

Intervention on Sustainable Development Goals

Speaker: Caroline Usikpedo

Thank you chair,

My name is Caroline Usikpedo, Niger Delta Women's Movement for Peace and Development

I am speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group

We welcome an upgrade on UNEP and a further role in addressing the increasing environmental challenges within sustainable development. We understand that UNEP's effective contributions to SDGs can exert a difference in the face of the current environmental, social and financial crises.

Therefore, such contributions must take into consideration the central role of women in the environment, and thus, sustainable development. Let me remind you that women around the world spend more time and energy in activities related to direct natural resource use and play a central role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, including by their use of traditional knowledge which have helped them overcome environmental challenges, and that still goes unrecognized.

Recognizing a traditional knowledge-policy interface is not only paramount for addressing environmental challenges but also addressing the underlying causes of increased poverty. In fact, women are already 70% of the world's poor therefore, if poverty is to be eradicated, women needs are to be considered separately and integrated into all areas of development. In addition, greater recognition of women's rights and gender equality are to be integrated including rights to land and self-determination.

We agree with many experts who say that the MDGs have partly failed because they did not address the root causes of poverty. Extractive industry activities in my region of the Niger Delta have ripped many poor people of their small livelihoods. The oil spills have killed their fish and cassava production, making many women beggars. The oil industry globally makes many hundreds of billion dollars in profits! It is unacceptable that they are not even cleaning up their damage and compensating the victims of their activities. It does not have to be this way, in Norway oil revenues are taxed at 80%, which are used to pay welfare and development cooperation, and to assure that their activities do not destroy peoples livelihoods. All oil producing countries should be held accountable by global guidelines which should be a core indicator for SDS.

Specific sub-goals can be a moratorium on all new extractive industry explorations unless a social-environmental assessment has been implemented, and a fund for clean up and damage payment has been paid into in advance.