



## My Retirement Plan Started from the First Day I Was Employed

-Dr. Omawumi Evelyn Urhobo

**Tell us briefly about yourself, your last position and the directorate you retired from**

I retired from the NDDC in November 2012 on the attainment of the glorious 60 years and after serving for 32 years and the last 10 years at the NDDC where I was the Delta State Coordinator ( Directorate of Admin) for ten years and promoted Director just before my retirement.

**How did you prepare yourself for retirement?**

I remained focused and proactive on joining the Public Service in 1976. Prior to retirement, I had setup a number of entrepreneurial concerns including the Morgan Smart Dev. Foundation, an NGO for the empowerment of women and youth in the Niger Delta, as well as the provision of technical assistance to oil companies and embassies in Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR), an Engineering Consultancy Firm and the Shebet Guest Apartments -a self catering apartment for extended stay in Lagos.

So, the honest truth was that I did prepare myself for Retirement because I wanted to see myself being able to live a comfortable life

with my children and family after I retire and this happened for me to the glory of God.

**How have you settled into your new life outside the office environment?**

After ten years of retirement from Public Service, I am still as busy as it comes. With my retirement, I have been able to give greater attention to all my various businesses that I have midwived along my career path. As the Chairman of my Microfinance bank based in Warri which will be 30 years this year, I follow the daily activities of the bank to be on top of things. I continuously interact/interface with women and youths through the various programs that my Foundation runs like the yearly celebration of the International Women's Day in the past years, also the International Day of the Girl Child etc.

As the MD of my businesses, I have remained extremely busy. In all, I commend NDDC for her support.

**Did your work at NDDC in any way prepare you for the new roles you are playing now?**

Before joining the NDDC, ten years prior to my retirement from Public Service, I have had

most exciting times in other sectors of the public service like my Service with the Southern Africa Relief Fund, National Committee Against Apartheid, all in the Presidency; the National Planning Commission, and the National Health Insurance Scheme before I finally came into the NDDC. While I must say that my previous experiences prepared me very well.

**How is the corporate image of NDDC (positive or negative) affecting you as a member of that family?**

I must confess without any equivocation that the corporate image of the Commission has been brought to great disrepute over the years different from what the pioneering fathers envisaged for the people of the Niger Delta, and it breaks my heart. I spent ten years of my working life with the NDDC (2002 to 2012) and this was a period when projects were implemented and commissioned all around the Niger Delta; this was the period when; Contractors and Consultants were paid as at when due; Free Medical Missions; thousands of Youths were trained in skills and capacity building. There have been delayed or nonpayment to contractors, retirees' medical allowances etc., impacting on the corporate image of the Commission.

**What will you advice management to do to help staff transit from service to retirement?**

I am not unaware that a lot of staff of the Commission have become disillusioned, working under difficult conditions in the Commission, but they must remain committed to rendering sincere service to the people of the Niger Delta where we all are from. There is no doubt that some staff have come to see the Commission as the cash cow from which to enrich themselves. They must be reminded that a prosperous Niger Delta is to the benefit of all of us that are from the region.

**Is there any way NDDC can help retirees in pursuing their different life endeavours?**

One good thing that NDDC did for me while in service was all the various Pre-retirement courses that Staff retiring from service were exposed to. All these courses helped to reinforce my own preparation for my retirement. I pray that the NDDC will continue to arrange such, especially for staff who are near retirement age, preparing themselves for retirement. Retirement can be harsh and lonely except you plan ahead. The greatest mistake is going to invest all your gratuity into a business you have not fully understood. One must start small till you learn all the ropes and loopholes in running a business successfully.



## Celebrating the JEWELS of NDDC

...In Commemoration of International Women's Day

## Stakeholders' Collaboration as Mantra





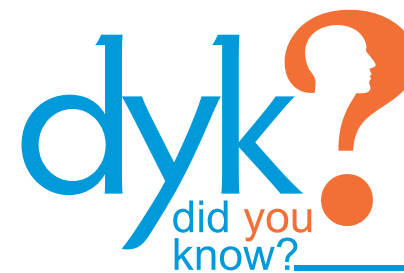
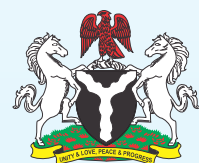
## New Thinking. New Frontiers. New Partnerships.

At the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, we see new possibilities: An exciting new phase of growth and prosperity for the Niger Delta and its resourceful people. Thanks to a supportive government, focused leadership and an extensive partnership that support our radical change agenda, we are making right investments in tomorrow's prosperity and joy for the region and its people.



**NDDC**  
NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION

*...making a difference*



Interesting facts about the Niger Delta. Got some? Then contact The Editor at [nddcnews@nddc.gov.ng](mailto:nddcnews@nddc.gov.ng)

## Oguta Lake and the Urashi River

**D**id you know that the Oguta lake is the largest natural occurring Lake in Imo State, one of the nine states of the Niger Delta region?

Did you know that the Urashi River and the Oguta Lake in Imo State are joined in a confluence where the two different waters never meet? At this confluence, while on one side is a brownish color of water (which is referred to as the Urashi River) the other side almost appearing green is the Oguta lake (Ogbuide). These two waters are rich in both flora and fauna. Although there are several beliefs around this, one of such beliefs is that the two bodies of water are a husband and wife. They are in a state of perpetual quarrel.

The people of Oguta in Imo State revere the Oguta Lake and it is worshipped. Even though the worshippers of the Ogbuide and the Urashi worship them differently, both believe and have high reverence for the Oguta Lake and the Urashi River

Oguta lake is a navigable water hosting the beautiful Ameshi boat regatta and other cultural festivals. Along the shores of the lake is the popular Oguta Motel and Resort that once hosted an NDDC retreat that drew participants from our various critical stakeholders from within and outside



the Niger Delta region. Other adorable features around the lake are the Oguta Lake Golf Course, the Marine University, still under construction; a colonial relic, the United African Company, UAC warehouse that was of high economic relevance during the colonial days etc. The lake is a tourist Centre and intrinsically valuable

The Urashi River, also worshipped by the Communities within the shore line stretches from Oguta, Ezi Orsu, Egbema, Ogba, Ahoada, Join Krama,

Okaki, Mbiama, Abua etc before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean. It has remained a major trading route between the hinter lands and the Atlantic Ocean, supporting fishing, inland transportation, tourism etc. it is one of the major tributaries of the River Niger and a sight worth beholding

The Oguta Lake and the Urashi confluence remain one of the mysteries of the Niger Delta region and the world at large.

Now You Know!

## Sunny Okosun



**T**he Niger Delta has produced many musical freedom fighters including Sunny Okosun.

Okosun towers among the giants of contemporary Nigerian music. Assigning his signature fusion of reggae, highlife, afro-funk, and traditional melodies and rhythms, the catchall description "ozziddi" (or, "there is a message" in Igbo interpretation), he tackled head-on, the most incendiary political and social issues confronting the African continent.

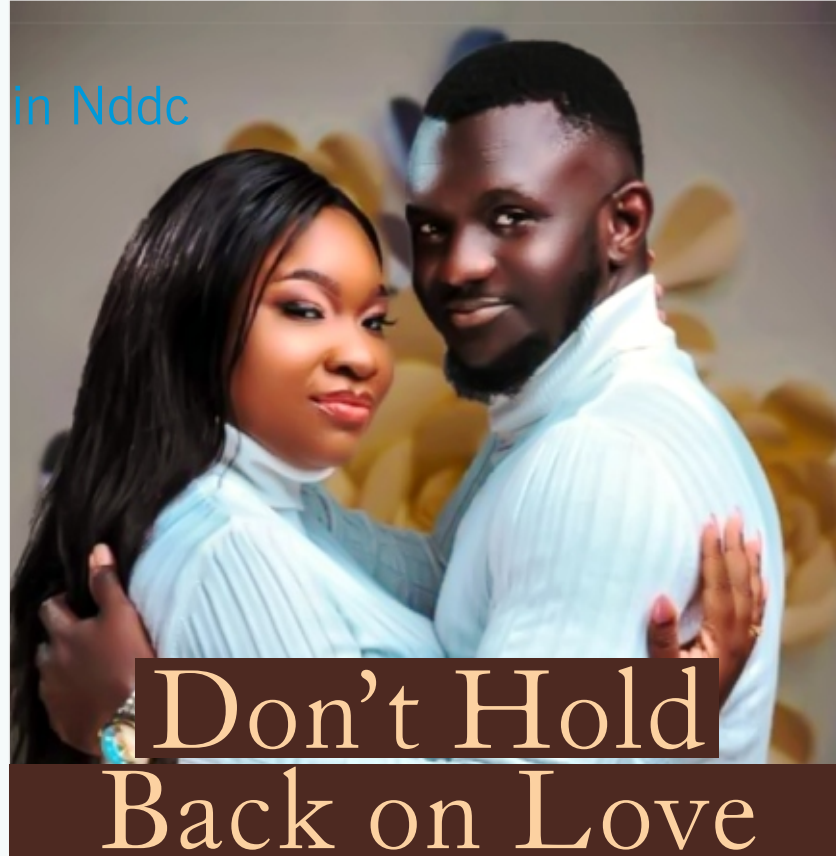
Okosun hailed from Irrua, Edo State. He was born in Enugu, Nigeria in 1947.

