

# SUMMARY REPORT

## **NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT FORUM: COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS FOR STIMULATING INVESTMENTS AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE NIGER DELTA.**

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Tuesday, November 17 – Wednesday, November 18, 2015  
Asaba, Delta State

Supported by Niger Delta Partnership Initiative (NDPI) and the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND)



# THE NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT FORUM



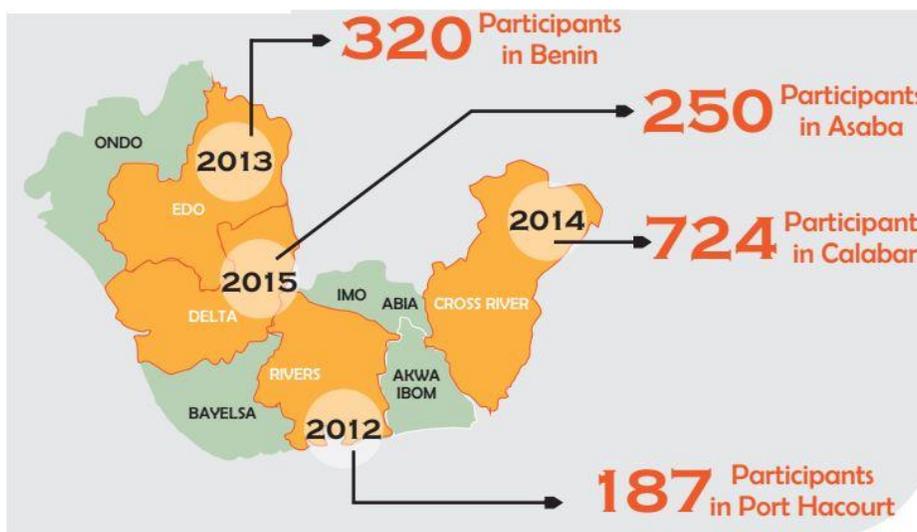
The vision of the Niger Delta Development Forum (NDDF) is a Niger Delta region where all persons that are economically active are able to generate income and employment and take full advantage of existing resources and opportunities, unhindered by constraints from within and outside the market system. The

Forums are catalytic information sharing and collaboration opportunities for government, private sector, and civil society organizations pursuing approaches for equitable economic growth in the Niger Delta. For many participants, the NDDF provides a platform to connect with other partners to collectively pursue improved development policies and practices in the Niger Delta.

The 2015 Niger Delta Development Forum (NDDF) in Nigeria was a watershed moment in the Niger Delta. With the recent elections in Nigeria, there were shifts in leadership at many levels, including in at least five of the nine Niger Delta states. This offered a unique opportunity for this year's Forum to frame and influence the discourse, priorities and flagship initiatives in the region for the next four years – building synergy of effort around government and private sector investments as well as citizens priorities as we collectively moved to explore the imperatives of inclusive economic growth and economic diversification in the Niger Delta. By gathering key decision makers from the public and private sphere, as well participants across infrastructure planning, finance and development, this NDDF Asaba aimed to reach balanced and practical insight into the opportunities and solutions. The theme for this year's NDDF in Asaba, Delta state was ***“Collaborative efforts for stimulating investments and inclusive economic growth in the Niger Delta.”***

NDDF Asaba sought to leverage the tradition of a value-added space where interested and committed development actors - public, private sector, development practitioners, and international development actors alike - convene to take actions to promote growth while seizing the huge opportunity to influence the development agenda for the region. It also sought to build on earlier Forums in 2015 - London, UK (June) and Washington, DC (October) - to connect interested international investors and development actors with the opportunities and networks on the ground in the Niger Delta to work around specific initiatives.

The Forums are organized by the Niger Delta Partnership Initiative (NDPI) Foundation, the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) and members of the DEMAND ALLIANCE.



