

# **STRENGTHENING INTERNAL SECURITY THROUGH YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA: THE NDDC EXPERIENCE**

**BY**

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## **Introduction**

At the dawn of civilization and the establishment of nation states, the primary purpose of government became and has remained the security and welfare of its people. The essence of the state, particularly in modern times is the maintenance of law and order, peace and security, and the creation of political conditions that would enhance the welfare of the citizenry. At the center of maintaining law and order is internal security. Therefore, internal security is of prime importance in the national life of nation states. On a general note, security simply suggests freedom from the danger of threats, safety-or the ability of the state to protect and promote its cherished values and legitimate interests, and enhance the well being of its people. While the general concepts of keeping a nation secure are not new, methodologies and strategies to achieve and maintain the highest possible desired state of security have been consistently developed over the modern period to this day. However, the concept of national or internal

security is very difficult to define because the root term, security, has remained a contested concept. In other words, it has no universally accepted definition due to its many facets arising from ideology and timeframe being addressed, as well as the locus of analysis.<sup>1</sup>

Internal security (IS) is variously defined as “the act of keeping peace within the borders of a sovereign state or other self-governing territories, generally by upholding the national law and defending against internal security threats”<sup>2</sup>. Responsibility for internal security may range from the police to paramilitary forces, and in exceptional circumstances, the military itself. For Walter Lippman, a nation is secured to the extent that it is not in a position to lose core values, lives, property and liberty. Internal security also refers to the requirement to maintain the survival of the nation-state through the use of economic, military, political power and the exercise of diplomacy<sup>3</sup>, while Imobighe (1990), conceptualizes internal security as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the corporate existence of the nation as well as its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values, socio-political and economic objectives while also meeting the legitimate aspiration of the citizenry. It implies freedom from danger to life and property and

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/articles/view/110242> accessed 13/8/18

<sup>2</sup><https://www.definition.net/definition/internal+security> accessed 13/8/18

<sup>3</sup> Culled from <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/articles/view/110242> accessed 13/8/18

the presence of a conducive atmosphere for the people to pursue their legitimate activities within the society.<sup>4</sup>

From the above it is clear that internal security simply suggests freedom from threat and the ability of the government to create and sustain an atmosphere conducive for the pursuit of economic interests by the population without interruptions from anybody. When there is a threat, it includes the ability of the government to quickly intervene to minimize its impact on the citizenry. Furthermore, it also includes the capacity of the government to create and maintain agencies and mechanisms, as well as institutions that would guarantee freedom from danger.<sup>5</sup>

The threat to life and property be it from armed bandits, militants, herdsmen and farmers clashes, communal crises, Boko Haram insurgency, civil disturbances and other disruptions of free movement and peaceful assembly are symptomatic of the failure of internal security.

The return of democratic rule in 1999 gave people the freedom to vent their disaffection with the existing social, political and economic order. This consequently led to the proliferation of militant ethnic and religious movements

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<sup>4</sup> TA Imobighe (1990), quoted in DO Egbefo & HA Salihu 'Internal Security Crisis in Nigeria: Causes, Types, Effects and Solutions' <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/articles/view/110242> accessed 13/8/18

<sup>5</sup> DO Egbefo & HA Salihu 'Internal Security Crisis in Nigeria: Causes, Types, Effects and Solutions' <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/articles/view/110242> accessed 13/8/18

collectively referred to as militias, starting from Odua People Congress (OPC), Arewa People's Congress (APC), Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Niger Delta Peoples' Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), "Boko Haram" and various other groups that often do not have a specific label or designation. The activities of these groups pose considerable economic, social, human and political threat to the sovereignty and co-existence of Nigeria and thus a threat to internal security. A general look at the activities of the members of these groups shows that they sometimes not only usurp the law enforcement functions of the police, but also wear provocative uniforms and openly brandish offensive weapons without any authorization. Therefore, these activities seriously violate general laws that were made for ensuring due process in law enforcement and criminal justice administration and for preserving public order and peace in the Nigerian society<sup>6</sup> as well as the supposed monopoly of the State of instruments of coercion.

