
Nigeria: Shell is back to wreck the environment and the people

The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) --which was responsible for the crude oil leaking from June to December 1998 of a pipeline into the Oyara mangrove forests and its dispersion into surrounding water streams, farms and sacred sites of the Otuegwe community-- is now implementing the SPDC-E major oil Trunkline Replacement project. Major operations involved are land take, route clearing, trenching/excavation, stringing, welding, radiograph, back filling, hydro-testing and re-instatement.

Major rural communities and areas in the Niger Delta such as Diebu Creek, Nun River, Rumuekpe, Nkpolu, Ogale, Bomu, Soku, Buguma, Oribiri, Alakiri, Nembe-Tie, Nembe main, Tora, San Barth, Krakama, Cawthorne and Bonny would be adversely affected during project execution and implementation. SPDC will wreck the ecology at both ends, thereby throwing creek dwelling families, ecology, rural people and the mangrove forests and other resources of the Niger Delta into massive disequilibrium.

In the months of March, May and June, 2003, SPDC in collaboration with the Nigerian authorities organized Public Hearings, as requested by Nigerian Law's Oil Pipeline Act Cap 338. Concerned environmental groups working in the area flayed the processes, and asked the Nigerian government not to give license to Shell because they have demonstrated their inability to operate the pipelines and reduce negative impacts on the environment and peoples of the area. However, the project is about to commence without regard for the people and their environment.

Niger Delta Project for Environment, Human Rights and Development (NDPEHRD) is concerned about the devastation that Shell is about to unleash on the tall and abundant mangrove species in the area. The cutting of trees will lead to loss of mangrove vegetation of different types, sizes, classes and shapes that will run into several hectares.

When SPDC eventually carries out their project, the decaying mangrove plant material will eventually foul the surrounding environment, particularly areas with limited capacity to flush. Generally, in mangrove environment and related human communities, associated attributes such as environmentally reserved areas, sanctuaries, shrine and archaeological sites are numerous. The negative impacts of the pipeline project will be enormous on the people and their environment.

During the replacement exercise, the pipelines containing crude oil will inevitably spill a huge quantity on the environment. At Peterside community in Bonny, members of the Bonny indigenous fishing co-operatives told NDPEHRD officials that they have protested against the project, but SPDC ignored them. They said they are more concerned about the impacts the project will pose to their activities.

NDPEHRD has launched a campaign and invites to write letters to SPDC asking them to obey Nigerian Environmental Laws and be mindful of the impacts of their activities on the peoples' environment (<http://www.wrm.org.uy/alerts/october03.html#4>).

Extracted and adapted from: "SPDC Commences Destruction of Hundreds of

