

Intervention by Women's Major Group 20 Feb.

On draft decision 6, Governance, Advancing Justice, Governance and Law

Thank you chair,

My name is Caroline Usikpedo, of the Niger Delta Women's Movement for Peace and Development, speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

Firstly, we support the intervention of the NGO Major Group made earlier, to expand on the Rio+20 decision on a national-level ombudsperson for future generations, to retain the reference to Rio principle 10 and to name the principle of non-regression.

In particular, we support the NGO group point, that important actors which should be recognized, are ALL stakeholders, in particular those who are impacted by environmental pollution.

I come from the world's largest wetland, the Niger Delta, which has been terribly polluted by the oil corporations in the last 50 years, destroying the livelihoods of many of the 20 million inhabitants of the region.

For example, in my community, a small woman entrepreneur, who had taken a bank-loan for a fish farm, lost all her 50,000 fish after an oil-spill. She has never been compensated by the oil company. She and her children are reduced to beggars. She is one out of thousands of poor people who lost their livelihoods and health.

The pollution – benzene in our drinking water wells, the pollution from the gas flaring – is killing us, with life-expectancy for women down to 45.

At the same time, the oil companies are making their biggest profits EVER! Despite the financial crisis, companies like SHELL have some 30 billion in profits. But poor people effected by their activities, become beggars.

This terrible situation could have been avoided, had stakeholders been involved in the decision making, had environmental and social assessments been done. An example is Norway which has such public participation, and where citizens have decided that 80% of the revenue from oil will go to assure social wellbeing of the people, environment and future generations of the country.

For the Women's Major Group it is therefore essential that women and other stakeholder are recognized in this draft decision, and it will restore the trust of civil society in international environmental decisions and processes.