

Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region: A collective non-violent approach

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Abstract

Since independence in 1960, insecurity has been a feature of the Nigerian State as conflicts in different parts of the country have continued to make life insecure. In the Niger Delta, violence has been the bane of the region where conflicts have been occurring for over four decades. Beginning from the pre-colonial period, the region has witnessed a series of conflicts, which had their roots, initially in the protest against injustice, and in recent years in the quest for resource control. All efforts to resolve conflict in the region failed until 2009 when amnesty was declared by the Yar'adua/Jonathan administration and some form of uneasy peace prevailed. However, seven years down the line, there is renewed militancy in the region and effort is once again geared towards finding lasting peace. This article assesses the efforts made by the Federal Government of Nigeria to address conflicts in the region from the early 1960s to date. It is based on a literature study and on the author's knowledge of the issues in the Niger Delta. Findings from the work show that the Federal Government's approach to resolving conflict in the region has not been successful because it has not adequately addressed the issues that gave rise to the conflict, and because of its emphasis on the

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use of force. The article therefore recommends a Collective Non-violent Conflict Management approach – involving a group of negotiators, both international and local, an international mediator, as well as all the parties to the conflict – as the means for resolving conflict in the region. There is no doubt that a viable resource conflict strategy based on an alternative framework of multilateral cooperation is necessary for resolving and preventing a recurrence of future conflict in the Niger Delta region.

Keywords: conflict, resource conflict, conflict resolution, insecurity, non-violence

Introduction

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria, located in the south-south zone of the country, is the region that produces oil – the lifeline of the Nigerian economy. Since 1956, when oil was discovered in commercial quantity in Oloibiri in present day Bayesa state, Hydrocarbon resources have been the engines for Nigeria's economy, as oil provides 95% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and 80% of the government's budgetary revenues (Davis 2010:1–2). According to the Nigerian National Petroleum Company, Nigeria's oil production accounts for 8% of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Corporation's (OPEC) total daily production and 3% of the world's volume. However, the discovery of oil, which was expected to improve the lot of the communities where it is sourced, has become a curse rather than a blessing because of oil exploration activities and its attendant hazards, such as air and water pollution. This has led to the indigenous people demanding compensation as well as control of the oil wealth. This demand has led to a confrontation between activists and Multinational Oil Companies operating in the region as well as the Federal Government. The struggle which started as a peaceful protest metamorphosed into armed conflict after the killing of a renowned activist and playwright in the region, Ken Sara-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni men. The new wave of protests after this has included the abduction of foreign oil workers, bombing of oil installations and destruction of lives and property.

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In 2009, the Federal Government interceded with an amnesty programme under former President Musa Yar'adua and his deputy, Goodluck Jonathan. The amnesty, which was proposed to last for five years, required that repentant militants surrendered their arms in return for unconditional national pardon. This exercise witnessed a total of 26 808 militants surrendering their arms and ammunition and being granted amnesty, which involved co-opting or integrating them into the society as well as training them (Ajodo-Adebanjoko 2016:1). While amnesty lasted, there was some reprieve as militants sheathed their swords. However, there has been recourse to arms in the region in recent times as new militant groups emerged in 2016 with various demands. While the new names that emerged this time differ from the past ones, there is no doubt that this was old wine in new bottles. The new militants are still insisting on resource control and bombing of oil installations, which is re-immersing the country in conflict once again. The Federal Government in its bid to check this has been returning fire for fire by constituting a military operation code-named operation 'Crocodile Smiles', which the militants and many analysts feel is not the answer to the problem of conflict in the region. This article is an attempt to assess the Federal Government's approach to tackling the new wave of militancy in the region. The study proposes a Collective Non-violent Conflict Management approach involving local and foreign negotiators, an international mediator and the parties to the conflict working together to find a lasting solution to the conflict. The choice of this approach is based on the fact that many of the strategies (violent and non-violent) adopted in the past to resolve conflict in the region have not achieved the purpose.

