

Shell agrees to start clean up of 2008 Niger Delta oil spill

May 3 2015



Fishing boats are abandoned on Bodo waterways polluted by spilled crude oil allegedly caused by Shell equipment failure in Ogoniland, Nigeria, August 11, 2011

Shell has agreed with Nigerian fishing community of Bodo in the Niger Delta to start the clean up of two devastating oil spills in 2008, activists and locals said Saturday.

"Shell officials met with representatives of Bodo community in Port Harcourt yesterday (Friday). The meeting was attended by officials of the Dutch embassy, UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), Amnesty International and some local activists," Steven Obodekwe of the Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development lobby group told AFP.

"It was agreed that the [clean](#) up would commence in July or August," he said.

Local fisherman Christian Kpandei who is among the 15,600 affected by the [spills](#), said a foreign contractor had been hired for the job.

"The company involved in the clean up of the massive spills in the Gulf of Mexico is handling the job. The clean-up will start by August," he said.

He said Bodo residents were looking forward to the exercise, adding that almost all the people affected by the spills had been compensated.

"Virtually all the 15,601 claimants have been settled. I am one of the beneficiaries. There are only 150 people that are yet to collect their compensation because of some issues of inheritance," he said.

Shell officials were not immediately available for comment on the development.

Godwin Ojo of Port Harcourt-based Environmental Rights Action said the clean up was belated.

"Shell should stop breaching its agreements with its host communities. The clean up is long over due. It should have started in January," he said.

Under a compensation deal hammered out in London in January, Shell's Nigerian arm agreed to pay £55 million (77 million euros) to people in Bodo following a three-year legal battle over the 2008 spills that devastated their environment.

The Shell Petroleum Company of Nigeria (SPDC) was to pay around £35 million compensation to 15,600 Nigerian fishermen whose livelihoods were affected, and a further £20 million to the wider community.

Each individual was to receive around £2,200, equivalent to around three years' income on the Nigerian minimum wage, said their London-based lawyers Leigh Day.

SPDC, a major oil operator in Nigeria, has repeatedly insisted that most oil pollution in the Niger Delta region was caused by sabotage, theft and illegal refining.

Nigeria is Africa's biggest crude producer, exporting some two million barrels per day but much of the Niger Delta oil region remains deeply impoverished.

© 2015 AFP

Citation: Shell agrees to start clean up of 2008 Niger Delta oil spill (2015, May 3) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-05-shell-niger-delta-oil.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.