

NSAC

THE NIGERIA SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVES CHARTER

CHARTER OF DEMAND

YOUTH EDITION

**(ADAPTED FROM THE ORIGINAL COPY OF THE NIGERIA
SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVES CHARTER BY
HEALTH OF MOTHER EARTH FOUNDATION – HOMEF)**



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Designed & Simplified: For training and awareness of youth as community right defenders.

Disclaimer:

This Charter is an adaptation for learning, advocacy, and mobilization purposes.

The original publication by Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) remains valid and authoritative.
(Find the link to the original copy below)

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INTRODUCTION:

Nigeria is facing serious social and ecological crises. In recent decades, these challenges have grown worse, threatening not just our wellbeing, but also our survival as a people.

Even though Nigeria is blessed with a rich climate and diverse ecosystems, these natural gifts are now at risk.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and decades of reckless exploitation of resources have brought us to a dangerous tipping point.

From unregulated mining and oil extraction to unchecked urbanization and poor policies, our land, air, and water are being destroyed while communities suffer the consequences. Unfortunately, governments at all levels have turned a blind eye.

Instead of protecting people and nature, they allow harmful practices to continue. It is clear that something bold and urgent must be done to stop this destruction.

This Charter is a call to action. It presents a vision for a sustainable, just, and fair Nigeria a country where people's wellbeing and the health of the environment are prioritized.

The challenges are urgent and real: forests are disappearing, air and water are polluted, the Niger Delta is drowning in oil spills, desertification and drought are spreading, floods are displacing communities, coastlines are vanishing, and farmers are struggling with declining harvests.

We need radical change. This Charter offers a plan to confront these problems and build a future where nature is respected, communities control their resources, everyone enjoys clean air, water, and a healthy environment.

This vision is rooted in **environmental justice, people's participation, and sustainable development**. It is a call for Nigerians to take charge of transforming their environment and their future.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE NIGERIA SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVES CHARTER :

This Charter is anchored on the following core principles and ideological precepts:

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE:

This principle recognizes the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation and climate change on people of poor and marginalized communities and pushes for the recognition of this disproportionality in national and global environmental and climate change responses.

PEOPLE PARTICIPATION:

This principle emphasizes the emergence of active and resilient communities that are empowered to participate in all decision making processes that affect their lives and ecological wellbeing.

SUSTAIN-ABILITY:

This principle recognizes the resilience and know-how of indigenous people and promotes their abilities, culture, and skills in developing sustainable long-term ecological solutions and practices that protect the environment and promote sustainable practices.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

This principle upholds the need to hold corporations and government entities accountable for their ecological footprints. It is founded on the belief that corporations and governments must comply with established regulations and do no harm principles, face penalties when they are in violation, and make reparations for any damage their activities have caused.

SOLIDARITY AND PARTNERSHIP:

This principle recognizes the value of fostering unity and cooperation among diverse communities and movements across the world with the overall aim of building strong, vibrant, and united forces for ecological transformation and protection of the planet.

CHARTER OF DEMANDS: DROUGHT AND DESERTIFICATION

Northern Nigeria states like Sokoto, Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi, Jigawa, Kano, Borno, Yobe, Gombe, Bauchi, and Adamawa—has been hit hard by increasing droughts over the past decades.

Families lose income, children and the elderly face malnutrition and health risks, and many people are forced to migrate, leading to conflicts and more poverty.

Drought has also worsened desertification in the region, caused by climate change, overgrazing, deforestation, and poor land use. Productive farmland is disappearing, threatening food security and livelihoods.

Records show that desertification has affected about 75% of land in frontline states around 43% of Nigeria's total land. Desert-like features now cover over 63% of Nigeria's landmass, with the desert expanding by about 600 metres every year from the Northeast to the Northwest. Around half of the water bodies in northern Nigeria have shrunk, including Lake Chad, which has almost disappeared.

