



MOTTO: "SERVICE BEFORE REWARD"

Ijaw Youth Council

Worldwide

YOUTH SUMMIT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

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Resource Control And Self Determination By Any Means Necessary

RECLAIMING OUR DESTINY

OBSERVATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE YOUTH SUMMIT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY IN BAYELSA STATE

YENAGOA

6TH FEBRUARY 2009

PREAMBLE

The peoples of the Niger Delta have historically enjoyed riches of nature and intellect. We conducted international affairs and exploited, traded and managed the resources of our forests, creeks, rivers and the Atlantic. We built city-states, monarchies and village republics and conducted war and peace.

In the multiplicity of our ethnicities we have always formed a common bond seasoned by marriages, friendships, rivalries, commerce and common destiny.

Today we are all in a great country in which we have always given more than we have ever received.

Youth may mean that some of us did not directly experience some of the historical injustices that the Nigerian state and peoples have imposed on us out of collective ignorance, greed or insensitivity, but the deprivations and isolation we so painfully feel are more potent historical records than the stories that have been passed to us by the older generation.

Even the youngest of us here will remember that ten years ago the first All Ijaw Youth Conference convened in Kaiama Bayelsa State to remind this country that our economy and political structure was built on injustice and was in need of reform.

Ten years after the Kaiama Declaration there is still no justice and we still do not feel the love and warmth of this great country.

Peaceful protests met with brutal and criminal state repression have since been over-shadowed by violent resistance and insurgency. As we gather here today pockets of this delta are outside normal governance as what appeared to be resistance now bears closer resemblance to criminal anarchy.

OBSERVATIONS

Under the auspices of the leadership of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) the veterans of the Niger Delta struggle who convened the famous Kaiama Declaration have summoned ourselves to this youth summit on economic development and security to deliberate

on the state of the Niger Delta and agree solutions to this quagmire in form of the observations and resolutions of this summit:

1. We welcome the creation of the Niger Delta Ministry and affirm faith in its leadership but regret that lacking in sufficient funding the Ministry has been programmed to fail
2. We welcome the Bayelsa State government's sustainable development vision and commitment to transparency and call for greater civil society participation to confirm this commitment
3. Two years after the present administration the Federal Government is still groping in the dark, lacking in focus, direction, commitment, will or strategy
4. The Federal Government's misguided and inept reliance on the military and total lack of vision is directly responsible for the near collapse of security in the Delta and the current unfortunate stalemate in the development of the region
5. Any peace and security gains obtained solely by military means will not last and will ultimately collapse into greater insecurity as clearly shown by the historical trend of the Niger Delta crisis
6. The economies of the Niger Delta states are in near collapse due to the activities of armed groups and the money-making Joint Military Task Force in the region. This is creating greater hardship for our people and in some cases having a very devastating impact on our environment and future
7. Armed criminals masquerading as militants are taking control of the Niger Delta and spreading unmitigated and indiscriminate terror and will lead us to our doom unless we rule a line here and reclaim our communities
8. The Federal Government of Nigeria is still devising sinister plans to wipe out several Ijaw communities especially in Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states
9. Government has given the petroleum industry as a "gift" to the northern part of Nigeria. All major appointments in the oil industry including its minister are all northerners

RESOLUTIONS

Convinced from our observations that no one will restore peace to the Niger Delta but ourselves and that the economic development of this region can never be achieved without peace we resolve that:

1. The Government of Bayelsa State should take immediate steps to dismantle all militia camps in Bayelsa state and provide for the demobilization, training and re-integration of those in such camps. Such a program must be holistic, broad and well planned to accommodate all militia camps in the state
2. Government should immediately grant amnesty to all militants including Mr. Henry Okah as part of the demobilization and re-integration process
3. All militia camps in Bayelsa State MUST embrace the government demobilization and re-integration process when it begins, and immediately start the process of closing down all militia camps forthwith. This should be accomplished within the next three months
4. The people of Bayelsa State will regard any camp that remains open after this period as anti-people and anti-development
5. All communities in Bayelsa State will cooperate with the Bayelsa State government in this regard
6. The Government of Bayelsa State must re-organize all internal peace and security organizations to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency
7. The Government of Bayelsa State must ensure that it takes active steps to make the presence of the JTF in Bayelsa State unnecessary
8. All other states in the Niger Delta should take similar measures to the best of their abilities
9. The Government of Bayelsa state must show more transparency in governance and implement more people oriented program for the benefit of the people

10. Ijaw youths will not stand-by and watch government troops decimate any Ijaw community. We will resist them by any means necessary. Ijaw youths from all parts of the Niger Delta should be on the alert

11. We condemn the “Northenization” of the petroleum industry and demand an immediate reversal of the appointments in the petroleum industry within one month after which Ijaw youths will mobilize to confront government

CONCLUSION

We have not directed any recommendations to the Federal Government because it is inconsistent and cannot be trusted.

We leave the Federal Government to conscience and history and express disappointment at the complicity of the international community for abandoning the Niger Delta by playing the ostrich.

The struggle continues!!!

Dr. Chris Ekiyor
President

Udengs Eradiri
Secretary