

**REPORT OF THE INCEPTION AND COOPERATIVE PLANNING EVENT IN
BAYELSA STATE AS PART OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE C7 WEST AFRICA
PROJECT ON COPING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE AS A CAUSE OF CONFLICT IN
COASTAL COMMUNITIES OF WEST AFRICA**

BACKGROUND

The phenomenon of climate change is an existential reality and a threat to the global system. It is in recognition of the changes within ecology, the variations in climatic conditions vis-a-vis the implications of these changes that some nations have been making concerted efforts to come up with mitigative and adaptive strategies to cushion the negative impact of climate change. There has also been an increase in research amongst scholars at various levels on the nexus between climate change and conflict or insecurity as well as climate change as threat multiplier. Climate change is a security threat as well as a threat multiplier. The threats posed by climate change have attracted global attention.

The link between climate change and conflict is increasingly at the forefront of security and development discourses. Violent conflicts and intra and inter-intercommunal violence caused by the effects of climate change have steadily increased over the past decade, claiming tens of thousands of lives, displacing millions of people and placing many more in need of humanitarian assistance.

In a bid to address these threats and their impact on humans, their means of livelihood as well as infrastructure, the United Nations (UN) organized series of climate change conferences to identify and examine the impact of climate change on human security, the environment and the proffer strategic recommendations and roadmaps for nation states to adhere to. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted that “warming of the climate system is unequivocal” and that climate change could become a major contributing factor to conflicts by exacerbating the scarcity of important natural resources, such as freshwater, with effects of triggering mass population dislocations (migration) due to extreme weather events.

As instability grows and begins to spill over to coastal West African countries, policymakers in Europe have been making concerted efforts to address the structural and local drivers of conflict and fragility, including environmental factors. The European Union, through the Fondazione Accademia Italiana della Marina Mercantile (FAIMM) otherwise called the Italian Shipping Academy embarked on a West African Project as a Regional Corporate Social Responsibility programme tagged C-7 with the



theme: **Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa (C-7 WA)**. Its focus is on the effects of climate change and the associated conflicts in coastal communities of West Africa.

The C7-WA project aims at improving the resilience of coastal communities in West Africa toward climate change and conflict, addressing the linkage between the two dynamics. This was targeted at developing innovative tools related to conflict sensitive climate change adaptation, mitigation, and prevention of environmental crimes. This was to exacerbate climate change impact on coastal communities and monitor the impact of climate change as a driver of conflict. In this regard, some select communities in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, Togo and Senegal became the focus based on extensive research conducted by specialized implementing partners of the C-7 WA project.

The aim of the research was to examine the social, economic, and environmental effects of climate change with a view to analyzing the impact of coastal erosion, devastating floods, rainfall patterns, pollution, and destruction of mangroves on fisheries, farming, and livelihoods of the people in coastal communities. It was also to evaluate how the communities are coping with the problem of rainfall patterns, erosion, devastating floods, rising temperatures, and their impact while assessing the specific needs of the respective communities. The research confirmed very strong correlation between climate change and conflicts, especially in the Niger Delta of Nigeria due to its imposition of intolerable extremes on many communities and threatening the livelihoods of millions of people. As a result, many people are fleeing inland with further possibilities of increasing tension among the displaced people and their new host communities.

A key finding was that the coastal communities need to be assisted through climate change education, financial support towards developing local adaptation strategies such as construction of canals and channels, seawalls, and dikes to protect their houses and farms as well as sustaining their livelihoods against the perennial flood disasters occasioned by melting of sea ice, rise in sea levels, increasing salinity of the coastal and fresh waters tidal surges thus threatening fishing communities in such areas. The need to further examine the governance structures, cooperation between communities and national authorities and the law enforcement agencies deployed in the coastal communities became apparent. This necessitates a needs assessment for the law enforcement agencies and the Standard/Standing Operating Procedures to enhance civil-military



relations, human rights observance effective conduct of security operations in the coastal areas of the Niger Delta and others.

THE NIGER DELTA OF NIGERIA

The Nigerian coastal areas usually experience severe flooding due to its geography, global warming, climate, vegetation, and soils, thereby impacting on its economic structure, population and

settlements, energy demands, and agricultural activities. The impacts of climate change in the Niger Delta over the years have been severe especially on the water quality, agriculture, physiology, and population of the aquatic organisms. The coastal communities are hence predisposed to food insecurity, health challenges and loss of means of livelihood. These lead to mass migration and general insecurity, worsened by environmental degradation through human and natural means. Gas flaring and pipeline vandalism in the Niger Delta exacerbate climate change issues. There is therefore the need to create awareness of the consequences and dangers inherent in non-adherence to measures aimed at reducing the impact of climate change as well as the strategies to enhance resilience and adaptation. Erosion and tidal surges are threatening fishing communities. As a result, many people are fleeing inland with severe consequences for conflict.



Flooded community in Bayelsa State. Source: Osa Ohomina, Leadership.ng. 2022



Nembe Oil spill in Bayelsa State. Source: newcitizen.ng 2022



Gas Flaring in Abama, Bayelsa State. Source: Tom Ashley/Reuters 2022

With the institution of the C-7 WA project and the implementing partners through the collaborative efforts of FAIMM and the European Union, the implementing partners commenced work. The partners engaged in Component A and Component B classification of the work are:

- a. Academic Associate PeaceWorks (AAPW).
- b. Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF).
- c. West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP).
- d. Nigeria Maritime University (NMU).



Collaborative working relations among AAPW, HOMEF and WANEP, Component A of the project was carried out. This included research and field works climate change, its impact on the coastal communities in relation to conflicts and peacebuilding measures, community entry and stakeholders mapping leading to the selection of ten (10) highly impacted communities; two in each five states in the Niger Delta of Nigeria and others in Togo and Senegal. The report (two volumes: full and abridged) of the research conducted by HOMEF on behalf of the C-7 with funding from the European Union was published with the title: “Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa” and a rider: “Climate Change, Insecurity, and Conflict in the Niger Delta”



STATES AND COMMUNITIES CONSIDERED AMONG THE MOST AFFECTED COASTAL AREAS OF THE NIGER DELTA

The States and communities considered among the most affected of the riverine/coastal areas of the Niger Delta are:

Akwa Ibom State:

- a. Inua Eyet Community in Ibeno LGA – 30 June 2022.
- b. Okoroete & Iko Community in Eastern Obolo LGA – 12 September 2022.

Bayelsa State:

- a. Akassa Communities in Brass LGA – 22 July 2022.
- b. Agbakabiriyai, Etieama & Igbetaewoama Community in Nembe LGA – 4 April 2022.

