

The logo consists of a red square with the letters 'SDN' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background of the slide features abstract geometric shapes in green, orange, and red, along with a faint network diagram of nodes and lines.

SDN

Our work in the Niger Delta

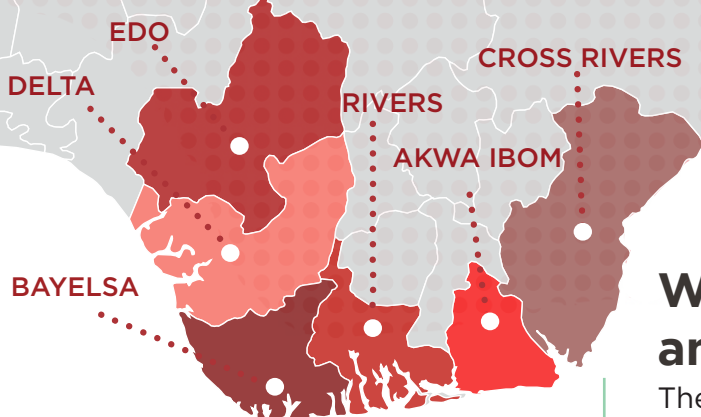
Who we are

Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN) is a charity working in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. Our office is based in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and is assisted by a small team in London, UK. We were established in 2004.

What we do

SDN works with communities in the Niger Delta impacted by the oil and gas industry, weak governance, insecurity, a lack of jobs and wider environmental and climate challenges. We work with communities, government, civil society and the private sector to identify and implement solutions to these challenges, which promote sustainable development and the protection of human rights—including the right to a healthy environment. Guided by principles of participation, inclusion and non-discrimination, SDN promotes the perspectives and experiences of those living in the Niger Delta at the centre of all of our work, and encourages transparency and accountability between all actors in the region.

South-South Niger Delta States



Where we work

Our work focuses on the Niger Delta, particularly those States responsible for the highest levels of oil and gas production: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers.

Lack of livelihood options:

The oil and gas industry has dominated the regional economy and stifled the development of other sectors. The revenues it generates have reduced the incentive for government and businesses to invest in the wider economy. This also means young people are more likely to enter dangerous livelihoods such as oil theft and criminal gangs, which are widespread across the Niger Delta.

Total unemployment in the Niger Delta exceeds

5.8
MILLION



Weak governance and lack of basic services:

Mismanagement of Nigeria's natural resources, weak regulation, and high levels of corruption have undermined development in the region. Oil companies operate well below the standard of other countries, resulting in high levels of pollution. The huge revenues from the oil and gas industry have been squandered. Corruption was estimated to cost USD \$1,000 per person in 2014—equivalent to 1/3 of GDP.

44%

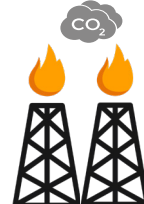


People in Nigeria said they paid bribes for public services in 2018

Widespread pollution and climate impacts:

The Niger Delta is one of the most polluted environments on Earth and a key front in tackling climate change and ensuring a just transition. Millions of barrels of oil have been spilled over decades and research estimates 11,000 infants die prematurely as a result of oil spill pollution each year. Huge quantities of natural gas are wasted through flaring each year—in 2022, flared gas had the potential to generate about the same amount of energy as Nigeria's annual electricity consumption, and this emitted 12 millions tonnes of CO₂. The region is also home to Africa's largest mangrove forest, which is a huge carbon sink, and must be protected.

214



MILLION
tonnes CO₂ from gas flaring, 2012-2022

Conflict:

The Niger Delta has experienced waves of militant conflict since the 1990s as groups vent grievances and vie for control of oil and gas revenues. With a very high number of illicit small arms and light weapons reportedly in circulation in Nigeria, everyday violence is common, including criminal, intra-communal, and other conflicts. 1/20 households experienced a bereavement due to conflict between 2010 and 2017.

20%



Households affected by conflict from 2010-2017

Our Focus

1

Protecting the environment and addressing climate impacts

We aim to reduce the negative environmental impact of the oil and gas sector, support climate adaptation and mitigation, and ensure a just transition to a green economy. Our work includes documenting the extent of pollution and climate emissions; working with environmental regulators to support oil spill clean-up; supporting communities to address climate impacts, for example, through climate smart agriculture and biodiversity protection; and supporting the National Assembly to improve environmental legislation.