Unfortunately, Nigeria's National Security Policy is outdated. It has relied on ad-hoc measures, fire brigade approaches, excessive use of force and disruption of free movement of persons, goods and services characterized by irritating road blocks, all of which do not enjoy the buy in of citizens. This partly explains why

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<sup>6</sup><https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/articles/view/110242> accessed 13/8/18

the internal security of the nation has not been very effective. “The national security policy of Nigeria since 1960 has been tied to the issue of dealing with the problem of external aggression and addressing internal upheavals. While the rest of the world now recognizes other variables that affect national security, Nigeria continues to adhere to an outdated model. In the United States, Canada and Europe, national security means national power and it is handled as such. This was eventually expanded to include economic and even other concerns”- National Security Policy in Nigeria by Emmanuel Jatau.<sup>7</sup>

### **Background on Niger Delta**

The Niger Delta is situated at the apex of the Gulf of Guinea on the coast of West Africa. It is home to over 40 million people, 60% of whom are below 30 years of age. Out of over 13,000 communities in the region, about 800 are oil-producing communities. The region covers about 75,000 square kilometers which makes up 7.5% of Nigeria’s landmass. It is the largest mangrove forest in Africa and the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest wetland in the world, comprised of mangrove forests and swamps in a complex and fragile ecosystem. It hosts over 1,100 producing oil wells from about 400 documented oil and gas fields. Historically, the area consists of present day AkwaIbom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers States,

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<sup>7</sup><https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/articles/view/110242> accessed 13/8/18

speaking about 250 dialects, but by virtue of the NDDC Act of 2000, now includes Abia, Imo and Ondo States.

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established in 2000. The vision of the Commission is to create the enabling environment for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta region. Its mission is to facilitate the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is socially stable, economically prosperous, politically peaceful and ecologically regenerative.

### **Causes of Internal Security Crisis in Nigeria**

Many writers have identified religious and political intolerance, systemic stress on our federal system of government, mismanagement of resources, subversion, sabotage, espionage, mutiny and other acts of criminality, climate change particularly desertification as the main triggers of internal security crises in Nigeria. However, there are deeper structural problems arising from the inherent systemic contradictions and the global financial economic crises that are engendering conflicts and crises that are manifesting in forms of political and religious intolerance, corruption and resource mismanagement.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ibid

“The Niger Delta exemplifies the paradox of low development in an environment of rich natural resources” (Francis & Sardesai, 2008)<sup>9</sup>. Several complex and interwoven factors have led to this outcome some of which are:

1. **Strong Federal Center versus weak periphery:** From 3 regions in 1960 dominated by single ethno-linguistic groups, the governance structure in Nigeria fragmented into 19 states in 1976, 36 states in 1996, with the number of Local Government Areas (LGAs) rising from 300 units in 1979 to 774 units today. Despite this autonomy, the federal system that redistributes centrally collected oil revenues (Suberu 2005).<sup>10</sup> Securing access and control over oil revenue (resource control) has become that main focus of political struggle at all levels, leading to violence (Watts 2004).<sup>11</sup>
2. **Patrimonialism and Prebendalism:** Patrimonialism is governance where power flows directly from the leader, blending public and private interests into one. Prebendalism is

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<sup>9</sup> P Francis and S Sardesai. May 2008. *‘Niger Delta Social and Conflict Analysis’*. Sustainable Development Department, Africa Region, World Bank. [https://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEV/Resources/3177394-1168615404141/33282201-1172597654983/Niger\\_Delta\\_May2008.pdf](https://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEV/Resources/3177394-1168615404141/33282201-1172597654983/Niger_Delta_May2008.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> RT Suberu 2005. *‘Renovating the Architecture of Federalism in Nigeria: The option of non-constitutional renewal’*. Conference Paper May 2005. <http://www.northwestern.edu/african-studies/Pdfs/May2005Conference/suberu.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> M Watts. 2004 *‘Resource curse? Governmentality, oil and power in the Niger Delta, Nigeria’*. Geopolitics. Vol. 9-1 2004 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14650040412331307832?needAccess=true>