He was a son of musicians but influenced by the likes of Elvis Presley and the Beatles. He taught himself guitar and later played with Sir Uwaifo.

Aside Ozziddi, his hit tracks included Papa's Land, Fire in Soweto, etc. The history of the dismantling of the Apartheid regime in Africa and elsewhere is incomplete without his name.

The Niger Deltan tower of hope answered the final call in Washington DC. on May 24, 2008 at the age of 61.





“Meeting my wife was one of the most unexpected things that happened in my deployment as a staff to the New Media Unit, NDDC. Her humility and carriage attracted me to her.”

**M**y name is Mr. Emmanuel Udoka Okeleke. A staff of the Department of Skills at NDDC Headquarters. NDDC as a Commission is blessed beyond the eyes of the ordinary and one would have to keep his eyes on the ground in the pool of characters here to discover a goldmine.

*On meeting my wife...*

“I remembered when I first walked into the New Media Unit as a staff, my wife was the first person to speak to me. I had no idea she was a senior colleague, despite how commanding my tone was when I spoke to her as the secretary then, she responded with such friendliness and humility, I was absolutely floored.

I never intended to fall in love with her because I knew there was someone else in the Department who was moving on to her but God had other plans. After a short period of time, I found myself admiring her and with close observation, I realized that the guy who was on to her was slacking and as a sharp Delta guy, I quickly positioned myself and look where we are today”.

Speaking on how they keep the balance between work and romance, he said “We never allowed romance to intertwine with work. Although that is not an easy thing to do but we always ensured we kept the boundaries we had set. But I did not fail to make her see that I love her. Even now as a couple, I still steal some time to stop by her office to see her

pretty face. We must keep to boundaries so that our source of livelihood is not threatened”.

*Taking the big step?*

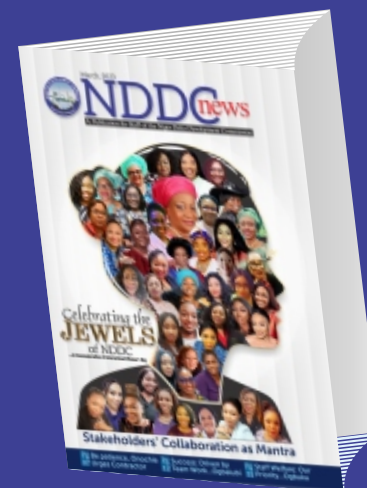
“I remember when I popped the question, she thought I was not serious but as a well cultured woman, she asked me to see her father for his approval. When I went to Umuahia to meet her father, the then Director of Finance, there was no hesitation whatsoever. I knew I wanted to do this and so I did. And he gave his blessings to us. It was at this point that she came to truly understand that I was serious and in love with her.”

“My wife is the most beautiful woman in this world and I would marry again in this world, or the next. I respect her sacrifices towards our marriage because she had to make some adjustment and I respect that”.

*What would your advice be on finding love within the workplace?*

“Absolutely, NDDC as a Commission is blessed beyond the eyes of the ordinary. One will have to keep his eyes to the ground in the pool of characters here to discover a goldmine. I mean, I would never have guessed that my soulmate would be sharing an office with me.” Please absolutely fall in love. Don't hold back because you are concern about what people will say. You might just be holding back a once in a lifetime experience“

“My wife is the most beautiful woman in this world and I would marry again in this world, or the next. I respect her sacrifices towards our marriage because she had to make some adjustment and I respect that”.



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## Vision

To offer a lasting solution to the Socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta region.

## Our 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

**CONSULTANT:**

Clearpoint Communications Ltd.

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## Editor-In-Chief's Take

Dear Colleagues,

**W**e have devoted ample space in this edition to celebrate our women in line with this year's International Women's Day, which focused on “Equity.” Since March is globally recognised as the International Month of Women, we chose to put together an edition to celebrate and recognize the amazing contributions of women in the Commission.

In this vein, we have lined up the profiles of some of our female Directors to give you an insight into their achievements.

Beyond the cover adorned by our beautiful women, we have packaged an array of interviews of the women in different creative and innovative roles. The views expressed by the women acknowledge that the Commission is gender-friendly.

Our cover story details the Commission's efforts to work with stakeholders and build partnerships in the conception and execution of projects and programmes for the development of the Niger Delta region.

The MD/CEO, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, has used every opportunity to explain that stakeholders, including State Governments, the IOCs, the traditional institutions, are key in driving the development process for Niger Deltans.

This edition highlights the Commission's engagements with various universities in the region to emphasise the need for partnerships for research to help in finding solutions to some societal problems. Such engagements involved the Niger Delta University, Amassoma, Bayelsa State, the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, the Rivers State University of Technology and the University of Port Harcourt.

We give you an insider's view of the recent meeting of our Executive Management with the Oil Producers Trade Section, OPTS, of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lagos.

Among key players in the oil industry present at the meeting were the Managing Director of Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, SPDC, Mr. Osagie Okunbor; the MD of NDDC, Dr Samuel Ogbuku; the Managing Director of TOTAL E&P Nigeria Limited, Mr. Mike Sangster.

Recognising the OPTS, which embodies the IOCs, as critical stakeholders, the MD used the opportunity of the meeting to explain the need for the Commission to embrace the Public Private Partnership, PPP, model to provide alternative sources of funding for key development projects and programmes.

Another important feature of this edition is the Youth Interactive Forum where the MD presented a new concept of

working with the Niger Delta Chamber of Commerce in the training of youths and young entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta region.

According to the MD, “the goal is to stop a situation where youths will be at home and be receiving stipends. Hence, the Commission is changing its Youth Volunteer programme to Youth Internship Programmes where youths will be attached to organisations for one year to learn skills.

Our regular section, “Feminine Angle” features, the Director of ICT, Mrs. Judith Aiyesan, a Project Management professional, who believes that women should leverage on ICT, especially as the theme of this year's United Nations International Women's Month is Digit ALL: Innovation for gender Equality

We have another interview with the Director Supplies, Dr. Linus Ogbalubi who believes that due process should be given pride of place in our financial operations.

In our health column, the issue of fibroids takes centre-stage and it is discussed in very plain language devoid of medical jargons.

We have introduced a new column on Financial Management, an advisory information on how to properly manage our finances. It takes us through how to unify one's finances, protect oneself from financial hardship by avoiding and eliminating debt; invest in one's future, and learn to work with budget.

Our popular “NDDC Alumni Class,” features a former Delta State Coordinator, Dr. Omawumi Evelyn Atsiangbe-Urhobo. For our beautiful women and the men too, this is certainly a collector's item. Please, relax and enjoy every bit of it.



*Ibitoye Abosede*  
- Ibitoye Abosede, Ph.D





cover story

## Stakeholders' Collaboration as Mantra

As the NDDC Board intensifies efforts to renew and reposition the Commission, building partnerships and encouraging stakeholders' collaboration is the underlying mantra.

The Executive Management has stayed on this course, engaging State governments, the International Oil Companies, IOCs, traditional rulers, civil society groups, contractors and youths in the Niger Delta region.

In one of such engagements recently, the NDDC Managing Director, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, told members of the Oil Producers Trade

Section, OPTS, of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lagos, that their role in funding the Commission places them as the second most important stakeholder group in the region.

He said: "We want to capture every stakeholder in our budget; State governments, the IOCs, traditional institutions, everybody should be included in it. It has to be an all-inclusive budget of the people of the Niger Delta region."

According to Ogbuku, the NDDC alone cannot carry the burden of developing the Niger Delta region. The

Commission, he said, needs the support of all stakeholders to achieve the goal of fast-tracking development in the region. "We cannot do it alone, we need your support, we need your partnership to succeed," he stressed.

