

**Third Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**  
**United Nations Headquarters**  
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**Item 4B-Environment**



Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address this august assembly. I am Legborisi Saro Pyagbara speaking on behalf of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) representing the six Kingdoms of Ogoni and the Ogoni Volunteers Indigenous Humanitarian Organization (OVIHO).

Mr. Chairman, the environment remains a very critical issue to all of us because our entire essence as Indigenous peoples depends on the wholesomeness of our environment.

It is however sad that the current neo-liberal policies of economic globalization is doing more damage to our environment as never before witnessed in our entire history as a people as the lord of profit maximization become the ethos of the present economic agenda.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to inform you that the flames of gas flares that led to the Ogoni campaign is still flickering in the Niger Delta. Despite our repeated calls on the Nigeria government to place the welfare of our people above economic advantages, in relation to taking a definite stand against the continued flaring of gas in the Niger Delta, which makes the country the highest on the list of countries where gas is flared in the world, the government continue to play politics with this issue while local Indigenous communities where this gas is flared face the blighting of their environment and the oil companies smile to the banks with the huge profits they declare at the end of each financial year.

It is time all parties concerned with the safe guarding of our environment match their words with action because we have played so much rhetorics with the environment question.

Mr. Chairman, based on the result of a recent research conducted by my organization, we recommend that:

1. Recognising that all phases of oil exploration damage the environment, a moratorium should be placed on the development of the oil industry in Ogoni and the Niger Delta until and when all issues are sorted out.
2. In our study, we also found that Oil exploitation is in complete contradiction to the concept of biodiversity conservation. As a result we call on the Permanent Forum to conduct more study on this issue and take an appropriate stand on it.
3. We call on the United Nations and its agencies to develop an acceptable framework on which all countries' environment performance will be measured and the result of such assessment used by them in allowing or refusing the participation of countries below the scale in their Development Assistance Programmes.

Thank you.