

**AN ECO-THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF TOXIC SMOG, TOXIC WASTE
AND OTHER POLLUTANTS WITH CATASTROPHIC HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE NIGER-DELTA REGION OF
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

In the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, like some other geographical areas, modern technology has brought several challenges which also inhibit the process of growth and development of mankind, leading to global warming. Anthropogenic release of green house gases and chemical pollutants like carbon-monoxide and other combustible elements, disposal of lubricating oils from machines into rivers, crude oil exploration and pipe-line vandalism all lead to environmental degradation and contribute to global warming. These pollution-intractable problems affect communities and have serious health, economic, and social implications. Reasons adduced for allowing multi-national companies to continue degrading the environment are: that if there are civil rights protection at all they are dead letters; again, people do not think that members of a poor community will fight back or that anyone would listen and there seem to be a kind of collaboration between government and the extracting companies that makes it possible for the plundering of the land. The church needs to sensitise people that they have obligation not just to one another but to the land. Thus, emphasizing the intricate interdependence of soil, water, flora and fauna, in which humans also belong and that God commands that we protect nature. The church should devise strategies to ensure that the mentality of our leaders change so that they can state and implement strict penalties for toxic dumpers and ensure that oil companies operate in ways in which care for the environment and the people are given due priority. When the church works with the community and the government, there may better prospects of ending this self destructive perpetration of greedy exploitation and pollution of the environment.

Introduction

Eco-theology is a form of constructive theology that focuses on interrelationships of religion and nature, particularly in the light of environmental concerns. It

begins with the understanding that there is a nexus between human religious/spiritual worldview and the degradation of nature. It emerged as a result of the increasing awareness of the environmental crisis wrecking the world, bringing about profound religious reflections on the relationship between the human person and the earth (Kanu 2017&2018). It generally started from the premise that a relationship exists between human religious/spiritual worldviews and degradation of nature in association with the emergent scientific field of ecology. It is about human activity altering many biological processes and environmental life. Eco-theology guides Christians' interaction with the environment, addresses the value of other creatures and God's intent for the cosmos. Practical issues surrounding human need for sustenance from agriculture - fisheries, animal husbandry etc, encourage constructive engagement with environmental problems and inspire us to better environmental care.

The need for an eco-theological appraisal of the plundered eco-system is brought to fore by Abe (2009) when he emphasised that it is important that the Church is adequately informed and equipped with environmental knowledge as well as dynamics of the global capitalist system and its hegemonic influences. The Church's understanding of these issues is imperative because as Alokwu (2009) points out, they affect the environment and impoverish the people. The church has environmental responsibility that it needs to live up to in practical ways. Phenomena such as vector-borne diseases, flooding and landslides, ozone depletion, gully erosions, climate-induced migrations, desertification and all forms of violence to the environment through industrialisation and wars should be a primary concern for Christians because God created the world; it belongs to Him and he has delivered it to us. Thus, we have the responsibility to maintain it and give a good stewardship of it. Moreover, our humanity and wellbeing depends on the environment. This according to Dreibelbis (2005), makes it imperative that people are alerted of the importance of working for and with God in the process of repairing creation. Indeed churches have been eco-justice advocates based on the conviction of the integrity of creation, responsibility to steward God's creation and conviction that justice, peace, and environmental protection are linked. According to Pope Francis:

We human beings are not only the beneficiaries but also the stewards of other creatures. Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a

physical ailment, and the extinction of the species as a painful disfigurement. Let us not leave in our wake a swath of destruction and death which will affect our own lives and those of future generations.

An eco-theological appraisal of toxic smog, waste and other forms of pollution is a dire necessity because, in Genesis chapters one and two, God saw that everything that He created was good. It follows, therefore that God's original plan and intention for us humans was to live in a healthy, nourishing and peaceful environment. And our duty, as Chartres (2011) emphasises, is not just to care for creation, but we are to be co-creators with God in protecting the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands. Climate change induced environmental hazards militating against natural and socio-economic security, by affecting soil fertility and water and forest resources need intervention, not only from world governments, but by Christians as well. In fact, Obasola (2013) opines that different forms of pollutions and climate change should become central to national planning processes and development assistance. A mind-set that embraces individualism, accumulation and consumption provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of the created order. Such negative mindset need to be re-educated for positive outcomes in the fight to maintain the earth and be co-creators with God. Thus, we need to take action to ensure man's responsible stewardship over nature.