It is urgent that the government takes serious, immediate action to protect vulnerable people, slow down desertification, and restore damaged lands and water bodies.

OUR DEMANDS ON DROUGHT AND DESERTIFICATION AFFORESTATION AND REFORESTATION:

The government must launch **large-scale tree planting programmes** to stop desert expansion, restore soil fertility, and support local livelihoods. Trees are natural shields against desertification, they improve soil moisture, bring back biodiversity, and help communities thrive.

A good step would be to **expand the Great Green Wall project** using indigenous tree species that suit local environments.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ADAPTATION STRATEGIES:

In recognition of the adverse impacts of drought and decortication on the lives of the people in the affected areas, it is critical that governments create intervention programmer aimed at supporting the livelihoods of communities and ensuring that people have the needed assistance to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT:

Establish policies and frameworks that foster sustainable agricultural practices that conserve water and soil resources. Strategies such as crop rotation, conservation tillage, and organic farming can significantly reduce soil erosion and water loss.

WATER CONSERVATION PROJECTS:

In areas affected by drought and decortication, it is critical for the government to develop and maintain water conservation and suitable irrigation systems to support agriculture. Efforts in this regard should take into consideration strategies such as rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, and building check dams to enhance water availability.

FLOODS

Flooding is the most frequent and devastating disaster in Nigeria. Since 2012, floods have repeatedly displaced millions, destroyed homes and farmland, and claimed many lives.

Floods are driven by heavy rainfall, poor drainage, deforestation, and dam releases. They destroy critical infrastructure, wipe out farmland, worsen food insecurity, and spread waterborne diseases. Farmers and poor communities are often the hardest hit.

Unfortunately, government response has been largely limited to weak emergency relief and ineffective warnings. Many affected households never receive help, and evacuation support is minimal. For example, during the 2022 floods, less than 2% of victims got government assistance, with most relying on family or friends for survival.

To protect lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems, Nigeria urgently needs stronger flood resilience measures, effective adaptation strategies, and long-term planning in the face of worsening climate change.

In line with the forgoing, the people demand the following:

FLOOD CONTROL INFRASTRUCTURE:

The government must invest in flood control systems, including dams, levees, and drainage systems, to protect vulnerable communities. These structures should be designed with community input and managed sustainably.

PROTECTION OF WETLANDS:

Protection of wetlands from unchecked sand filling and so-called land reclamation

RELOCATION OF HIGHLY AFFECTED COMMUNITIES:

Since the floods have continued to intensify in regularity and impacts, the people demand that governments immediately produce plans for relocating the most affected communities to safer and more protected areas.

We consider this very critical to assist vulnerable people in rebuilding their lives. These efforts should be carried out in close collaboration with affected communities and all stakeholders, while fully observing the principle of doing no harm.

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE:

The impacts of flooding on households in Nigeria have been devastating. Increasingly, communities have become poorer and facing impoverishment. It is pertinent that governments extend economic support initiatives to affected communities to aid in rebuilding their lives.

GOING BEYOND EARLY WARNING:

Governments at all levels need to go beyond the routine announcements of impending floods without any corresponding assistance for communities to relocate or survive the floods. Bold transition initiatives that include relocation, aid, and health support should be developed ahead of floods and deployed when floods occur.

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

It is pertinent for the government to realize that the escalating risk of flooding in Nigeria is principally driven by climate change. The most effective and efficient long-term solution to flooding is the reduction of Nigeria's fossil footprints.

Beyond making promises in global spaces on cutting emissions, the government must make plans to wean the economy off its dependence on fossil fuels. In the interim, the government should introduce a moratorium on all new fossil projects including new oil licenses and leases.

DEFORESTATION

Nigeria has one of the fastest deforestation rates in the world, losing about 3.7% of its forests every year. Forest cover has dropped from 40% in the 1960s to less than 10% today, mainly due to logging, agriculture, and firewood use. Weak governance, corruption, and poor law enforcement have worsened the crisis.

