it was with Titusville in America, so it is with the oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The elders of my place say that a whirlwind which troubles the ogi (raw akamu) seller

must have rendered the yam-flour seller empty of her wares (Ategun to damu ologi ti so elelubo d'ofo). If America with its sophistication in technology could lament about environmental degradation because of oil exploration, one can imagine the fate of the environment and the people of the Niger Delta.

The history of Ogoniland is one that humanity will never forget. The oil-rich locality was largely unknown until the early '90s when the indigenes began agitating against the adverse effects of oil exploration in the area and demanded action to alleviate their suffering. The flagship of that agitation was the Ogoni Bill of Rights of November 1990, endorsed by leaders of Ogoni from Babbe, Gokana, Ken Khana, Nyo Khana and Tai.

The Bill, an intellectual product of the struggle against environmental devastation in Ogoniland, was produced by the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). MOSOP was led by the State-murdered environmentalist, writer and poet, Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa, otherwise known as Ken Saro-Wiwa, or simply, Saro-Wiwa.

The agitation for the emancipation of Ogoniland from the shackles of IOCs visiting untold environmental pollution in the area took a tragic-dramatic turn on May 21, 1994, when the foursome of Albert Badey, Edward Kobani, Theophilus Orage and Samuel Orage, who were holding a meeting in Giokoo Community in the Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State, were attacked by an irate mob and murdered.

The Federal Military Government of the late Head of State, General Sani Abacha, wasted no time as it arrested Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others, accusing them of being the masterminds of the killing of the four

Ogoni leaders. Saro-Wiwa and his eight Ogoni brothers: Saturday Dobe, Nordu Eawo, Daniel Gbokoo, Paul Levura, Felix Nuata, Baribor Bera, Barinem Kiobel, and John Kpuike, were paraded before Justice Ibrahim Auta's special tribunal which found them all guilty and sentenced them to death by hanging.

The Abacha-led military junta affirmed the sentence on November 8, 1995, and had all the nine Ogoni leaders executed on November 10, 1995. Their bodies were never released to their families! In all, Ogoniland lost 13 of its illustrious sons to the agitation to have a clean environment for the people. Many of the IOCs left the area and have not returned. Many oil wells in the locality became 'orphaned' and the attendant effects of such 'Orphaned Oil Wells' combined with the already degraded environment made Ogoniland lie in waste!

The death of the initial Ogoni Four and the execution of the Ogoni Nine opened the eyes of the international communities to the happenings in Ogoniland. To address the concerns of the Ogoni people, the President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration commissioned the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to conduct an environmental audit of the Ogoni environment. The report of UNEP was submitted to the Federal Government in 2011. The UNEP report recommended, among others, the immediate remediation of the soil and groundwater in Ogoniland. After a false start by the previous regime, it was the administration of General Muhammadu Buhari that implemented the recommendations of the UNEP report.

Before the Ogoni Clean-Up Tour, Ogoni had remained, to me, a mystery; a land of fairy tales, typical of the

mystical city of Kathmandu in Nepal. So, the tour became experiential, especially as the team was taken through the landscapes to have first-hand information of what happened in the land of Ken Saro-Wiwa, and what HYPREP is doing in fulfilling the mandate given to it to remediate Ogoniland.

The idea of the tour, when it was first mooted by Dr. Dakuku, ignited in me a deep sense of enthusiasm. I knew it was an opportunity I must take, first, out of curiosity but more importantly, to have a first-hand idea of what the famous Ogoniland of the late Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight other heroes of the 1995 agitation against the inhuman environmental degradation caused in the area, and the entire Niger Delta in general, looks like, by the operations of the IOCs extracting crude oil.

My first impression as we took a detour to Ogoniland was that life had returned to the once-devastated land. The pre-tour presentation by the Communication Unit of HYPREP headed by Dr. Enuolare Mba-Nwigoh on what the body had put on the ground, no doubt fired inspiration to explore the famed Ogoniland. Ditto the idea, as suggested by the Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Professor Nenibarini Zabbey, that HYPREP had gone beyond the original mandate of remediation to providing basic infrastructures to make life abundant for the Ogoni people.