governance where elected officials and government workers feel they have a right to share government revenues for the benefit of their supporters. From the outside, Nigeria seems to be a modern state. However, powerful networks of patronage and political alliances control the distribution of resources biased by a lack of strict division between public and private spheres (Chabal & Daloz, 1999).<sup>12</sup> Public employment and goods are viewed as resources for personal or group advancement rather than serving public good. As a result, the public sector is extremely bloated with up to 70% of federal income allocated to supporting the bureaucracy itself rather than the services it is designed to provide (Okafor, 2005).<sup>13</sup>

3. **Politics of Oil:** Oil revenues are central to nation building in Nigeria. With resource control agitations on the rise in the late 1990s, total monthly allocations to the Niger Delta states rose fivefold between 1999 and 2006 (HRW, 2007). Internally generated revenues account for about 15% of total state revenues with the Federal 13% derivation accounting for up to

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<sup>12</sup> P Chabal and JP Dolz. 1999. *'Africa Works: disorder as Political Instrument'* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. <https://eyr17fjhw05.storage.googleapis.com/MDI1MzlxMjg3MQ==05.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> EE Okafor. 2005 *'Public Bureaucracy and Development in Nigeria: a Critical Overview of Impediments to Public Service Delivery.'* CODESRIA Bulletin. No. 2 & 4. Pp.67-68 <http://www.codesria.org/Links/Publications/bulletin305/okafor.pdf>



60% of state revenues in Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States (Federal Ministry of Finance). The weak tax base, coupled with strong political and economic power centralized in the hands of state governments make it difficult for citizens to hold governments to account. This strengthens the personalization of politics, encouraging more corruption in the region and making reforms very difficult.

4. **Land Use Act:** The Petroleum Act of 1969 gave the state full ownership and control over the country's oil and gas reserves, whilst the 1978 Land Use Act nationalized all land, handing administration to states and local governments. Communities in the Niger Delta, which previously negotiated directly with oil companies, lost their rights (Ebeku, 2001).<sup>14</sup> The 1998 Kaiama Declaration referred to these Act as “rob our people of the right to control our lives and resources”. Likewise, the Ogoni protests of the 1990s focused on the same issues. All were met with violent repression by the Federal Government, further heightening perceptions of political exclusion and economic marginalization in the region.

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<sup>14</sup> K Ebeku S.A. 2001. *'Oil and the Niger Delta People: the Injustice of the Land Use Act.'* The Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy. Vol. 9: Article 14.  
<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/cepmlp/journal/html/vol9/article9-14.html>

From the foregoing, Nigeria is over burdened by the skewed federal structure it operates. As at 1<sup>st</sup> October 1960 when Nigeria got her independence from Britain, her economy was at par with the economies of India, Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Nigeria had three Regions, the Eastern, Western and Northern Regions. In 1963 the Mid West Region was created out of the Western Region. Infrastructure was basic but functional. Schools and hospitals were good. The Regions contributed to the Federal purse. The Regions were substantially autonomous and had their constitutions and had representative offices abroad. The Federal government was given exclusive powers over defence, foreign relations and commercial and fiscal policy.

The advent of the military in January 1966 resulted in the proliferation of states, 12 States by 1967, 1976 to 1987 - 19 States, 1987 to 1991 - 21 States and 1991 to 1996 -30 States and the Federal Capital Territory and from 1996, thirty six States. In thirty six years therefore we moved from three federating units to thirty six, an average of one per year, easily the most prolific bifurcation of federating units in history. Local Governments which stood at 300 in 1979 increased to 774 by 1996 through whimsical Local Government creations by the military.