Cross River State:

- a. Creek Town Communities in Odukpakani LGA – June 2022.
- b. Esuk Mba Community in Akpabuyo LGA – 14 September 2022.

Delta State:

- a. Ogulagha Community in Burutu LGA – March 2022.
- b. Ugborodo Community in Warri South-West LGA – 19 September 2022.

Rivers State:

- a. Finima Community in Bonny LGA – 28 July 2022.
- b. Kono Community in Khana LGA – 12 September 2022.

The law enforcement aspect of the project was classified as Component B, to be implanted by the NMU thus leading to the appointment of the Operational Security Component Coordinator in person of Air Commodore Darlington Abdullahi (rtd) PhD, FNIM who has worked very closely with the representatives of the NMU, Dr Godfrey Pondei and others. The task of the Operational Security Component Coordinator (OSCC) was carry out sensibilization of local law enforcement agencies (Nigeria and neighbouring countries) based on the plan developed by FAIMM, towards enhancing implementation of the C-7 project. Other tasks for the OSCC include the development of training and capacity building programmes as well as coordinating local and international experts.

ADVOCACY VISITS AND AWARENESS CREATION FOR THE C-7 WEST AFRICA PROJECT IN NIGERIA

Following the meetings held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria 6 – 10 February 2023, organised by FAIMM as coordinating meeting with the local implementers of the C-7 WA project, Component B of the project undertook compilation of the relevant security agencies with roles in law enforcement in the Niger Delta Region, starting with Bayelsa State. The advocacy, sensibilization or awareness creation visits for the C-7 WA project was carried out at two levels. First was the visit to strategic level security and other major stakeholder institutions in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The second stage was visits to operational security units and other institutions in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State aimed at facilitating the commencement of the project in the Niger Delta. Further details are as stated hereunder.

ADVOCACY VISITS TO STRATEGIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF NIGERIA

The NMU sent letters to various strategic security agencies and other institutions in Abuja. Three key institutions were visited. These were the Defence Headquarters, Headquarters Nigerian Air Force and the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency. Following assurance by the Defence Headquarters to communicate with the planned programme and direct other military Services to participate, the focus shifted to the agencies at the

operational level. Copies of the research report were presented to all the agencies and institutions visited.

It is important that security personnel understand the nexus between climate change and conflict with a view to enhancing their understanding of the root causes of conflicts in coastal areas often affected by climate change. This will greatly assist them in adopting appropriate measures to address emergent security issues. This is particularly so because conflicts resolved through non-military means (non-kinetic) often make a greater positive impact and are better appreciated by the affected parties to the conflict.

Addressing the effects and consequences of climate change involves creating awareness on climate change as a phenomenon with a global impact and sometimes beyond the immediate control of human capacity. However, its effects can be mitigated by long term planning and education to reduce human suffering, save lives and property and other infrastructure such as economic developmental infrastructure.

VISIT TO DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, ABUJA

At the Defence Headquarters (DHQ), the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Lucky Irabor mandated the Chief of Defence Policy and Plans, Air Vice Marshal JA Yusuf and the Director of Policy, Rear Admiral Okeke to receive the C-7 team. The period of visit coincided with series of other activities at the DHQ hence the inability of the CDS to meet with the team consisting of 4 members NMU and the OSCC representing FAIMM. The pictures below show a group photograph with Air Vice Marshal Yusuf in the middle. Others are the OSCC, Director Policy (DHQ), Vice Chancellor of NMU, Prof Adigio, Registrar of NMU, Director Partnership of NMU, Dr Pondei and Prince Igbagara of the NMU. The second picture was the presentation of the research report by the OSCC to the representative of the CDS, Air Vice Marshal JA Yusuf who was later mandated to also represent the CDS at the Inception Ceremony in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State



VISIT TO HEADQUARTERS NIGERIAN AIR FORCE ABUJA

At the Headquarters Nigerian Air Force, elaborate reception was organised for the the C-7 team. Air Vice Marshal C Aneke represented the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Oladyo Amao who was receiving his counterparts from other countries. The Nigerian Air Force team consisted of Air Vice Marshal Aneke and eight other high ranking Directors and other officers while the C-7 team included the the FAIMM OSCC, VC NMU, NMU Director of Partnership, Registrar and six other NMU staff. The photographs below show the events at the reception and briefing. The Air Force pledged its support and participation at various future climate related events to be organised in the Niger Delta or others.



VISIT TO THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

The Director General/Chief Executive Officer of the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), Prof Aliyu Jauro and virtually all the Directors and other senior officers of the Agency were available to receive the FAIMM and NMU team for the C-7 project. He was particularly elated to have been considered among those to be visited especially considering the role of the Agency in ensuring national and international environmental standards in the Niger Delta. Below is a group photograph and an address by the FAIMM OSCC before presenting the research report to the Director General.



ADVOCACY VISITS TO MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS AND OPERATIONAL LEVEL SECURITY COMMANDERS AND INVITATION TO THE INCEPTION CEREMONY OF THE C-7 PROJECT IN YENAGOA BAYELSA STATE

Prior to the commencement of the advocacy visits to various law enforcement agencies and other key stakeholders in the security and management of the environment in Bayelsa State, several online meetings were held involving FAIMM, OSCC, HOMEF, AAPW, WANEP, and NMU. Some of the personalities that participated at the meetings included: Marco Simoncini, Davide Stasi, Judith Burdin Asuni, Beatrice Bazzica, Darlington Abdullahi, Godfrey Pondei, Godson Jim-Dorgu, Tega Edeki, Manrico Benelli, Carmen Giodano and others from the European Union. The essence was to ensure adequate planning and achieving the aims and objectives for the C-7 project in the Niger Delta. The visits were then embarked upon.

COURTESY VISIT TO FORMER PRESIDENT GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN



The former President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan GCFR is an indigene of Otueke in Bayelsa State. Since the C-7 event is commencing from Bayelsa State, it was considered appropriate to pay him a courtesy visit and to intimate him of the laudable C-7 project and European Union funding. He appreciated the visit and consideration of Bayela State as a beneficiary. In the picture are Former President Goodluck Jonathan, Air Cdre (Dr) Darlington Abdullahi presenting the research report, Dr Godfrey Pondei, Prince Igbagara (NMU) and Godson Jim-Dorgu (AAPW).

