

UNEP In Ogoniland Newsletter

November 2010

It's one year since project launch

During November, the fieldwork for the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) environmental assessment of Ogoniland entered its closing stages.

The scientific teams continued collecting samples of soil, sediment, water and air, and examining specimens of plants, marine life and livestock from sites across Ogoniland, aided by the Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST), local guides and other community members.

This month also marked the first anniversary of the official launch of UNEP's environmental survey. UNEP appreciates the support its project team has received from the Ogoni people which has contributed greatly to the significant progress made so far. Here we recap some key project milestones.

October 2009 In the presence of the Secretary to the State Government, the Hon. Magnus Ngei Abe, UNEP opens a project office in Port Harcourt to help deliver its work on-the-ground.

A week-long technical training course is held for newly recruited UNEP project team members and representatives of government agencies and universities.



October 2009 The project's reconnaissance phase begins. It involves a four step process: 1) area identification, 2) sensitization, 3) land access negotiation and 4) initial assessment of oil spill sites.



27 November 2009 The Governor of Rivers State, the Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, and UNEP's Project Manager, Mike Cowing, officially launch UNEP's assessment project in Bori at an event attended by

King G.N.K Gininwa the Gbenemene Tua Tau Tai together with some 5,000 Ogoni community members. During the assembly, the Governor sends a strong message of endorsement of the assessment and encourages local communities to lend their support.

December 2009 Major consultation meetings take place with the four Ogoniland Local Government Area (LGA) chairmen. These meetings effectively commence UNEP's community sensitization activities which are still ongoing.

December 2009-March 2010

Town Hall meetings to discuss the project are held with the local government secretariats in each LGA (Eleme, Tai, Khana and Gokana). All four meetings see a high turnout of



people from various sectors, including community rulers, youth, women, non-governmental organizations and community based organizations.



25 February 2010 The Governor of Rivers State, Rt. Hon. Amaechi, hosts a meeting at Government House of the Presidential Implementation Committee which is overseeing UNEP's environmental assessment project. At the meeting, UNEP gives an update on its project and invites feedback.

April 2010 UNEP commences the scientific sampling phase. The technical teams comprise international and national experts and students who are assisted in the field by other members of the UNEP project team, local guides and volunteers. Forty people attend technical training at RSUST aimed at developing the capacity and awareness of project team staff and key stakeholders involved in UNEP's project, including representatives from the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, Rivers State Ministry of Environment, the Directorate of Petroleum Resources and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.



At the request of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is conducting a comprehensive, independent assessment of the environmental and public health impacts of oil contamination in Ogoniland, Rivers State, Nigeria, and options for remediation. The fieldwork and laboratory analysis are ongoing. The report writing will start in November. The report will be published in early 2011.

26 May 2010 The project's Community Consultation Committee (CCC) meets for the first time. The meeting, held at UNEP's project office in Port Harcourt, provides a forum for open discussion and exchange of ideas, as well as stakeholder concerns. Among the participants are Professor Roseline Konya (former Commissioner, Rivers State Ministry of Environment), Engr. Enyi U.U. (NOSDRA) and Dr Iyenemi Kakulu (Rivers State University of Science and Technology).

July 2010 The UNEP project teams working in the field assessing hundreds of oil impacted sites collect their 1,000th scientific sample.

5 August 2010 More than 30 representatives of the Rivers State Government, the Gokana, Tai, Eleme and Khana LGAs, youth groups, RSUST and national organizations attend the third CCC meeting.

30 August 2010 The President of Nigeria, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, commends UNEP, the Rivers State Government, the committee chairman, Rev. Monsignor Matthew Kukah, and other key project stakeholders on their efforts to establish the pollution levels in Ogoniland in the best interest of the Ogoni people.

September 2010 The total number of participants at UNEP community outreach sessions since the project's launch exceeds 20,000 people.

October 2010 Twenty students attend an orientation day at the UNEP Project Office as part of a change-over of RSUST students who are assisting the UNEP project team.



Women chiefs made valuable contributions during the sensitisation programme at Ejama-Ebubu, Eleme LGA

November actions in the field



Technical Team leader Thorsten Kallnischkies discussing with scientists during site briefing in K-Dere, Gokana LGA



UNEP project team members Mike Cowing and Hannoa Guillaume collecting soil samples at a site in Bodo South West, Gokana LGA



Thorsten Kallnischkies and Andrew Akhighu collecting ground water sediments at Bomu creek in Gokana LGA

Schools embrace Green Frontiers



Pupils at community primary school Kwawa, Khana LGA enrolled as members of the Green Frontiers Club

The Green Frontiers Schools Programme is now up and running in Ogoniland.