The MD/CEO noted that one of the first steps by the management was a decision to do things differently. "This sent a message to the stakeholders and the workforce that the NDDC of today is different from the NDDC that lost the trust, confidence and support of the Niger Delta people," he said.

According to the MD, changing strategy required mobilising the workforce. He stated: "We did not just meet with staff to communicate the new direction of the management, we also lifted their spirits to motivate them to work harder."

"We cleared most of the outstanding staff entitlements and ensured others are paid as at when due."

Ogbuku affirmed that bringing changes come with challenges and this informed a review of the problems of the Niger delta region and the resources available to the Commission. The result of that review, he said, was the conclusion that the resources were inadequate.

He explained that inadequate

“According to the MD, changing strategy required mobilising the workforce. He stated: “We did not just meet with staff to communicate the new direction of the management, we also lifted their spirits to motivate them to work harder.”



sports

## Victorious Female Team Presents Trophy to Board Chairman

The Chairman of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Mrs. Lauretta Onochie, (2nd left) receiving the MD/CEO Cup from leader of the winning team, Mrs. Gift Ikechukwu, at the NDDC headquarters in Port Harcourt. First left is Zonal Representative of North-East on the NDDC Board, Prof. Tahir Mamman, SAN.

The winners of the MD's Cup for female teams during the 5-day football tournament organized by the Commission in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, have presented their trophy to the NDDC Board Chairman, Mrs. Lauretta Onochie.

While receiving the trophy in her office, Onochie applauded the team for the victory and emphasized the need to provide women equal platforms when planning youth and sport programmes to enable them maximize their potentials.

The board Chairman recounted her involvement in sports years ago and emphasized the importance of the tournament to make staff physically fit as well as create conviviality among staff and management.

Onochie who enjoined staff to share useful ideas that will move the agency forward with their superiors, encouraged them to be at their best while carrying out their assignments.

She noted that Month of March is for commemoration of International Women's Day as such, a programme would be rolled out that will be beneficial to the female folks.

Earlier while presenting the cup, the Captain of Chairman's Team who also doubles as the Best Goal Keeper of the tournament, Mrs. Gift Ikechukwu expressed joy that the team emerged Champions of the tournament.

Mrs. Ikechukwu appreciated management for approving the tournament to create friendship among

staff and management.

Apart from, the captain who emerged the best goal keeper of the tournament, the chairman's team equally produced the most valuable player of the tournament, Mrs. Edna Ibe-Henry.

During the tournament, the MD's Male Team emerged champions. At the final match of the 5 - day soccer fiesta played at Samson Siasia Stadium Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, MD Team defeated the defending Champions, Akwa Cross by a lone goal.

In the Female Category, Chairman's Team overcame CEPP team to lift the trophy. However, to get to the final, the Chairman's female team overcame some huddles in the tournament.

In their first match, the Chairman's Team had an easy one, as they walked over MD's team that was disqualified, with that, the team advanced to the semi-final stage.

The semi-final match was against Fach. Both teams tried each other's resilience, including that of the goal keepers who blocked all goal bound shots. After ninety minutes of the energy sapping encounter, scores stood at zero-zero.

At the ensuing penalty kick out, Chairman's team won by two goals to one (Chairman 2-1 Fach) Having qualified for the final of the tournament, the Chairman's Team was pitched against CEPP team.

On the D-Day, both teams came out in high spirits, motivated by the mammoth crowd that thronged Samson Siasia

Stadium Yenegoa, Bayelsa State, venue of the final match.

Though anxiety rented the air, the teams came out beaming with confidence to carry the day. As the match kicked off, Chairman's Team left no one in doubt of their resolve to lift the trophy.

The strikers made forays into the vital areas of CEPP, but the defenders blocked and intercepted every move that could lead to a goal. The first half ended with the Chairman's Team dominating and creating scoring chances, but could not covert any of them.

The tempo did not change at the resumption of hostilities in the second half, but CEPP goal keeper was at her best blocking and parrying away goal bound shots.

CEPP team came into the game in the middle of the second half, created some half chances from the right flank, but the goal keeper of Chairman's Team refused to concede.

At the end of regulation time, scores stood at zero-zero. In the resultant penalty shoot-out, luck smiled on the chairman's Team as they converted three while CEPP team scored two, handing the Chairman's Team the victory with three goals to two, (Chairman 3-2 CEPP)

Having conquered the rest of their opponents in the tournament and carted away the coveted trophy, it was natural as a mark of honour to present the trophy to the chairman whom the team represented; coincidentally, it happened when a woman is the Chairman of NDDC Governing board.



“  
Women have a great role to play in the development of the Niger Delta Region but it starts with being well equipped because “you cannot give what you don't have”.  
according to a quote by Brigham Young

indicates that men and women were created equal. A man is not superior to a woman. Both Sexes are equal in worth. However, in the marriage institution, because there has to be a leader, God made the husband the head of the family. Women's advocacy for gender equality is our way of saying, “Look, I am not inferior to the man, so give me the same opportunities you give to the man and watch me thrive”.

#### Can you explain briefly, the role of I.T in a Workplace like NDDC?

NDDC has the mandate to develop the Niger Delta region. The role of I.C.T. is to ensure that the requisite I.C.T. working tools and services are available to staff to

ensure this mandate is realized. It is the role of I.C.T. to automate processes in the Commission for effective and efficient service delivery

#### Are there any noticeable milestones already recorded in the course of the Women's Day Celebration as a change element, over time?

Several notable milestones are already being recorded. Women can now expect to be paid equally with men for the same job. Women can also aspire to the highest level in their careers. For instance, here in NDDC, we have several women Directors and Heads of Departments. Also for the first time since

the inception of the Commission, we now have a female Chairman of the NDDC Governing Board. Even in politics, women are making their mark. We may not fully be there yet, but we are definitely not where we used to. The International Women's Day has helped to raise awareness of gender inequality and we can all help to create a more inclusive world where women and girls have equal opportunities as their male counterparts.

#### What advice do you have for fellow women on the role of the female gender on the development of the Niger Delta region?

The advice I have for women is that they should not rest on their oars and be contented with their present level. They should seek out opportunities to improve on themselves. Take up that training, acquire an additional qualification so they can be better versions of themselves and be better equipped to handle challenges they may face. Women have a great role to play in the development of the Niger Delta Region but it starts with being well equipped because you cannot give what you don't have. According to the quote by Brigham Young “When you educate a man, you educate a man, educate a woman, you educate a generation” This quote should ring true to every Niger Deltan who wants the region developed.

#### How do you relate with your staff?

I relate with my staff as a team working together to achieve the mandate of the Commission. The MD/CEO has given us a mantra that goes thus “NDDC, making a difference!” We in the I.T department are conscious of the fact that we need to make a difference by deploying technology for the smooth running of NDDC.

#### Are there any openings for staff development/training for NDDC staff in I.T?

Definitely! There are trainings in I.T for staff. The MD/CEO has graciously approved the procurement of Desktops and laptops for staff of the Commission and any moment from now, we shall be taking delivery of the I.T work tools. Then we shall commence with a training to sensitize staff on the I.T resources available to them and how they can be utilized. This training shall be conducted in-house by I.T staff.

financial resources necessitated the Commission's adoption of a Public Private Partnership, PPP, approach to developing the Niger Delta region.

He stated: “We have made provisions for partnership in our budget. Partnership brings more mileage to development where finance and technical limitations will be significantly reduced or eliminated.”

Throwing more light on the engagement with OPTS members, Ogbuku emphasised that they needed to be engaged in project conceptualisation and execution because the IOCs work in the communities and sometimes had first-hand information of the needs of the local people.

The MD said: “We believe that the partnership model used for the Ogbia-Nembe road can speed up the delivery of key infrastructure projects around the region. This partnership model which was jointly funded by Shell Petroleum Development Company, SPDC, and the Commission, delivered 25.735 kilometres of road through the most challenging terrain imaginable in the region. The project had 7 bridges, 53 culverts and traversed 9.15 kilometres of swampy terrain.”

Ogbuku insists that this successful partnership model should be replicated for other regional projects. He thus reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to work with key stakeholders to determine the areas of priority in the conception and execution of projects in the Niger Delta region.

He took the message to the University of Port Harcourt where he was joined by the Executive Director Finance and Administration, Maj-Gen. Charles Airhiavbere (Rtd), the Executive Director, Projects, Mr. Charles Ogunmola and other Directors on a working visit.