VISIT TO THE NIGERIAN AIR FORCE – HEADQUARTERS MOBILITY COMMAND YENAGOA

The Mobility Command of the Nigerian Air Force in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State plays significant role in the security of the Niger Delta. The Chief Staff Officer to the Air Officer Commanding, Air Vice Marshal Obeya and Air Cdre Ekpa received the visiting C-7 team as the Air Officer Commanding was attending to other activities. The Command promised adequate visibility during the event. Below is a group photograph and presentation of the research report.



VISIT TO NIGERIAN ARMY – HEADQUARTERS 16 BRIGADE YENAGOA

The Headquarters of the 16 Brigade, Nigerian Army in Yenagoa was another major stakeholder location visited in Bayelsa State. The Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Yakasai warmly received the team in his office. He spoke extensively on the issue of climate change as a personal subject matter of interest. He therefore appreciated the move by FAIMM and the European Union to contribute positively to addressing the climate change related issues in the Niger Delta in particular, having seen the massive effect in the area being his area of responsibility and deployment. He suggested that the European Union should equally intervene on issues of desertification as a major cause of conflict in the country especially as that is also responsible for the movement of herdsmen to the southern part of Nigeria. The pictures below show Brigadier General Yakasai and one of officers in a group photograph with Air Commodore Darlington Abdullahi (rtd), the FAIMM OSCC, Dr Godfrey Pondei and Mr Igbagara both of NMU.



VISIT TO THE NIGERIAN NAVY – HEADQUARTERS CENTRAL NAVAL COMMAND YENAGOA

The Headquarters of the Central Naval Command in Yenagoa was equally visited being a key stakeholder in law enforcement maritime operations in Bayelsa State. Rear Admiral CE Atebi, the Command Chief of Staff who stood in for the Flag Officer Commanding gave the C-7 team a very warm reception. As he noted, this was an opportunity to meet his former teacher, Air Cdre Darlington Abdullahi (rtd) while recalling the various occasions we met during training programmes, seminars and conferences. He pledged his support for the team and participation in the climate change events. Rear Admiral CE Atebi was later appointed to represent the Chief of the Naval Staff, Nigerian Navy at the Inception Ceremony. The pictures below show Rear Admiral CE Atebi with some of his officers in a group photograph with the C-7 team and the presentation of the research report to him.



VISIT TO NIGERIA SECURITY AND CIVIL DEFENCE CORPS - BAYELSA STATE COMMAND

The C-7 team also visited the Headquarters of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Bayelsa State Command. The Commandant, DCG L Fakoya who received the team in her office, along other senior officers of the Corps expressed happiness for being considered for the visit. She promised to ensure officers of the Command participate fully in the events.



VISIT TO NIGERIAN POLICE FORCE BAYELSA STATE COMMAND

There were series of redeployments affecting the top hierarchy of the Nigerian Police Force in Bayelsa State at the period of intended visit to them. This affected the Assistant Superintendent of Police in Charge of Zone 16 of the Nigeria Police which includes Bayelsa and the Commissioner of Police. Consequently, the C-7 team visited the State Police Command Headquarters with the Divisional Crime Officer received the team. He vowed to ensure that officers of the Command participated at the Inception event. Below are pictures taken with the officer in group and while presenting a copy of the research report to him..



VISIT TO THE NATIONAL DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY – BAYELSA STATE

Drug abuse, addiction, and trafficking play significant role in the growth of insecurity across various countries. In the Niger Delta, officers of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency are deployed to all States to check the trend and ensure minimal effects if not eliminated. The Head of the Agency in Bayelsa State, Mr Matthew Ewah received the team in his office. The group photograph with him and his officers is shown below while in the second, the OSCC is being decorated with an anti-drug abuse badge.



VISIT TO HIS ROYAL MAJESTY KING BUBARAYE DAKOLO – CHAIRMAN BAYELSA STATE TRADITIONAL RULERS’ COUNCIL

Traditional rulers in the Nigerian society play very important roles in national security and development. They usually exercise significant influence on the general populace on the trend of events especially in security within their domains. The Chairman of the Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council was visited during the advocacy and general awareness creation on climate change and its effects in the Niger Delta. His Royal Majesty King Bubaraye Dakolo is highly learned and an author of several books on the Niger Delta. He is an advocate of community policing. He was impressed with the efforts of FAIMM and the European Union for initiating measures to address the problems emanating from climate change especially starting with Bayelsa State, his domain. He assured the team he would give necessary support and mobilise stakeholders to participate at the events. Pictures taken with him at his office in Yenagoa are shown below.



VISIT TO THE FEDERAL FIRE SERVICE, BAYELSA STATE

The Federal Fire Service plays major roles during emergencies such as fire, flooding and others. With the spate of flooding and vandalism of oil pipelines with the attendant fire outbreaks, their services are always sought. Consequently, the Federal Fire Service Headquarters in Yenagoa was visited by the team. Mr Igali Felaye, the Commandant warmly received the team and expressed joy that the team considered the Fire Service among those visited contrary to the trends that they

were usually not considered. He assured of effective participation. The pictures taken with the officers of the Fire Service in Yenagoa are shown below.



VISIT TO BAYELSA STATE COMMUNITY SAFETY CORPS GOVERNMENT HOUSE YENAGOA

Bayelsa State operates a State Community Safety Corps for the protection of the populace and quick reaction to crime incidences across the state. Brigadier General E Angaye (rtd) who is the Chief Security Coordinator and his Deputy, Squadron Leader Fola Amoo (rtd) were consulted on the provision of security for the expatriates arriving from various European countries for the programme. The C-7 team visited the office in Government House Yenagoa and were urged to write a letter to the Governor of the State. This was promptly done by NMU and the Police were then directed to provide escorts for the team during movements, at the event venue and hotel. A team of six armed policemen were accordingly deployed with an escort vehicle. The entire programme was incident free. The picture below was a photograph with Squadron Leader Amoo at the Government House Yenagoa.



INCEPTION CEREMONY AND COOPERATIVE WORKSHOP HELD AT THE GOLDEN TULIP HOTEL YENAGOA BAYELSA STATE NIGERIA 4 – 5 MAY 2023

The arrival of Mr Marco Simoncini at Bayelsa Airport, Yenagoa through Lagos signified the commencement of the Inception Ceremony and the Cooperative Workshop. The Arrival of the FAIMM OSCC and members of the Implementing Partners from AAPW, HOMEF and WANEP to Yenagoa preceded that of Mr Marco Simoncini. Air Cdre Darlington Abdullahi (rtd) and Dr Pondei met him on arrival at the airport having made necessary security arrangements for transit to the hotel. The pictures below were taken at the airport in Yenagoa.