So, as we hit Ogoniland, I looked out to see if indeed the narratives have changed and if life is back in Ogoniland. I admit here that indeed, Ogoniland is getting back its glory before the devastation. The peasants and their farmlands, the luxuriant vegetation, the new road networks and the presence of government in the locality all combined to show that

Ogoniland will be great again.

Just as Professor Zabbey, HYPREP Project Coordinator assured that: “HPREP will implement the UNEP reports and recommendations but not sheepishly” but would “add value to the report. Beyond the core value of remediation as recommended by UNEP, we are adding electricity, healthcare delivery services and potable water facilities”, the agency can be said with empirical evidence that it has lived up to its billing as an interventionist agency.

The HYPREP water projects in Korghor/Gio and Barako, the giant ongoing 100-bed Specialist Hospital in Botem due for completion in September; the 40-bed Cottage Hospital at Buan community slated for commissioning in July and the N40 billion Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration, a research Institute with its Integrated Soil Management Centre (ISMC), sitting on a 28-hectare of land, are mind-boggling!

With what HYPREP has been able to do, one can confidently say that life is back in Ogoniland! The remediation works ongoing in Ogoniland to address the pain of the people are pointers to the fact that life could become abundant in the area again.

Day two of the tour of the HYPREP remediation sites opened one's eyes to the level of devastation visited on the agrarian community by the various oil companies that had operated in Ogoniland in the last 60 years! I saw for the first time what oil spillage looks like. I was shocked and sad to see, for instance, at LOT 15 of the Obajiken remediation site, a land measuring 30,750 square metres, polluted up to 6.2 metres deep! Even with my almost total anosmia state, I could perceive the smell of crude oil in the environment!

But it is heartwarming to note that gradually, life is returning to Ogoniland. Revegetation is taking place and aquatic habitats are being restored. The massive excavation sites geared towards removing the contamination in the soil and groundwater are encouraging. One can boast that the Ogoni clean-up project has gone beyond political sloganeering and has now become a reality.

More engaging is the fact that HYPREP is also focusing on reforestation of the ancient Ogoni mangroves. Though I couldn't follow the team on the voyage to the big sites for the mangrove replanting because of my phobia for water, the few sites by the banks of the Ogoni River at Goi in Gokana Local Government Area, are enough testimonials that aquatic elements and avian species would soon return to their natural habitats. The simple implication of this is that the locals would soon have their aquatic delicacies and means of livelihood back!

More delightful is the engagement of the locals in the projects. The sense of belonging, relevance and ownership given to the Ogoni rural dwellers cannot be quantified. This is the physical manifestation of light at the end of the tunnel!

This is why HYPREP cannot afford to drop the ball. Its ambitious projects in Ogoniland indicate that with the right mindset, sustainable willpower, and determination to make a difference, establishments can indeed change the narrative for a people once on the verge of extinction. One can only hope and pray that Nigeria will not happen to those giant strides in Ogoniland.

The Ogoni people, nay, the entire Nigerian people, owe it a duty to sustain the efforts of HYPREP in Ogoniland by building a solid wall of

protection around the facilities deployed to redress the injustices of the past six decades. HYPREP must be self-challenged to keep upping the ante. The success of the Ogoni Clean-Up Project is the success of the Niger Delta people.

The Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Professor Zabbey, re-echoed this when he intoned that “HYPREP sees the Ogoni clean-up project beyond

Ogoniland. What we are doing is a sustainable project for the entire Niger Delta region and the whole country at large. We are determined to ensure that what we are doing in Ogoniland will serve as a template for other areas where we have that kind of experience as Ogoni.” Nothing can be more encouraging!

As the tour ended, the biggest message for me is that the late

environmentalist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and his fellow Ogoni patriots who were murdered by the State, and the four Ogoni chiefs who paid the supreme price for a better Ogoniland, in the wake of the Ogoni crisis, did not die in vain. Without any intention to engage in necromancy, I say this: Ken Saro-Wiwa, hear this: You and your ideas live on in HYPREP.