Can we say we are still at par with the referenced countries? A simple look at some features will give us an answer-

## **India**

Population: 1.324 billion

Land mass: 3,287,260 km<sup>2</sup>

GDP (PPP) USD 10.38 trillion; (nominal) USD 2.84 trillion

Per capita: USD 2,134

Number of States: 29

## **Brazil**

Population: 209m

Land mass: 8,515,767 km<sup>2</sup>

GDP (PPP): USD 3.389 trillion; (nominal) USD 2.139 trillion

Per capita: USD 10,224

Number of States: 26

## **Indonesia**

Population: 261m

Land mass: 1,904,569 km<sup>2</sup>

GDP (PPP): USD 3.481 trillion; (nominal) USD 1.074 trillion

Per capita: USD 4,116

Number of provinces: 34

## **Malaysia**

Population: 32 m

Land mass: 330,803 km<sup>2</sup>

GDP (PPP): USD 1.002 trillion; (nominal) USD 365 billion

Per capita USD 11,237

Number of States: 13

## **Singapore**

Population: 5.6m

Land mass: 721.5 km<sup>2</sup>

GDP (PPP): USD 554.855 billion; (nominal) USD 349.659 billion

Per capita: USD 61,766

Number of states, nil; city state

## **Nigeria**

Population: 182m (estimated)

Land mass: 923,768 km<sup>2</sup>

GDP (PPP): USD 1.118 trillion; (nominal) USD 376.28 billion

Per capita: USD 1,994

*Source: International Monetary Fund Economies Data, World Economic Outlook Database*

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders within a specific time, usually on an annual basis. By GDP India and Brazil are among the top ten countries of the world with India at 7<sup>th</sup> place and Brazil at 9<sup>th</sup> place. Indonesia is 16<sup>th</sup>, Nigeria 23<sup>rd</sup> and Malaysia 33<sup>rd</sup>. However all other economic indices like inflation rate, unemployment rate, budget deficit and change in real GDP put the referenced countries ahead of Nigeria. So do social indicators.

### **What did we share?**

Brazil and Indonesia share the commonality of our experience of military rule. In spite of the disruptions of military rule they have made substantial economic progress nevertheless. Therefore, theirs are examples that in spite of the disruptiveness of military rule, development is possible. Indeed the military regime of Getulio Dornelles Vargas of Brazil is credited with the transformation of Brazil and the introduction of Estado Novo, "the new state" though it was characterized by the over centralization of power at the expense of the provinces. Nigeria has had a feast of military regimes: Ironsi, Gowon, Murtala Mohammed, Obasanjo, Buhari,

Babangida, Sani Abacha and Abdulsalam Abubakar, cumulatively spanning almost thirty years of our post colonial period, which in my view was hardly transformative but more disruptive, totally distorting our federalism especially by over centralizing power and resources and effectively creating a unitary state.

### **What did we do that they did not do?**

Relative to their land mass, populations and the GDP they have fewer and therefore larger federating units, whether as States or Provinces. Their federating units have been largely numerically stable and where there has been bifurcation, division or creation, it has not been as dramatic, prolific and as rampant as has been in the case of Nigeria. In a sense there is the economics of scale in federating units.

I had earlier said that between 1960 to 1996 (a period of thirty six years), we moved from three Regions to thirty six states, on the average a new State per year of that period. This rate of proliferation has had systemic and structural implications and complications.

### **Implications and complications**

As mentioned earlier, Nigeria's economy as at 1965 was one of the fastest growing in the world and that of the defunct Eastern Region reputed to be the fastest growing in the world. My deduction is that structurally we were at an

optimal point of structural efficiency that guaranteed economic development which was empirical as it showed in our economic growth rate. We need to do comparative analyses of the national budgets and other economic indicators to find the breaking point, that is, the point where through states creation we became structurally inefficient, to be factual and authoritative. I however have some informed suspicions.

