

INSECURITY AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE NIGER DELTA: SOME LESSONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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ABSTRACT

A critical exploration of the nexus between insecurity and the failure of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Niger Delta is still in infancy after the expiration of the deadline set for its actualization. As the United Nations inaugurated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the need to investigate the festering security challenges and its possible far-reaching implications on the actualization of the SDGs in the Niger Delta became very necessary. Within the foregoing context, the study explored the nexus between insecurity and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Niger Delta region. The study adopted human security theory in understanding the obvious nexus between security and development within the context of SDGs implementation; given the fact that Sustainable Development Goals falls within the fulcrum of human security. Employing secondary method of data collection where data were largely drawn from scholarly articles, academics journals, books, publications by government and non-governmental institutions, newspaper and newsmagazines as well as the internet materials while the data sourced were analysed using content analysis. The study argued that the implementation of SDGs can only be guaranteed in the Niger Delta by the recognition of the inextricable nexus between security and development, which was the main factor that led to the failure of MDGs attainment in the region. The study recommended for more concerted effort at global, national, state and local levels to address insecurity for the smooth implementation of SDGs in the region by the deadline of 2030 given the strategic nature of the region to Nigeria economy in particular, and global economy in general.

Keyword: Insecurity, Millennium Development Goals, Niger Delta, Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations, Fiscal gap, Policy incoherence, Logistic and Infrastructure challenges.

Introduction

The Millennium Declaration was adopted at a special Session of the UN General Assembly on September 20, 2000; as a global development agenda premised on a set of mutually reinforcing development goals, targets and technical indicators, now widely known as the

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹. Sixteen years afterwards, and 1 year after the inauguration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the 70th Summit of UN General Assembly in New York, the assessment of how far the SDGs is been implemented, presents a formidable challenges in the Niger Delta region owing to the failure of the MDGs in the region.² The MDGs were anchored on global development; it stands to reason that such developmental agenda cannot be achieved in a crisis-ridden environment like the Niger Delta region. This point resonates with the liberal democratic thesis perspective, which points inescapably to the nexus between peace, security and development. Thus, for development to be viable in any region, the security of such region must be ensured, and the path to such security according to the democratic peace theorists, is the path of liberal democracy.³ The term security within the context of this paper means the protection of human beings from any forms of threat or actual physical molestations that are capable of preventing them from optimising their skills and potentials. In line with the foregoing, it is incontestable that the linkage between physical security and development which formed part of the concerns of the MDGs suggests an inextricable nexus. In this regards, this study seeks to explore physical insecurities within the context of MDGs attainment in the Niger Delta between 2000 and 2015 with the aim of discovering way forward in the quest for the actualization of SDGs in the region by the deadline of 2030.

Problematization of the Study

Extant literature have focused more on how fiscal gaps, climate change, policy incoherence, logistical and infrastructure challenges hampered the achievement of MDGs targets in the Niger Delta region, given no salience to insecurity in general, and physical insecurity in particular. However, the relationship between development and security is not a fundamentally new conceptual issue. Much the same can be said of the practical inter-faces between various outward-oriented policies and above all the development and security policies.⁴ Stable and peaceful environment has to exist if development is to be possible in the Niger Delta.⁵ The idea of security centred on the state has, in many respects, given way to an entirely new concept. Security has fundamentally evolved in the international debate from a concept which focused on the stability of the state to a proactive approach related to the individual. However, it is hard to appreciate many of the implications of the change in

thinking of the new concept of development and security. Within the context of how physical insecurity hampered MDGs attainment in the Niger Delta, it cannot be gainsaid that security and development are inseparable.