Conflicts and insecurity in the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria comprises the nine states Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. About 31 million people live in the region which is renowned as one of the World's ten most important wetland and coastal marine ecosystems. The Niger Delta is rich with a diverse mosaic of ecological zones, five of which are the Mangrove Forest and Coastal Vegetation Zone, the Fresh Water Swamp

Forest Zone, the Lowland Rain Forest Zone, the Derived Savannah Zone and the Montane Zone. The Niger Delta is also the location of massive oil deposits, which have been extracted for decades by the government of Nigeria and by Multinational Oil Companies (MNOCs) (Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Ojua 2013:2). Since 1970, the country has earned at least \$300 billion from energy development and in 2005 it made \$450 billion. With about 40 million barrels of proven oil reserves, it currently produces 2.4 million barrels of oil per day, which constitutes about 90% of the government's revenue and 95% of the country's foreign exchange earnings (Ajodo 2002:6). Nigeria is West Africa's biggest producer of petroleum and the sixth largest supplier of oil in the world, thanks to oil from the Niger Delta. Oil wealth has been instrumental to Nigeria's emergence as a leading player in world and regional politics. Specifically, Nigeria has been playing a leading and dynamic role in African politics as a member of several regional organisations, such as the Africa Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and an active role in global politics under the United Nations. With the oil boom in the early 1970s, Nigeria began to assert her influence around the globe and to date whatever influence Nigeria has, is credited to the discovery and exploration of oil.

However, the region which bears this economically important oil has been enmeshed in conflicts for more than four decades – owing to the negative impact of oil exploration. The region is a tale of poverty, squalor and gross underdevelopment in the midst of plenty, due to environmental degradation which has affected the people's agricultural means of livelihood. The effect of oil spills and gas flares has been death to aquatic lives and waste to farm lands. It is on record that more gas is flared in Nigeria than anywhere else in the World (Nore and Turner 1980). It is on record that the oil industry in the Niger Delta is one of the worst cases in the world of gas flaring. Nigeria is the second largest offending country, after Russia, in terms of the total volume of gas flared and the resulting emission of about 70 million tons of CO₂ a year, higher than the emissions in Norway (Worgu 2000). In the case of oil spills, Nigeria has the highest number of oil spills in the world; between 9 million and 13 million barrels of oil have been spilled in

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the Niger Delta (although the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) puts the amount of petroleum spilled in the area between 1976 and 1996 at 1.8 million out of a total of 2.4 million) (Ajodo 2012). A UNDP report states that more than 6800 spills were recorded in the area between 1976 and 2001 while the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC) places the quantity of petroleum spilled into the environment yearly at 2300 cubic metres, with an average 300 industrial spills annually. The World Bank however believes that the amount of oil spills could be ten times higher than the officially released figures. Erosion, canalisation, intra- and inter-communal conflicts between host communities are also some effects of oil explorations in the region. This has led to protests by the indigenous people, leading in turn to full blown conflicts.

Conflicts in the Niger Delta have been occurring as far back as the pre-colonial period and the early 1960s when there were protests against the marginalisation of the region. In the early 1990s, there were also non-violent protests in Ogoniland to protest against the degradation of the environment by Oil companies. After these series of uprisings, a new wave of protests characterised by militancy began in 2003. Violence during this period grew out of the political campaigns in 2003. As they competed for office, politicians in Rivers State manipulated the Niger Delta Vigilantes (NDV), led by Ateke Tom, and the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), led by Alhaji Asari Dokubo, and used these groups to advance their aspirations, often rewarding gang members for acts of political violence and intimidation against their opponents (Bekoe 2005). This eventually witnessed the emergence of other militant groups, such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and the Niger Delta Liberation Front (NDLF) which unleashed mayhem on the region. This introduced militancy into the region which was characterised by armed attacks, bombing of oil installations and hostage taking, particularly of foreign oil workers – thereby ushering in a Hobbesian Niger Delta (Ibeanu 2006:9). For several years, the region was characterised by insecurity; and at the height of the crisis, the situation was dreaded by Nigerian citizens and foreigners alike. As a result, many people fled their communities and many foreign businesses were relocated to their home countries.