2

Promoting good governance

We support local civil society organisations and the public to hold government and oil and gas companies to account, and aim to ensure everyone in the Niger Delta can participate in free, fair, and credible elections. Our work includes election observation and reporting, supporting women to engage in politics, and working with communities to engage government to access budgets and plans, and to demand better services in response to their needs.

3

Fostering sustainable livelihoods

We strive to demonstrate the potential of economic opportunities outside of the oil and gas sector, and support vulnerable young people who are making a living in risky ways to enter safe, dignified work. We work in some of the most difficult locations in the Niger Delta, running livelihoods projects to demonstrate their potential to communities, development donors, the government, and the private sector.

4

Supporting peace and security

We advocate to persuade the government and oil and gas companies to listen to the concerns of those living in the Niger Delta, and to deliver long-term development interventions. Our work includes supporting dialogue and mediation between local communities, engaging in policy work with the government, and working with at-risk groups to reduce local conflicts, such as those arising from cultism, and intra-communal violence.

Protecting the environment

Highlight

Documenting and improving the response to oil spill pollution

In 2013, SDN developed the Oil Spill Monitor, an online tool used by the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA, a government regulator) to record and manage the response to oil spills, and make this information public. In 2019 we updated the Oil Spill Monitor to improve its functionality to become the central tool used to record and respond to oil spills.

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Having oil spill records published publicly... has improved transparency in the oil and gas industry. The platform has also increased the pace with which decisions are taken by providing readily accessible data for officers to query anytime, anywhere. - Mohammed Gumsuri, Senior Environmental Scientist, NOSDRA

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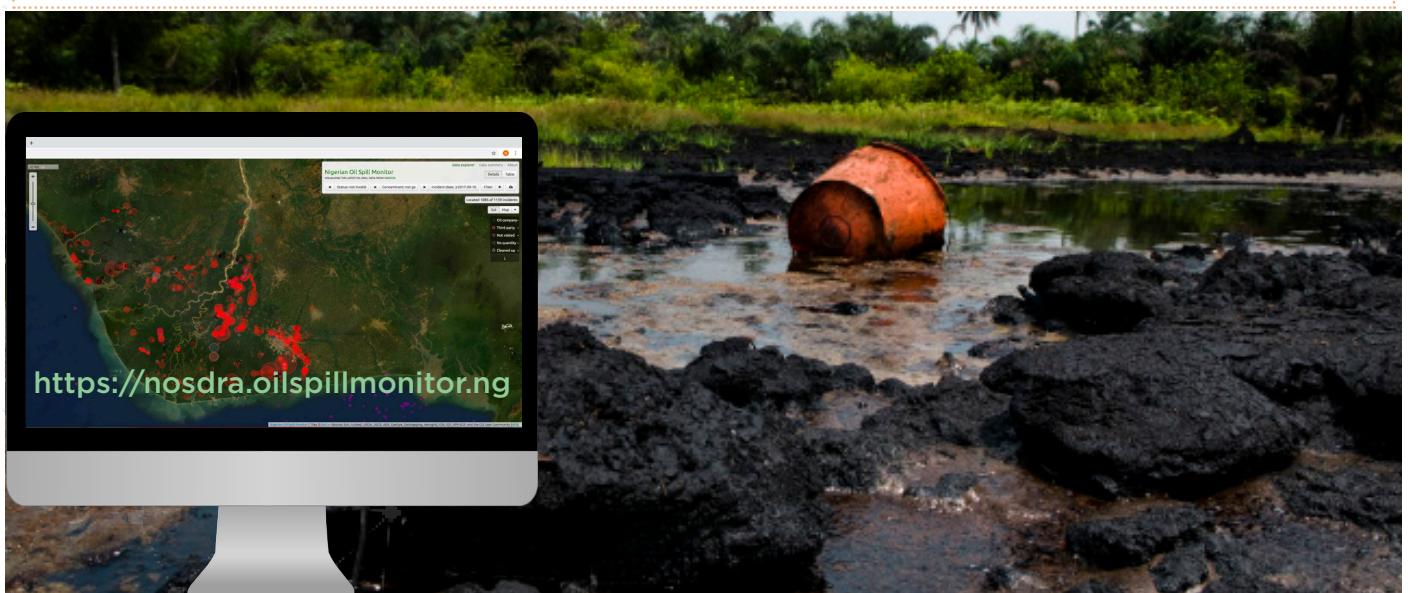
The Oil Spill Monitor has been used by academics, civil society organisations, and the public to understand the impact of oil spills in the Niger Delta—one study shows that children are twice as likely to die in their first month of life if their mother lived near an oil spill before conception. Before the Oil Spill Monitor, it was difficult for the public to access information on oil spills. Now this data is available, it has improved the relationship between NOSDRA and communities, who were previously sceptical about its work; improving transparency, and ensuring an effective response to oil spills.