The Niger Delta, which is the focus of this paper, covers 20,000km² within wetlands of 70,000 km² formed primarily by sediment deposition. Home to 20million people and 40 different ethnic groups, this floodplain makes up to 7.5% of Nigeria's total land mass. It is the largest wetland and maintains the third-largest drainage basin in Africa. The Delta's environment can be broken down into five ecological zones: Mangrove Swamp forest and Coastal Vegetation Zone, the Freshwater Swamp Forest Zone, the Lowland Rainforest Zone, the Derived Savannah Zone and the Montane Zone (Adebanjoko 2017). The area was the British Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 until 1893 when it was expanded and became the Niger Coast Protectorate.

This incredibly well-endowed ecosystem contains one of the highest concentrations of biodiversity on the planet, in addition to supporting abundant flora and fauna, arable terrain that can sustain a wide variety of crops, lumber or agricultural trees, and more species of freshwater fish than any ecosystem in

West Africa. The region could experience a loss of 40% of its inhabitable terrain for the next thirty years as a result of extensive dam construction in the region. The carelessness of the oil industry has also precipitated this situation.

In the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, like some other geographical areas, modern technology has brought several challenges which also inhibit the process of growth and development of mankind, leading to global warming. Anthropogenic release of green house gases and chemical pollutants like carbon-monoxide and other combustible elements, disposal of lubricating oils from machines into rivers, crude oil exploration and pipe-line vandalism all lead to environmental degradation. Deforestation – a form of forest degradation reduces biodiversity, that is, the range of habitat, species and genetic types, contributing to regional and global climate imbalances, leading to excessive storage of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and contributing to global warming.

Onwumere (2007) reiterates that challenges in the Niger-Delta are myriad, such as, poor waste management leading to contamination of fresh water sources, technical advancement accelerating decline in the quality of the environment and ability to sustain life, poultry smells, inadequate storm drains, dumping refuse in drainages and natural waste channels, leading to destruction of aquatic life, and harmful to flora and fauna, which are the mainstay of most rural folk. Oil industries are allowed to operate, unmindful of environmental hazards and ecological threats because of none or ill regulated industrial activities. Again, due to industrial activities and deforestation, toxic waste dumping, even from developed nations and other pollution-intractable problems affecting communities and urban centres, there are serious implications to humanity which according to Abodurin (2009), include a dangerously high degree of abuse of nature, posing a serious challenge to human life and existence, integrity of the whole creation and peace on earth. Theologians and scientists should have keen interest in addressing the issue of ecological and environmental crises, especially the spiralling effect of the environmental crises in Nigeria.

Air pollution is an emergency situation in the Niger Delta. Vanguard July 31 (2011) reports that Oil revenue is central to Nigeria's economy, accounting for about 70% of government earnings and 90% foreign exchange. Decades of exploration, spills, pollution of farmlands and fish in the maze of creeks across the Niger-Delta has greatly affected the health and social-economic status of

people in the region. About 94% of Nigerians are exposed to air pollution implication levels that exceed World Health Organisation guidelines.

Smog (one of the key words in the topic) is a type of air pollutant. The word 'smog' was coined in the early 20th century as a portmanteau of the words smoke and fog to refer to smoky fog, because of its opacity and odour. This kind of visible air pollution is composed of nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, ozone, smoke or particles among others (less visible pollutants include carbon monoxide, CFCs and radioactive sources).
<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smog>

Human-made smog is derived from coal emissions, vehicular emissions, industrial emissions, forest fires and photochemical reactions of these emissions. It is usually highly toxic to humans and can cause severe sickness, shortened life or death. It may be formed when air pollution levels are high and there isn't much wind, so a combination of particles and ground level ozone builds up to create a yellowish or black fog. The particles that can form smog can include dust, soot, diesel fumes or aerosols.