Up to and including when we had twelve States, the Federal and the States' governments delivered massively on infrastructure. The then Head of State General Yakubu Gowon was famously quoted to have said that “money was not the problem but how to spend it”. By the time we got to nineteen states payment of salaries to workers in the states' public services had become an issue, largely because of the following reasons:

- a. Bloated bureaucracies** - Each newly created state required a bureaucracy and there are as many bureaucracies as there are states. With each state creation, people were promoted into positions for which they were not ready. I know of a state where school teachers without any prior experience were appointed Directors-General, as Permanent Secretaries were then known. In fact a disc jockey whose only experience in government was having been a Councilor in a Local Government was also appointed a Director General in that dispensation. Inefficiency and incompetence were thus promoted in the

system. Inefficiency and incompetence breed corruption. Corruption is the taking of advantage of inefficiency or weaknesses in the system for private advantage or gain. It is largely a consequence of systemic inefficiency. The same inefficiency and incompetence were fed to the federal system. The higher the number of States the higher the theatres of corruption and the bigger the infrastructure for corruption.

- b. Dwindling Budgets:** A comparative study and analyses of the federal and regional/states budgets from 1960 till date will need to be done for my postulation to be factual, scientific or objective. However, I strongly believe that there is a direct correlation between the number of regions or states and the ratio between the capital and recurrent budgets and the extent of budget implementation. States in Nigeria were never created on economic considerations or as economic units; rather they were created whimsically on political and personal considerations. Economic viability of states was not a criterion in the creation of states. The states were therefore conceived as consumption and not production centres. Up to and including the twelve states structure, states were able to massively deliver on infrastructure because - in my yet to be verified view - the various budgets, federal and states, the capital/recurrent ratio weighted substantially in favor of capital. As more states were created the ratio progressively reversed to a point where

the capital components of both the federal and states budgets were barely twenty percent. It is the capital component of the budget that delivers development and poverty reduction through the implementation of capital projects.

Other structural problems itemized by Egbefo and Salishu<sup>15</sup> militating against internal security include:

- The effects of rapid population growth on the economic development of Nigeria. This has been identified as a major clog in the wheel of economic development in Nigeria and reasons for internal security threat since 1960.
- Electoral fraud is an impediment to Nigeria's search for internal security. Nigeria has a long history of electoral rigging, ballot box snatching, fraud and now vote buying that have been frustrating the wishes of the people to choose those who exercise political power. Precisely because of this history, elections in the country have often been associated with political tension and indeed violence and crises.
- Environmental pollution and degradation from extractive activities including gas flaring.
- Climate change and desertification as well as the drying up of Lake Chad

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<sup>15</sup><https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/articles/view/110242> accessed 13/8/18



- Economic under development occasioning unemployment, poverty, inequality and want, and the growing rate of poverty and hunger among Nigerians. Poverty is a situation or condition of hopelessness, a condition of being poor and wretched and not being able to meet the basic necessities of life. Poverty is a situation in which people live below a predetermined standard value in terms of income and conditions of living, hence the rating and description of individual and nations as being poor. About 50% of Nigerians live below poverty line and about 70% live in rural areas with no infrastructure, food, shelter and so on. The effect of poverty and hunger makes the poor to be aggressive and intolerant and to indulge in violence and anti-social activities which threaten the security of the state.
- High rate of illiteracy among Nigerians. The rate of illiteracy is very high in the country, figures from various education departments' show that education in some part of Nigeria has sustained a progressive decline over the years. The implication is that social, political and economic mobilization policies of the government do not trickle down to the majority of the youths and other agents of peace.
- The consequence of corruption and unethical practices in Nigeria. Corruption is essentially the product of man's greed for earthly grandeur, power and authority. It exists when an individual illegally or illicitly puts

personal interest above those of the people and the ideals she or he is pledged to serve. Generally the consequences of corruption and unethical practices in Nigeria are multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. The implications are overwhelming and have far reaching negative implications for internal security required for development. Corruption is the consequence of an inefficient system. Inefficiency disposes people to take advantage of the system for personal gain.

