



***The Public Eye Award 2005 in the category environment goes to:
Royal Dutch/Shell Group***

Ladies and gentlemen,

AWARD TO SHELL FOR DISSERVICE TO AFRICA: A Day of Reckoning is at Hand

On behalf of the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, Nigeria in conjunction with Friends of the Earth, England, Wales, and Northern Island, and the organisers of the Public Eye on Davos on irresponsible corporate behavior, it is my pleasure to announce to you the villain of the Nigerian environment, the global environment destroyer, the Shell Petroleum Development Company. In particular, the Shell Company has laid its fangs and maintained a firm grip on the politics and economy of Nigeria thereby distorting its core values and impoverishing the people. During exploration and exploitation for oil and gas, Shell's operations lead to environmental human rights violations, wanton destruction of the environment and traditional livelihoods, and pollution of rivers and streams while sucking and feasting ostentatiously on the Nigerian oil resources since 1956. Over the past four decades, more than 4,000 oil spills have been recorded in the Niger Delta with devastating consequences for the environment and the local population and not one spill has been effectively cleaned up. Such irresponsible corporate behaviour is roundly condemned.

A former Nigeria's Minister of Petroleum Resources, Dan Etete, in frustration decried that Shell and the other oil companies in Nigeria were short-changing the government and people of Nigeria: "I have taken stock of our oil industry. I have looked at the nation's share from the oil industry over the years vis-à-vis the major operators in the industry, that is the oil companies. From the evidence before me, I feel sad that our country has not received a fair share from its own resource."

Regarding oil and gas resource, Nigeria is a resource curse country, no thanks to Shell and its collaborators. As a major operator of the joint venture, (55 %) the assets and liabilities of the

partnership is known only to Shell. It is now an open secret that the federal government under the terms of the MoU is made to pick up the expenses of the oil companies down to toothpicks, including tea and coffee the workers drink, and hiring of helicopters which could cost over \$2,500 per hour. In addition, the community development projects were discovered to be directly funded as part of Shell's overheads and not from profits declared. All these are charged to the operational cost which the federal government must cough out. No wonder Shell's activities promote environmental human rights violations, community tension and violent clashes, while profits swell from blood and destruction.

Resistance to Shell's atrocities is fought at many fronts and from the local to the global. Oil conflicts have generated violent struggles and thrown up ethnic militias in the oilfields. Arms and ammunitions now swim the Niger Delta. A compilation of the court cases against Shell will further attest that all is not well with this company. Between 1981 and 86, only 24 court cases were recorded against Shell in the Nigeria court of law. In early 1998, Shell was involved in over 500 cases. In 2003, the number of court cases against Shell has risen to about 2000 court cases. Shell neither honours court decisions nor respect the legislative organs of the land.

This Public Eye Award for Shell's despoliation of the Environment, therefore, represents a rescue mission to Shell and all its collaborators including the World Bank and the financial institutions and governments supporting fossil fuels. Shell should heartily congratulate the organisers for this mockery award to Shell for a disservice to Africa and humanity. We shame Shell and enjoined others to join to shame Shell through this award of irresponsible corporate behaviour. History is being made today in our collective attempt to give hope, to identify with the suffering oil bearing communities' decades of struggle for environmental justice, and to loosen the stranglehold of this irresponsible oil giant from the live nerves of Nigeria and her people. It is the hope of all that Shell should seize this golden opportunity to discover itself, clean up its dirty acts and abandon its shadow pursuits and green rhetoric. Shell should face reality and own up to its responsibility and be a responsible corporate citizen of Nigeria. For Shell, the real day of reckoning is at hand.

Godwin Ojo
Programmes Director
Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, Nigeria

Davos, 26 January 2005

<http://www.evb.ch/publiceyeondavos.htm>