This loss of forests threatens biodiversity, water cycles, local livelihoods, and accelerates climate change. Communities that depend on forests for food, medicine, and cultural practices are being displaced and impoverished.

In recent years, two new threats have emerged:

- Commercial exploitation by governments forests are being cut and sold as a quick revenue source.

- Commodification through carbon markets forests are being leased or sold for carbon credit schemes that put profit over people and ecosystems.

The push to assign monetary value to forests risks undermining true ecological protection. Forests must be safeguarded for their ecological, cultural, and community value, not just for financial returns.

In accordance with the above, the people following:

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES TO PROTECT FORESTS:

What remains of Nigeria's forests have been preserved chiefly by indigenous communities who live within forested areas and depend on forest resources for multiple socio-economic and cultural needs. It is vital that forest protection and conservation initiatives are led by them. Community-led forest conservation projects that promote sustainable forest management and check logging should be established across the country.

These initiatives empower local communities and ensure that conservation efforts align with local needs.

END THE FINANCIALIZATION OF NATURE:

In places like Cross River state, the attempt to commodify forests and forest protection has rather resulted in unprecedented forest loss. The commodification of forests threatens community rights over their resources, and exposes nature to corporate grab. The same trend is emerging in some states where huge swaths of land are being earmarked for carbon credits speculation.

The people demand an end to all policies that seek to hand over forested areas to corporate interests under whatever guise.

AN END TO PLANTATION EXTENSION:

The cessation of plantation agriculture is essential for the prevention of deforestation in Nigeria, as the clearance of extensive forest areas is frequently the result of large-scale monoculture plantations which serve strictly colonial export purposes.

By transitioning to agroforestry, it is possible to maintain forest cover while simultaneously sustaining local economies and meeting food needs. In order to achieve long-term environmental sustainability and resilience against climate change, the people demand an end to licensing large mono crop plantations and the so-called 'salvage logging' that attends it.

REFORESTATION:

Forest restoration in Nigeria is critical for reversing the adverse effects of deforestation and enhancing environmental sustainability.

Reforestation projects not only improve biodiversity and carbon removal from the atmosphere, but also support the livelihoods of local communities through agroforestry and the sustainable harvesting of forest products.

The people demand that the government initiates programmes to drive reforestation across the country, especially in places where forests have been lost.

WATER RIGHTS

Access to clean water remains a global crisis. Billions of people especially women, children, and poor communities struggle daily to secure water, often paying high costs for this basic necessity. Lack of water worsens health problems, poverty, and insecurity.

In Nigeria, the situation is severe.

Despite being rich in water resources 215 billion m³ of surface water and 87 billion m³ of groundwater about 179 million people still lack safe drinking water. The challenge is worse in rural areas due to poor infrastructure, weak governance, and economic hardship.

Historically, colonial systems treated water as a business resource, a legacy that continues today in the debate over whether water should be a public good or a private commodity. Privatization pushes inequality further, making water inaccessible to the most vulnerable.

The crisis is made worse by climate change, pollution from oil and mining industries, and weak regulation. Rivers, wetlands, and other water bodies are under severe threat.

The people affirm that:

- Water is a human right, not a commodity.
- Nigeria, as a signatory to the UN Declaration on the Right to Water and Sanitation (2010), must uphold this right.
- Pollution and exploitation of water sources violate not only human rights but also the rights of nature, since rivers and ecosystems are living entities that deserve protection.

In accordance with the above, the people make the following demands;

DECENTRALIZING WATER MANAGEMENT: DECENTRALIZING THE MANAGEMENT:

Decentralizing the management of the water resources will empower local communities and enable more effective control and management at the grassroots level.

RESISTING THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF WATER:

Governments in Nigeria must resist pressure from international financial institutions to commercialize the water sector. Governments must prevent the commodification of water by reinforcing public ownership of water infrastructure, prioritizing public access to safe, clean and affordable water.