To address the state of insecurity in the region, the Federal Government in 2009 proposed an amnesty programme which witnessed a large number of militants surrendering their arms in return for training by the government. Under the programme, many repentant militants were trained within and outside the country and during the period, relative peace returned to the region. However, this has been short-lived as there has been the emergence of new militant groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), the Red Egbesu Water Lions, Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force (JNDLF), Niger Delta Red Squad (NDRS) and the Adaka Boro Avengers in 2016. These new groups have continued from where the former militant groups left off with renewed bombing of oil installations and abduction of oil workers. Several lives have been lost including those of militants and security operatives, and insecurity has become the order of the day once again in the Niger Delta. Apart from death that has occurred as a result of confrontation with the militants, security operations have failed due to the risks involved. For instance, in 2016, about four members of the Operation Crocodile Smile died when their boat capsized while they were on patrol. There has also been destruction of property worth millions of naira. Militancy was indeed taking its toll on the Nigerian economy with the country losing over N1.8 billion daily due to attacks on oil installations by militants (Okinbaloye 2016). The government has responded to the attacks by matching force with force, a step which analysts have criticised as not helping to achieve the goal of enduring peace in the region.

Amnesty represented an opportunity to stabilise the region for constructive conflict resolution negotiations. It was not the first time that an amnesty initiative had been put forward to resolve the violence in the region, but this time it was an offer backed with solid proposals for the necessary disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the region's militants (Davis 2010). Despite this, however, the programme was not able to address regional violence, largely due to the lack of attention to the peculiar type of conflict in the Delta and the issues that gave rise to it. Thus, in order to fully appreciate the task of conflict resolution there, it is important to look at past attempts at conflict resolution in order to consider ideas for the future.

Theorising conflict in the Niger Delta region

Scholars are unanimous in their views that the end of the Cold War and economic globalisation in the 1990s have had a significant impact on warfare globally and that the search for appropriate theories to explain this has contributed to the growing debate on the importance of natural resources as drivers of violent conflicts (Kaldor 1999; Duffield 2001; De Soysa 2002:1; Berdal 2003). Empirical studies have also shown that natural resources underlie territorial struggles which have been the most prevalent form of conflict all through history (USIP 2007:11; Alao 2007:1). Extant literature on conflicts, particularly in Africa, suggests that an overwhelming percentage of these conflicts are resource-based (De Soysa 2002; Blench 2006). According to a recent United Nations report in Sylvester (2012), in the last sixty years at least 40% of civil wars on the African continent have been connected with natural resources. Even in the natural sciences, there is a consensus that competition over scarce natural resources is one of the key drivers of violent conflict within and across species (Bhattacharyya 2015). Similarly, studies by the World Bank (2003) and others have shown that countries whose wealth is largely dependent on the exportation of primary commodities (Nigeria, Sudan, Chechnya, Liberia, Indonesia and Angola for instance) are highly prone to civil violence, and that those with oil and natural gas are the most conflict prone (Bannon and Collier 2003:ix). Nigeria is the 12th largest producer of petroleum and its 8th largest exporter worldwide. Resource-related conflict in Nigeria revolves around oil with about 95% of violent conflict in Nigeria since 1997 being resource-related (Kishi 2014). Studies also found that the fight for resource control strengthens the segmentation around already existing ethnic or linguistic cleavages thereby escalating conflict (Gleditsch and Urdal 2002:286; Gurr and Harff 1994). Against this background, this work adopts a combination of eco-violence and psychological primordial theories.

Eco-violence, also known as environmental conflict, theory was developed by Homer-Dixon (1999:30) in his attempt to explain the causal relationship between natural resource endowment and the outbreak of violent conflict.

According to him,

Decrease in the quality and quantity of renewable resources act singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of vegetation, farmland, water, forests etc. This scarcity of ecological resources can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economies. Consequently, the affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands ... while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation conflicts (Homer-Dixon 1999:30).

The central argument of the theory is that declining availability of renewable natural resources, which results in competition over scarce resources, engender violent conflict (Ajaero et al. 2015:471). This view was expressed by Annan (2006) when he stated that 'environmental degradation in forms such as desertification, resource depletion and demographic pressure exacerbates tensions and instability ...'. Michael (2001) also noted that:

Competition over the control of valuable oil supplies and pipeline routes has emerged as a particularly acute source of conflict in the 21st century. With the demand for oil growing and many older sources of supply (such as those in the United States, Mexico, and China) in decline, the pressure on remaining supplies, notably those in the Persian Gulf area, the Caspian Sea basin, South America, and Africa, is growing ever more intense.