Ogbuku told members of the University's Governing Council that the NDDC would incorporate the needs of major stakeholders in its 2024 budget. He said: “We are here to understand what your priorities are, we believe it is not enough to conceive projects. We have to interface with the beneficiaries, including stakeholders like state governments, to execute meaningful projects and avoid duplications.”

The MD said it had become necessary to involve the Commission's stakeholders in the formulation phases



of the NDDC's planning in order to give stakeholders in the Niger Delta region what was needful and sustainable.

He noted that members of the university community across the nine

NDDC mandate states were critical stakeholders of the Commission. “You are very important to us because amongst the stakeholders of the NDDC, we believe that you are very important.”

“We believe that the partnership model used for the Ogbia-Nembe road can speed up the delivery of key infrastructure projects around the region.”



# NDDC 2024 Budget Will Accommodate Stakeholders' Interests –Ogbuku



L-R: The Managing Director of Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, SPDC, Mr. Osagie Okunbor; the Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Dr Samuel Ogbuku; the Managing Director of TOTAL E&P Nigeria Limited, Mr. Mike Sangster and the NDDC Executive Director Finance and Administration, Major General Charles Airhiavbere, during a meeting of the Oil Producers Trade Section, OPTS, of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lagos.

The MD/CEO, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku has assured that the Commission's 2024 budget will be an inclusive budget that largely accommodate the interests of stakeholders in the Niger Delta region.

Speaking in Lagos when he addressed members of Oil Producers Trade Section, OPTS, of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lagos, Ogbuku said that the 2024 NDDC budget will be a budget that will have inputs from all major stakeholders in the region.

"As we are planning the budget, you will also tell us the kind of projects you want in your areas of operations so that we also include it in our budget. That is the plan for our budget for 2024. We know it wasn't captured in previous years because we did not prepare those budgets however, going further, we want to capture every stakeholder in our

budget. State governments, the IOCs, traditional institutions, everybody should be included in it. Let it be an all-inclusive budget of the people of the Niger Delta."

Ogbuku told members of the OPTS that: "In our budgeting for 2024, which we have already kick started the process, we have told out budget committee to have a stakeholder's conference for our budget. The budget cannot be NDDC budget alone, it must be a budget for people of the region, of which you are also stakeholders."

He noted that meeting members of the OPTS was critical to the NDDC management because: "You are very important to us because amongst the stakeholders of the NDDC, we believe that you are the second most important. The first of which, I think, are the people of the region – the second being the IOCs who contribute towards the funding of

the NDDC."

According to Ogbuku, the NDDC alone cannot handle the task of developing the Niger Delta region. The Commission, he said, needs the support of all stakeholders to achieve the goal of developing the region. "NDDC funds alone cannot fully develop the region. If those monies have been wasted before, let us put an end to it and see together that a difference is made henceforth. We cannot do it alone, we need your support, we need your partnership to achieve this. That is why we are here, meeting with you people, to also introduce ourselves to you, to know that we want to do things differently. To know that genuinely, we are willing to develop the Niger Delta. To let you know that we are willing to embark on legacy projects; projects that will stand the test of time, projects that will outlive all of us. Those are the projects we would leave behind. We cannot achieve this without you."

He also added that the Governing Board of the NDDC is committed to changing the narrative about the NDDC and its operations. "As a new management, we must pick up the pieces from where we met it and continue from there. We are here to improve on the successes of our predecessors and, to correct their mistakes."

"Above that, we have also decided to explore the angle of partnerships (PPP), by strengthening our PPP Directorate and setting up a committee to assist and support them. The Act gives us that leeway to operate PPP. The only standing PPP which NDDC has partnered with in the past 22 years is just the Ogbia-Nembe Road – Shell partnered with NDDC to achieve that. That road is about 27-km long with seven bridges and 9.5 meters of it is on the swamp. NDDC alone wouldn't have been able to achieve that without a partnership with Shell."

feminine  
Angle

## DigitALL: Innovation for Gender Equality

...I.T. Advocacy Accentuates Women's Rights

-Mrs Judith Aiyesan

Who is Judith Aiyesan?

My background is in Information Technology having bagged a B.Tech in Physics/Computer Science from the Federal University of Technology Minna. I was privileged to have done my NYSC in the defunct OMPADEC where I was retained after my service. You can see that I grew through the ranks in the system to get to where I am today. I have gone ahead to bag an MBA in Management from the University of Port Harcourt. I am also a Project Management Professional (PMP) of the Project Management Institute. I am currently studying for my Ph.D in Management. I am a conscientious person who sees every opportunity as God-given to make an impact.

My hobbies are reading, watching inspiring movies and singing. I have so far recorded 3 gospel songs. I am married with three children.

March 8 is set aside by the United Nations Organisation (UNO) to celebrate the International Women's Day. Can you shed more light on the importance of this day?

This day is very important because it draws attention to challenges faced by women. The day seeks to address these challenges and also see how gaps between men and women can be bridged so that women can enjoy equal opportunities with their male counterparts. This day is also used to celebrate and showcase the progress women have made so far.

The theme of this year's program is DigitALL: Innovation for gender Equality. How does Information Technology fit in?

A career woman can utilize digital devices and services that will enable her work smarter and reduce incidences of errors thereby enhancing her service delivery.

o this celebration?

I.C.T has made the world a global village and it is now very easy to access any information needed. Women can leverage on Information technology in whatever endeavours they are involved in. Be it in their career or business. A career woman can utilize digital devices and services that will enable her work smarter and reduce incidences of errors, thereby enhancing her service delivery.

The business woman can take advantage of digital platforms that would connect her to potential buyers of her goods and services. This will greatly improve the economic power of women which consequently will greatly bridge the gap between the genders.

Women's advocacy for gender equality has often been misunderstood by most people, can you please, guide us through the route of this somewhat, confusing term?

Women's advocacy for gender equality is only reiterating what God did when He created man. In the beginning God created man, male and female, He created them. This

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# NDDC Pledges to Complete Projects in Obuama

The NDDC has re-affirmed the commitment of the Commission to complete all on-going projects in the Niger Delta region, including those in Harry's Town, Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Speaking after inspecting the 6-kilometre Obuama Internal Roads, the NDDC Managing Director, Dr Samuel Ogbuku, assured that the Commission would continue to deliver quality projects for the benefit of the people of the

Niger Delta region.

The NDDC Chief Executive Officer, who was accompanied by the Executive Director Projects Mr. Charles Ogunmola and other Directors of the Commission, assured that the NDDC would complete all the on-going projects in the community to positively impact on the lives of the people.

Ogbuku, who later paid a courtesy visit to former leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force, Alhaji Alabo

Asari Dokubo, said that it was only proper to visit the activist, whose mother hails from Obuama, noting: "You cannot just go for project inspection and leave from the site."

He said that NDDC was eager to complete all the projects in the community, stating: "We will look at all the issues raised by the community to ensure that the projects are completed for the benefit of the people. Every community in the region deserves to benefit from NDDC project."

Responding, Asari Dokubo pledged to assist the Governing Board of the NDDC to stabilize to enable it work effectively for the people of the Niger Delta region.

He stated: "I am very humbled by this visit. It is not every time that an NDDC MD will come with his entourage. We have known most of the MDs but he is the only one who has come to see me, I am grateful. I am not going to ask for anything from him, because the community is saturated with NDDC projects that are stalled."

"I think if my brother will assist in completing these projects, we are satisfied. We are not going to ask for more. The chiefs have already told him, these projects were there before but were stalled and for various reasons. Now, we pray that by the grace of God they will be completed."



The MD, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, (right) inspecting the Obuama Internal Roads in Degema LGA, Rivers State, with the former leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force, Alhaji Alabo Asari Dokubo (left) and the EDP, Mr. Charles Ogunmola (middle).

## Bayelsa Communities Rejoice over 3 New Roads

The Igbogene and two other communities in Yenagoa Local Governments Area of Bayelsa State were in jubilant mood when the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, inaugurated the Igbogene Polako Road, New GRA Extension and the 16 Brigade, Nigerian Army Barracks.

Speaking during the commissioning, the NDDC Managing Director, Dr Samuel Ogbuku, assured that more projects would be inaugurated across the Niger Delta region. He listed that the roads commissioned in Yenegoa as New GRA Extension Phase II, Otio; 1.2-kilometre 16 Brigade, Army Barracks Roads and the

1.39-kilometre Rigid Pavement Igbogene Polako Road.