OPENING CEREMONY

The Opening Ceremony was attended by several dignitaries, government functionaries, officers and non-commissioned officers of various security agencies and paramilitary agencies, academia, civil societies and non-governmental organizations as well as traditional rulers. The State Governor, Douye Diri was represented by the Secretary to the Government of Bayelsa State, Honourable Gideon Ekeuwe. Air Vice JA Yusuf represented the Chief of Defence Staff as the Special Guest of Honour while the Chief of Naval Staff was represented by Rear Admiral CE Atebi. King Bubaraye Dakolo was also in attendance with some of his Council members. There were 185 registered participants for the opening ceremony, 61 and 71 for Day 1 and Day 2 of the Cooperative planning Workshops respectively. The photographs below show sections of the participants in attendance. The overall objective of awareness creation or sensibilization was no doubt achieved.



WELCOME ADDRESS



The Vice Chancellor of the Nigeria Maritime University (NMU), Prof Adigio presented the welcome address. He brought greetings from the governing council, management and staff of the NMU and expressed joy that the NMU was identified and selected by Fondazione Accademia Italiana della Marina Mercantile (FAIMM) as a worthy local partner for the implementation of the C-7 West Africa project. He was optimistic that the project will have a positive impact on the lives of the people of the coastal communities, as the destinies of the communities will be altered for good. The VC concluded his remarks by appreciating other stakeholders whose contribution in the C-7 West Africa project has culminated in the success that has been recorded so far, although it is still a work in progress.

VIRTUAL PRESENTATION BY MR. BROGI LUIGI FROM EEAS – DAKAR

Mr Brogi Luigi connected virtually from his base in Dakar, Senegal. Representing the European Union, he spoke extensively on the role of the European Union in the C-7 project. He noted the need to address climate change issues with a view to reducing conflicts, saving lives and property as well as reducing humanitarian crises around the world.

GOODWILL MESSAGES

In his goodwill message, the representative of FAIMM and the European Union at the event, Mr. Marco Simoncini expressed gratitude to everyone participating in the project, stating that the project is aimed at improving the resilience of coastal communities in West Africa to climate change and conflict. He noted that the project is funded by the European Union and implemented by an international partnership of European and African organizations, including FAIMM and the NMU. The project involves developing innovative tools for conflict-sensitive climate change adaptation, prevention of environmental crimes, and monitoring the impact of climate change on conflict. These tools will be disseminated and tested through large-scale capacity-building programmes targeting communities and local actors. The project also includes a component dedicated to security agencies, with the aim of raising awareness on the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on conflict dynamics and security in the Niger Delta. He informed the audience that the project coordinators have implemented visits and meetings with top managers of several agencies.

While concluding his remarks, Mr Marco Simoncini stated that the workshop is aimed at getting feedback from the relevant security agencies that are working in the coastal communities, with emphasis on their assessment of needs. This is with a view to designing programmes in line with the needs of the agencies for the effective actualization of their assigned responsibilities. On that note, he thanked all the participants and wished them fruitful deliberations. The pictures below show cross sections of the participants from agencies and institutions.





KEYNOTE REMARKS BY THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF



The Special Guest of Honour, the Chief of Defence Staff, General Lucky Irabor was represented by Air Vice Marshal JA Yusuf. He felicitated with the Italian Shipping Academy (FAIMM), the European Union, Nigeria Maritime University and other partners on the C-7 West Africa Project initiative with the theme “Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal communities of West Africa”. He congratulated the management team and sponsors of the project on this great stride. He noted that the Armed Forces of Nigeria deems it proper to be associated with laudable projects of this nature stating that this project would no doubt further assist to curtail structural and local drivers of

violent conflicts as well as intra and intercommunal violence caused by the effects of climate change.

The Chief of Defence Staff further added that the connection between climate change and conflict has continued to increase at the forefront of security and development discourse. Hence, the need to put in place kinetic and non-kinetic efforts as well as adopt appropriate measures to address emergent security threats. Therefore, it is worthy of note to state that the aim of the workshop which is to create awareness on the nexus between climate change and conflict is a welcome development. The workshop will certainly create an avenue to educate stakeholders and those concerned on the management of conflicts associated with climate change. In line with the Armed Forces of Nigeria’s support to the workshop and Project, I have approved and directed that our Military personnel participate at the workshops scheduled to hold in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers states. The participation of security personnel in the workshop is expected to further enhance the approach of the military towards addressing security challenges and threats related to climate change. He concluded by appreciating the European Union and FAIMM for considering the Niger Delta for the project.

REMARKS BY CHIEF HOST - THE GOVERNOR OF BAYELSA STATE

The chief host of the event, who is also the Executive Governor of Bayelsa State, Douye Diri was represented by the secretary to the State Government, Hon Gideon Ekeuwe. expressed gratitude to the organizers of the C-7 West Africa project for selecting his State as a beneficiary of the project. He stated that he is particularly delighted to host the inception workshop for an initiative that spans across coastal communities in West Africa. The governor hopes that the recommendations of the initial research will be implemented and completed according to plans; and he expressed optimism that the inhabitants of the coastal communities will become more productive as a result of this project, thereby enhancing their peaceful coexistence. He also believes that the target audience for the workshop will take advantage of the workshop to enhance their knowledge base and experience in better handling conflicts as they occur in the coastal communities.

REMARKS BY CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF



Rear Admiral CE Atebi, the representative of the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) appreciated the NMU for organizing the event and FAIMM for developing the project, with funding from the European Union (EU). He also thanked them for selecting the Niger Delta as the project's area of interest. He stated that the project falls under the area of responsibility (AOR) of the Flag Officer Commanding (FOC), Central Naval Command and as such, is under his office's jurisdiction. He stated that the Nigerian Navy (NN) has deployed its officers and men to several coastal communities in the Niger Delta region as part of its constitutional duties, noting that their presence in those communities ensures the maintenance of peace and security, as climate change can cause conflicts. In as much as the NN is carrying out her activities in this region, he reiterated that security is everybody's business. It is in the light of this that the C-7 West Africa project is seen as a welcome development.

He expressed the willingness of the NN to cooperate with the relevant stakeholders to ensure appropriate response to security challenges, stating that the NN is a willing partner to the C-7 West Africa project. He promised the continual support of the NN in the realization of the objectives of the C-7 West Africa project and informed the audience that the Commanders on the

field have been tasked to provide all the support needed in that regard. He further expressed happiness that a needs assessment would be carried out to determine areas the European Union could support various security services, especially the Nigerian Navy.