Toxic waste is hazardous wastes that are poisonous by-products of manufacturing, farming, city septic systems, construction, automotive garages, laboratories, hospitals and other industries. The waste may be liquid, solid or sludge and contain chemicals, heavy metals, radiation, dangerous pathogens, or other toxins. It is any material in liquid, solid, or gas form that can cause harm by being inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin. It is a discharge or by-products of industrial processes such as cyanide compounds, chlorinated compounds, and heavy metals known to cause physiological damage when ingested or breathed in by humans; and causes serious injury to animals, and plants if disposed indiscriminately in the environment. They pollute the air, and contaminate soils and water.

Toxic Waste in West Africa

The business of toxic waste is a gigantic and satanic activity that observers according to Onwunmere (2007) call an arm of the Devil's Trinity, including hard drugs and illegal arms deal. All over Africa, toxic wastes within the nations and those shipped in from developed nations constitute a threat to the health of the people. For instance, Goodman (1990) in reporting for the Centre for

Investigative Reporting in New York Times, writes about the Colbert brothers from New Jersey who labelled hazardous waste as AID products from government's USAID with the logo of handshake signifying friendship, and sent loads of toxic waste to Zimbabwe, Shipping waste as "aid-relief".

Nahigyan (2008) reports how Netherlands dumped toxic waste in Cote D'Voire. Another junk exporting scenario was that reported by Brooke (1988) when a ship named Kian Sea which carried 2,000,000 tonnes of toxic matter from Philadelphia Asia, from Panama to Guinea Bissau in West Africa. Benin Republic reportedly had a contract on January 12, 1988 with a British company affiliated to South Africa to dump 5million tones of waste yearly for a fee of \$2.50 per tonne from Sesio Gibraltar, the company behind the deal, Onwumere (2010).

Toxic Waste in the Niger-Delta

Now to examples of toxic poisoning in the Niger-Delta; let us start with the environmental criminality perpetrated by Gianfranco Rafaelli who approached 67 year old Sunday Nana to dump waste in his compound in Koko, in the then Bendel State. Eight thousand drums of polychlorinated biphenyl sulphate (PCBS), methyl melamine, dim ethyl ethyl-acetate were deposited in Koko Village in present day, Delta State. The residents including Nana drank water from the toxic waste drums oblivious of what it contained. The result was that many pregnant women according to Doctor Solomon Ogbemi, had their pregnancies aborted. People were poisoned and came down with disease and some lost their lives. When the problem was discovered by the then Babangida Administration, they brought in an advisory team from the United States, two from Britain and another from Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, (IAEA) who confirmed that the waste contained resins, solvents, pigments and chlorine which were harmful to humans, wild life, plants and aquatic life. The waste was shipped back to Italy but many of those who were engaged to clear the mess came down with chemical burns, nausea and paralysis; and their lives were saved by the skin of their teeth even though they wore masks, protective clothing and other equipment to clear the mess.

In February 14, 2017, Vanguard Newspaper reported that the "Garden City" of Port Harcourt started experiencing black soot falling from the sky that started in November, 2016, scaring and annoying residents of the oil hub because nothing was done to protect their health. People's clothes, bodies and floors were

“tarred”. Traders covered their wares with umbrellas; people wore protective masks, but could not escape accumulating dark phlegm in their lungs and throats and black particles in their nostrils. Cars were also covered in dust.

Burning tyres for scrap copper and illegal refineries were some of the speculated causes of the smog. Hash tag #stopthesoot# was all over the social media. There were photographs of hands and feet covered in dust and protest marches were organised.

Again, under the guise of recycling waste, the Rivers State government fenced and prepped a refuge dumpsite which it latter called Rivers State Semi-Sanitary Landfill. The toxic waste dump was at Obigbo, in Oyingbo Local Government Area along Port Harcourt-Aba Express Way and popularly dubbed “Amaechi dustbin” (named after the governor at the time). The toxic dumpsite was next to peoples’ homes, schools businesses and health centres. With the heavy stench emanating from the site, those who could not move out were forced to endure the man-made environmental disaster. There were no equipment for waste sorting, processing, and onward forwarding for recycling contrary to what the State Government had made the people believe. The poor folk who had the unfortunate luck of having the dump as an unwelcome neighbour suffered in silence for fear of retribution.