RECOGNIZING ACCESS TO WATER AS A HUMAN RIGHT:

The people call on the federal government to explicitly recognize access to water as a fundamental human right.

STRICT SANCTION FOR POLLUTING WATER:

The government should enforce existing legislations that criminalize the pollution of water bodies, including through exposure to hydrocarbons or waste dumping.

RECOGNIZING THE RIGHTS OF NATURE:

The Nigerian government should recognize our water bodies as living entities with rights to maintain their natural cycles, thus protecting them from indiscriminate pollution and reckless exploitation.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Nigeria is blessed with rich and diverse ecosystems from rainforests and savannas to mangroves and wetlands harboring thousands of unique species of plants and animals.

With over 4,700 vascular plants, 285 mammals, 775 fish species, 864 birds, and many more, Nigeria is one of the world's biodiversity treasures.

The Niger Delta stands out as a global biodiversity hotspot, containing Africa's largest mangrove forest (1 million hectares) and 11 Ramsar wetlands of international importance.

It is home to rare and endangered species such as the Cross River gorilla, African manatee, Niger Delta red colobus, and the leatherback turtle. Similarly, the Cross River tropical forest ranks among the 25 most important biodiversity hotspots in the world.

Yet, this wealth of biodiversity is under severe threat. Drivers of biodiversity loss include:

Industrial agriculture (excessive agrochemicals, monocultures, and tillage) Deforestation, soil degradation, and pollution.

Overexploitation of natural resources, climate change, and urbanization, weak laws, poor policy implementation, and reliance on GMOs and toxic pesticides.

The consequences are grave:

- Soil degradation from the loss of essential microbes and invertebrates.
- Food insecurity as ecosystems lose resilience to pests, diseases, and climate shocks.
- Health risks from the unregulated use of hazardous pesticides over 50% of which are highly dangerous in Nigeria's market, often used without farmer awareness or safety guidance.

In response, the people demand a shift to Agroecology as the foundation of agricultural and environmental policy.

Agroecology is not just farming it is a justice-driven, ecological, and social system that restores soil fertility, enhances biodiversity, strengthens local food systems, and empowers communities to decide what they eat and how it is produced.

In line with the above, the people demand the following:

TRANSITION TO AGROECOLOGY:

The Government should encourage the adoption of agroecological farming practices which promote biodiversity conservation, soil health, and sustainable agriculture. Support small-scale farmers with training, resources, and incentives to implement agroforestry, organic farming, crop diversification, and integrated pest management techniques.

INCREASE SUPPORT FOR SMALL-HOLDER FARMERS:

Smallholder farmers are responsible for producing an estimated 90% of food in Nigeria. The government should ensure adequate support for small-scale farmers, especially women and youth, through access to land, credit, inputs, and technical assistance.

The government should also invest in agricultural extension services, farmer cooperatives, and community-based organizations to strengthen the capacity and resilience of small-scale food producers.

DOMESTICATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIODIVERSITY:

Nigeria has taken steps to align with the Convention on Biodiversity by enacting laws such as the National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) Act. However, this law is deeply flawed and fails to adequately protect human and environmental health.

Key problems with the NBMA Act include:

- Weak precautionary principles, which should put public and environmental safety first.
- Conflict of interest in the NBMA Board, which includes the National Biotechnology Development Agency (a strong GMO promoter).
- No strict liability for harm caused by GMOs and related technologies.
- Excessive discretionary powers given to the agency, allowing it to operate with little accountability.

Instead of acting as a rubber stamp for GMOs, the NBMA must be restructured to truly safeguard biosafety, biodiversity, and public health in Nigeria.

ADOPT THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE:

Regarding GMOs, the government of Nigeria should take a precautionary approach and reverse the commercialization of GMOs including the herbicide tolerant ones with direct implication for biodiversity and the pesticidal beans commercially approved in 2021.