REMARKS BY KING BUBARAYE DAKOLO

In his intervention, the chairman of Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council, HRM King Bubaraye Dakolo noted that the theme of the workshop is timely and apt, as climate change is a cause of concern in the world. He appreciated the efforts put into the research on the effects of climate change and its subsequent report, which are the basis for this workshop. The king however, raised concerns on the actual causes of conflicts in the region and advised the organizers to put more efforts in that regard, as the effects of these conflicts have great impacts on the region. While appreciating the European Union for funding the project, he appealed that the European Union should develop mechanisms and structures aimed at putting an end to the theft of crude oil and gas resources from the region, as lots of funds are being lost from the theft of these products. Additionally, he appealed for an end to the pollution of the creeks caused by the activities of gas flaring and oil spillage which has a great effect on the health of the populace and their means of livelihood, as fishing is their mainstay.

INTERVENTION BY THE COMMISSIONER MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

The Director of Climate Change in Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment spoke on behalf of the commissioner. He highlighted that climate change is felt globally, and the organizers of the event recognize the security issues it can cause. He noted the impact of climate change on the ecosystem and the behavior of marine organisms that leads to conflicts. He also noted that the fishing sector is particularly affected by changes in temperature and sea level rise, and this is also a security threat as fishing is the major occupation of the coastal communities.

He went further to highlight the efforts made by the Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment through the adoption of a holistic approach in tackling the issues arising from climate change. One such effort is their present engagement with the international community on climate change discourse and their call for an international convention on rivers.

INTERVENTION BY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

In a short but impactful message, the representative of the Director General (DG) of the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) expressed gratitude to the NMU, and other partners involved in the project. He noted that there is a clear linkage between NESREA and the C-7 West Africa project, as NESREA has the mandate to develop and enforce existing environmental laws and conventions which Nigeria is signatory to. He showed gratitude for the invitation to participate in the workshop and assured that NESREA will partner with the project to ensure its success.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE FOR PEACEBUILDING IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES OF NIGERIA

The keynote presentation titled *Combating Climate Change for Peacebuilding in Coastal Communities of Nigeria* was delivered by the Operational Security Component Coordinator, Air Commodore Darlington Abdullahi (rtd) PhD. The paper discussed the impact of climate change on national security and development in Nigeria, particularly in coastal areas affected by rising sea levels and the expansion of desert landmass.



The presenter argued that climate change exacerbates security threats and can increase insecurity and political instability. It was noted that the negative effects of climate change on land and water bodies have led to increased conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, while pollution from industrial activities and criminal logging has made livelihood a difficult task in the southern part of the country. The paper also discussed the root causes of conflict in Nigeria, such as terrorism and insurgency, and how climate change is often overlooked as a cause of conflict that requires economic, political, and environmental measures. The presenter noted that the aim of the workshop is to provide an avenue for exchange of ideas by the relevant stakeholders on coping mechanisms, strategies for adaptation, mitigation, and resilience as well as enhancing peace among coastal communities. The key concepts discussed in the paper include climate change and peacebuilding, with the presenter arguing that persistent work to find creative solutions to conflict is needed to build sustainable peace.

Additionally, the paper discussed the impact of climate change in Nigeria, which is evidenced by rising temperatures, variable rainfall, rising sea levels, flooding, drought and desertification, land

degradation, more frequent extreme weather events, dwindling freshwater resources, and biodiversity loss. The presenter noted that the Niger Delta region of Nigeria which is the focus of the C7 West Africa project, experiences devastating effects of climate change, leading to forced migration with conflict undertones, environmental pollution, and possible resort to criminal activities.

The paper informed that Nigeria's National Security Strategy (NSS) recognizes climate change as a threat to the security of the nation and its people, and the Nigerian National Defence Policy (NDP) identifies climate change as a security threat that causes internal and external migrations and resource conflict. More importantly, the Climate Change Act (CCA) was signed into law in 2021, thereby establishing a National Council on Climate Change and instituting a Climate Change Fund.

Furthermore, he reiterated that climate change is a real and pressing issue that requires urgent attention from governments and communities around the world. The presenter noted that implementing measures to enhance law enforcement and peacebuilding in coastal communities is critical for their safety and well-being. In addition, addressing climate change through adaptation, resilience, and mitigation strategies are also important in building sustainable and resilient communities, as these strategies are necessary to address the negative impacts of climate change, including protecting vulnerable communities in coastal and desert areas.

Also, the paper recognized the security implications of climate change, as it can exacerbate existing tensions and conflicts in affected communities. It emphasized that addressing these security challenges requires collaboration and cooperation among various stakeholders, including security agencies, community leaders, and government officials. Again, the paper noted that some conflicts are either avoidable or can be reduced to the barest minimum if appropriate measures are adopted through early warning systems, awareness creation, direct and indirect interventions of national governments as well as international organizations and institutions at different levels.

As the head of the security component of the C7 West Africa project, the presenter listed the security institutions that the team visited and consulted for advocacy, in the course of the planning of the workshop. These institutions include the Defence Headquarters, Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Navy, the Nigerian Air force, the Nigerian Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, the Federal Fire Service and the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA). Prominent individuals the team also visited include a former president of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan who is an indigene of Bayelsa State, and King Bubaraye Dakolo, Agada IV, Ibenanaowei of Ekpetiama Kingdom and Chairman of the Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council who is the custodian of the culture and tradition of the people of Bayelsa.

PROJECT PRESENTATIONS AND UPDATE

SITUATION ON THE GROUND: CONFLICT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr Stephen Oduware, a representative of HOMEF presented an overview of a preliminary research on conflicts and climate change that was conducted by FAIMM, AAPW, HOMEF and WANEP in 5 states of Nigeria's Niger Delta region and 2 communities each in Togo and Senegal, with funding from the European Union. The research shows that the issues are cross cutting and are evidenced by flooding, erosion, unpredictable rainfall patterns, rise in sea level and excessive heat across all the areas studied. It was observed that climate change has social, economic and environmental impacts on the people and the communities as key factors of production such as land is gravely impacted, loss of livelihoods, and the washing away of roads and houses due to floods. These increases the vulnerability of the coastal communities to conflicts as people tend to seek alternatives by developing coping strategies.