On April 9th 2010 a Maersk Line vessel, operated by American President Line, APL, a wholly owned subsidiary of a Singapore based Neptune Orient Lines, arrived at the Federal Ocean Terminal at Onne in Rivers State and discharged some toxic waste; it got to Lagos on the 11th loaded with 70 storage (lead) batteries classified as Basel Code A1180 and broken televisions. On a tip off it was arrested by members the Nigerian Ports Authority - NPA and the Nigerian Customs Service - NCS exposing this cruelty of people to their fellow humans. Onitsha, in May 2016 was said to have the world’s worst levels of PM10 particles, microscopic particles in the air, measuring between 2.5 and ten thousand of a millimetre or micrometres from smokes, dust, soot, vehicle exhaust and industries.

Gas flaring and oil spillage in most parts of the Niger Delta are common occurrences. Till date clean potable water is a luxury in a place like Bayelsa State. The land has been so polluted that drilled boreholes do not yield water fit for

drinking. One of the resultant effects of this is that water for drinking and cooking is imported (packaged in plastic bags) from neighbouring states at exorbitant prices as a result of the high cost of transportation added to the cost of water. The poor and vulnerable who cannot afford the luxury of such imported water are left to make do with what polluted natural water sources have to offer them with obvious negative health implications.

Moreover, many rural dwellers that rely on fishing and farming have been thrown out of businesses and the youth especially are rendered restive. As far back as 2011, John Vidal an environmental editor in Guardian News Papers noted the following about the Niger Delta:

- i. Community drinking water contains dangerous concentrations of benzene and other pollutants.
- ii. The soil contamination is more than five metres deep in many areas.
- iii. Most of the spill sites that oil firms claimed to have cleaned are still highly contaminated.
- iv. There is evidence of oil firms dumping contaminated soil in unlined pits.
- v. Water is coated with hydrocarbons more than 1,000 times the level allowed by Nigerian water standards.
- vi. There is failure by Shell and others to meet minimum Nigerian or own standards.

Just recently (23rd May, 2018), it was in the news that crude oil spillage wrecked havoc in Delta communities. A devastating oil spillage, caused by equipment failure, on the 24 inches Trans Rasmus crude oil pipeline owned by Shell Petroleum Development Company affected 50 communities under Odimodi Federated Communities in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State. Julius Pondi, the House of Representative Member representing the area, visited the place for on-the-spot assessment of the situation. He expressed concern that Shell had not shown any commitment to the plight of the people. The spillage had polluted the entire area, destroying aquatic life and fishing nets, which has made fishing which is the major occupation of the people impossible. Farmland was also affected, destabilising the economic life and the health of the people and desecrating the ecosystem.

Some people have fought against this desecration of the ecosystem in the Niger Delta. One of such personalities is Ken Saro Wiwa who was human rights and environmental activist, a poet and a great intellectual from the Niger Delta. He was a winner of the Right Living Award and the Goldman Environmental Prize. He organised the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People that developed a nonviolent campaign against environmental and social exploitation by multinational oil companies. He spoke against environmental damage from decades of indiscriminate petroleum waste dumping. He was unhappy about the reluctance of the Nigerian government to enforce environmental regulations on the foreign petroleum companies operating in the area. At the peak of his non-violent campaign, he was alleged to have masterminded the killing of some chiefs. He was tried by a special military tribunal under the military dictatorship of General Sani Abacha and hanged in 1995 at the age of 54 years.

Others that have formed coalitions for the fight against environmental degradation are: General John Duku - Coalition of Niger delta Agitators; John Dudu (Niger Delta Watch Dog); Ekpo Ekpo (Niger Delta Volunteers); Osarolor Nedam (Niger Delta Warriors); Henry Okon Etete (Niger Delta Peoples Fighters); Asukwo Henshaw (Bakassi Freedom Fighters); Ibinabo Horsfall of the (Niger Delta Movement for Justice); Duke Emmanson (Niger Delta Fighters Network); Inibeghe Adams (Niger Delta Freedom Mandate); Abiye Tariah (Niger Delta Development Network) total devolution of power and fiscal federalism.

New movements are NDA - Niger Delta Avengers; the Red Egbesu Water Lions, Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force (JNDLF), Niger Delta Red Squad (NDRS) and the Adaka Boro Avengers in 2016.