This is seen from competition in Africa over the revenue generated from scarce natural resources which has led to violent conflict in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sudan and Nigeria (Bhattacharyya 2015). The foregoing aptly describes the situation in the Niger Delta where oil exploration activities leading to environmental degradation such as shortage of farmlands, death of aquatic life, air and water pollution, oil poisoning causing respiratory ailments and destruction of mangrove forests, often without adequate compensation, have resulted in conflict. This was why the late environmentalist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, lamented that the people of the region faced extinction in what he described as an ecological war (Saro-Wiwa, cited in Na'Allah 1998).

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Increasing frustration emanating from oil exploration has led to violent resistance which has culminated in conflict in the region between locals represented by militants and oil corporations operating in the region.

Psychological/primordial theorists, on the other hand, are of the view that humans have a deep-rooted psychological need to dichotomise and to establish enemies and allies, which leads to the formation of ethnic and national group identities and behaviours. How a group perceives itself and its relationship with those outside the group determines whether their relationship will be based on cooperation, competition or conflict. Usually those within the group are regarded as better than those outside, and this leads to 'me-you', 'we-they' 'insiders-outsiders' and 'minority-majority' sentiments. In the Niger Delta, conflicts are generated by grievances about natural resources (which border on demands for ownership of the resource concerned), the distribution of resource revenues and about environmental and social damage caused by extracting the resource. In Nigeria, the Federal Government is the one responsible for resource allocation and control, but conflict has arisen over the most appropriate revenue sharing formula with the Niger Delta people who demand that a special proportion be given to them due to their oil richness – just as it was done for the north when agricultural produce was the mainstay of the economy (Sheriff et al. 2014:75). This demand has however been refused by Nigerians in the rest of the country and by some of the leaders. The result was the above-mentioned primordial sentiments of group versus group, which led to the creation of ethno-nationalism-identities (Kasomo 2012:1; Alao 2007:159). We see this in the confrontation between foreign oil companies and local communities in the Niger Delta and between the Niger Delta people who view themselves as minorities being marginalised and oppressed and the 'majorities' in the other parts of the country that do not produce oil but reap the benefits of revenue allocation. Consequently, there have been violent agitations in the form of militancy and a call for secession by the Niger Delta buttressing the argument of Bannon and Collier (2003:5) that violent secessionist movements are statistically much more likely if a country has valuable natural resources, especially oil.

Efforts by the Nigerian government to address conflicts in the Niger Delta

Various efforts, beginning even before independence, have been made by the Federal Government to end the conflicts in the region. In 1957, the government established the Willink Commission to look into the problems of the minorities, and this Commission acknowledged the utter neglect of the region and, among other proposals, recommended the creation of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB). This Board could not achieve its aims for many reasons, one of which was the fact that its headquarters were located in Lagos, far from the problem area. With the creation of twelve states in 1967 and the establishment of the Niger Delta River Basin Authority (NDRBA), the NNDB became obsolete. In the second republic, a 1.5% Federation Account for the development of the Niger Delta region was set up for the oil producing areas, but because of the constraint of operating from its secretariat in Lagos it was not able to achieve its purpose.

In spite of recurrent failures, and in order to show its commitment to ending the crisis and ensuring the development of the area, the Federal Government established some other Commissions such as the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) which was in operation from 1992 to 1999. OMPADEC was set up by the Ibrahim Babangida Administration under the chairmanship of Chief Albert Horsefall. Like its predecessors, it failed to achieve its mandate owing to official profligacy, corruption, excessive political interference and lack of transparency. After this, the Niger Delta Environmental Survey was set up in 1995, followed by the Niger Delta Development Commission, established in 2000 by President Olusegun Obasanjo with a vision 'to offer a lasting solution to socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta Region' and a mission 'to facilitate the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful' (Niger Delta Development Commission 2000:103). The government also put in place

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other mechanisms such as the Task Force on Pipeline Vandalisation (April 2000) operated by the Nigeria Police Force in collaboration with the NNPC (Niger Delta Development Commission 2001). Similar task forces were also set up by the navy, army and State Security Service (SSS) in various states of the Niger Delta. In Delta state, the government passed a law in August 2001 banning militant groups blamed for the disruption of oil activities in the state. The Special Security Committee on Oil Producing Areas was also set up by the Federal Government in November 2001 to address the prevailing situation in the oil producing areas. Other efforts include the convening of the first Niger Delta peace conference in Abuja in 2007, a Joint Task Force (JTF) in 2008, and a Technical Committee made up of stakeholders and the Niger Delta ministry in 2008.