In summary, reckless exploration and exploitation of crude oil resulted in incessant oil spills and gas flaring, polluting and degrading the environment, poisoning the waters, seafood and destroying aquatic life as well as streams, which are the only source of drinking water. These pollutions over the years have resulted in birth defects, premature births, cancers and skin diseases, suffocation from noxious gasses, poisoned water, crops and other forms of environmental pollution. As farmers and Fishermen, their polluted lands were rendered useless. Poverty increased and with it, anger and frustration increased, according to Ugokwe<sup>16</sup>.

Also, despite the enormous resources exploited from the area, the region remains pervasively and inexcusably poor and under developed, lacking virtually

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<sup>16</sup>E Ugokwe 'The Niger Delta Crises, Problems and Solution'

<https://progresspublishing.wordpress.com/2012/04/16/latest-the-niger-delta-crises-problem-and-solution> accessed 14/8/18

all forms of social amenities and infrastructure, including electricity, medical facilities, roads, housing etc., a life of scarcity in the midst of plenty. Historically, the region has been politically extremely fragile, fragmented and prone to violent disputes over land and family rights. Fighting for the rights of these communities continue to fall in the hands of the youths that are sometimes mismanaged or misdirected. It is a region today whose traditional leaders and elites have compromised social justice and have lost much credibility and respect. They have been corrupted by payments from the government and oil companies and, coupled with unbridled quest for control of political power. As a result of these factors, many aggrieved youths in the region resorted to direct action to extract compensation for their perceived losses, thereby compromising the internal security of the region. They invade oil company properties, take employees hostage, and shut down facilities. Oil companies typically negotiate the release of captured personnel and property with relative ease by paying modest ransoms which in turn triggered the cycle of kidnappings and hostage taking some resulting in fatalities, creating its own illicit economy. There is also destruction of pipelines and bombing incidents, bunkering and illegal refineries as well as clashes between government forces and militants, which result in the death of many innocent persons. Chaos and restiveness have thus become the order of the day.

## **Strategy for Management of Internal Security**

Nigeria relies on the traditional instruments of internal security namely the coercive, that is, the Army, Navy and Air Force including the Nigerian Police Force, and non coercive instruments which are those agencies whose activities silently reinforce internal security, such as State Security Service (SSS), the Nigerian Customs, Immigration, Prison Service, Civil Defence Corps, Federal and State Fire Service, Federal Road Safety Corps etc. However, the political use of the above agencies and paucity of funds for proper training of personnel and provision of appropriate equipment have distorted their functions. Perhaps given the age bracket of those involved in these acts of criminality and reasons given for engaging in crime, there is an urgent need for the government to amongst others, tackle this menace by addressing the issue of unemployment, poverty, hunger, quality education, population growth and underdevelopment. Simply put, development of both infrastructure and human capital is the answer to the agitations in the region. The skewed structure of the federation also needs to be addressed by dismantling the infrastructure for corruption, the inefficiency and incompetence promoted by a debilitating and suffocating federal structure. We must agree that the structure that we have now is not working. The states are bankrupt. Most of them cannot pay salaries and/or clear refuse. Poverty and

unemployment are biting. The way out is restructuring the federation in a way that the federating units are economic units and therefore economically viable.

Nevertheless, youth empowerment as a veritable tool for reducing crime is of focal importance. It is a process where children and young persons are encouraged to take charge of their lives. They do this by addressing their situation and then take action in order to improve their access to resources and transform their consciousness through their beliefs, values and attitude.<sup>17</sup> Put differently, youth empowerment can be defined as the process whereby young people gain the ability and authority to make informed decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people. It is a means of encouraging youths to do great things for themselves and also to make great impact in their society. Youth empowerment involves helping youths identify, utilize and maximise their potentials; helping the youth to develop confidence and self-identity; encouraging youths to grow together in accountability; and imbibing in youth, the eagerness to create a change.<sup>18</sup>

### **Key Initiatives for Youth Empowerment by NDDC**

- a. NDDC oversea scholarship program. The commission has granted scholarships to several indigenes of the region for postgraduate training in the best universities and institutions abroad.