The research recommends a NEEDS assessment and hands-on action plans that involve advocacy, capacity building, resilience building, human security, among others. The recommendations involve a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach with responsibilities for the government, civil society organizations (CSOs), the coastal communities and the multinational oil companies in the communities. Some of the recommendations include the protection of shorelines by the government for communities that are threatened by coastal erosion and floods; educating the populace on conflict-sensitive responses to climate change by the CSOs; and the avoidance of environmental destructive actions such as mangrove destruction, and the promotion of peaceful resolution of conflicts by the communities. For the oil companies, the research recommends an end to gas flaring and the clean-up of all oil-contaminated lands and water in the Niger Delta.



UNDERSTANDING IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE CONFLICT AND INSECURITY IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES OF THE NIGER DELTA

Mr Godson Jim-Dorgu (AAPW) gave an overview of the Niger Delta as a delicate coastal region whose inhabitants depend on its natural resources for their survival. However, he noted that climate change, conflicts and insecurity have had a significant impact on these natural resources, thereby constituting a threat to their

means of livelihood. He listed the issues associated with climate change to include unusual, unpredictable sea turbulence, horizontal rainfall patterns, increase in sea water salinity, rise in sea level, heat wave, to mention a few. These issues are threats to the communities as they lead to the extinction of some plants and animals, destruction of aquatic life, human displacement and the depletion or loss of livelihoods.

Additionally, the presenter argued that there is a correlation between the issues discussed above and insecurity and conflicts in the region under discourse. He stated that climate change- induced destruction of livelihood resources is a trigger for conflict and insecurity, as the youths are compelled to engage in maritime crimes such as sea piracy, for their survival. This has also led to illegal bunkering and local oil refining. The scarcity of farm and fish produce has also intensified the competition for these resources, and therefore results in conflicts.

Presenting the findings of research that was conducted, he noted that the enforcement of standard fishing regulations and practices is lacking in the communities studied. This has led to conflicts between the indigenous and non-indigenous fishermen over the fishing methods and general fishing in the territories. He therefore recommended an understanding of the standard fishing regulations to address such grievances. Additionally, he observed that there was a lack of proper communication between the security agencies and the communities over the implementation of policies that affect the communities. On this note, he recommends the involvement of coastal communities in the implementation of policies that affect them.

CLIMATE CHANGE, DISPLACEMENT, RESOURCE DISLOCATION AND POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT

In his second presentation, Mr Stephen Oduware (HOMEF) highlighted the difference between natural greenhouse effect and the human-enhanced greenhouse effect, and notes that more heat escapes into space in the natural greenhouse while less heat escapes into space in the human-enhanced greenhouse. In presenting Africa's regional climate fact sheet, it was observed that the rate of surface temperature increase has generally been more rapid in Africa than the global average, with human-induced climate change as the dominant driver. Additionally, relative sea level in Africa has increased at a higher rate than global mean sea level over the last 3 decades. Marine sea waves are also projected to increase around Africa.

According to the presenter, the implications of the above factsheet on the coastal communities cannot be overemphasized as these changes in climate increase the vulnerability of the communities and indeed, have the ability of wiping out an entire community. It leads to the destruction of infrastructure and impacts the wellbeing and psychology of the people as their means of livelihood are also affected.

Additionally, the presenter identified climate change as a driver of unrest and conflicts. This is because it brings about boundary disputes due to improper delineation and bad environmental standards enforcement. It also causes displacements and leads to the abuse of human rights, among others. In his conclusion, the presenter recommended impact assessment and toxicity studies, incident preparedness, emergency response plan, and compensation from the government to the affected communities.

COPING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE AS A CAUSE OF CONFLICT IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN WEST AFRICA

Mr Marco Simoncini's presentation on "Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities in West Africa" centered around the 3 components of the project viz component A, B and C. The components involve developing and implementing tools for conflict sensitive climate adaptation; developing and delivering capacity building for conflict sensitive law enforcement in coastal areas, sea and inland waters; and the dissemination of tools and an improvement in the capacity of governments and regional actors to implement policies that addresses the nexus between insecurity and climate change. He noted that the workshop falls under component B with a focus on capacity building, needs assessment of the security agencies and the identification of global best practices for conflict-sensitive interventions by security agencies.

He went further to justify the selection of Nigeria and the Niger Delta region for the project. He noted that Nigeria's Niger Delta region represents a hotspot for climate change-induced and environmental degradation-induced conflicts, as the region is characterized by coastal erosion and flooding which removes the topsoil with attendant effects on agriculture. Additionally, the intrusion of salt water into fresh water has led to the loss of aquatic species which is a major vocation of the people in the coastal communities. Additionally, activities of international fishing fleets through illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing as well as the pollution of water often linked to the oil and gas sector, and the destruction of coastal areas through the extraction of sand and mud, all have negative effects on the communities. These factors in turn decrease the economy of the communities and the struggle over the limited resources leads to inter/intra communal conflicts.

While emphasizing the role of the security agencies in the communities, Marco noted some gaps that hinder their effective performance. These include inadequate training and lack of capacity in both planning and implementing initiatives in conflict prone areas. The available physical assets and infrastructure are also grossly inadequate. Subsequently, he stated that one of the objectives of the workshop is to gather information on the needs of the security agencies and ascertain their

actual needs in order to develop capacity building plans based that are based on global best practices. He concluded by informing the participants of the next stage of the project which are expected to commence in June/July 2023. This involves a session on training of trainers (ToT), direct training sessions and regional training sessions in two other West African countries.

CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICTS AND SECURITY IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES OF THE NIGER DELTA

Mr Godson Jim-Dorgu further spoke on “Climate Change, Conflicts and Security in Coastal Communities of the Niger Delta”. He referred to a Climate Security Risk Profile Report by the University of Sussex and a report by the British High Commission in Nigeria. According to him, both reports showed that the Niger Delta region is a hotbed of conflicts and insecurity due to the impacts of climate change. He also noted that climate change creates conditions that allow criminal activities to thrive as the region regularly experiences series of maritime crimes such as piracy, sea robbery, illegal bunkering, and artisanal refining. These activities are worse in the coastal communities due to their geographical location and their role as hosts to multinational oil companies. The activities of these companies through oil exploration and oil exploitation have a great impact on the populace and have led to a loss of their livelihoods.

He went further to give a background to the C7 West Africa project, which is carried out by 4 consortiums, with the singular aim of strengthening the resilience of West African coastal communities to cope with climate change and conflicts by developing innovative tools related to conflict sensitive climate change adaptation and prevention of environmental crimes that exacerbates climate change impact on communities. He also gave a brief on the roles of each of the 4 consortiums on the project and noted that the scope of the project is 5 states in Nigeria viz Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers states with a focus on specific communities in two local government areas of each of the states under study.