HYPREP JOINS THE WORLD TO MARK 2025 WATER DAY *-Hints of More Water Projects Commissioning*

The Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) has provided safe drinking water for over thirty communities under its potable water project for hydrocarbon impacted communities in Ogoni.

Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Prof. Nenibarini Zabbey stated this in a release issued to mark the 2025 World Water Day today with the theme “Glacier Preservation.”

Prof. Zabbey stated that so far thirty (30) Ogoni communities have access to potable water, adding that HYPREP potable water projects are designed to provide sustainable solutions that meet the needs of impacted communities to restore dignity, improve public health, and secure a better future for the people and residents of Ogoniland.

He emphasized the importance of protecting water sources to ensure steady supplies of safe drinking water to the population which he said is the idea behind the HYPREP Potable Water Project.

“This year's theme underscores the need to protect the world's freshwater sources, which sustain ecosystems, support human life, and regulate our climate. It specifically highlights the



HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey Inspects a HYPREP Water Project Under Construction

importance of preserving glaciers, a critical source of freshwater for millions of people worldwide. In our context, it also highlights the importance of protecting potable water sources, such as the operational water schemes and those under construction in Ogoniland.

At HYPREP, we recognize the importance of clean and safe water, particularly for the hydrocarbon-

impacted communities of Ogoniland. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Report on Ogoniland made clear recommendations for restoring contaminated water sources, and HYPREP has remained steadfast in implementing these recommendations.”

The Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project has awarded



HYPREP Water Station under Construction

contracts for the phases 1 and 2 provision of potable water across the four Local Government Areas in Ogoni, some of which have been commissioned for use by the benefitting communities.

“HYPREP's effort to provide potable water is a critical component of its mandate to remediate and restore the environment in Ogoniland. Our efforts in this regard include rehabilitating existing water infrastructure, establishing new facilities, including the recently commissioned facilities in Bunu and Beeri communities, and implementing sustainable water management strategies. Also, we recognize that access to clean water is a fundamental human right, and we are working tirelessly to ensure that communities in Ogoniland have access to this basic necessity.”

The HYPREP Project Coordinator

restated his commitment to completing ongoing water schemes and called on various stakeholders to support the Project achieve set goals under the provision of potable water for Ogoni communities.

“As we celebrate World Water Day, we reiterate our commitment to addressing the water challenges facing hydrocarbon-impacted communities in Ogoniland. Therefore, we call on all stakeholders, including government agencies, international organizations, community leaders, and other Niger Delta communities, to join us in this effort. Together, we can ensure that communities in Ogoniland have access to clean water and that the environment is protected for future generations. We also reaffirm our commitment to environmental restoration and building structures for peace in Ogoniland.”

Meanwhile, Professor Zabbey used the occasion of the celebration of the World Water Day to visit ongoing water projects in Bodo City, Gokana, Onne and Eteo in Eleme Local Government Areas respectively.

He stated that the water stations, especially that of Bodo City, which have reached advanced stages of completion will be ready for commissioning soon.

While in Bodo, Prof. Zabbey also stopped over at the transmission substation in the community and later proceeded to the Wiiyaakaara substation. He was excited at the pace of work on the 132KVA Ogoni Power saying, 'it is work in progress.'

MANGROVE AND DISHES

EGÀN (THE BLUE FISTED SWIM CRAB)

With about ten edible species crawling all over the Niger Delta mangrove swamps, the blue fisted swim crab, or Egàn as Ogonis call it, is the defacto prince of the Niger Delta and our area boy of the creeks.

The blue fisted swim crabs, in the photo, are the most popular, and can be fished in a variety of ways. With nets from the salt waters, crabs can be swooped up, and from the chicoco mud of the mangrove swamps, as well as from holes by the banks of the creeks, with bare hands or elbow hooked sticks.

