
LEAD DEBATE

ON

**A BILL FOR AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERAL
UNIVERSITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY, SAKPENWA OGONI,
RIVERS STATE (AND OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH) BILL, 2019**

Sponsored By Senator, Barinada Mpigi, PhD. (Rivers South East)

Mr President, Distinguished colleagues, I seek your esteemed permit to lead this debate on the general principles of this unique and justice seeking bill which seeks to establish the Federal University of Environmental Technology, Saakpenwa, Ogoni, Rivers State.

This bill was read for the first time in this Chamber on the 26th day of November, 2019 and it speaks to the need to proffer an enlightened, sustainable and confidence building solution to one of Nigeria's darkest examples in petroleum exploration and production activities and natural resource governance, which brought in its wake, – oil pollutions, incessant conflicts and devastation of the entire ecosystem of vibrant Ogoni communities, its people and environment. A situation that today requires billions of dollars to clean up and manage for sustainability of the now and future generations.

Mr President and distinguished colleagues, I share strongly in the desire to provide credible platform for national reconciliation and healings to build confidence for sustainable solutions to our national challenges and shortcomings, thus I hereby bring forward this bill seeking to establish the Federal University of Environmental Technology, Saakpenwa, Tai Ogoni, Rivers State for the benefits of its people and service to humanity.

Mr President and dear colleagues, we need no further conviction and proof that this University when established will train and apply a multi-disciplinary approach of knowledge dissemination and technical innovations including Renewable Energy technology, Environmental Engineering and Technology, Mineralogy, Oceanography, Geographical Information System and Geodesy, Electronic Environmental Monitoring and Waste Management as well as Industrial Toxicology, Ecotoxicology, Environmental Analysis, Decontamination Technologies and Assessment of Environmental Impacts.

Mr President and my colleagues, you are all aware and conversant with the Oil history of Ogoniland and the manifest devastation of the Ogoni environment and loss of sustainable economic livelihood due to oil exploration and exploitations in the area since 1958. It was indeed, in recognition of these environmental injustice to the Ogoni people and communities that compelled the Federal Government of Nigeria in consultation with other stakeholders, to request the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to conduct an independent assessment of the environment and public health impacts of oil contamination in Ogoniland, in the Niger Delta, and options for remediation.

In August 2011, UNEP submitted a report to the Federal Government on Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland. Today, that document is popularly referred to as the "UNEP Report" among stakeholders. The report contains detailed information on the assessment which covered contaminated land, groundwater, surface water, sediment, vegetation, air pollution, public health, industry practice and institutional issues as well as recommendations and steps to be followed in carrying out the clean-up exercise. The report highlighted significant environmental impacts from oil pollution in parts of Ogoniland relating to various causes.

Mr. President and my colleagues, for the records, in 2015 when President Buhari assumed office, his administration identified the acceleration and implementation of the UNEP Report's recommendations as a priority. And on 4th August, 2016 President Buhari inaugurated the Governing Council and Board of Trustees of the Ogoni Trust Fund, established via the Federal Government of Nigeria Gazette of 2016 as part of the Governance process for the implementation of the UNEP Report on Ogoniland being executed by the Hydrocarbon Pollution and Remediation Project (HYPREP).

The UNEP report also recommended the creation of a USD 1 billion Ogoni Trust Fund (OTF), to be co-funded by the FGN, the SPDC JV and other operators in the area. The Nigerian Federal Executive Council in December 2016 approved a new gazette for HYPREP under the Ministry of Environment that maintains that SPDC JV partners will provide 90% of the US\$1 billion (N 360.9billion) OTF over a five-year period. In February 2017, the SPDC JV provided \$10 million (N3.7 billion) to help set up the HYPREP office. In July 2018, the SPDC joint venture deposited an additional \$170 million (N61.36 billion) into an escrow account to fund HYPREP's activities which completes its first-year contribution of \$180 million (N64.97 billion). But the balance of \$23m from Port Harcourt refinery, owned by the Federal Government is yet to be received.