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<sup>17</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/youth\\_empowerment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/youth_empowerment) accessed 17/8/18

<sup>18</sup>[www.schoolmattazz.com/2017/02/youth-empowerment](http://www.schoolmattazz.com/2017/02/youth-empowerment) accessed 20/8/18

- b. Soft contracts particularly renovation works and contracts for clearing of invasive weeds or water hyacinth have been reserved for specific category on indigenes to empower them and distract them from acts of criminality. The Commission has also taken steps to address the erroneous mindset and sense of entitlement exhibited by youths of the Region by constant dialogue and intervention through undertaking Pro-Poor and people oriented projects as well as big ticket projects that would create a more prosperous and integrated Regional economy,
- c. ICT Revolution. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a ‘no jobs’ Century and no government or institution, no matter how rich and how good intentioned, can solve this problem completely. Information and Communication Technology (ICT), like the Industrial Revolution did at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is taking away many jobs. Automated Teller Machine (ATM) cards, for instance, are reducing the number of cashiers needed in banks. Majority of travelers do not need to go to an airline office to book and pay for flight tickets. Many Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) are doing away with personal secretaries because they can schedule meetings, appointments and do most of their business on ipads and smart phones. Furthermore, there are new energy sources and more countries are entering into the Oil Market as producers even as oil prices continue to fall. This situation has compelled many nations to look to other areas of endeavor to engage and empower their youths who are mostly affected by the paucity of employment and business opportunities. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the country's unemployment rate rose from 14.2% to 18.8% in 2017. This statistic refers to only those actively seeking employment. There are also bands of youths at various stages of the educational ladder or those who have graduated from tertiary institutions in search of jobs while waiting to

get to the next level of education or waiting for NYSC call-ups. Only about 30% of graduates are said to get jobs leaving the rest in the job search queue. This makes it imperative that our young men and women would need to have multiple competencies to survive. To address this situation, the NDDC has taken steps to ring the Niger Delta States with fibre optics for broadband penetration. The focus of this Board is to create an integrated regional economy to meaningfully impact the lives of the people of Niger Delta region. A cardinal vehicle to achieve this objective is Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Connectivity, whether the Internet or mobile phones is increasingly bringing market information, financial services, health services to remote areas, and is helping to change people's lives in unprecedented ways. New information and communications technologies, in particular high-speed internet, are changing the way companies do business, transforming public service delivery and democratizing innovation. It has been observed that with 10 percent increase in high speed Internet connections, economic growth increases by 1.3 percent. The mobile platform is thus emerging as the single most powerful way to extend economic opportunities and key services to millions of people which will in no small measure help address unemployment, poverty and youth restiveness in the region.

- d. The Commission is proposing to establish sports academies for youth engagement, health and crime prevention. Sports have been used successfully as a tool for engaging the youth all over the world. The health benefits of regular exercise are also well known – a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. Even more significant is the critical role sports can play in enhancing security and reducing crime in a society. David Dinkins, the black American Mayor of New York from 1990 to 1993 was known to have

used sports to significantly reduce the crime rate in New York. Under the Dinkins administration, crime in New York City decreased more dramatically and more rapidly than at any time in previous New York City history. He established training programs in the slums and introduced midnight basketball competitions, which kept the youth engaged, and out of mischief. Engaging in sporting activity is one of the most potent areas of endeavour that can empower our youth to create wealth for themselves, their families and the nation. The sports industry is estimated to be a 450 – 600 billion US dollar global industry and is the second largest employer of labour after ICT. Industry experts have projected that the Nigerian sports industry has the potential to generate 40 – 50 billion US dollars annually and engage and empower millions of Nigerian youth. The best football players are being signed on for sums between 20 – 50 million dollars and paid weekly wages of between 100,000 – 250,000 dollars. Professional boxers are getting up to 35 million US dollars for a night's fight. Basketball superstars are earning averages of 15 million dollars besides endorsements. Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes are running in meets all over the world grossing between one and two million US dollars each year. There are professional leagues in other sports that recruit and pay well for outstanding players from any part of the world. To tap into the sports industry, the NDDC intends to establish functional standard facilities in the form of academies in NDDC States with due consideration for aptitude and comparative advantage, and will promote specific sports like football, lawn tennis and golf. This will provide an opportunity for our youths to be exposed to global professional platforms, worldwide sports scholarships to institutions abroad and to use their sporting talents to create wealth at home and abroad for themselves, their families and their nation.