Speaking on the project’s intervention strategy to these conflicts, the presenter mentioned monitoring and reporting the impacts of climate change as a driver of conflicts, with a view to informing policy formulation and implementation. The strategy also involves developing innovative tools that are based on research and adaptable global best practices which will be disseminated through a large-scale community engagement, capacity building and implementation.

Jim concluded his presentation by briefing the audience on the activities of the AAPW on the C7 West Africa project, which he grouped into 2 phases. The activities under phase 1 include multi-stakeholder consultations, the identification of climate change issues that can cause conflicts in the coastal communities and the analysis of these issues, and the documentation of community coping strategies. The phase 2 engagement includes the presentation of the findings of the

research at town hall meetings, the training of community stakeholders' networks, documentation of current and potential methods of mitigating climate change by communities, and the development of a practical toolkit for climate change adaptation strategies.

INTERACTIVE SESSION 1

During the interactive session, several participants spoke on various issues. one of the participants of the workshop raised concerns about the approach been taken by the security agencies when conflicts arise in the coastal communities. He was of the view that a proactive approach be adopted to prevent such conflicts from arising rather than waiting for them to occur before responding. He recommended a routine check-up and engagements with the inhabitants of the coastal communities, to nipping some conflicts in the bud, and thereby avoiding their escalation. A Superintendent of Police, A Wainwei from Bayelsa State Command of the Nigeria Police (in C-7 T-shirt) expressed appreciation for the opportunity provided by the European Union, FAIMM and others, to broaden their knowledge on climate change as a cause of conflicts



STRATEGIES FOR ADOPTION AND AWARENESS-RAISING OF NEW PRACTICES BY GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS



Dr Gloria Okafor while speaking on “Strategies for Adoption and Awareness-Raising of New Practices by Government Institutions” reiterated that since the onus of developing and implementing policies lies with the government, it is also the responsibility of governments to develop and implement strategies to reduce emissions to mitigate the effects of climate change. She noted that there are always challenges regarding public perceptions in adopting new government strategies.

Thus, the need to embrace awareness-raising strategies to get the buying-in of the populace.

The presenter observed that although there is ample data and information on climate change issues, there are however, some noticeable gaps. These gaps are in the implementation of policies, the misappropriation of funds earmarked for tackling climate change issues, and the policies and plans do not sometimes reflect the plight of the people it was intended for. Others are inappropriate public-private partnerships and collaborations, unprofessional practices by stakeholders, insufficient funds, and under-utilization of resources.

The paper recommends the strategies for the adoption of the policies to include stakeholder engagements through participatory processes that allows for feedback and inputs; capacity building through training and provision of incentives and technical assistance; pilot projects aimed at identifying barriers to the adoption and implementation of policies; as well as monitoring and evaluation by tracking the progress of the new strategies. The presenter posits that the most important strategy to help the coastal dwellers cope with climate change is to tackle its root causes by identifying the causes and taking actions to eliminate or reduce the activities that cause climate change.

Finally, she recommended the development of short-term and long-term policy goals for the strategies. The short-term goals involve creating incentives for the adoption of new strategies, commending stakeholders that champion new strategies, financial incentives for businesses and individuals, and providing education and training to ensure people understand the importance of climate change and the need to adapt new practices. The long-term goals involve developing initiatives that tackle climate change issues, developing public-private partnerships, creating enabling environments for businesses to thrive, introducing legislations that requires businesses to adopt certain practices, as well as financing research initiatives.

INTEGRATED TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR SECURITY AGENCIES IN IMPLEMENTING CONFLICT-SENSITIVE INTERVENTIONS IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Dr Christiana Akpoduado in her presentation on “Integrated Training Needs Assessment for Security Agencies in Implementing Conflict-Sensitive Interventions in Coastal Communities” highlighted that coastal communities are conflict-sensitive places as they experience conflicts due to resource constraint and population displacement caused by climate change. She defined coastal communities as people living on the thin strip of land or on the water along the fluctuating line where the sea meets the land. She noted that despite being distinct concepts, conflict and security studies have found connections between climate change and conflict. This is because conflicts have grown due to climate change, although in indirect ways. Due to the unique characteristics of conflict-prone places like the coastal communities, several context causative factors such as socioeconomic conditions, governance and political factors play critical roles in translating climate change into conflict risks. This reduces the potential for possessing crude oil or other natural resources and causes exposure to environmental difficulties in addition to having small amount of farmed land and experiencing scarcity of drinking water, among others.



Furthermore, she reiterated that climate change-induced conflicts in Nigeria have primarily affected rural and coastal communities. As a result, these regions experience a variety of conflicts such as territorial disputes over limited natural resources, kidnappings, and piracy, weaponizing water, protests and vandalism, and social/ethnic disputes.

The paper established that there is a relationship between climate change and conflicts in coastal communities, and that the conflicts triggered by climate change present security risks to not just the affected localities but to the entire region. Hence, there is a need for the involvement of security agencies in the implementation of conflict-sensitive interventions in coastal communities with the primary responsibility to establish and disseminate environmental standards, build partnerships with local communities, develop early warning systems, protect territorial integrity, ensure the maintenance of order and most importantly, embark on an anti-crime operation, and to provide all necessary security measures for quick response and recovery.

She concluded by stating that interventions by security agencies in this regard will necessitate the personnel to undergo training and be properly equipped to carry out their duties in the conflict-affected areas. Security agencies are also required to engage in international best practices and ensure the limited use of force in internal security operations.

MAPPING OUT CONTENTS OF THE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE AND THE TRAINING REQUIREMENT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Air Cdre Darlington Abdullahi, the OSCC, conducted the session on “Mapping out Contents of the SOP and the Training Required for Law Enforcement” He defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as a set of instructions and guides within the sphere of a given subject matter. In the context of this workshop and the C7-WA project, he opines that SOPs provide guides to issues such as discipline, dress code, and procedures to be followed in certain situations, health status, the availability of the right equipment and how to use them, mode of communication, log books for record keeping, incidence books, language, religion and culture in the coastal communities, use of fire arms and relations with the host communities.



He further discussed each of the areas mentioned above and emphasized that these instructions and guides are to be always adhered to by the security personnel, as failure to do so can jeopardize the overall objective of the mission. He then guided the participants in their groups, to attempt an SOP based on their specialized job functions in the Niger Delta as well as their Service needs. The participants were reorganized from their initial sitting arrangements into

groups based on their Services for better articulation of Service needs. Copies of a questionnaire were also administered for completion by the participants to aid the needs assessment.