Theoretical Perspective of the Study

Development and security have historically fashioned distinct discourse. More recently, they have been inevitably linked both in discourse and policy, as a consequence of the so called security-development nexus.⁶ However, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) being a pure developmental agenda can much better be achieved in a secure and peaceful environment. MDGs, which were unanimously adopted by World Leaders to address poverty and human development, made no reference to conflict or human security. More recently, the nexus between the MDGs and conflict or physical insecurity security have gained increasing attention. This was greatly facilitated by the impressive work of the Commission on Human Security in 2005, which noted that:

People security around the world is interlinked as today's global flows of goods, services, finance, people and images highlights. Political liberation and democratization opens new opportunities but also new fault lines, such as political and economic instabilities and conflicts within states. More than 800,000 people a year lose their lives to violence. About 2.8 billion suffers from poverty, ill health, illiteracy and other maladies. Conflict and deprivation are interconnected. Deprivation has many causal links to violence, although these have to be carefully examined. Conversely, wars kill people, destroy trust among people, increase poverty and crime, and slow down the economy. Addressing such insecurities effectively demand an integrated approach.⁷

To this extent, this paper is anchored on human security theory as an analytical framework in understanding the nexus between security and development within the context of MDGs attainment in the Niger Delta. It is worthy of note that human security theory gained currency in the early 1990s with the publication of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report of 1994. The theory gives insight into the *raison d'etre* of MDGs; emphasising that MDGs did not only reflect global justice and human rights; but also vital to national security and stability for it attainment to be guaranteed.⁸ The theory argues that the socio-economic well being of any society and security are inter-dependent.

The theory however, emphasises that development need safety from all form of chronic threats as hunger, disease, depression, environmental degradation, climate change, as well as poverty. This view stands to resonates that there will be no development without security and no security without development.⁹

The contextual relevance of the human security theory to this paper can further be understood from the perspective of how specific physical security challenges like kidnapping, militancy, youth's violence, oil bunkering, breaking of oil pipe lines, political riots as well as environmental degradation over and above all other factors bedevilled the attainment of MDGs in the region. Evidently, it is indisputable that Nigeria's oil rich Niger Delta is prone to series of physical security challenges ranging from kidnapping, oil bunkering, militancy, youths protest, and environmental degradation amongst other. By implication, the attainment of the MDGs in the Niger Delta and insecurities suggests an intertwine relationship. Since security and development are inseparable and MDGs were developmental agenda; which falls within the rubric of economic security, health security, community security, environmental security as well as food security as postulated by human security theory. Human security theory emphasises that socio-economic development and well being of the people was the tangential focus of MDGs which was hindered as a result of physical insecurities. In this regard, the paper therefore, submits that human security theory serves as a veritable framework to underpin the nexus between security and development within the context of Niger Delta insecurities.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Backgrounds, Targets, Indicators and Plan of Actions

In order to respond to worsening global development challenges, the U.N Millennium Summit held in New York in September 2000 adopted the Millennium Declaration. The Summit witnessed the participation of 189 nations, and an unprecedented 147 Heads of State and Governments as signatories. The Millennium Declaration identified and institutionalised Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a mandate to work towards achieving them as at 2015.¹⁰ The MDGs were eight global development agenda encapsulated into what could be considered key performance indicators, were further complemented by 18 quantifiable

targets, more than 10 plan of actions and 48 technical indicators to measure and monitor progress towards its actualisation.¹¹

The aforementioned indicators, targets and plans of action have since then been adopted by a consensus of experts from the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as the World Bank (WB) for states to use them as yardsticks to measure their progress. Each target and indicator was linked to a Millennium data series as well as to a background series related to the target in question.¹² For instance; MDG 1 has two main targets and five technical indicators. The first target is to halve the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day by 2015, with indicators such as to reduce: (i) the proportion of population that spend below \$ 1.25 per day; (ii) reduce poverty gap ratio incidence; and (iii) increase share of poorest quintile in national consumption. The second target of MDG1 was to halve within the time frame the proportion of people who suffer hunger. The indicators for benchmarking this include: (i) reducing prevalence of underweighted children less than five years of age; (ii) reducing proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption.¹³