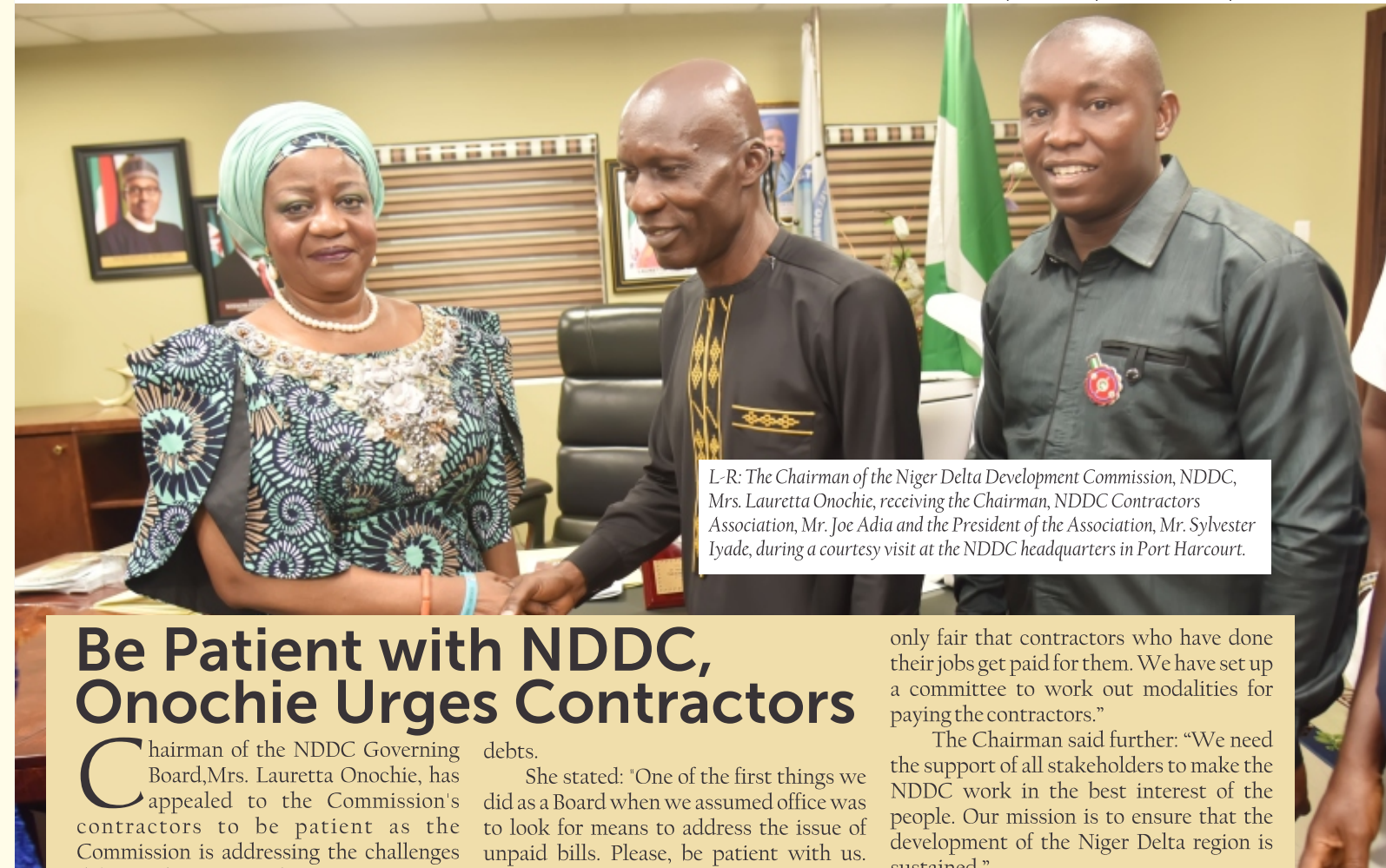
The NDDC Chief Executive Officer, who was accompanied by the Bayelsa State representative on the Board of the NDDC, Senator Denyanbofa Dimaro, the Executive Director, Projects, Mr. Charles Ogunmola and other directors of the Commission, charged the communities served by the roads to ensure that they played their part to protect and maintain them.

Ogbuku said the Commission would continue to execute projects that would enhance the living conditions in the Niger Delta communities. He assured that the

projects would stand the test of time, given the difficult terrain in the region, and add value to the lives of the people.

The NDDC boss said it was important for the Commission to inaugurate its completed projects, noting: "We need to let our partners and the various stakeholders in the Niger Delta region know what we are doing with the resources available to us."

Giving a brief on the road in GRA, the NDDC Director, Bayelsa State office, Engr. Theophilus Allagoa, said that the New GRA Extension Road had added value to the properties in the area.



L-R: The Chairman of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Mrs. Laurretta Onochie, receiving the Chairman, NDDC Contractors Association, Mr. Joe Adia and the President of the Association, Mr. Sylvester Iyade, during a courtesy visit at the NDDC headquarters in Port Harcourt.

## Be Patient with NDDC, Onochie Urges Contractors

Chairman of the NDDC Governing Board, Mrs. Laurretta Onochie, has appealed to the Commission's contractors to be patient as the Commission is addressing the challenges delaying their outstanding payments.

Speaking during a courtesy call by a delegation from the NDDC Contractors' Association at the Commission's headquarters in Port Harcourt, Onochie told the contractors that their support and cooperation were necessary in resolving the challenges.

She expressed regret that contractors who had completed their jobs were yet to be paid, but affirmed that the Commission had set up a Committee to streamline the payment of all verifiable outstanding

debts.

She stated: "One of the first things we did as a Board when we assumed office was to look for means to address the issue of unpaid bills. Please, be patient with us. Give us a little more time to do our house cleaning."

She assured them that they would not be neglected henceforth. "You are our partners in the development process. As partners in the development of the Niger Delta region, we need your cooperation," she said.

Onochie commended the persistence of the leadership of the contractor's association in fighting for their members. She said: "When I hear about the backlog of debts to contractors, I get disturbed. It is

only fair that contractors who have done their jobs get paid for them. We have set up a committee to work out modalities for paying the contractors."

The Chairman said further: "We need the support of all stakeholders to make the NDDC work in the best interest of the people. Our mission is to ensure that the development of the Niger Delta region is sustained."

Speaking earlier, the Chairman, NDDC Contractors Association, Mr. Joe Adia, stated that members of the group were critical stakeholders in the development of Nigeria's oil-rich region. He said: "We are happy that a new Board has taken off. Before now, the contractors were having a rough time. We believe that the coming of the new Board will bring changes to the NDDC. We are ready and eager to partner with NDDC."

## Let's Emphasise Research, NDDC Tells Universities

The NDDC has charged Nigerian universities to devote more energy in research to help in finding solutions to some of the problems bedeviling the society.

This was the advice of the NDDC Managing Director, Dr Samuel Ogbuku, when he received a delegation from the Rivers State University, led by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nlerum Okogbule, at the Commission's headquarters in Port Harcourt.

Ogbuku said: "We want to partner with universities in academic research. Let us be part of the solutions the world is seeking. We want to partner with academic institutions to produce life-

saving vaccines. We should be looking at finding lasting solutions for medical and social problems."

The NDDC Chief Executive Officer acknowledged the contributions of universities in manpower development and the overall development of the Niger Delta region, stating that it was part of the efforts of the Commission to build the capacity of universities in the Niger Delta region.

Ogbuku stated that as development partners in the Niger Delta region, Universities should conduct research that proffers solutions to the challenges facing the people of the Niger Delta region.

He remarked: "As development

partners in the Niger Delta region, we will support and fund research projects that adds value to our society and solves the challenges facing the people of the Niger Delta region. The NDDC seeks partnerships in research to address challenges facing society. Research will provide solutions for society."

Speaking earlier, the Vice Chancellor of the Rivers State University, Professor Okogbule, commended the NDDC for building the capacity of universities in the Niger Delta region.

He noted that the Commission has left an indelible mark on the Rivers State University and called for closer ties with the NDDC.



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## We Will Engage Youths in Productive Activities – NDDC boss

The NDDC says that it will review the Commission's youth development programmes in the Niger Delta region to ensure that the youths are engaged in productive activities.

Speaking at the Commission's headquarters in Port Harcourt when a delegation from the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education led by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Okechukwu Onuchukwu, paid a courtesy visit on him, the NDDC Managing Director, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, said that the

Commission was reviewing its youths' programme to make it more wholesome and sustainable.

