

International Conference on

# ENVIRONMENTAL MICROBIOLOGY & MICROBIAL ECOLOGY

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# ECOLOGY, ECOSYSTEMS & CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

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## Shell Petroleum Company and the environment in Nigeria

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This presentation uses data from field interviews with 47 respondents in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The interviews were carried out conducted through in-depth interviews one to one and focus group sessions. This paper examines the nexus between the environment, conflict, and security in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The study has raised some valid and insightful questions concerning how different views promote their notions and visions of the oil extraction, particularly regarding exploration, environmental pollution, security, and development. The questions were timely and established an increased understanding of the nature of the environmental conflict in Nigeria by excavating the nexus between the central government, oil companies, and communities. The paper will also highlight how both the government and MNCs responded to such developmental issues as the environment and the social security of the local communities in the oil-rich Niger Delta. The specific objective of the presentation is: a) to discuss the oil-based conflicts in Nigeria's Niger Delta region triggered by environmental destruction; b) to examine the responses of the government and local and international oil companies to the demands of the community regarding environmental protection or clean-up, and the development and security of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta. The riverine communities experiencing the infernal quaking of the wrath of gas flares which have been in operation and burning, 24 hours a day non-stop for the last fifty years. No one community in the Niger Delta comfortably drinks water anymore from cement wells. The multinational and local oil companies and the Nigerian federal government have left the owners with no compensation after taking all the massive acreage of land. The lands, streams, and creeks are mostly polluted seemingly beyond easy remediation. The gas flaring, illegal oil refining, corroded oil supply blast and spillages contributed to the severe risks to the ecosystem and human life in the Niger Delta, which the government and the oil companies neglected for so long. The Ogoniland clean-up necessitated by the reality on the ground, one of the activists I interviewed in the Niger Delta had this to say: In the Niger Delta, the ecosystem has been depleted: water is polluted and the environment everywhere is in total degradation. No one community in the Niger Delta comfortably drinks water anymore. Apart from the government leaving the owners with no compensation after taking all the massive acreage of land, there is a huge amount of unemployment as a result. The Niger Delta environment has suffered tremendous damage during the militants' violent conflict with the Nigerian security forces, especially from the recent destabilization and the setting fire to the oil pipelines.

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