Continue the Struggle for Environmental Justice

People’s Goals Solidarity Message to the People of Ogoni on the 3rd Anniversary of UNEP Report

The Campaign for People’s Goals for Sustainable Development (People’s Goals) expresses its solidarity with the people of Ogoniland, Nigeria as they mark the third year anniversary of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) report compelling Royal Dutch Shell to indemnify the victims of its environmental and human rights abuses. The continued impunity against the Ogoni people as shown by the lack of any serious response from Shell and the Nigerian authorities underscores the need to carry on our fight for environmental justice in Nigeria and the world over.

For almost half a century, since Shell began its operations in the area, the people of Ogoniland have suffered from toxic oil spills and pollution.

Wells that are the sources of drinking water in Ogoni contain levels of carcinogenic toxins up to 900 times more than World Health Organisation guidelines.

Cases of cancer and infant deformity, as well as lung and skin conditions are on the rise.

Farmers are unable to grow crops, as oil contamination reaches five meters below the land surface. In a region where over 70 per cent of the population rely on land for their livelihood, the situation could only be described as catastrophic.

When the Ogoni people began to organize and mobilize to protest this injustice, they were met with violent repression by the government and Shell Oil. Mass organizations and their leaders were targeted in several large-scale military operations.

In 1998, the United Nations Special Rapporteur to Nigeria recommended the establishment of an independent agency to determine the scale of environmental damage caused by Shell’s oil exploration and other operations in Ogoniland. Not until after 8 long years was this recommendation acted on by authorities when the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo invited UNEP to carry out an investigation.

On August 4th 2011, after four years of carrying out the unprecedented study of the impacts of oil exploration on the ecosystems, fishing grounds and farmlands of the Ogoni people, the UNEP released its report confirming Shell’s culpability in the degradation of the environment and life in Ogoniland. The UNEP estimated the cleanup would take up to 30 years and required Shell to put up $1 billion to get the work started.

Three years later, Shell has yet to clean up its mess.

We call on the government of Nigeria and duly responsible UN authorities to take action and make Royal Dutch Shell to pay for its criminal negligence and indemnify the victims of its environmental injustice and human rights violations in Ogoniland.

We call on governments and the United Nations to ensure that the next global development agenda ensures the protection of the environment from corporate plunder and exploitation.

We demand the institution of a legally binding international regulatory framework for monitoring and holding corporations like Royal Dutch Shell accountable for violating human rights and environmental destruction. Critically, we stress the need for community access to justice, right to protest, reparation and restoration of damaged environment and livelihoods, and criminal liability for corporate offenders.

***Justice for the people of Ogoni!***

***Indemnification for the victims of Shell’s environment and human rights abuses in Ogoni!***

***Fight for environmental justice!***

***Demand development justice!***