According to Ogbuku, the NDDC will review the NDDC Youth Volunteer programme into a Youth Internship programme as part of its efforts towards discouraging sedentary lifestyles among the youths of the Niger Delta region.

The NDDC boss noted that universities in the Niger Delta region were key stakeholders in the development of the region, noting: "We want to partner with universities on

effective research. We seek research that can tackle challenges facing our communities in the Niger Delta region. We will finance research that solves problems in our society."

Speaking earlier, the Vice Chancellor, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Professor Okechukwu Onuchukwu noted that there were no NDDC projects in the University and called for support from the Commission for projects in the university's Port Harcourt campus.

## MD/CEO Inaugurates 2024 Budget Committee

The MD/CEO, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, has inaugurated the Commission's 2024 Budget Committee to proactively prepare its 2024 budget through engagements with stakeholders.

Speaking to members of the Committee during the inauguration of the Committee in his office, Dr. Ogbuku said that the Committee must first identify the vision of the NDDC as an interventionist agency in order to prioritise the allocation of available resources. "You must first of all articulate our vision for 2024 then you can allocate available resources. Please, always have that at the back of your mind"

"As a Committee the first thing you must identify is to come up with and articulate what our vision for 2024 is. It is our vision that will determine our budget. Let's look at a budget that can be

implemented; a budget that will capture our present reality; a legacy budget."

Ogbuku urged that the 2024 NDDC budget should balance funding of new projects, funding of ongoing projects as well as debt financing in order to get the buy-in of stakeholders. The Committee, he said must actively engage stakeholders

in their activities.

The 13 member Budget Committee is led by the NDDC Managing Director as its Chairman with the Commission's Executive Director, Finance and Administration, Major General Charles Airhiavbere as the Committee's Vice Chairman.



through many challenges in life, coming out with a smile. Watching many people in their struggles, with destinies being made and destroyed, some being drowned in sorrows, there was need to give people hope.

"Don't forget, this was in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. I could see hopelessness and helplessness written on the faces of many and it was like even if the world is down, you can still be up with a little courage to get to an altitude no one can pull you down. It was all these that made me to come up with a compilation of an easy to read, colourful quotes that at a glance will be able to put a smile on the face of someone."

Asked if she will consider a future in academics, she said: "Oh yes! I have always had passion for imparting knowledge and we all have a great role to play in ensuring that the future never lacks teachers and lecturers in our citadels of learning. I am currently engaged in a part time Ph.D. programme

in Peace and Security Studies.

As part of her quest for continuous training, Iyasere, a Fellow of the Society for Peace Studies and Practice in Nigeria, attends the annual conference of the professional organisation. She participated in the November 2021 Conference held at the National Open University of Nigeria, Jabi, Abuja with the theme: Peace and Security in the Wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Again, in November, 2022, she attended the conference at the Nigerian Army Resource Centre, Abuja with the theme: Election, Democratic Consolidation and Good Governance in Nigeria.

On how she relates with her male counterparts, Iyasere seems to have an antidote. She advises: "Be professional in your conduct. Whether male or female, we have all come together to bring our professionalism to the table and nothing else. I have not suffered any

disadvantage because I don't think I have ever put myself in any disadvantaged position because of my gender. "I am proud to be a woman and while in the office, my focus is work and service delivery.

My goal is to be a woman that will always stand out. "I strive to be of service to humanity. And without mincing words, working in the Commission has brought me closer to the plight of most Niger Deltans. I do my best to lend a helping hand, making a difference in my little corner and fitting into the Commission's mandate as an interventionist agency."

While working for NDDC in various capacities as an adjunct staff, she served as a consulting Community Liason/PRO Officer for Emmpepek Farms Ltd, a fast growing and privately owned commercial agricultural enterprise with headquarters in Port Harcourt and various branches in the South-South region.

Her hard work paid off eventually in 2019 when she was officially engaged by the Commission and deployed to the Directorate of Legal Services. In October 2022, she was redeployed to the office of the Acting Managing Director. Subsequently, and with the inauguration of a substantive Board for the Commission, she was moved again to the office of the Chairman, Governing Board.

In charting a new path for the Commission to enhance its performance in the area of service delivery, Iyasere believes that there is need to go back to the drawing board.

She said: "We need to understand why the Commission was actually created, because right now, with the misinformed and uninformed public opinion, we have lost it somewhere.

"The NDDC is an interventionist agency for the Niger Delta Region, there is no NDDC without the Niger Delta region and its people and you and I will not be here if there is no NDDC. What must we do? We must learn to work together to achieve the Commission's common goal. We must focus on service delivery which can only be done when we begin to focus on doing the right thing."

*In charting a new path for the Commission to enhance its performance in the area of service delivery, Iyasere believes that there is need to go back to the drawing board.*





## My NDDC Experience: Bumper Story of My Life

*"My journey in NDDC is one that I can describe as the bumper Story of My Life. It was my research work as a Post-Graduate student at the University of Ibadan, which focused on the media reportage of the Niger Delta region and the menace of hostage taking, that brought me to NDDC."*

That was how Justina Iyasere captured the beginning of what she described as a life changing experience in the NDDC, which began with her attachment to the Community and Rural Development, CRD, Directorate where she was a Conflict Analyst and Community Sensitization Personnel in 2006.

With her research work completed later that year, the CRD made efforts, albeit unsuccessfully, to retain her and engage her as a staff. According to her: "That was how "my bumper story" began." Despite the initial setback, the enterprising young lady could not be deterred. She said: "I never gave up, as I actually found favour with some staff who kept me busy with one form of intellectual work or the other. I worked with various executives on adhoc basis and more significantly with the Executive Director, Projects from 2013 to 2015. It is here that the Director in the office of the EDP, Engr. Dr. Emmanuel Audu-Ohwaborua, acknowledged my hard work, dedication and commitment and made

efforts to ensure my formal employment in 2019."

Iyasere who currently works in the office of the Chairman, Governing Board, said that she appreciates hard work and will continue to make it her watchword to actualize her God-given purpose. She sees herself as "God fearing, dedicated, hardworking, courageous and intelligent young lady who stands for Justice, equity, godliness, integrity and fairness."

Asked why she is not in Corporate Affairs Department or other information management-related Directorates, as a Mass Communication graduate, she said: "As a communicator, I was trained to know everything about something and somethin

about everything. Working in a place like the NDDC, affords one the opportunity to be versatile; to garner knowledge from every corner while contributing one's quota to the overall wellbeing of the Commission. So far, I have worked in various directorates and I am happy to say I have done my best in all without shortcomings.

She said further: "I have always taken it as a challenge to find myself in a new field because I love learning on the job. For me it is fun. And don't forget, I told you that being a Mass Communicator, there is no directorate or department I have found myself that has not demanded me bringing my knowledge to the fore. We keep learning every day and every knowledge I have acquired, be it in academics, professional courses or personal trainings have always been useful."

Obviously, her training in Peace and Conflicts Studies came in handy for her at the CRD, where she had the opportunity to do some conflict analysis and needs assessment.

In 2020, Iyasere published a book entitled: "Up in a Down World." Which she believed was necessary to help in lifting the spirits of many people battling with the challenges of life.

According to her: "I have passed

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*If the people in power do not favour women in participation and governance, you will find that the women will have a ceiling which might be difficult to go beyond.*



## BLACK SOUP (OMOEBE)

We want to take you through some of the delicacies that spice up the life of the people in the Niger Delta region.

We would be featuring Black Soup which is also known as *Omoebe*. This delicious soup originated from Edo State and it is well known for its medicinal attributes.

Black soup is literally black, this is due to oxidization of the vegetables. The Ugwu leaves (Pumpkin) is rich in iron, while the bitter leaf has hypertension reduction properties and the scent leaves have anti-inflammatory properties making this soup a great addition to your diet.

### RECIPE FOR BLACK SOUP

#### Ingredients:

- 1 bunch of ugwu leaves [Optional]
- 1 bunch of bitter leaves
- 1 bunch of scent leaves
- 1 kg of goat meat or any protein of your choice
- ½ kilo of kpomo

- Dried fish
- Stock fish
- Crayfish powder
- Onions
- Pepper (Scotch bonnet)
- Palm Oil
- Seasoning cubes
- Salt

#### Method:

In a clean pot, wash season and bring to boil the goat meat, kpomo, dried fish, sliced onion and blended peppers.

Using a blender or grinding stone, wash and blend vegetables till smooth.

