

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Friends of the Earth Nigeria / Friends of the Earth Netherlands

Friends of the Earth Groups Call on Shell To Clean Up Nigeria Oil Spills

AMSTERDAM (THE NETHERLANDS) / LAGOS (NIGERIA), 5 August 2013 -

Exactly two years after a United Nations report exposed oil giant Shell's systematic contamination of Ogoniland in Nigeria, Friends of the Earth groups from around the world are today launching an online petition targeting Shell. [1]

Friends of the Earth groups are urging Shell to accelerate the clean up of the oil-rich and heavily polluted Niger Delta in Nigeria.

The call for action comes exactly two years after the publication of the United Nation's Environmental Programme's (UNEP) report 'Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland' about the situation in Ogoniland.

Ogoniland is one of the regions in the Niger Delta where oil pollution has devastated the environment and the livelihoods of farmers and fishermen. [2]

In the report the UNEP accused Shell of not properly cleaning up oil that had leaked from its pipelines and from other facilities. According to UNEP the way in which Shell has handled its contaminated sites in Ogoniland so far is "not leading to environmental restoration nor legislative compliance, nor even compliance with its own internal procedures". [3]

One of the key recommendations made by the UNEP is that Shell, other oil companies, and the Nigerian Government set up an Environmental Restoration Fund for Ogoniland with an initial capital injection of USD 1 billion.

Other key recommendations by the UNEP include an overhaul of the inadequate clean up method (the so called RENA method) that Shell is applying in Ogoniland and a decommissioning of abandoned oil facilities.

So far, none of these recommendations have been implemented by Shell, even though Shell endorsed the UNEP report almost immediately after its publication

Geert Ritsema from Friends of the Earth Netherlands said: "It is about time that Shell puts its money where its mouth is. Shell should start a thorough clean up programme in Nigeria and follow the recommendations of the United Nations."

Friends of the Earth Netherlands, together with four Nigerian farmers, took Shell to court in The Netherlands and on 30 January 2013 the district court in The

Hague ruled that Shell was guilty of neglect in the case of Friday Alfred Akpan – one of the four farmers.

The court ordered the oil giant to pay him compensation for the damage caused by oil that was spilled on his land. However, in the case of the other three farmers the court let Shell off the hook. Friends of the Earth Netherlands and the Nigerian farmers have appealed the verdict. A first hearing in the appeal case is expected in early 2014 in The Hague. [4]

Friends of the Earth groups are also urging the Nigerian government to take action and in particular to improve regulatory oversight of Shell and other oil companies.

Friends of the Earth Nigeria Executive Director Godwin Ojo said :
"The Nigerian government and Shell are still promoting cosmetic approaches to the remediation measures recommended by the United Nations. These approaches guarantee that Shell does not take responsibility for its mess in Ogoniland. Instead, Shell should immediately commence the cleaning up of all impacted sites and ensure remediation, restoration and compensation. "

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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NOTES TO EDITORS

[1] The petition is online at <http://www.foei.org/en/what-we-do/land-grabbing/latest-news/shell-clean-up-your-mess-in-ogoniland>

[2] For more information about the 2011 UNEP report see :
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/aug/04/niger-delta-oil-spill-clean-up-un>

[3] More information at page 135 of the UNEP report Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland: <http://www.unep.org/nigeria/>

[4] For more information on the courtcase, see:
<http://www.milieudefensie.nl/english/shell/news>