MDG 2 was to achieve universal primary education; with a target as at 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. The indicators for this Goal are: the number of net enrolment ratio in primary education must be equal between boys and girls; (ii) proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 must increase by 100% between 1990 and 2015; and (iii) literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds must be reduced by 100% in 2015. MDG 3 was to promote gender equality and empower women, with the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. Indicators for MDG 3 attainment are premised on the fact that by 2015 the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education must be equal; ratio of literate women to men between 15-24 years old must be equal; share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector must be equal with that of men; and that the proportion of seat held by women in national parliament must be equal with that of men. Furthermore, MDG 4 was to reduce child mortality; that is, among under-five, target by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015. The key indicators are to reduce

under-five mortality rate by 100%; infant mortality rate by two-third in 2015, and the proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles increased by two-third.¹⁴

Goal 5 seeks to improve maternal health, target by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015. The Indicators are to reduce maternal mortality ratio by three-quarter, and to increase proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel. MDG 6 was to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, set target to have halted and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases by 2015. The indicators are premised on halting HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years by 2015; increasing condom use rate and the contraceptive prevalence rate; increasing the percentage of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS; combating prevalence rate ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years; combating prevalence and death rates associated with malaria; combating the proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures; combating the prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis; and combating the proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under the internationally recommended TB control strategy.

MDG 7 and 8 focused on environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for Development. Goal 7 was to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resource by halve. By 2015, the goal is to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; achieve by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. Indicators for the attainment of this goal was premised on the reduction in the proportion of land area covered by forest; increase the ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area; reduction in carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone-depleting; reduction in the proportion of population using solid fuels; increase the proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source in urban and rural areas; increment in the proportion of population with access to improved sanitation in urban and rural areas; and finally, increase the proportion of households with access to secure tenure. Lastly, MDG 8 was to develop a Global Partnership

for Development, corroborated with six targets and sixteen technical indicators. Among the targets were to:

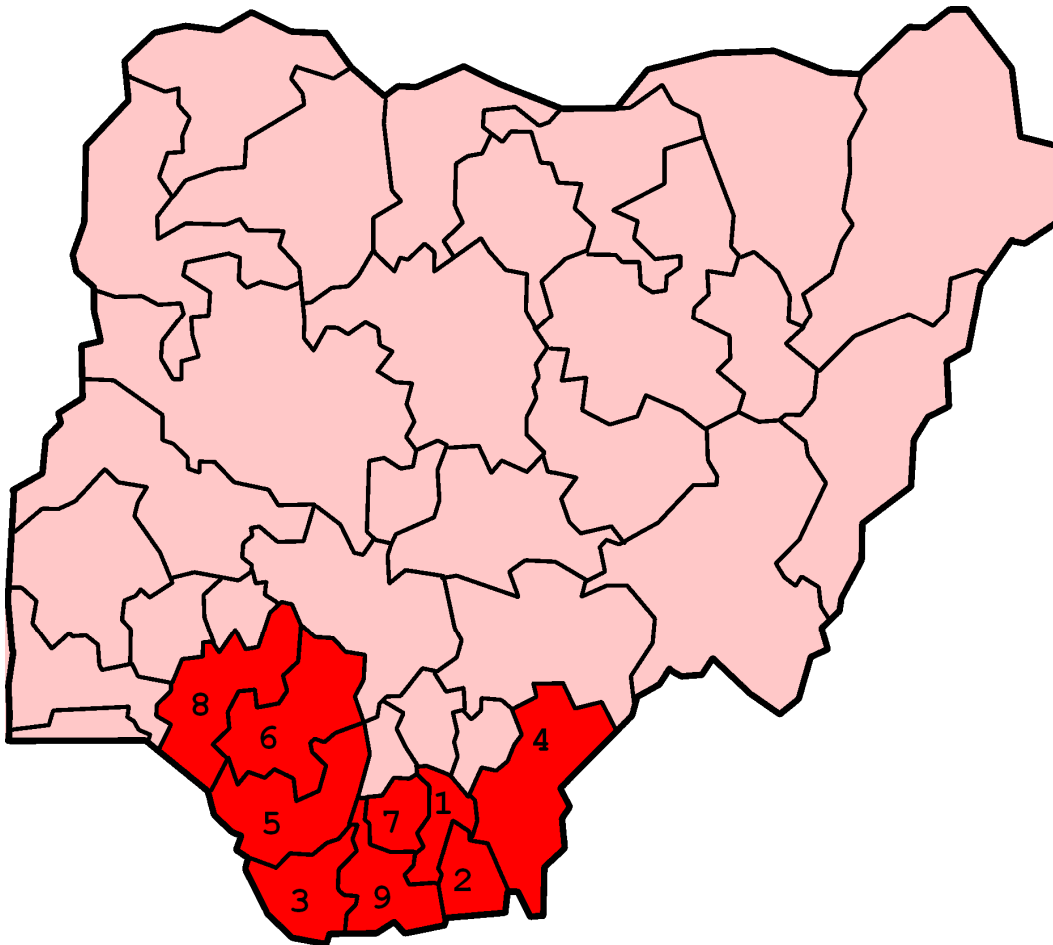
- develop further an open rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system which includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction both nationally and internationally;
- address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries which includes tariff and quota-free access for Least Developed Countries exports;
- enhanced program of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries [HIPC] and cancellation of official bilateral debt, and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction;
- address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states through the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and 22nd U.N General Assembly provisions;
- deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term, to make room for cooperation with developing countries by the developed ones, to develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth;
- cooperate with pharmaceutical companies and provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries, to cooperate with the private sector and make available the benefits of new technologies especially information and communications technologies. The indicators are to increase the proportion of total bilateral and sector-allocable of ODA and DAC donors to basic social services in education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation;
- increase the proportion of total developed country imports by value and excluding arms from developing countries and from LDCs;
- admit free of duty and average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products, textiles and clothing from developing countries; and;
- encourage Agricultural support estimate for developing countries as percentage of their GDP increases; and increase the proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity in the developing countries. ¹⁵

