

COMMUNIQUE OF THE NIGER DELTA CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2024

Theme: Acting Together for Climate Resilience: A Recovery Plan for the Niger Delta

Venue: Justice Mary Odili Judicial Institute Hall, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Date: October 21 – 25, 2024

The Niger Delta Climate Change Conference 2024, convened by the Lekeh Development Foundation and partner organizations, brought together representatives from local communities, grassroots leaders, civil society organizations, government officials, women's groups, youth movements, environmental advocates, and international allies. Over the past five days, we have reflected on the environmental, economic, and social challenges facing the Niger Delta, with the aim of advancing a just energy transition and building climate resilience.

This communique captures the key outcomes, resolutions, and collective commitments from the conference.

- a) Observations and Key Issues
 - i. Environmental Degradation: Decades of oil extraction, gas flaring, and pollution have devastated the region's ecosystems, poisoned water bodies, degraded farmlands, and negatively impacted the health of the people.
 - ii. Divestment Without Accountability: Oil companies are divesting from onshore facilities without undertaking proper environmental remediation or community consultations, leaving communities with unresolved environmental harm.
 - iii. Climate Change Impact: The Niger Delta faces increasing challenges from climate change, including rising temperatures, sea-level rise, flooding, and loss of biodiversity, further undermining livelihoods.

- iv. **Limited Participation in Energy Transition Plans:** Nigeria's energy transition policies do not adequately reflect the realities and needs of frontline communities, risking further exclusion of Niger Delta residents in the shift to renewable energy.
- v. **Gender and Youth Exclusion:** Women and youth—key drivers of change—are often marginalized in decision-making processes, despite bearing disproportionate burdens from climate change and environmental degradation.

b) Resolutions and Action Points

- i. **Demand for Corporate Accountability**

Oil companies must undertake comprehensive environmental remediation, health audits, and compensation for communities before any divestment is finalized. The Nigerian government must enforce environmental laws and ensure that no oil company exits without restoring polluted areas.

- ii. **Advancing a Just Energy Transition**

Participants call for Nigeria's energy transition framework to prioritize renewable energy investments in the Niger Delta and ensure no community is left behind. The government is urged to halt new fossil fuel projects and reallocate investments toward sustainable, green energy solutions that create jobs and enhance livelihoods.

- iii. **Strengthening Community-Based Climate Resilience**

Grassroots leaders will implement local adaptation strategies and promote agroecology and sustainable livelihoods to strengthen resilience to climate change. Participants emphasized the need to integrate indigenous knowledge systems into climate policies and promote nature-based solutions.

- iv. **Advocacy and Policy Engagement**

A Niger Delta Action Plan on Climate Change will be developed and used as a policy advocacy tool to engage decision-makers at the national and international levels. A collective delegation from the Niger Delta will attend COP29 in Baku to present their position and demand financing for loss and damage, as well as climate justice for frontline communities.

v. Gender and Youth Inclusion

Gender-responsive policies will be integrated into all climate initiatives to ensure the full participation of women in decision-making and implementation. Youth groups will be mobilized to take active leadership roles in climate advocacy, locally and globally, with a focus on capacity building and innovation.

vi. Launch of the Fossil-Free Niger Delta Campaign

Lekeh Development Foundation officially launched the Fossil-Free Niger Delta Campaign, calling for an end to fossil fuel extraction in the region and resisting any attempt to resume oil production in Ogoniland and other impacted areas.

vii. Campaign actions will include community dialogues, peaceful protests, and awareness campaigns across the Niger Delta to promote renewable energy and sustainable development.

a) Call to Action

Participants call on:

- i. The Government of Nigeria to prioritize environmental cleanup, enforce corporate accountability, and accelerate the transition to renewable energy.
- ii. International development partners and allies to provide financial and technical support for climate resilience and community-based adaptation projects.

- iii. Oil companies to honor their responsibility for environmental restoration and compensation before exiting the region.
- iv. Communities and civil society organizations to remain united, resilient, and committed to advancing climate justice and sustainable development in the Niger Delta.

Conclusion

The Niger Delta Climate Change Conference 2024 has reaffirmed the commitment of participants to act together for climate resilience and environmental justice. As we move forward, the voice of the Niger Delta will be carried to national and global platforms, including COP29, where we will demand the resources, policies, and commitments needed to protect our communities and secure a sustainable future.

We leave this conference united in purpose and strengthened by solidarity. The path to a Fossil-Free Niger Delta begins today, and together, we will achieve a just and sustainable future for our people.

Signed:

Lekeh Development Foundation

Yeraba Women Foundation