Amnesty and post-amnesty era

Following criticisms of the military option, especially when it became obvious that the use of force by the JTF was aggravating rather than resolving the conflict, an amnesty programme was set up by the Federal Government on 25 May 2009 under the leadership of a former president, Umar Musa Yar'Adua. Amnesty was the Federal Government's effort towards bringing enduring peace, security, stability and development to the region. It involved granting of national and unconditional pardon to all armed militants in the Niger Delta region who in turn were to surrender their arms and ammunition, sign an undertaking not to return to the creeks and continue with the struggle and also sign the military re-unification forms. Amnesty followed the recommendations contained in the 2008 report by the Niger Delta Technical Committee (NDTC) initially established by the Federal Government, and chaired by MOSOP president Ledum Mitee, to assess initiatives taken in the region and provide for a comprehensive report and recommendations. The 45-member committee was inaugurated on 8 September 2008 to collate and review all past reports in the Niger Delta, appraise their recommendations and make other proposals that will help the Federal Government achieve sustainable development, peace,

human and environmental security in the Niger Delta Region (Mitee 2009). The amnesty programme included a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process.

The first stage of the programme led to 26 808 ex-combatants accepting the offer. Of them, 20 192 accepted the offer on or before 4th October 2009 and 6 616 during November 2009 (Ejovi and Ebie 2013). The second stage involved government setting up demobilisation camps for the demilitarisation and rehabilitation of the ex-militants; while the third stage involved government's engagement with the leadership of the combatants and ex-combatants, as well as non-combatant youths, for employment and socio-economic empowerment. This therefore brought an end to the spate of bombing and kidnappings in the region, and led to an increase in oil outputs. Despite this seeming success, amnesty was alleged to be riddled with cases of corruption which made it less effective than it should have been. As a result, five years after amnesty new militant groups emerged in the region, namely; the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), The Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force (JNDLF), the Niger Delta Red Squad (NDRS), the Adaka Boro Avengers (ABA) and the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate (NDGJM). In response, the Federal Government deployed 3 000 military personnel to the region with a plan to deploy 10 000 more by the year 2017 in addition to launching Operation Crocodile Smile aimed at restoring peace to the region (Utebor 2016). Criticisms have however followed the deployment of troops and particularly the use of force in the region. Critics are of the view that the new security measures will further worsen the security situation in the region and they therefore called for dialogue. In response to this call, the government proposed a \$10 billion (N4 trillion) infrastructural rebirth investment programme for the region. Leaders and stakeholders from the region rejected this, however, on the grounds that they were not consulted before it was proposed (Omotayo 2016). In addition, the Federal Government in November 2016, convened a peace dialogue in which President Buhari met with leaders from the region in Abuja to discuss the way forward. At the meeting, leaders of the region led by Edwin Clark

presented a 16-point agenda to the Federal Government and although the president welcomed the requests in addition to stating that the reports of amnesty would be implemented, peace remains elusive. Some critics have attributed the rise in militancy to the failure of the 13% derivation principle and amnesty to produce development in the region. The result has been pressure and a call for 'resource control' or 'fiscal federalism' (Akintunde and Hile 2016).

Recommending the collective non-violent approach to conflict management in the Niger Delta

There is no gainsaying that many strategies have been put in place to resolve the ongoing imbroglio in the Niger Delta. However, these efforts have failed to have the desired effect of ushering in the needed peace. The failure of the various strategies is probably due to the fact that they lacked sufficient elements of democracy, accountability, equity and active public participation of all stakeholders (Ako 2011), which is why Abidde (2009) opined that 'peace cannot be dictated; it has to be a natural born child of a just and humane environment'. In view of this situation, this article proposes Collective Non-violent Conflict Management (CNCM) as an alternative approach. This approach is based on collective or cooperative problem solving to conflict management. CNCM is a multilateral non-violent and democratic approach to conflict resolution involving a team of negotiators, a mediator and parties to a dispute working together to find a lasting solution. It is an emerging phenomenon in international relations and combines the elements of non-violence such as dialogue, negotiation and mediation in resolving conflict, building trust and seeking a 'win-win' solution (Crocker et al. 2011:51). Non-violence as an ideology and a practice is not a new approach to conflict resolution but has been accepted for decades. It rejects the use of violence as a conflict resolution mechanism and serves as a potent force for resolving conflict and bringing about social change (Jaspreet 2012:7). CNCM as an approach is similar to the Collective Conflict Management (CCM) approach of Crocker and others (2011:51), which involves countries,