The United Nations Plan of Actions to actualise MDGs by 2015 was based on investing in development and bringing together the core recommendations of the UN Millennium Projects, and by outlining practical investment strategies and approaches to financing the project, analyse each project on MDGs and its operational framework that will allow even the poorest countries in the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as at 2015, amongst other.¹⁶ It should be noted however that despite the laudability of the MDGs, the targets, indicators and plan of actions were, many NGOs and social movements have unflinchingly questioned time again time the choice of the MDGs goals and indicators, the processes through which these were derived and decreed.

The Niger Delta Region: Origins, Socio-geographical analysis and Economic importance

The oil-rich but ecologically fragile Niger Delta region of Nigeria is a vast coastal plain in the southernmost part of Nigeria, where one of West Africa's longest rivers empties into the Atlantic Ocean between the Bights of Benin and Biafra, in the Gulf of Guinea. This huge wetland, said to be Africa's largest, has one of the world's widest biodiversities and is home to about 31 million people according to the 2005 census in Nigeria.¹⁷ The region covers a total land area of about 75,000 square kilometres, 7200 kilometre of oil pipeline, 159 oil fields as well as 275 oil flow stations. It is the third largest wetlands globally, and the largest in Africa.¹⁸ The region is defined as comprising the area covered by the natural delta of the Niger River and the areas to the east and west, which also produce oil. Furthermore, the natural limits of the Niger River Delta can be defined by its geology and hydrology. Its approximate northern boundaries, located close to the bifurcation of the Niger River at Aboh, while the western and eastern boundaries are around the Benue River and the Imo River, respectively.¹⁹ The Niger River has two mouths namely, Forcados and the Nun, while it is linked by a labyrinth of creeks and lagoons to several rivers such as Benue, Brass, Bonny, Qua-Iboe, and the Cross.

Map of Nigeria Illustrating the Niger Delta Region



Map of Nigeria showing the Niger Delta states: 1. Abia, 2. Akwa Ibom, 3. Bayelsa, 4. Cross River, 5. Delta, 6. Edo, 7. Imo, 8. Ondo, 9. Rivers. Available at www.waado.org/nigerdelta/Nigeria. accessed on 17th of May, 2015.