- e. Skills acquisition and training program for Niger Delta Youths. One of the mandates of the Commission is capacity building for youths of the Region. Capacity can be in the form of formal education, technical training and skills acquisition. It is in this regard that the Commission set up several skills acquisition centres and programmes across the region and is in collaboration with key industrial concerns such as Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company, an Indigenous Vehicle Manufacturing firm with an ultra modern manufacturing plant located at Nnewi, Anambra State. The company's facilities is a veritable resource centre for training and building of capacities of our youths in the area of automobile, technical and engineering skills. Already, the company is involved in training youths under the presidential Amnesty Programme.
- f. Provision of farming tools and fertilizer to target group of farmers to enhance their farming capabilities and boost product output.

### **Niger Delta Development Bank**

There is a changing global energy mix. Oil revenues are dwindling and may well eventually dry up, such that NDDC (which already has funding constraints) would be bedeviled by poor funding over the long run. Events of the recent past show that-

- Oil is depleting and indeed a wasting resource. This must draw attention to what the future portends as funds for NDDC would continue to diminish overtime.
- Tumbling oil prices, volatility of the oil market and developments in the United States, Nigeria's hitherto main market for oil export suggest that Nigeria's (and NDDC's) reliance on oil revenues is unsustainable.

- Improvements in alternative energy sources – wind, solar, biomass, nuclear and others would increasingly reduce global reliance on oil, diminish associated revenues for the country and indeed the NDDC.
- Technology and its ever increasing advancement, including advancement in fuel efficient engines and the drive for electric vehicles would ultimately reduce global reliance on oil as the major energy source for vehicles.

To forestall the impending consequences of the Niger Delta without oil, the Commission has put in place mechanisms to establish the Niger Delta Development Bank (NDDB). The essence of development banking is that there is a well documented import, impact and historical role of development banks in national, regional and global development. For instance, the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank, IFC, and IMF) were established as most countries including Europe and United States were bedeviled by WW2 losses and reduced government revenues. The AfDB was established in 1963 to support fledgling African economies. Also, NEXIM (Nigeria) and Afreximbank (Africa-wide) were championed by Nigeria in the early 1990s (at a difficult time in Nigeria's history). These organizations have since become veritable purveyors of finance to the benefit of the focused regions and economies.

### **Benefits of NDDB**

Establishing the NDDB would put the NDDC region at the centre of development, with attendant positive multiplier effects for the Nigerian economy. Specifically, a professionally developed and managed NDDB would-

- Generate tax revenues for governments, as existing firms expand operations and new ones enter the region, thereby improving the revenue base of the Niger Delta region, and the country as a whole.

- Ultimately help diversify the economy (a laudable mantra of the present administration) as the region blooms.
- Help the region to ultimately transit and thrive in the future post-oil economy.
- Contribute to the sustainable financing of the region's development.
- Complement the efforts of IOC's, LGAs, States, NDDC and FGN in regional security, integration, development and much needed peace, all to the benefit of the Country as a whole

## **Conclusion**

The Niger Delta is a microcosm of the larger Nigerian state. Apart from the issue of Boko Haram insurgency, every other internal security challenge of the country is replicated in the region. Not all concerns of internal security can be addressed by the traditional instruments of policing and coercive power of the State. Economic strategies to address the basic necessities of life may well be the needed panacea to reduce internal security challenges. Above all, our current structure cannot deliver development and by implication the much needed security. We should not continue in self deceit or in self denial. Every society must adapt to changing realities otherwise it dies. Nigeria has great realizable potentials. Making her great is a choice Nigerians only can make. That choice we must make. And now. The simple answer to our challenge is development and we must take up the challenge of development in every aspect.

Thank you

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