If the meat is cooked, add palm oil, crayfish powder, stir and taste for seasoning.

Allow the soup simmer for 4 minutes on low heat, then add the blended vegetables.

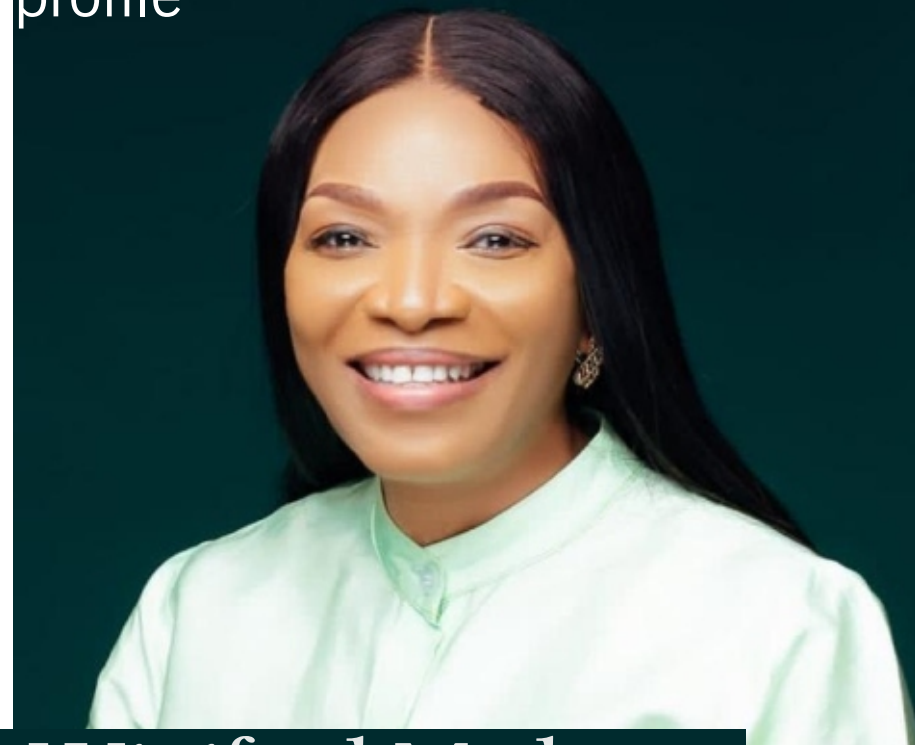
Allow to simmer for another 3 minutes and your black soup is ready.

Serve hot with pounded yam, garri, fufu etc

Gbadun oni ebai







# Winifred Madume

The Director Skills Development and Empowerment, Mrs. Winifred Madume, is an experienced officer with over 30 years of professional experience. She has a diverse background that includes work in Public Relations, banking, education, and agriculture. In her current role at NDDC, she has been able to leverage her expertise in these areas to lead the development and implementation of a wide range of initiatives focused on skills training, empowerment, and social welfare.

Her academic background includes an ongoing Ph.D. in Strategic Management from the University of Port Harcourt, as well as an MSc in Project Management and an MBA in Management from the same institution. She also holds a B.Agric in Agricultural Economics from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Throughout her career, she has been recognized for her ability to develop and execute innovative strategies that drive positive change and deliver tangible results.

She is passionate about empowering individuals and communities through skills training and education, and has a proven track record of success in this area. "As Director of Skills Development and Empowerment at NDDC, I'm committed to continuing this work and making a meaningful difference in the lives of people across the Niger Delta region."

As the Director Skills Development and Empowerment, she has

been leading the department responsible for providing skills training and empowerment opportunities for youths, women, and children in the Niger Delta region

It is part of her responsibility to develop and execute innovative strategies to promote economic growth and social welfare in the region; foster partnerships with local organisations and government agencies to achieve shared goals.

She equally oversees the implementation of a wide range of programs, including agricultural training, vocational skills training, and entrepreneurship development.

Between 2016 and 2020, Madume was the Deputy Director/Head of Social Services Department, where she led the effort to provide welfare for internally displaced persons across the nine States of the Niger Delta region; provided relief to inmates in various correctional centers in the region; led campaigns against human trafficking in the region and provided skills training for widows in the region.

It is part of her responsibility to develop and execute innovative strategies to promote economic growth and social welfare in the region;

From 2010 to 2016, Madume was the Assistant Director, Head of Agric., Skills Training. During this period, she was responsible for training youths in various agricultural skill areas, including poultry, fishery, piggery, snailery, food processing, and cassava cultivation; trained as many as 15,000 youths across the Niger Delta

region. At this time also, she facilitated loan facilities for trained youths who were made to form cooperatives (total of 166) to enable them to establish their own farming businesses, such as poultry farms, concrete fish ponds, piggery farms, and cassava processing industries.

Before she rose to the Directorate level, Madume was Principal Manager for three years, Senior Manager in charge of agriculture and fisheries for three years.

Madume's diverse experiences other companies where she worked before joining the NDDC family. She served as Administrative Manager in both the Nubia Oil Servicing Company from 2003 to 2004 and ST. Maria Gorretti Primary School from 1997 to 2001.

She was a Cash Officer and Customer Relations Officer with Crystal Bank of Africa 1991 – 1996. She was also the Public Relations Officer for Kenor Clinic between 1987 and 1991.

## Skills and Achievements:

- ❖ Exceptional leadership skills with experience managing and leading teams in various industries.
- ❖ Proficient in project management, strategic planning, and business development.
- ❖ Proven track record of successfully managing and executing large-scale projects.
- ❖ Extensive experience in training and development, including designing and delivering training programs for various audiences.
- ❖ Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to build and maintain relationships with stakeholders at all levels.
- ❖ Adept at problem-solving and decision-making, with a strong ability to think critically and analytically.
- ❖ Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, project management tools, and other relevant software.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS:

- ❖ Successfully trained over 15,000 youths in various agricultural skill areas across the Niger Delta region, leading to the establishment of 166 cooperatives and the creation of numerous farming businesses.
- ❖ Led the effort to provide welfare to internally displaced persons across the 9 states of the Niger Delta region, as well as provided relief to inmates in various correctional centres in the region.
- ❖ Led campaigns against human trafficking in the region and provided skills training for widows in the region.
- ❖ Successfully managed day-to-day operations of ST. Maria Gorretti Primary School and Nubia Oil Servicing Company, ensuring smooth operations and personnel welfare.



The Chairman, Mrs. Lauretta Onochie, (right) speaking when she hosted members of the Niger Delta Youth Assembly at the NDDC headquarters, in the middle is the Representative of the North West on the NDDC Board, Prince Sulelko Sami, while the President of the Niger Delta Youth Assembly, Comrade George Godwin is on the left.

## We Will Empower Niger Delta Women, Youths – Onochie

Chairman of the NDDC Governing Board, Mrs. Lauretta Onochie, has pledged that the Commission will initiate projects and programmes to empower women and youths in the Niger Delta region.

Speaking during a courtesy visit by a delegation from the Ijaw Community in Abuja and Northern Nigeria at the Commission's headquarters in Port

Harcourt, Onochie stated that the Governing Board of the NDDC was determined to change the narrative in the Niger Delta region.

According to her: "We are here to empower our people as part of NDDC's sustainable development programmes. We are not going to be throwing money at stakeholders as a means of addressing challenges facing the Niger Delta region."

## We Need Partners for Oloibiri Museum Road–Ogbuku

The NDDC says that it will collaborate with other development agencies to construct a good road that bring the world to the Oloibiri Museum and Research Center, in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the museum at the site of the first oil well in Nigeria, the NDDC Managing Director, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, thanked President Muhammadu Buhari for making the dreams of Niger Deltans come true.

He said: "I salute the drive of the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, who got the support of President Buhari to ensure that the desire and long-awaited dream of the Niger Delta region came to reality."

Ogbuku remarked that apart from boosting tourism and socio-economic activities in the Oloibiri area, the museum would also be a historical landmark for Nigeria.

Performing the groundbreaking ceremony of on behalf of President Buhari, Chief Timipre Sylva, noted that

Speaking earlier, the Chairman of the Ijaw Association in Abuja and Northern Nigeria, Hon. Alagba Ebifemowei stated that the association was focused on building bridges among all the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, noting that their interest was to secure empowerment programmes for the rural women of the Niger Delta region.

He said further: "Our goal is to build peaceful coexistence among Nigerians. Most of the projects in the Niger Delta region target only men, neglecting rural women in the region. Our programmes for the Niger Delta region must include women. That is why our own programmes have been focusing on building the capacity of women in the rural communities."

the Museum and Research Center was being developed as a collaboration between the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF), Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) and the Bayelsa State Government.