Prior to the 1980s in its strictest sense, the Niger Delta comprised of areas that constitute the ‘great delta’ of the River Niger that arises on the north-eastern border of Sierra Leone and flows in a great arc of 4, 100km north-east through Mali and Western Niger before turning southwards to empty into the Gulf of Guinea.²⁰ It consists of nine states: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers state; with 185 local governments’ areas with more than 1,600 settlement. The Niger Delta communities are extremely heterogeneous with respect to culture and ethnicity. However, it should be noted that the five major linguistic and cultural groups in the region are the Ijaw, Edo, Yoruba and Igbo; each composed of numerous sub groups. The Ijaw who are said to have the longest settlement

history in the Niger Delta are the most complex linguistically and even culturally. Each of the numerous clans of this community has some linguistic and cultural distinctiveness.

The map of the Niger Delta Region



Map of the Niger Delta showing the geographical analysis of the Niger Delta region, available at www.waado.org/nigerdelta/Nigeria, accessed on 17th of May, 2015.

The community which occupies virtually the whole of Bayelsa state, is also found in Rivers, AkwaIbom, Delta, Edo and Ondo states. While the Edo community is made up of the Isoko and Urhobo of Delta state, the Edo of Edo states, the Engenni and Apie-Atissa of Bayelsa state, and as well as the Degema of Rivers State. Within these communities, however, several sub-groups exist; many claims to have their own individual identity, for instance the groups within the Urhobo and typical cases are the Okpe and Uvbie among the Igbo groups but the Urhobo's still have the largest population.²¹ Although the Edo is the larger group overall because most of them are found outside the Niger Delta region. The Edo groups in Bayelsa and Rivers states are considered largely within the Ijaw group because of the cultural impact the latter has had on the former. The Delta Cross comprises mainly the Ogoni, Ogba, Abua,

Odual and Obolo/Andoni in Rivers State and the Ibibio, Oron and Ibeno of Akwa Ibom state while the Ibibio is the largest of these groups.²²

Furthermore, the most well known community in the Niger Delta internationally is the Ogoni because of its agitation for resource control and autonomy. The ethno-cultural complexity of the Niger Delta region is vividly illustrated by the fact that even a small ethnic group like the Ogoni of about 500,000 people is made up of at least four cultural communities: the Khana, Gokama, Tai and Eleme. The main Yoruba groups in the Niger Delta are the Itsekiri of Delta State, and the Ilaje and Ikale in the borderlands of Ondo State.

The main Igbo groups are the Ikwerre, Ndoni, Egbema, Ogba and Ekpeye in Rivers State and the Ukwuani in Delta state.²³ Before modern times, for instance, there was considerable interaction among the groups of the Niger Delta region, especially those of the core Niger Delta. i.e, the Urhobos, Ijaws and the Ogoni's. This interaction has always been in terms of trade, farm land demarcation, hunting ground demarcation, water ways and inter-group marriages. One major system of exchange is the trade between the Ijaws, who fish and the Urhobos subsistence farmers, while until recently when the Itsekiri female traders became an important facilitators of this trade. Inter-group marriages have been so significant, particularly among the Urhobo, Itsekiri and Western Ijaws, this has made a large proportion of families in the areas a multicultural. Given such interactions, it is imperative to emphasise that inter-ethnic conflicts have been common in the region, but the competition for resources, especially land in this land-short region, has been intense.²⁴ However, the emergence of petroleum on the scene seems to have accentuated such conflicts. The paper argues that there is no gainsaying that the incidence of conflicts and physical security challenges may have been considerably less if there had been no oil and gas in the region. The socio-economic and developmental challenge in the region is how to manage these conflicts so that the business of promoting development can go on without interruption.²⁵

5. Findings and Discussions

5.1. Understanding Insecurities, Millennium Development Goals and Lessons for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Niger Delta.