PROTECT RESERVE AREAS:

The government should establish measures to enhance the management of protected areas, including national parks, wildlife reserves, and forest reserves, through improved governance, law enforcement, and community involvement. Strengthening protected area networks can help safeguard critical habitats and species.

The government should also promote community-based approaches to biodiversity conservation that empower local communities, indigenous peoples, and traditional landowners as stewards of their natural resources.

REMOVAL OF PATENT RIGHTS FROM ALL PLANT SEEDS AND FOOD:

The people demand the immediate removal of patent rights from all plant seeds and food. This action is essential to ensure that agricultural resources remain accessible and affordable for all farmers and communities.

Patents on seeds and food create monopolies that restrict farmers' rights to save, exchange, and replant seeds, leading to increased costs and dependency on a few large corporations. Eliminating these patents will promote biodiversity, enhance food security, and support sustainable agricultural practices.

Policymakers and relevant authorities must take urgent action to revoke existing patents and prevent future ones on plant seeds and food products.

MINING AND SOLID MINERALS:

While Nigeria is rich in minerals like tin, columbite, gold, coal, lead, zinc, and lithium, the sector contributes only **0.3% of GDP**. Yet the environmental and social costs far outweigh this tiny economic benefit.

Both **large-scale mining** and **artisanal small-scale mining** devastate communities and ecosystems. The impacts include:

- **Severe land degradation:** erosion, gully formation, loss of agricultural productivity, deforestation, and desert encroachment.
- **Air and water pollution:** toxic gases (methane, CO₂, SO₂) contribute to acid rain, global warming, and respiratory diseases.
- **Toxic contamination:** heavy metals like mercury and lead poison water, soil, and food chains endangering human health, wildlife, and aquatic life.
- **Public health crises:** mining communities, such as in Zamfara, face neurological disorders, respiratory diseases, cancers, and long-term disabilities from exposure.

- **Cultural and social collapse:** child labour, prostitution, insecurity, terrorism, and illicit mining funds are rampant in mining zones.
- **Destruction of protected areas:** mining encroaches into National Parks and ecologically sensitive areas, threatening endangered species.
- **Climate impacts:** radioactive mineral decay, greenhouse gas emissions, and deforestation worsen climate change.

Mining in Nigeria today represents **ecological injustice**: communities carry the burden of poisoned environments, broken livelihoods, and ill health while elites and foreign corporations profit.

The People Demand:

- **A moratorium on destructive mining practices** especially in National Parks, reserved lands, and ecologically fragile areas.
- **A review and strict enforcement of mining regulations** to prioritize community health, biodiversity, and climate safety.
- **Mandatory restoration and reclamation** of mined lands, with penalties for defaulting companies.
- **Ban on mercury and other toxic chemicals** in artisanal and small-scale mining.
- **Community consent (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent)** as a precondition for any mining project.
- **Health and compensation plans** for mining-affected communities, including screening, treatment, and reparations.
- **Transparency in mining revenues** to stop illicit funds and corruption that fuel insecurity and banditry.
- **A just transition framework** that invests in renewable energy, agroecology, and green jobs instead of destructive extractives.

DEMANDS OF THE PEOPLE ON MINING AND SOLID MINERALS :

1.Enforcement of Mining Regulations:

The government must strictly enforce mining policies and laws that protect the rights of communities and regulate the conduct of local and foreign miners. This should include the institutionalization of mandatory Social and Environmental Impact Assessments (SEIA), with findings acted upon proactively to ensure the protection of communities, ecosystems, and public health.

2. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC):

Communities must not be sidelined in decisions that affect their land and livelihoods. Mining activities have too often proceeded without genuine consultation. We demand comprehensive consent-seeking mechanisms that respect the concerns of every segment of the community particularly marginalized groups such as women, youth, and indigenous peoples.

3. Proper Research and Mapping of Mineral Deposits:

Nigeria cannot continue to rely on speculators and foreign interests to identify mineral deposits. The government must urgently lead a transparent, community-inclusive process to ascertain and map mineral resources nationwide. This will prevent exploitation disguised as agriculture or construction and guarantee that communities benefit equitably from their resources.