NDDF Participation numbers from 2012 – 2015

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM NDDF ASABA

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### Session 1: Funding and investment opportunities for economic infrastructure and diversification

***“Develop clearer plans for alternatives for the import and distribution of goods away from Lagos through investment to make port areas more responsive to the needs of the new poles of growth.”***

- Lack of infrastructure is key to unlocking the problem of lack of development opportunities in the region, especially power. Hold a conference to bring together all key actors in the power sector to discuss strategies and models for power/energy generation/distribution in the Niger Delta.
- The enabling environment has been a tricky thing to get right in the Niger Delta. Nigeria has had a long history of infrastructure projects that have never been finished, where people have opportunistically gotten contracts that they have never completed. How do we incorporate a culture of transparency and accountability with infrastructure contracts and government agencies that oversee these contracts?
- Access to financing and availability of sources of capital is a critical enabler of socioeconomic development, whether from development funds, or micro finance or commercial banks. There is a significant “missing middle” tier of finance for medium and large sized enterprises in the Niger Delta.
- Security is a vital public good, enabled by strong infrastructure and public services. The high cost of criminality to firms acts like a tax and produces an unsustainable cost to local businesses. Increased domestic security would create an economy of its own, but the main challenge is implementing security initiatives in an economic and political environment that thrives on instability and insecurity.

### Sessions 2: Skills development for women and youth as a priority for the region in the next four years

***“ICT has the potential to drive economic growth in the region. Youth need to find innovative ways of applying technology to help solve problems in their local communities.”***

- Government institutions should strive to work more closely with local CSOs and businesses around policy creation, especially in the areas of talent development with human resources agencies, in ensuring that policies on gender equality are carried out from the hiring processes to leadership or managerial positions in organizations and businesses.
- Engage with the Ministry of Education to encourage entrepreneurship skills are included in all schools’ curriculum. Changing mindsets from “job seekers” to “job creators” will ultimately lead to economic development for the region.
- The Nigerian National Gender policy equally highlights women’s lack of access to critical resources such as education, finance, labor, entrepreneurial skills and most importantly, lack of control over their valuable time as being responsible for the feminization of poverty.
- Women’s invisibility in statistics culminates in their being robbed of their “voice” and “agency” (opportunity to be heard and reckoned with) leading to exclusion from development processes.

### Session 3: Strengthening agricultural/market value chains

***“Agriculture constitutes a large proportion of the Nigerian economy worth a total of over \$500 billion; one dollar in every five is generated from agriculture.”***

- All value chain actors need to upgrade, upscale and expand agricultural production in order to meet both the local and international market demand
- Nigeria does not have a policy and an institution regulatory body that guides international investment in agriculture. There must be an enabling environment that will drive international investment in agriculture. Similarly, Nigeria does not have an institution that helps in exportation of agricultural products. Creating such institutions, as well as addressing logistics problem through provision of railway system and seaports, can promote exportation of agricultural products outside the country and the Niger Delta, in particular.
- 5 key target areas for policy recommendations:
  - Assistance for the promulgation of a National Quality Policy (NQP) and improvements in ensuing legislation for the NQI
  - Establishment of a National Accreditation Body (NAB) and Capacity development for accreditation auditors
  - Establishment of a National Metrology Institute (NMI)
  - Improved private sector capacity to create and support conformity assessment bodies (CAB) in the NQI program
  - Extend the use of NQI services through awareness activities and better trained NQI’s workforce

### Session 4: Governance and accountability

***“A new partnership model for collaborating on development projects is needed. Rather than competing (in some instances for the same pool of funds), Niger Delta Institutions should find ways to leverage their resources and work together for the entire benefit of the region.”***

- Information in the Niger Delta is often considered a source of power and therefore citizens and organizations are not incentivized, or sometimes lack the appropriate systems, to share data and research findings.
- The BRACED Commission can act (and has acted) as a governing body for Regional Governors to meet on a regular basis to discuss and update each other on development initiatives in the region. There is a need to strengthen/empower the institution to enable it to act as the main nucleus for sharing information that comes out of NDDF and for ensuring all state governments and their respective institutions are well represented in the decision-making process.
- States are naturally inclined to look inward first when attempting to solve issues and may not naturally seek the collaboration or even interest of other Niger Delta States to tackle issues that are common across the region. NDDF can serve as a body for establishing a link and a need for Niger Delta State governments to begin to work more collaboratively with one another.
- The fall in oil prices and its impact on a reduction in rent-seeking behavior in the Niger Delta, (not only in the public and private sectors but also at community level) should be seized as a unique window of opportunity to change thinking and encourage wider development without increasing the region’s dependency on the oil industry.
- To address the business and investment risks presented by the region, it is essential that government at Federal and State levels demonstrate exemplary leadership and political will.