Eight schools are participating in the pilot phase of the environmental education programme, previewed in our September newsletter, which is a joint initiative between UNEP and the Rivers State Government. Two schools have been recruited from each LGA as follows:

Khana LGA

- ☐ Community Primary School, Kwawa
- ☐ Community Secondary School, Kpean

Eleme LGA

- ☐ Government Secondary School, Onne
- ☐ State School, Egbu

Tai LGA

- ☐ Tua Tua Community Secondary, Aa-bue Korokoro
- ☐ Community Primary School, Nonwa

Gokana LGA

- ☐ Government Secondary School, Kpor
- ☐ State School 1, Bodo



Some students at government junior secondary school Kpor, Gokana learning to use field radios earlier this year

The Green Frontiers programme is receiving tremendous support from both school heads and students. Already, 586 students from the participating schools have registered as Green Frontiers Club members.

During advocacy visits to schools, the UNEP project team has consulted teachers and students alike to understand their perceptions and expected outcomes of the initiative in their schools and communities at large.

On our visit to Tua Tua Community Secondary School Aabue-Korokoro in Tai LGA, the Vice Principal Administration, Venerable Promise Ngaragbor, said he welcomed the programme which would give students and teachers the opportunity to learn not just about oil spills in their community but other environmental issues too.

In the same vein, Melukabari Ernest, a Junior Secondary School 3 student and a volunteer in the Green Frontiers Club of Community Secondary School Kpean, stated that he



appreciates the club as it will help him and his classmates expand their horizons and know more about environmental issues in their community. Melukabari said he wants the club to continue its activities well into the future.



Community secondary students at the general assembly line at the school premises. A lot of them indicated interest in becoming members of Green Frontiers Club.

Remaining project timeline

December:	Remaining scientific sampling and other fieldwork
Ongoing:	Liaison with government officials, traditional rulers, Ogoniland communities
Dec-Jan:	Scientific analysis and preparation of the assessment report
Early 2011:	Release of UNEP's environmental assessment of Ogoniland report

Meet the Project Team



Urs in the field with one of his team, Sabrina Meier

Dr Urs Bloesch, Forestry and Agriculture Team Leader

UNEP's forestry and agriculture team is investigating the impacts of oil contamination on land ecosystems, focusing on plant vitality, food and forage quality, livestock health and local community perceptions of the effects of oil pollution on their livelihoods. This team is led by Dr Urs Bloesch, a forest engineer who has worked in Africa for 25 years on forestry, agriculture, biodiversity and environmental rehabilitation issues.

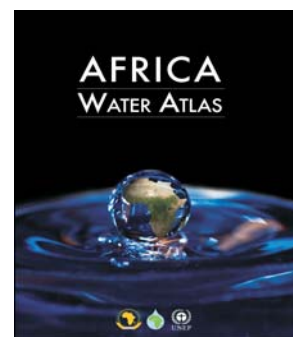
Dr Bloesch has carried out environmental work for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Bank; for such national organizations as the Belgian Technical Cooperation, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ) and Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency; and for Care International, Conservation International, WWF and other international NGOs. He currently heads Adansonia-Consulting.

Urs also lectures in his homeland of Switzerland at the Swiss College of Agriculture and the Institute for Communication Research and was formerly part of an East Africa ecosystems applied research programme at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

Africa Water Atlas

In other UNEP news, the major challenges facing Africa's water resources are set out in a new atlas released by UNEP during Africa Water Week in November.

The *Africa Water Atlas* features images and detailed maps from 53 countries, including Nigeria. The atlas was compiled at the request of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW), the Secretariat for which is hosted by Nigeria. The atlas can be accessed via the UNEP website at: <http://na.unep.net/atlas>.



Did you know?

It will be the International Year of Forests in 2011. The United Nations General Assembly decided to focus on forests in 2011 to raise awareness of the need for sustainable management of all types of forests, including fragile forest ecosystems. The theme will be 'Celebrating Forests for People'. Organizations and individuals can get involved.



For more information on UNEP's Environmental Impact Assessment of Ogoniland Project

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30 November 2010