As one of the dominant sources of global energy supply, the Niger Delta is also important within the wider context of the international socio-economic, cultural and political system. Since the

19th century, a complex interplay of factors has provoked sometimes volatile security challenges from the pressures for the control and distribution of resources. Underlying these security issues however, have been a feeling, among the peoples of Niger Delta of injustice, marginalisation and inequity.²⁶ The Niger Delta region produces the oil that contributes about 80% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and yet continue to witness series of physical insecurities like kidnapping for ransom, militancy, oil bunkering, breaking of oil pipe lines, armed violence as well as youth protests with implications for the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the region. The basic facilities and infrastructure of a modern society like potable water, good roads, electricity, good health care facilities, good modern school, as well as cottage industries are still very much inadequate in the region. Violence takes a severe toll on human security in Niger Delta; as the attainment of MDGs became worsened in the region mostly because of intermittent violence. For instance, 65.6% of the populace still spend below \$1.25 a day as well as about 56.8% of the children do not have access to primary education; the ratio of girls to boys in primary schools is 1.02:2.08; under-five mortality rate is 140/1000 live; and infant mortality rate is 75/1000 live; maternal mortality ratio is 704/100,000 live birth; and proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel is 42%; HIV prevalence among 15 to 24 year old pregnant women is 5.9%; proportion of land area covered by forest is 11.03%.²⁷

Within the context of insecurities in the Niger Delta; 2008 was regarded as the most dangerous year on record for the Niger Deltas, with death rate of 1, 000 people and 300 hostages taken in the first nine months of the year. Also, criminal gangs stepped up their attacks on oil industry by one-third in the same year. Violence in the region continued to cause serious insecurity; thereby, undermining the attainment of reasonable level of human development that could have enhanced the actualization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (State and Local Government Dialogue Report in Rivers State, 2012). With high revenues, the Niger Delta states had the wherewithal to meet the MDGs, as at 2015, regardless of the difficult terrain in the area which makes project costs in the region higher than in other regions. The paper posits in view of the pervasive nature of physical insecurities and the gross failure of governance in the Niger Delta region, it is important to assess the status of MDGs in the region and the prospects for attaining them as a baseline for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As indicated

above, with the mineral and oil derivation share of 17 per cent since 1999, most of the oil-producing states receive higher revenue allocations than others in the Nigerian Federation.²⁸

This should mean that the Niger Delta states are in a better position than other states to meet the key targets of MDGs. If not because of the physical insecurities that characterizes the region and very much absent in other region. As a result of the difficult terrain in the Niger Delta, the costs of providing residential housing, hospitals, schools, roads, water supplies, etc. becomes very much higher than in most other parts of Nigeria. In Rivers state for instance, it cost the state government about N500 million merely to reclaim the land for a 500-bed state hospital; this is only one example of the daunting challenges in achieving the MDGs. To make Rivers state attractive despite the pervasive insecurity nature of the state, the former governor of the state, Rotimi Ameachi supplemented 40,000 naira monthly allowance for N.Y.S.C medical doctors observing their primary assignment at ministry of health in Rivers state; as a way of encouraging the number of student doctors that deploys to the state with a vision to increase the chances of meeting MDG4, 5 and 6 respectively. Despite this laudable effort; the number of student doctors observing their primary assignment in Rivers state still shows an abysmal performance. However, apart from the fear of physical insecurity, most of the student doctors preferred to work with oil multinationals on the basis that they are capable of guaranteeing their security; given the high level of insecurity in the region. This paper further contends that physical insecurities like kidnapping, militancy, oil bunkering as well as breaking of oil pipe lines which had significantly died down in the wake of the general pardon to militants, had resumed in earnest in the Niger Delta.