international and regional/sub-regional organisations, and, importantly, Non-governmental Organisations or private actors addressing potential or actual security threats in a concerted action to:

- control, diminish or end violence associated with conflict through combined peace operations and/or mediation, conflict prevention and avoidance;
- assist, where appropriate, with a negotiated settlement through peacebuilding, cross-border management and other cooperative efforts and measures;
- help address the political, economic and/or social issues that underlie the conflict; and/or
- provide political, diplomatic and economic guarantees or other long-term measures to improve local security conditions which involve international, regional/sub-regional and local actors and institutions supporting negotiation to end a conflict.

CNCM is a multilateral arrangement involving all parties in the conflict management process working together with parties to the conflict to find solutions to their problems. Negotiation is facilitated by a mediator acceptable to both parties. The mediator is a neutral person and a national of another country. The approach is voluntary, informal, improvised and adapted to the ad hoc situation; and because of the peculiarity and distinctiveness of each region, it is most effective when it occurs within regions (Crocker et al. 2011:51). Negotiations should preferably take place on neutral ground, for instance in a neighbouring country. In the case of the Niger Delta conflict, Ghana provides an appropriate location for negotiations.

The multilateral approach to conflict resolution has been found to be best suited for resolving natural resource conflicts in the 21st century (Mwanika 2010:7; Pynn 2011). Multilateral non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms have been successfully used in the Liberia peace process, the Philippines–Mindanao talks, the Afghanistan–Pakistan border dispute and the Horn of Africa Piracy (Crocker et al. 2011:46–49).

Characteristics of the collective non-violent approach

- It is usually undertaken by an ad-hoc arrangement or coalition that deals with specific security challenges and immediate conflict management needs in the situation concerned.
- It is a democratic problem-solving approach that gives parties to a conflict equal opportunity to participate in finding common solutions to their problems. It involves communicating face-to-face with one another, dialoguing, and negotiating, thereby building trust. This is very important in the Niger Delta case as the issue of lack of trust on both sides has impeded the process of dialogue.
- It is particularly effective when one or more key actors at the official or unofficial level are prepared to take the lead and mobilise partners who are willing to support a shared undertaking.
- It comprises peacebuilding and conflict transformation processes from their inception to their conclusion, including the implementation of formal peace settlements which has been lacking in the peace processes in the Niger Delta so far.

Challenges of the collective non-violent approach

- It needs a supportive environment as parties to the dispute must agree to the process and cooperate with the team otherwise it would not succeed. Because of the issue of sovereignty, a State may be reluctant to adopt an approach that may be seen as foreign interference in its domestic politics.
- It is expensive as it requires using a neutral location such as another country and paying members of the team of negotiators and the mediator.
- It requires members to have the right skills and resources for the success of the task at hand and as a result it needs long-term planning, training and mobilisation of resources which depend on availability of funds.
- It is ineffective where one or more key actors are not prepared to take the lead and mobilise partners for the task.

Conclusion

Five years after the declaration of amnesty, there has been a resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta region. Although many claim it is in response to the government's anti-corruption stance, the new wave of militancy is worrisome as the region is once again back to the old days of violence and insecurity characterised by abductions and vandalism of oil and gas pipelines. Conflict in the region is adversely affecting the Nigerian economy at a time when the price of crude oil has plummeted and there are calls for diversification of the economy. Furthermore, insecurity in the region is compounding an already tense and insecure political climate in the country and this is further being heightened by the use of force by federal troops. The use of force has never been found to be a solution for problems such as those of the Niger Delta and therefore a multilateral non-violent approach is recommended. A cooperative approach to resource conflict management is not only necessary for avoiding conflict and addressing social and environmental crises, but it would also salvage significant financial resources and foster goodwill among parties to the dispute.

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