4. Upholding International Best Practices:

Mining companies in Nigeria must be held accountable to the highest international standards of human rights, labor, and environmental protection.

Government must ensure that “do no harm” principles guide every mining operation in the country.

5. Mandatory Decommissioning:

Communities cannot continue to bear the scars of abandoned mines. The government must establish binding policies and monitoring mechanisms that compel mining companies to rehabilitate mined areas and carry out full decommissioning in line with global best practices before exiting operations.

6. No Mining Zones:

Certain areas must be declared permanently off-limits to mining activities. These include the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), forest reserves, national parks, watersheds, and areas of critical biodiversity. This is essential to protect ecosystems, cultural heritage, and national security.

ENERGY TRANSITION:

The world is currently faced with a critical climate emergency, making it imperative to rapidly shift our energy choices. This means moving away from fossil fuel-based systems (coal, oil, and gas) to renewable and sustainable energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydro power.

This transition is not just about technology it encompasses fundamental changes in energy production, distribution, and consumption, backed by strong policy reforms and innovations.

Fossil fuels remain the single largest driver of climate change, accounting for about **75% of global CO₂ emissions**.

In 2023 alone, global energy-related CO₂ emissions rose by 1.1%, adding **410 million tonnes** and reaching a record high of **37.4 billion tonnes** (Gt). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has confirmed that human activities, especially fossil fuel burning, are responsible for most of the warming since the mid-20th century.

In Nigeria, the consequences are glaring more frequent droughts, floods, desertification, and sea level rise, all with devastating ecological, economic, and social impacts. Since the energy sector contributes about **73% of total global emissions**, cutting emissions at the source is the most effective way to mitigate climate change.

Nigeria has committed to a **Net-Zero Emissions target by 2060**, as reflected in its 2021 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Achieving this requires more than rhetoric it demands decisive action.

A **just energy transition** is non-negotiable. It must simultaneously tackle environmental crises, create new green jobs, improve public health, promote equity, and build resilience.

For Nigeria, justice must be at the core of this transition. Our people are among the worst affected by climate change, yet we contributed the least to the global emissions that caused it. Wealthier nations and historical polluters must bear greater responsibility, especially in financing and supporting Nigeria's transition.

One critical energy challenge lies in cooking energy. Over **70% of Nigerian households rely on fuelwood** for cooking and heating, particularly in rural areas where alternatives are scarce.

This reliance fuels deforestation, which further undermines our carbon sinks and accelerates climate impacts. Burning fuelwood also releases CO₂, methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O) gases far more potent than CO₂ in their warming effect. Urgent investment is needed in clean cooking solutions such as LPG, biogas, and solar technologies to reduce dependence on wood fuel, cut emissions, and save our forests.

Finally, Nigeria must avoid falling into another extractive trap in the name of the energy transition. The global push for “transition minerals” (such as lithium and cobalt) risks recreating the same exploitation, inequality, and sacrifice zones that fossil fuel extraction imposed on communities.

Our transition must not repeat history it must be people-centered, environmentally just, and socially inclusive.

Here’s a simplified and paraphrased version of that section while keeping the demands and context intact:

People’s Demands on Energy Transition

Inclusive Energy Policies:

The government must involve all stakeholders especially communities, civil society, and marginalized groups in shaping Nigeria’s Energy Transition Plan (ETP).

Without a people-driven plan, Nigeria’s energy future remains uncertain and unstable.

Job Transitioning and Training:

Workers moving from fossil fuel industries should be supported with training and education to prepare them for new opportunities in the renewable energy sector.

Fair Compensation:

Communities and individuals who lose jobs or livelihoods due to the energy shift must receive adequate compensation and government support.

Environmental Remediation:

The transition should also address decades of oil-related pollution, especially in the Niger Delta. A thorough assessment of the environmental, health, and livelihood damage must be carried out, followed by a clear plan for restoration.