“

The creation of the oil spill monitor has enhanced transparency and hence, synergy and trust between government and host communities. - NOSDRA staff member

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Oil Spill Monitor and Gas Flare Tracker Update project, supported by the Facility for Oil Sector Transformation, 2018-2019.



Highlight

Supporting communities to hold government to account

SDN's Community Monitoring and Advocacy Group (CMAG) approach works with communities to collectively define their development priorities, access government budgets and plans—where available—and to engage with government agencies to highlight their concerns and demands, holding them to account on what they have committed to deliver.

Promoting good governance

In just six communities between 2016-2020, the CMAGs helped secured over USD \$12m of projects in their communities, from the construction of road, drainage, and bridge infrastructure, to renovations and equipment of schools, benefitting more than 250,000 people. Since 2020, this work has been expanded to 46 communities, where 24 CMAGs have been set up. The approach has also been elevated to the State level, where key priorities have been developed which will benefit the entire State.

For example, in Nonwa community in Rivers State, the Community Secondary School building had been unfit for use since 2015; the roof was leaking and collapsed, and its doors and windows were broken. With SDN's support, Nonwa CMAG persistently engaged with local government and relevant ministries until they were successful in getting the school building renovated. It is now functional again, sending a powerful message to both the Nonwa community and government.

“

We are recognised by our Community Head and Chiefs in Council as a group that represents the Community. We will not relent in chasing our duty bearers to ensure development comes to this community. - Collins Ndegwe, Chairman Nonwa CMAG.

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Strengthening Environmental Policy and Accountability in Governance project, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, 2021-2024.

Environment and Governance Framework for the Niger Delta project, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2016-2020.



Fostering sustainable livelihoods

Highlight

Promoting digital sector livelihoods in Port Harcourt

In 2017, and in collaboration with the Ken Saro-Wiwa Foundation, SDN established the Ken Saro-Wiwa Innovation Hub in Port Harcourt, the largest city in the Niger Delta. Ken Saro-Wiwa, after whom the Innovation Hub is named, was a prominent writer and environmental activist, who was hanged by the military government in 1995 for his actions promoting human rights and protesting against Shell's activities in Ogoniland.

The Innovation Hub provides mentoring and training to individuals and groups trying to create or improve their livelihoods through the digital technology sector, with the aim of fostering a self-sustaining digital business community in Port Harcourt. Since 2018, the Innovation Hub has delivered workshops to over 3,000 participants, becoming one of just seven digital innovation hubs to partner with Facebook for their Nigeria programmes, and running incubation programmes for start-up businesses, which now have sustainable business models, offer employment for locals, and are building digital solutions to social challenges. These start-ups have also secured in-kind investments from PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Delta State Investment Agency, and two won places on the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Programme.

“

I was among those young entrepreneurs that starts their businesses with just ideas and zeal, without practical knowledge on how to structure a business. The [Innovation Hub] Mentorship Programme is equipping me to build a sustainable business and helping me to tackle the challenges that comes with my business. - Okorode Christian. Founder, Millionaire Farms Ltd

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Since 2023, SDN has started work to reduce the digital gender gap. Digital skills training is being expanded to four States to train 1,000 women, and SDN is conducting the first sub-national study of the digital gender gap. SDN is also working with the State Governments to develop their first digital sector policies, to expand this work, and create the enabling environment for further development of the sector.

Reducing Digital Gender Gaps in the Niger Delta, supported by the European Union, 2023-2025.

Niger Delta Stabilisation Programme, supported by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2017-2020.



