



Shell in Nigeria

THE UNEP REPORT

Ogoni Restoration

On 4 August 2011 the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) published its Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, a study of oil pollution in the Ogoniland region of Rivers State in the eastern Niger Delta. The report was commissioned by the Federal Government as part of a wider Ogoni reconciliation process, which the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) supports. The SPDC joint venture financed the report and supplied data.

SPDC withdrew from Ogoniland in 1993 following a rise in violence, threats to staff and contractors and attacks on facilities. SPDC has produced no oil in Ogoniland since then, although a main pipeline still passes through the region and there remain several non-producing facilities.

The UNEP report highlighted significant environmental impacts from oil pollution in parts of Ogoniland relating to a variety of historical sources and ongoing crude oil theft and illegal refining activity. It identified some emergency measures requiring immediate action, particularly relating to the provision of potable water to impacted communities. It called on government, industry and communities to take action to put an end to all forms of ongoing oil contamination (including crude oil theft and illegal refining) and to begin a comprehensive clean up of the region.

Most of UNEP's recommendations – including the creation of an Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Authority and an Environmental Restoration Fund for Ogoniland – were directed at the Federal Government and require it to take the lead on coordinating the activities of the many stakeholders involved. The report also contained a number of findings specifically relating to SPDC practices and performance.

1993

SPDC halts operations in Ogoniland

AUGUST 2011

UNEP Report Published

2011-13

SPDC takes action on all recommendations directed to it and works with Rivers Government on emergency water supply

2012

Federal Government sets up Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Project (HYPREP) to implement UNEP

2013

HYPREP re-states commitment to commence full implementation of UNEP in 2014



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SPDC action

SPDC has taken action on all the UNEP recommendations directed specifically to it. All of the 15 sites identified in the report have been remediated and certified by regulators where further remediation was required, although there has been re-contamination from pipeline sabotage and oil theft in some cases. SPDC has completed an inventory and physical verification of assets in Ogoniland for decommissioning purposes.

SPDC has shown leadership by undertaking a range of activities related to the UNEP report in advance of the government, where it was able to do so. This included increasing community access to potable water in Ogoniland. In partnership with the Rivers State Government (RVSG) SPDC immediately began work to provide 250,000 litres a day of potable water to those communities whose water was found to be contaminated. These supplies started two weeks after the report was published. SPDC and RVSG also embarked on a project to construct permanent piped water distribution facilities. The Eleme Regional Water Supply Project, a 450,000 litre capacity facility with potential to serve an estimated 30,000 people a day (see picture), was completed and commissioned in August 2013.

MOST OF UNEP'S RECOMMENDATIONS WERE DIRECTED AT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND REQUIRE IT TO TAKE THE LEAD ON COORDINATING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MANY STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

SPDC continues to improve its clean-up practices to align with international best practice and Ogoni contractors are being trained as remediation consultants to build local capacity. SPDC staff and contractors are using improved bioremediation techniques in oil spill cleanup and restoration projects, enabling more effective remediation of deep-seated impacts and shallow groundwater contamination.

Transparency and collaboration

An independent verification team - consisting of a coalition of Nigerian NGOs, the verification consultancy Bureau Veritas and experts from the University of Port Harcourt and University of

Nigeria - was set up in September 2013 to review SPDC's emergency spill response and clean-up practices. SPDC also invited the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - a body of academics, environmental NGOs and other civil society experts - to set up an independent scientific panel to advise SPDC and make recommendations on restoring the biodiversity and habitats of spill sites related to its facilities. IUCN made a number of recommendations in a report submitted in August 2013 and a team has been set up to put into practice those recommendations which relate specifically to SPDC and are appropriate for it to implement.

IT IS CRUCIAL TO PUT AN END TO WIDESPREAD THEFT AND ILLEGAL REFINING OF CRUDE OIL, WHICH CONTINUE TO CAUSE NEW SPILLS AND IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OF OGONILAND.

Ongoing challenges

As UNEP stated, it is crucial to put an end to the widespread theft and illegal refining of crude oil and sabotage of infrastructure, which continue to cause new spills and impact on the environment of Ogoniland. Incidents of oil theft and willful damage of SPDC facilities increased again in 2013, with many taking place in Ogoniland.

Access to sites to clean up still remains a problem in some locations. The cooperation of communities in granting safe access has been and will remain a key factor in making progress in the clean up and remediation of impacted areas. Where communities grant access, SPDC cleans up and remediates oil spills from its facilities irrespective of the cause.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has a key role to play. Its Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Project (HYPREP) was set up in July 2012 with a mandate to implement UNEP's recommendations but has faced challenges in becoming operational on the ground. HYPREP has stated that it is determined to commence full implementation of the UNEP report in 2014. SPDC remains committed to working with the government on its environmental restoration programme in Ogoniland.