Mr. President and dear colleagues, it would be of interest to intimate us that the UNEP Report had gone further to make other critical recommendations which included, creation of Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Authority, creation of Environmental Restoration Fund for Ogoniland with a capital base of USD1 billion, and creation of a Centre of Excellence for Environmental Restoration. These institutional frameworks are aimed at promoting a focused space for knowledge acquisition and skills development both locally and externally on issues of environmental remediation as well as educational resources for human capacity development.

Mr. President and colleagues, it is no longer news that the Federal Government is interested in Oil resumption in Ogoniland after oil exploration activities were stopped in 1993 following the earlier mentioned disagreements between the communities and Shell and the government. As a leader and community mobilizer, it is my passion and conviction that the establishment of a Federal University of Environmental Technology, Saakpenwa Ogoni, will capture and mainstream the ideals of the UNEP recommendations and help in confidence building and cementing relationship with the community leadership and give opportunities to the youths and women to better understand the relationship between technology, environmental pollution and environmental protection not only in Ogoni but in the entire Niger Delta region and Nigeria in general in order to combat the threat of ecology and climate change.

Mr President and my dear colleagues, the proposed Federal University of Environmental Technology, Saakpenwa, Ogoni when established will also provide for the institutional

requirements for running a world class environmental technology institution by catering for learning and research needs of its prospective students and researchers in Nigeria and beyond. The institution is designed to stand tall in the dissemination of knowledge and in the building of graduates with practical knowledge and earned diplomas and degrees in professional areas.

Mr President and fellow colleagues, I want to reiterate that when this Bill is enacted into law, the Federal University of Environmental Technology, Saakpenwa Ogoni, Rivers State will be the first in Africa in these areas of learning and knowledge as a specialized University. Again as we are aware, the Ogoni struggle has earned international recognition and reputation. And thus there are available willing partners and buy-ins from international organizations and individuals especially those with bias in nature conservation and environmental protection to support the take-off of the University. May I quickly add, that the Rivers state Government has equally expressed support by providing a modern state-of-the arts facility at Saakpewa for the immediate take-off while the host community have also indicated interest to donate more lands as contributory support for the commencement of this highly coveted University

Mr President and my colleagues, I have no doubt in mind that you will support this bill considering the numerous benefits that this specialized University will bring in the restoration and conservation of our threatened environment and people. The economic and intellectual values and benefits that will be gained cannot be over-emphasised. Thus a Federal University of Environmental Technology in Ogoni will not only help us meet local needs in Environmental justice but will also help in raising the global reputation of Nigeria in corporate social responsibility and sustainable development.

I seek the strong support of everyone to this second reading of this Bill. Thank you for listening.

Senator, Barinada Mpigi, Phd.

APPENDIX 1:

A COMPENDIUM OF THE FINANCIAL NEEDS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY, SAAKPENWA, OGONI RIVERS STATE

1. **SPECIAL NOTE:** *The UNEP Report proposed a special fund of USD 18,600,000 to be granted within five years for the commencement of the Centre for Excellence as recommended. This fund can be sought for deployment in the take-off of the Federal University of Environmental Technology, Saakpenwa Ogoni, Rivers State. Other stakeholders, including the State Government will be available to assist.*
2. *Anticipated current and capital expenditure in the first 12 months will include:*

TOTAL ALLOCATION	N1,796,867,163
• <i>Personnel Cost</i>	<i>200,800,560</i>
• <i>Salaries and Wages</i>	<i>300,500,500</i>
• <i>Allowances and Social contributions</i>	<i>50,000,700</i>
• <i>Non Regular Allowances</i>	<i>30,000,100</i>
• <i>Foreign Resource experts</i>	<i>80,000,000</i>
• <i>Overhead Cost</i>	<i>100,000,000</i>
• <i>Constructions/Provision of Fixed Asset – General</i>	<i>750,000,000</i>
• <i>Construction of infrastructure</i>	<i>300,000,000</i>
• <i>Miscellaneous Provisions (5%)</i>	<i>85,565,103</i>
GRAND TOTAL	N1,711,302,060