Highlight

Supporting dialogue between government and ex-agitators, and promoting long-term development

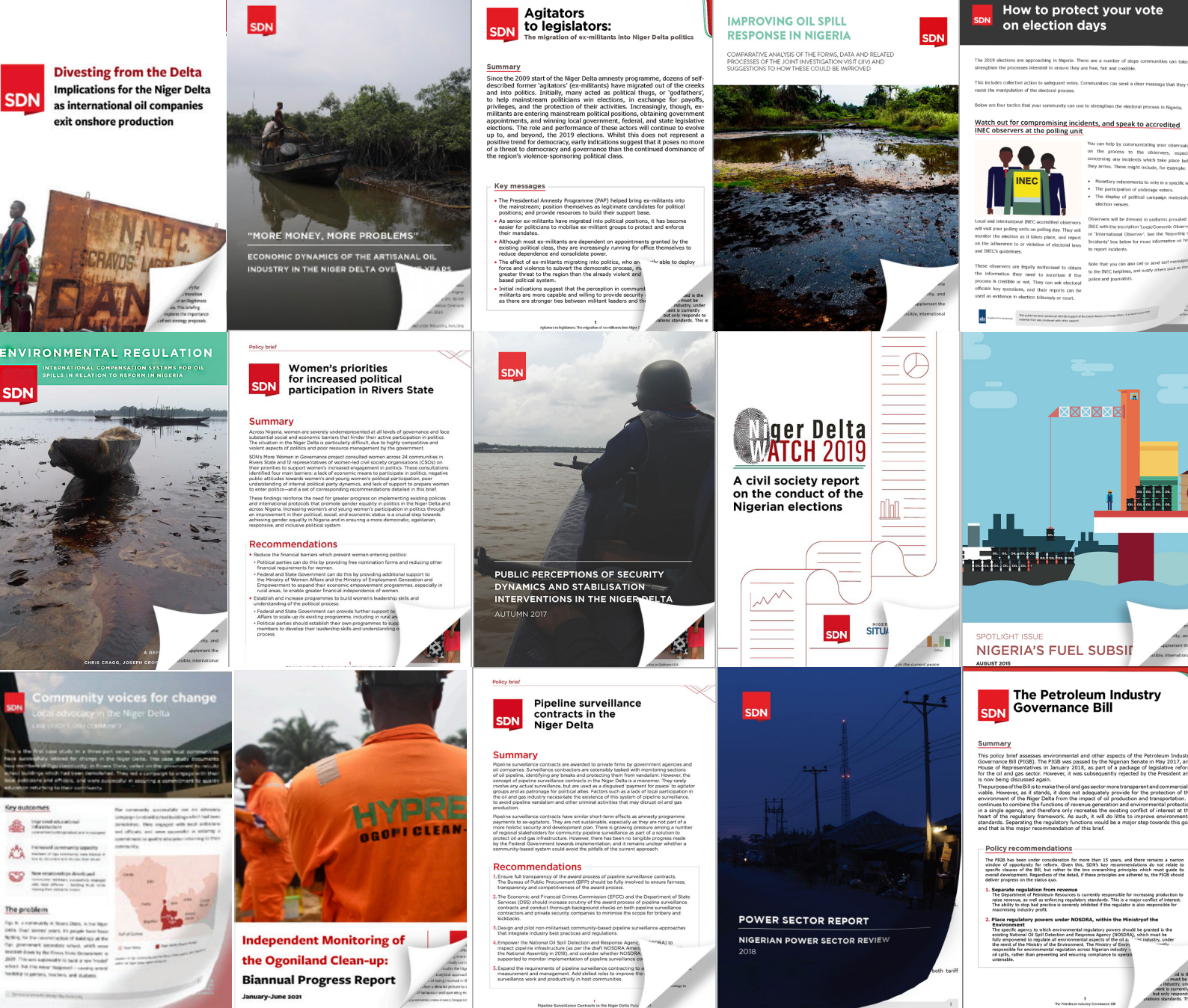
After a sharp increase in militant activities and the bombing of oil pipelines in 2016, SDN, alongside others, promoted and supported dialogue between the Federal Government and ex-agitators.

This resulted in the Strategic Implementation Work Plan, an initiative of the Office of the Vice President and the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on the Niger Delta, to establish a coordinated plan for long-term peace and development. SDN worked with government ministries to produce this plan, and we were the only NGO with observer status in the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Niger Delta. SDN continued this high-level collaboration, working with the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, to set up a public online portal to increase the visibility of development projects in the Niger Delta and the status of their progress. SDN also worked with representatives from the Niger Delta region, such as the Pan-Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) to improve how they consult and communicate with communities across the region and represent their interests to the Federal Government.

SDN's trusted, independent position, and our local presence, means we are often relied upon to bring different groups together and find solutions.

Niger Delta Stabilisation Programme, supported by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2017-2020.





Selected SDN research and publications, visit our website for more information.



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