Access to Clean Energy:

Clean, affordable, and reliable energy must be made available to all, especially rural and underserved communities. This must also include clean cooking technologies that reduce deforestation and protect both people and the environment.

OIL AND GAS EXTRACTION IN THE NIGER DELTA:

Since 1956, crude oil has been extracted nonstop from the Niger Delta, now with over 900 active oil wells producing up to 2.5 million barrels of crude daily, alongside vast gas reserves of 192 trillion cubic feet. This region has generated Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings for decades, yet the 40 million people living there remain trapped in poverty, neglect, and repression.

Oil and gas extraction has brought devastation instead of development. About 70% of associated gas is still flared annually, despite court rulings and repeated government deadlines since 1979.

Gas flaring continues because oil companies prefer paying fines to investing in safer alternatives. This practice causes heart disease, lung complications, and severe environmental damage.

More than 7,000 km of pipelines crisscross farmlands and rivers, many over 40 years old.

Corrosion and ruptures frequently release oil, destroying crops, poisoning water, and sometimes igniting fires that raze entire communities.

Each year, an average of 240,000 barrels of crude spill in the Niger Delta over 14 million litres, equivalent to 429 fuel tankers leaving communities with illness, poverty, and displacement.

Now, after nearly 70 years of reckless extraction, major oil companies like Shell, ExxonMobil, TotalEnergies, Chevron, and Eni are selling off their assets and exiting, leaving behind massive contamination with no accountability.

Nigerian buyers of these oilfields often deny responsibility for historic pollution, making remediation even harder.

The Niger Delta deserves urgent cleanup, restoration, and justice. After decades of carrying the burden of Nigeria's oil economy, its communities cannot be abandoned again.

THE PEOPLE'S DEMANDS:

1. Ecological Audit of the Niger Delta

We demand an immediate and comprehensive ecological audit of the entire Niger Delta region. This audit must cover environmental, livelihood, health, social, and economic impacts of crude oil and gas extraction. The findings should be made public and followed by:

- Full remediation of impacted lands and waters.
- Restoration of ecological systems and human livelihoods.
- Reparations to communities for irreversible damages.

2. Emergency Response to Disasters

The response by oil companies and the National Oil Spills Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) to oil spills and disasters has been intolerably slow, sometimes nonexistent. For instance, the Ororo-1 oil well off the coast of Ondo State has been burning since April 2020 without response. We demand:

- Immediate extinguishing of ongoing oil well fires and spills.
- A national emergency protocol with enforceable timelines for disaster response.
- Penalties for companies and agencies that fail to act promptly.

3. Oil Company Divestment

As oil majors exit the Niger Delta, they cannot walk away from six decades of destruction. The federal government must establish a *Divestment Accountability Framework* that requires companies to:

- Conduct a **Post-Hydrocarbon Impact Assessment Report** covering ecological, social, and livelihood impacts.
- Carry out a **Health Audit** for communities near extraction sites and those exposed to hydrocarbons.

- Present a **Remediation and Compensation Plan**, fully costed and implemented before divestment is finalized.
- Ensure liability for historical damage remains with parent companies, not transferred to new buyers.

4. Gas Flaring

Gas flaring continues to devastate communities, despite decades of false promises to end it. The 2021 Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) even permits indefinite flaring with token fines.

The people demand: A *definite, non-negotiable deadline* for ending routine gas flaring, stricter conditions, publicly defined, for any emergency venting, transfer of flare-approval powers from the Commission to the National Assembly for accountability, revision of gas-flare penalties to match the **full commercial value** of natural gas on the international market, mandatory allocation of flare-penalty revenues to Host Community Development Funds for health and ecological remediation.

This Charter is a living document and will be reviewed from time to time by the peoples of Nigeria to ascertain the level of response by policy makers and to include other areas where the threat to expand the fields where the people and the environment are treated as disposables.

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