Causes of Environmental Degradation

Several reasons have been attributed to why toxic merchandise thrives in nations and the lack of will for waste management in the Niger Delta. One of the reasons is that there is no civil right enforcement protection. If there are at all they are dead letters, with the rules unchanged for many years to suit modern realities. Again, people do not think that members of a poor community will fight back or that anyone would listen. Even though, the people of the Niger-Delta are showing their discomfort about the status quo and many people (especially the youth), are beginning to express themselves through the formation of many Militant Groups. Pressure Groups like The Niger Delta Avengers and Movement

for the Actualisation of the Niger Delta Development have been formed over the years, but the unfortunate thing is that in their bid to get across to the government and the various multi-national companies who help to degrade the environment, they end up adding to the destruction in the ecosystem, thus making life more unbearable for the indigenous poor people who get their livelihood from the rivers and land.

The West wrongfully thinks that since most developing nations seem to care very little about their environment, maybe they could just use them as dump sites. This is a wrong notion that is borne out of human depravity, leading to the strong over-powering nations oppressing the weak. The government of the nation is not also helping matters. The government does not see environmental degradation as too important as they do not understand the implications of the attack on the environment, so they don't take it seriously.

Ash soot and smog are known to be caused by the following activities - burning tyres for scrap copper, from illegal refineries, the use of generators and from petrol containing high levels of sulphur. Toxic smoke from burning of rubbish is a legacy of absence of adequate municipal waste evacuation services.

The past and present administrations seem to be indifferent to the implementation of policies that safeguard and protect the environment because the multinational companies have a stake in funding some political parties and are greatly influential in ensuring those that will become political leaders. There is therefore a kind of collaboration between government and the extracting companies that makes it possible for the plundering of the land that we now experience.

Impact of Environmental Degradation

A lot of Nigerians, especially from the Niger Delta, according to Bob-Manuel (2017) suffer health problems that can be linked to the activities of oil extractors. It begins with running down the ecosystem by compromising the environment with all sorts of hazards ranging from extinction of species, air, water and land pollution, leading to respiratory diseases such as breathing difficulties, including pneumonia and asthma. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates some 600,000 people die in Africa every year as a result of air pollution. Again, environmentalists have been sounding the alarm that the soot contains

sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide which cause acid rain when combined with moisture. It is common to see people with burning eyes, and sore throat, and with few and sometimes no health facilities in some places, the trauma the people experience is difficult to express.

The loss of biodiversity to maintain a balance of the ecosystem by restoring soil nutrients, protecting water resources and stabilizing the climate has led to the extinction of marine life. All these have not just made the impact of global warming not only excruciating but has also killed the tourism industry which was a means of economic empowerment for the people of the Niger Delta Region.

Exposure of fish to heavy toxic metal, sediments in rain, and in drinking water, have been implicated in the high incidence of prostate enlargement among the residents of the Niger-Delta region Kadafa (2012). There is also the issue of unemployment for the locals whose major means of livelihood is fishing and farming. Land and water pollution have made it impossible for the people to fish and farm. There is also noise pollution as a result of the activities of oil and gas companies. The economic impact of the cost of cleaning up oil spillage and stopping flaring is high and many of the extracting companies are not ready to do the right thing probably because the government is not responsible enough to hold them accountable.

Lack of accessibility to basic education, underdevelopment and unemployment, have contributed a lot to youth restiveness leading to formation militant groups, prostitution. Thus, we have negative impact of pollution (due to the activities of the oil companies) ranging from destabilisation of the ecosystem, to health hazards, noise pollution, economic crippling through unemployment, leading to poverty that is intensified by lack of provision of infrastructure. The cumulative result of all this is low standard of living.

Solution

The church has a role to play especially in the creation of awareness that land is not a commodity belonging to us but that we should see land as a community to which we belong. Bauckhan 2010, sees human life as not a self-contained affair, but takes place in relationship both to the creator and to the rest of the creation. Thus, the intricate interdependence of soil, water, flora and fauna, in which

humans also belong will help to emphasise that humans have obligation not just to one another but to the land (land here, meaning, the soil, water bodies, air etc). God reminds us in Leviticus 25:23-24 that the land belongs to Him and that we as tenants must provide for the redemption of the land. Christ's holistic ministry is to perpetrate the gospel which not only saves from sin, hunger and poverty but also freedom from environmental degradation and human rights abuses. If we do not consider the environment as the basis for the survival of humanity but place economic and financial considerations above environmental issues then we are destroying ourselves. Quoting U. Utah Philips, Owusu-Koranteng (2010) states, "The Earth is not dying - it is being killed. And the people killing it have names and address." These killers are mostly the big multinational companies.