With two serrated pincers, on either side, acting as its attack and defense gadget, egàn is not an easy pick for fishermen. It fears no other creature, and strikes so fast, as it parades the mangrove swamps fearlessly.

No wonder it is on top of the seafood chain, devouring sardine fishes, mudskippers, mullets, and smaller fishes, within the mangroves.

Making crab stew is now gaining ground as the most exotic treat or delicacy in Port Harcourt, as crab sellers in the markets now help buyers by opening and cleaning the crabs for them, making it easy to prepare soup, stew, or crab meals. If your wife hasn't prepared a 'crab-infested' soup for you yet, you need to send her to take home lessons or declare her not loyal to your "structure".

As kids, while on holidays, I would lead my cousin, now Prof. Clement Barikuma Alawa of the University of Abuja, and my young friend, Prof. Joseph Vipene of the Rivers State University to fish for crabs at



Blue Fisted Swim Crabs

Kozo River in Bodo City...even though they got bitten several times by these area boys.

I had perfected my crab fishing skills at Kono waterside, under my late childhood friend, George Sàronéé, with whom I prowled all the nyómuí (watersides) in Kono.

Bigger sized crabs, most times move in pairs, male and female, for which we can't ascertain their marital status, and can be caught in special locally fabricated crab nets, called nwìgbór-egàn, or in holes on the mud as the water recedes.

Crabs are very fast, and can move forward, backward, or sideways in rapid maneuvers to avoid being caught. Local skills and knowledge of the waterside are required to be an expert crab catcher...but you can't eliminate been bitten by these area boys of the creeks.

Why you must eat crabs is because they are rich seafoods, with enough

fibre, protein, and they are not an exclusive reserve for the rich amongst us.

Kono waterside is still a great place to go crab fishing. The neighbouring Andoni boys are making much more money with crab sales.

Creek Road Market is still one spot where you can buy crabs daily in Port Harcourt. Let your wife or mum spoil you with crab soup, if you want to understand why crab is the area boy of the creeks.

The female ones, called nwàà-eko in Ogoni, are tastier and richer, with a harder shell to crack. Crabs aren't known to have seasons or periods when they come out. So, I have started teaching my kids how to "tere nwìgbór-egan" (cast crab net) in my backyard when they are on holidays.

Blessing Wikina
Kono, Ogoni

PICTURES OF THE MONTH



L-R: HYPREP PC, Prof. Nenibarini Zabbey; Belgian Ambassador to Nigeria, HE. Pieter Leenknecht and HYPREP DTS, Prof. Damian Aguiyi



L-R: Emeritus Prof. Olof Linden; HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey and Mr. Mike Cowing



L-R: Prof. Barineme Fakae Receiving a Souvenir from HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey



L-R: Prof. Roselyn Konya Receiving a Souvenir from HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey



HYPREP Officials with Dr. Dakuku Peterside at a HYPREP Water Satation



Dr. Dakuku Plants Mangrove Seedling at Bomu



A Team of Journalists and Columnists Pose with HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey



L-R: Charles Gininwa, Chief Dr. Prince Gininwa, HYPREP PC, Prof. Zabbey, Mrs. Fashion Zabbey at the Funeral of Gbenemene Tai Kingdom, HRM G.N.K Gininwa

OGONI CLEAN-UP

...HYPREP SPEARHEADING MANGROVE RESTORATION

POETRY CORNER

A NEW LIFE SPRINGS

By: Kpoobari Nafo

The seed drops now and sprouts
Not like before when it withered
From roots oiled by crude
Piped online through farmlands

The crab burrows now and lives
Not like then when dregs suffocated it
And its next of kin - the periwinkle
Crawled to muddy death

In all the shorelines occupied by HYPREP
Biodiversity breathes again air of relief
And ecosystem once traumatized
Populated anew with fingerlings.

Photo:HYPREP



THE ENVIRONMENT ON MARBLE

"I think having land and not ruining it, is the most beautiful art that anybody could ever want." – Andy Warhol

Photo:HYPREP

... for a cleaner and greener Ogoniland

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