INTERACTIVE SESSION 2

A participant from the academia shared her concerns over the state of abandoned oil wells in the region. She noted that these oil wells are still producing gas and have the potential of emitting green gas which can be harmful to the populace. She advised the C-7 West Africa project team to look into this aspect. Another participant spoke on the need for oceanography training for the coastal dwellers and indeed, the Niger Deltans.

A Lieutenant Commander in the Nigerian Navy (NN) who was also a participant at the workshop spoke extensively on the activities of the NN in the coastal communities to which they are deployed. These activities include sea patrols to ensure the safety of the waters and intelligence gathering from indigenes.

A participant from a civil society organization observed that youths were not represented in the workshop. She therefore recommended for their involvement in subsequent engagements as the youths are the core players in crisis situations. Air Commodore Darlington Abdullahi responded to her observation by stating that the workshop is in line with the findings of a research, and the focus of the workshop is on the role of the security agencies with the aim of getting inputs from the personnel that will aid the formulation of necessary policies and interventions.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr Marco Simoncini appreciated all the participants for their input and the feedback received at the workshop. He promised that the feedback will be followed by interventions from the European Union. Speaking on behalf of all the participants, a participant thanked the organizers of the workshop and was optimistic that the knowledge gained, and the experience shared will have positive effects in carrying out their future assignments in the coastal communities. He further appreciated the team members for their efforts in making the event possible.



The workshop was thereafter ended as Mr Marco Simoncini headed to the Bayelsa airport, Yenagoa for transit to Lagos. This was to enable him to catch the flight to Amsterdam the following day.

COMMUNIQUE ADOPTED AT THE INCEPTION CEREMONY AND COOPERATIVE PLANNING WORKSHOP ON THE THEME: “COPING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE AS A CAUSE OF CONFLICT IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES OF WEST AFRICA” HELD AT THE GOLDEN TULIP HOTEL YENAGOA FROM 04 – 05 MAY 2023

BACKGROUND

The Nigeria Maritime University (NMU) organised a two-day Inception Ceremony and Cooperative Planning Workshop with the theme “**Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa**”. The event was organised in collaboration with the Fondazione Accademia Italiana Della Marina Mercantile (Italian Shipping Academy) from 4 to 5 May 2023 at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Yenagoa with the sponsorship of the European Union. It brought together various security personnel and agencies serving in the coastal environment of Nigeria’s Niger Delta region, the academia and civil society organisations to deliberate on issues around the theme of the workshop. The FAIMM Operational Security Component Coordinator worked closely with the NMU to achieve the objectives.

The Executive Governor of Bayelsa State, Senator Douye Diri was the chief host while the Chief of Defence Staff, General LEO Irabor was the Special Guest of Honour and Keynote Speaker. They were however both represented at the event. Other guests that graced the occasion were HRM King Bubaraye Dakolo and other traditional rulers in Bayelsa state; representatives of the Chief of Naval Staff and the Chief of Air Staff; heads of other security and para-military institutions and MDAs in Bayelsa State, and other dignitaries. The chief host; the special guest of honour; the chairman of the traditional ruler’s council; and Mr Marco Simoncini presented remarks in line with the theme of the workshop. There were also interventions by the representatives of the CNS; the DG NESREA; and the Bayelsa State Commissioner of the Ministry of Environment as well as the OSCC.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Arising from the paper presentations and discussions, the following observations were made by participants:

- a. Acknowledged that the theme of the workshop was apt and most appropriate given the dynamics of the security situation in the Niger Delta.
- b. Ascertained that platforms and equipment are needed for the security agencies to work optimally in the coastal areas.

- c. Acknowledged that the underlying cause of conflict in the region is poverty arising from the theft of crude oil, effects of climate change and acts of criminality.
- d. Noted that climate change has resulted in mass displacements of people from their places of habitual residence.
- e. Highlighted that climate change has resulted in loss of some cultural heritage.
- f. Noted that climate change has an impact on livelihoods.
- g. Observed that climate change impacts the wellbeing and psychology of people.
- h. Took cognizance of the imperative of resource extraction on the communities concerned
- i. Reiterated that some government policies and regulations do not reflect the plight of the people intended.
- j. Acknowledged that personnel deployed to some conflict zones are not familiar with the environment and are thereby, easily defeated by the indigenes who are familiar with the terrain.
- k. Argued that there is a lack of collaboration among the relevant stakeholders.
- m. Lamented that there is inadequate funding for climate change related issues.
- n. Recognized that Nigeria has partnership with other countries on maritime issues to address piracy
- o. Affirmed that the NN monitors all the vessels that ply Nigerian waters and appropriate actions are taken for violators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the strength of the observations above, the following recommendations were made:

- a. The European Union and others should be commended for the climate change initiative and work towards supporting an end to the theft of crude oil and gas resources.
- b. The oil companies should ensure the minimization of oil spillage and gas flaring in the communities.
- c. The FGN should ensure shoreline protection for communities threatened by climate change.

- d. The government should carry out the rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure and procure new ones where necessary for various agencies involved in law enforcement.
- e. The Civil Society Organizations should provide more voices for communities to know and defend their rights.
- f. The State governments should support poverty reduction projects such as skills acquisition.
- g. The academia should conduct more research on climate sensitive agriculture with the aim of developing improved seedlings.
- h. The FGN and State governments should develop environmental transition programmes to enable the Niger Delta to transit from fossil fuel to renewable energy.
- i. The Federal and State governments should develop disaster preparedness plans for each community to be better prepared at the outbreak of disasters.
- j. The government should set up review panels to conduct impact assessments in the aftermath of conflicts.
- k. The security agencies are to ensure incidence preparedness and emergency response plans are put in place.
- l. The government should ensure livelihood restoration and compensation for those impacted by the effects of climate change.
- m. The government should conduct reclamation and restoration efforts for wetlands.
- n. The government should conduct health audits and psychosocial support for people who have experienced the effects of climate change.
- o. The security agencies with the mandate for securing pipeline facilities should ensure their mandate is carried out effectively.
- p. The FGN should commence the process for a comprehensive review of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA).
- q. The security agencies should make efforts to curb unregulated and illegal fishing.
- r. The security agencies should conduct regular training and retraining of their personnel to familiarize themselves with the operational environment and the best international practices.

s. Sensitization and training of security personnel and the general populace be conducted periodically.

t. Climate change should be made as a course of study in various academic institutions (both military and civil).

Adopted this Day

05 May 2023

Signed:

Marco Simoncini

Darlington Abdullahi

Godfrey Pondei