

**SEARCHING FOR
POLITICAL SOLUTION
TO THE PROBLEMS OF
THE NIGER DELTA OF
NIGERIA.**

ALICE UKOKO

The Willinks commission set up by the British Government before Nigeria's political independence in 1960 recognised the unique developmental needs of the Niger Delta due to her difficult terrain.

Although the region is rich in natural resources, there has not been a corresponding development in the region. Instead, the masses are the poorest in Africa. The deprivation and adverse environmental impact caused by 50 years of oil exploration in the region have compounded the problems of the people of the Niger Delta.

As a campaigner for the rights of the people of the Niger Delta, I have not supported the agitation for the region to control her wealth being called for by the political and community leaders of the region. The reason being that the political leaders has failed to apply the resources that have come to the region through monthly allocation for public good.

Those in positions of trust throughout the region, convert the wealth of the people to private wealth with impunity. The masses wallow in absolute poverty, a situation compounded by the environmental destruction of their lands making crop and fish farming fruitless.

Every effort to effect positive change in the region has been met with resistance by the Nigerian Governments and the oil multinational companies operating in the region.

Grass root women of the region tried to dialogue with the oil companies on the 8th of August 2008 and were brutalised. Being a victim of the brutality, I worked to prevent a repeat of that attempt to protect grass root women from further brutalisation. I silenced grass root women's public agitation.

However, following my discussions with Shell International in London, supported by Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), an international women peace movement, Shell Nigeria met with grass root women in Warri Delta State on 23.03 2003 to discuss a ways of ending the problems of the Niger Delta. Nothing was achieved by the women's efforts. The problem continued.

The failure of grass root women in their search for justice, peace and sustainable socio-economic development in the region gave birth to the on-going youth militancy.

Mothers have buried their sons who have refused to watch failings of their governments in silence. Foreign oil workers have been taken hostages. Although the MEND has not killed any hostage, there is no denying the fact that foreign oil workers are been made victims of the failings of Nigeria's Governments.

I do not agree that poverty alleviation is the sole responsibility of the oil multinational companies operating in the Niger Delta. I strongly believe that it is the responsibility of government to ensure that the multinational companies meet their international operational and legal obligations in their pursuit of profit.

I believe that for there to be lasting peace in Nigeria, the problems of the Niger Delta must be correctly diagnosed and addressed correctly.

I believe that the 50 years old problem has political solution in place of the show of military might which appear to be the method being adopted by Nigeria's governments. To attempt to solve a political problem with military solution will not only fail, it would compound the problem.

I believe that for there to be sustainable peace in the Niger Delta, there must be responsible governments made up of persons with integrity and sense of commitment to national peace and stability.

Haven campaigned successfully to return Nigeria to civil rule since 1999, the next stage is for us to consolidate our democracy and hence address the many problems facing us as a nation. This is why I am presenting myself to serve my nation and the Niger Delta by providing a focussed and progressive leadership to the next government of Delta State.

Nigerians will be going to the polls to elect their political leaders in April. Unlike the developed world, Nigerians have not had the privilege of being governed by persons elected by them in the past. In 2003 for instance, guns and machetes were used to prevent Nigerians from electing their leaders.

Thus, although Nigeria is presumed by the world to have returned to democracy in 1999, to the people of Nigeria, the last eight years of presumed civil rule represents the greatest nightmare in their history.

Nigeria has lost more people during this last eight years than in the civil war. Lives have been lost through increased incidence of ritual killers, armed robbers through unsolved assassinations and political thuggery. In fact, Nigeria is a perfect specimen of a failed State.

As a human right defender and political activist, I have campaigned successfully to end direct military rule in Nigeria.

I have supported Africans to integrate into the UK community through the charity Women Of Africa formally, Women Of Nigeria International.

I have successfully supported UK professionals to work with African families by mediating cultural misunderstanding between UK and African cultures. I have served Africa through this charity free of charge for 12 years.

My present challenge is to contest the governorship of Delta State. I am aware that this is a huge task given the poverty level and the presence of guns and machetes in Nigerian politics, plus the prospect of vote rigging which feature prominently, but failing to challenge the corrupt nature of Nigeria's politics represent a worsening of socio-economic lives of Nigerians.

Delta State is a major oil and natural liquid gas producer. Although rich in resources, the rate of absolute poverty is extremely high. Environment destruction has contributed to deaths and poverty level.

As a woman without economic wealth, I have succeeded in gained the privilege of contesting the forthcoming governorship election under the Labour Party. This was in recognition of my contribution to humanity in the past and the confidence that the party has in me.

To succeed in the forthcoming elections I need financial support the people are eager for positive change. But it is difficult to reach the people without vehicles to convey the message.

This plea for financial support is to empower my campaign as the Labour Party does not have the resources to back me as their governorship candidate for this important election.

I have made several appeals to individual Nigerians in Nigeria for financial support without success. My last hope is this appeal to the world for support.

The new Delta State has huge investment prospects for Deltans and non-Deltans who wish to invest and hence contribute to Our collective dream: A Delta State that will meet international standard. Please Help Alice Ukoko Political Campaign for a better Delta State.

There is an overwhelming desire and expression of support for a positive change of government led by me, there is also an urgent need for me to raise finance for the election campaign.

Campaign Budget

I need to purchase one vehicle for each of the 25 local governments that make Delta State and three salon cars. This is to ensure that every grass root person of every ward of the 25 Local Governments are reached and carried along in our quest to end corrupt leadership in Delta State.

To meet the cost of security, vehicles, administration, communication and others, a total sum of £2.5million needs to be raised.

Please invest in good governance, transparency and 21st Century Delta State as a step towards the development of the Niger Delta to ensure lasting peace in the region, Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

No amount is too small as every penny counts.

Please make cheques payable to Alice Ukoko and sent to:

Women Of Africa; 54 Camberwell Road, London SE5 OEN (Marked Alice Ukoko's campaign fund)
or, make direct bank payments to:

Name of Bank: Lloyds TSB;

Branch: Camberwell Green

Account Number: 2288528

Sort Code: 30-91-54

To donate in Nigeria, please contact Alice Ukoko directly in Nigeria.

Thank you for your contribution.

Kind Regards,

Alice Ukoko

Governorship Candidate for the Labour Party (LP) of Nigeria.