The voice of the church must be loud, because our faith demands that we protect nature as instructed in Genesis 2:12, to cultivate and care for god's creation. We have to state a strong opposition to the environment, human rights abuses and the exploitation of our natural wealth which ends up impoverishing the masses. For this to be effective, the church should devise strategies to ensure that the mentality of our leaders change so that they can state and implement strict penalties for toxic dumpers and ensure that oil companies operate in ways in which care for the environment and the people are given due priority. Gleaning from Oviasuyi, P. O. and Uwadiae J. (2010) and Ajodo-Adebanjoko, A. (2017) certain suggestions come to mind.

The church could work with communities to take part in the process of discussing their problems and suggesting possible solutions. The people of the grassroots that feel the pinch the most in the communities need to be involved. Village councils, family heads, non militants and militants, activists, community leaders, elders, religious leaders, youth leaders should be engaged by the government in collaboration with the multinational companies, in interactive study workshops, designed to suggest possible solutions and strategies for implementation.

As part of the creation of awareness, of the crises that are affecting society in recent times, Christian communities could observe the celebration of environmental days which are usually at national and internal levels. This will create in the people the need to be agents of change. Moreover, seminars and retreats that focus on environmental stewardship could be used to redefine the

people's understanding about the relationship of humans and nature. Even liturgical songs that are of environmental concern could help to communicate messages oriented towards environmental protection. Through the use of both print and electronic media, the church can preach its position and advocate for environmental care and sustainability.

Institutions of government and development intervention agencies should fast track process of environmental remediation and ecosystem restoration. Transparency and accountability should be taken seriously. Health risk communication process can be improved as a means of advancing understanding, practice and policy. Legislation, decrees and enactments that are disempowering should be reviewed and where necessary abrogated as they continue to serve as impediments to peace and security.

Topics like the use of environmentally sound technology, proper method of farming, bush burning control and the use of chemicals as detrimental to the soil fertility, avoidance of the use of harmful chemicals for fishing, proper waste disposal, recycling of waste material. The church could establish funds from which scholarships could be awarded to relevant students to pursue courses on environmental management, environmental theology and agriculture. The church could also provide financial support or partner with environmental agencies and departments to ensure environmental sustainability.

Give voice to the socially excluded through involvement of Community Based Associations, so that representatives from the ordinary people can participate in the process of planning, implementation, monitoring and executing of projects. Transnational oil companies should reserve a percentage of job openings for qualified and employable youths in the host communities.

The church should prompt the government ensure that transnational oil companies modernise infrastructure and equipment and replace aging and corroding pipes as a prevent measure against frequent oil spillage and to ensure implementation of memoranda of understanding that are signed with host communities. In addition, there should be construction of roads and other amenities provided by the multinational companies.

Pastoral letters that promote eco-justice should be translated into local languages and discussed in small Christian communities. People should be informed and education. Education is key to reorient them. Theological schools, seminaries and academics could also teach stewardship of all creation in order to deepen the ethical and theological understanding of the causes of global warming. By this future ministers will become aware of the reality of the ecological crisis and how to respond to it.

Apart from the church's contribution in health and education, each Christian must consider the implication of an ecological theory for their life and the application of ecological concepts is possible in diverse fields of employment and personal interests. The church could help to demand cessation of the production of all toxin, hazardous waste and radioactive material, protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water and food.

The United Nations and African leaders should help Africa by enacting strict laws that would prevent these waste merchants from shipping these unwanted wastes into Africa. All over Africa, pollutants like toxic ash smog, toxic wastes within the nations and those shipped in from developed nations, oil spills, and pipeline vandalism. Asphalt processing plant belching out thick smoke from its operations.

The United Nations and African leaders should help Africa by enacting strict laws that would prevent these waste merchants from shipping these unwanted wastes into Africa. Development priorities should be set by local priorities, clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature. All past and current producers should be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production. Collaborators should be dealt with; if there are no collaborators there will be no perpetrators. Emergency measures should be taken to clean up drinking wells, and companies working in the Niger Delta should overhaul the way they operate.

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