An attempt by government to compensate major war lords in the region with mouth-watering contract running into billions of naira for the protection of pipelines was responsible for the renewed level of attacks and physical insecurities in the region. However, the result has been unimpressive and unsustainable. Right from the Niger Delta Development Commission Board (NDDC) to the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, the result has been the same.²⁹ Physical insecurities were the main hindrances to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the region. In the past, the Nigeria government had used so many strategies to address the issue of violence in Niger Delta, by launching a joint army-police offensive as a way

of curbing the unrest; this signifies yet another ad-hoc and disjointed attempt at solving an endemic problem, which otherwise requires a coordinated and multi-dimensional approach.³⁰

Government appears to have forgotten so soon that its proposal is similar to many others it had launched in the last few years, without a desired result, instead, tension has been heightened, as warring factions have perceived government's action as simply a way to force official resolve down their throat.³¹ Violence still creates physical security challenges in the Niger Delta. With few months after the expiration of the 2015 for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs), there are fears that Nigeria will still not meet the new target of SDGs, most especially in the volatile and impoverished Niger Delta region. For instance, government lost \$23.7 billion to militant attacks, oil theft and sabotage in the first nine months of 2008. Furthermore, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) report on humanitarian indicators revealed that living conditions in several resident areas in the Niger Delta states have deteriorated. However, the 2013 UNDP reports on Niger Delta violence vis-à-vis its far-reaching implications on the attainment of Millennium Development Goals posits that traces of physical insecurities is still one of the fundamental shortcomings of achieving Millennium Development Goals in Niger Delta.³² However, insecurities like kidnapping and violence have made life in Delta region to be very hard and absolutely unsecured.³³

Physical insecurities in Niger Delta have made the country to continue to lose more than 30 thousand barrels of crude a day. As at July 2014 for instance, the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) asserts that given the current security situation in the Niger Delta; Nigeria had lost over 136 million barrels of crude oil estimated at \$10.9 billion through pilfering and sabotage.³⁵ Furthermore, total amount of products and revenue lost to crude oil as a result of violence and criminality in the region amount to about 10 million barrels of products, valued at about \$894 million.^{xxxv} NEITI also, stated that the figure of losses in crude oil theft and criminal act in the region, represent more than 7.7 per cent of the total revenue accruing to the federation within the period. Furthermore, security challenges have resulted into unquantifiable loss of lives and property and have also affected socio-economic development of the region. For instance, the Niger Delta region had experienced, and is still experiencing serious socio-economic disadvantages such as poverty,

unemployment, poor infrastructure facilities, illiteracy among others, when put side-by-side with other region in the country, especially the South West region, given its socio-economic and political challenges.

However, some amazing paradoxes also emerge from the socio-economic development of the Niger Delta region. Ordinarily, the Niger Delta region should be a gigantic economic reservoir of national and international importance. Its rich endowments of oil and gas resources feed methodically into the international economic system, in exchange for massive revenues that carry the promise of rapid socio-economic transformation within the delta itself. In reality, the Niger Delta is a region suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructure and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty owing to devastating physical insecurities that bedevilled the region since 1894.³⁶

Concluding Remark

Although, the SDGs was inaugurated to continue the developmental successes recorded by the MDGs. Nigeria's score card in terms of MDGs assessment especially in the Niger Delta region shown an abysmal performance; as the region failed to meet up with specified targets and technical indicators of the MDGs before the deadline. This study therefore, revealed how the festering physical insecurity facing the Niger Delta constitutes a critical hindrance responsible for the achievement of MDGs in the region. This study however, concluded that intermittent physical insecurities have made the Niger Delta region to fail in achieving Millennium Development Goals by the deadline of 2015. To this extent, achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the year 2030 looks bleak unless viable measures for achieving it were put into consideration. In view of the foregoing, the paper makes the following recommendations:

- Government must recognise the inextricable nexus between security and development within the context of the Niger Delta physical insecurities and the SDGs attainment;
- Mobilise additional resources and security to champion the cause of SDGs attainment and fight corruption at all level of SDGs implementation;
- Increase political will and executive capacity to achieve the goals, target public oriented investment that will be more beneficial to youths, widows and widowers in

the Niger Delta and provide more basic social amenities as well as infrastructural facilities.

- Hasting the cleaning up policy in the region; and ensures that the policy is not a mere rhetoric but part of government topmost priorities that need to be achieve within the stated timeframe.

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