

**DECLARATION AFTER A ONE DAY COMMUNITY TOWN HALL MEETING ON INCLUSIVE BUDGET ORGANIZED BY NIGER DELTA BUDGET MONITORING GROUP {NDEBUMOG} WITH SUPPORT FROM OXFAM IN NIGERIA, AT HOIL SUITES, YENEGOA TOWN, ON THE 30TH OF MAY 2015.**

At an Inclusive Town-Hall Meeting organized by the Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group (NDEBUMOG) with support from OXFAM in Nigeria, held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015 @ Hoil Suites and Apartment at Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The meeting was attended by Women Groups, Community Based Organizations, Youth Groups, Clergies and Politicians, which was to brainstorm about inclusive budget for Bayelsa State. Yenegoa Cluster Includes Aleibiri, Kpansia, Azikoro, Ogbogoro, Agudama, Koroama, Okordia, Okaka, Biseni, Zarama, Oporoma and Nembe). At the end of the meeting, we the participants made the following observations:

1. That there is a wide gap in Yenagoa Cluster's projects, between what is on the budget for projects and services, as these do not seem to reflect actual budgetary allocation.
2. Some authorities in government claim that the Freedom of Information Act is not applicable in Bayelsa State, because it is not domesticated.
3. It is very difficult for CSOs and communities to access income and expenditure information from government MDAs in the State.
4. The Bayelsa State Transparency Law 2012, though operational in the state, does not adequately address transparency

issues in the state, as MDAs have refused to divulge information on income and expenditure to interested members of the public.

5. The state government has failed to publish amount released to local government councils.
6. The Government does not publish various sources of funds accruing to the State.
7. There are cases of duplication of projects by Federal, State, Local Government, NDDC and Donor agencies.
8. Annual budgeting process has become an annual ritual. Budget line items are defective, not specific and lacks transparent and accountable framework to ensure the needs and priorities of the people and communities are met.
9. Intervention Funds e.g Sure-P has no impact in the State.

Participants recommend as follows:

1. Government should follow due process in the procurement and bidding processes. Also, projects quality and specification should be strictly followed, as well as inclusiveness of community people from start to finish in every project.
2. Government should include communities in the budget process and implementation. Also, communities should be encouraged to develop a framework known as “Community Charter of Demand” to guide developmental processes at the community level.

3. Project that is included in the budget of a particular fiscal year whether completed or not should be reviewed and completed in the subsequent fiscal year's budget.
4. Civil society organizations and other community based organizations should engage the government in project and budget monitoring and tracking.
5. Participants appeal to the Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group to publish uncompleted and on-going projects in Yenagoa Cluster.

Signed:

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| 1. Hon. (Mrs.) Epigha Okpongu (Chairman) | Aleibiri |
| 2. Barr. David Alagoa (Secretary)        | Ogbia    |
| 3. Sir. Godwin Ebeli                     | Ekeremor |
| 4. Torki Dauseye                         | NGOs Rep |
| 5. Kikile Ovietemewo                     | Yenagoa  |