

**COMMUNIQUE ADOPTED AT THE END OF A ONE DAY FISCAL INCLUSION TOWN HALL MEETING,
ORGANIZED BY THE NIGER DELTA BUDGET MONITORING GROUP, WITH SUPPORT FROM OXFAM IN
NIGERIA AS PART OF OXFAM'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (SPP YEAR 3) HELD ON SATURDAY,
17TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2018 AT LIBAC HOTEL, IGWURUTA, RIVERS STATE.**

Preamble

A one-day town hall meeting on *community needs assessment and shadow budget* was organized by the Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group (NDEBUMOG (www.nigerdeltabudget.org) with support from Oxfam Nigeria's Financing for Development's program.

The **Financing for Development's (F4D)** concept- under Oxfam's **Strategic Partnership Program (SPP)** envisages to create sustainable impact, whereby, more Nigerians, especially; women, are empowered to participate in decision making processes, contributes to nation building as active citizens, and benefits from better living standards through increased availability of essential services. Futuristically, on the long-term, the outcome is projected to be achieved, through an improved (fiscal) policies, responsive practices of government, together, with the private sector that would result in reduction of poverty and extreme inequality, through effective and efficient management of **Nigeria's** (tremendous) resources with increased citizens' participation.

Pathways to change has been planned at 5 levels, namely; *Improved Policies of Government, Improved Policies of Private Sector, Strengthened CSOs, Increased Citizens' Voice* and finally, *building Stronger and wider Alliances* through (strategic) influencing modules. The beneficiaries, are mainly; the **Nigerian people**, that is; workers, civil society organisations, local communities, market women, small scale farmers, artisans, traders, local governments, national and sub-national parliaments, Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government (**MDAs**), the private sector, et al.

In view of the above, participants for this town hall meeting, were drawn from communities in Etche and Ikwerre Local Government Areas of Rivers state, respectively. The meeting focused on community needs assessment, community action plans and livelihood opportunities for women and men. Gender equity and fiscal inclusion also featured during deliberations at the meeting. **Among** the **aims** of these Town Hall meeting are to raise a communal- mass of fiscal influencers, mobilize the citizenry through strategic partnership/influencing theory, which shall enhance democratic inclusion, raise communal mass of (fiscal) lobbyists at the grassroots, deepens democratic accountability and transparency around communal developmental clusters, among others. We further used these Town Hall meetings for enlightenment of communities on (inclusive) participatory budget and exposure to governmental-fiscal mechanics, which the communities could use to leverage development at the grassroots and promote the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** for the benefits of all by the year 2030.

The following were **observations** made at this Igwuruta Town Hall meeting:

1. That monies spent by the government belongs to the people, hence, citizens must be consulted during fiscal processes by every tier of government.
2. Knowledge about shadow budget as essential fiscal tool is relegated to the background and neglected in budget tracking and in the fight against corruption.
3. Fiscal domineering by men is a factor that hinders social harmony and encourages inequality.

Resolutions:

1. That government at all levels, should place value and priority on (inclusive) human needs, livelihood and strategic planning, which engenders women's rights.

2. That exclusion of women in communal, cultural, traditional and political settings, should be addressed through fiscal approaches and policies that promotes inclusivity towards the SDGs.
3. Participation of women in community projects', alongside, other social, cultural and economic sectors should be encouraged.
4. Budget of government should be opened for proper accountability, transparency and tracking by communities and other stakeholders.

Conclusion:

Participants appreciated NDEBUMOG and Oxfam for taking a fiscal activity, such as this, to hinterlands and semi-urbans areas, pledging to be fiscally responsive within their areas. Participants solicited for more town hall meetings around semi urban and rural areas.

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Adopted at Igwuruta, Ikwerre Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria on Saturday 17th November, 2018.

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