The Minister said that the project would place Nigeria among other oil-producing nations that established oil and gas museums to recognise and preserve the heritage and origin of their oil and gas production.



# NDDC Seeks Collaboration with NNPC



Group Managing Director of NNPC Limited, Mr. Mele Kyari.

Dr. Ogbuku was accompanied by the Executive Director, Finance and Administration, Major General Charles Airhiavbere, Rtd, and Executive Director, Projects, Mr. Charles Ogunmola.

The NDDC's partnership overture to the NNPC comes on the heels of similar moves to get the hands of the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, Tony Elumelu Foundation, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board and POWERCHINA in a multiple-partner arrangement.

The NDDC's quest for multiple partners is part of its renewed approach to expedite the development of the Niger Delta in creative ways, irrespective of funding and liabilities challenges.

The MD/CEO, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, recently led the Commission's executive management team to the Nigerian National Petroleum Company, NNPC, Limited to propose a partnership for speedy development of the Niger Delta region. The delegation was received by the

## Warri Monarch Pledges Support for PPP Initiative

The Olu of Warri, Tsola Emiko, Ogiame Atuwatse III, has expressed support for NDDC's Public, Private Partnership, PPP, initiative in driving the sustainable development of the Niger Delta region.

Ogiame Atuwatse III offered his support when a delegation from the Commission, led by the Managing Director, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku paid him a courtesy visit in his palace in Warri, Delta State. The NDDC team included the Executive Director, Projects, Mr. Charles Ogunmola and other Directors of the Commission.

The monarch commended the efforts of the NDDC in re-activating the construction of the Omadino-Escravos Road, as well as the Koko-Oghoye Road, noting that they would boost economic activities in his kingdom.

He observed: "I am an ardent believer that if you want Nigeria to work, you should get the Niger Delta working."

Speaking earlier, the NDDC Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Ogbuku, said it was necessary to visit the Warri monarch because the Commission recognized the fact "that Warri kingdom is the hub of oil and gas activities in the Niger Delta region."

He lamented that Warri was now a shadow of itself since most of the

International Oil Companies moved out of the city and took their operations to the deep offshore.

Ogbuku stated that the NDDC was exploring new means of changing the narrative in the Niger Delta region, hence the setting up a Public, Private Partnership Committee to explore opportunities for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta region through partnerships.

He remarked: "We have come up with a PPP Committee to help change the narrative in the Niger Delta region. Today, our doors are open to new partnerships

through PPP. We have visited the NNPC to explore possibilities of collaboration with them. We are to seek your support in reaching out to key stakeholders in the Niger Delta region such as the Delta State Government and the International Oil Companies operating in your kingdom to support our PPP initiatives."

The NDDC boss solicited the support of the Warri Monarch in building partnerships for the completion of the Koko-Oghoye Road project in Warri North Local Government Area, which was meant to connect Warri to Escravos.



## Mrs Okara Lyna Ijeoma

**Ag. Director, Dispute & Conflict Resolution**

Mrs. Lyna Ijeoma Okara, the Ag. Director, Dispute and Conflict Resolution, Niger Delta Development Commission NDDC, is a seasoned Lawyer with expertise and experience spanning over 30 years in different areas of legal services.

Born on January 9, 1969 in Lagos the commercial capital of Nigeria, she spent her childhood life in Port Harcourt where she started and obtained her First School Leaving Certificate, 1979, in Port Harcourt Primary School, Port Harcourt.

From 1979-1985, she was a student of the Federal Government Girls' College, Abuloma, Port Harcourt, for certification on West African Examination Council. For her Bachelor Degree in Law, she was at the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt from 1985-1989. At the completion of the Law degree, she proceeded to Nigerian Law School, Lagos between 1989-1990 for BLL-Bachelor of Law.

Between 1996-1997, she was again in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt for Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Law and Policy.

In 2013, she yet again proceeded to University of Dundee, Scotland, United Kingdom,

where she obtained LLM on Environmental Law and Policy.

Her many laurels in education have found a place of expression in the service of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), where she is currently the Ag. Director, Dispute and Conflict Resolution, a unit in the Legal Services Department.

Prior to the current position, she was a Manager Legal Services 2004-2007. She rose to the position of Senior Manager Legal Services, 2008-2010. She also served as a Principal Manager 2011-2014, Assistant Director, 2015-2018, in Legal Services Department. She served as a Deputy Director, Culture and Women Affairs between 2021-2022.

Barrister Okara has attended various training courses in leadership, Legal Services, Climate Change and Civil Service Administration, in the different parts of the globe. These Includes:

University of Copenhagen, the SDGs: A Global Trans disciplinary vision for the future;

Metropolitan School of Business and Management- Corporate Government and Leadership;

Nigerian Institute of Management Leadership for High Impact Course;

Lagos Business School Leadership and Corporate Governance, Lagos

London Corporate Training – Formulating and Executing Strategy for Result;

Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies – Intensive Practical Course on Climate Change, Environmental Law, Regulation and Management;

The Administrative and Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON): The New Public Services Rules;

Falconbury Business Seminar: Contract Negotiating Skills for International Lawyers and other Professionals, UK;

8th Accreditation Course of the Institute of Mediators and Conciliators, Lagos.

Barr. Lyna Okara is a member of several professional organizations.

She is a Fellow of Strategic Management Nigeria (FISMN). She is a member of International Bar Association (IBA), as well as Nigerian Bar Association (NBA).

Okara is also a member of the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC). She is an alumni of International Visitors Leadership Programme (IVLP).

She is also a member of Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), and

Member, Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE).

Barr. Lyna Okara is among the staff of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) recognized by the management for her efficiency in effective service delivery.

Prior to the current position, she was a manager Legal Services 2004-2007. She rose to the position of Senior Manager Legal Services, 2008-2010. She also served as a Principal Manager 2011-2014, Assistant Director, 2015-2018, in Legal Services Department.



# Success: Driven by Team Work, Due Diligence

## Dr. Linus Ogbalubi

He holds a Ph.D. 2015 from the University of Port Harcourt. Earlier in 2010, he earned a Master's degree in Development Economics from the same university. In addition, he has an M.Sc. in Corporate Governance, Leeds Metropolitan University in United Kingdom in 2011. Before his higher degrees, Ogbalubi graduated from the then Rivers State University of Science and Technology, now the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt in 1987, with a degree in BSc., Accounting. Subsequently, he got an MBA in Banking & Finance from Imo State University in 1998.

*Tell us about yourself, your academic/professional career, working experience, social life etc.*

By the grace of God, I am a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Consultants; a member of Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM); a member of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN); a member of the American Certified Fraud Examination; and also a member of the Institute of Strategic Management of Nigeria and Chartered Institute of Economics.

I have attended several leadership trainings in terms of exposure: both local and international. I have attended a leadership programme in Harvard Business School twice; Stanford University, Cambridge University and Lagos Business School – and so many other leadership programmes and professional trainings abroad and in Nigeria.

I started my working career with Elf Petroleum (now Total Petroleum) as a Youth Corper in 1987/88. After my NYSC, I joined Shell Petroleum Development Company of

Nigeria as a contract staff and worked there for about three years before I moved to Remm Oil as a Senior Accountant. Quite shortly, I left for Ecodrill Petroleum (Expo Group), a Scottish Company where I was the Chief Accountant in 1991. In 1993, I left for the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) now defunct. I was in OMPADEC till 2000 when it was transformed into the

“Every new management awards new contracts so there is a tendency to overshoot, chewing more than you can swallow.”

NDDC.

Here in NDDC, I spent more of my time in the Directorate of Finance and Supply, and I rose to the position of Director. I then became Director, Planning, Research and Statistics and Management Information Systems, Director, Cross River State Office, and now, Director, Supply.

In terms of my other assignments, I am a member of the Governing Board of University of Port Harcourt Business School, a community leader, and an evangelist.

*You have just been moved from the Finance Directorate where you headed for a couple of years to the Supply Department, may we know the high points of your career as a financial expert in your previous posting? What were your greatest challenges while in the Finance Directorate?*

My experience in Finance was quite interesting but challenging. Interesting because of the exposure. Challenging in the sense that the Commission is quite big in terms of the volume of activities we have. So, when you are in Finance, you handle a lot of internal and external issues, relating with



## NDDC Plans New Youth Development Scheme

The MD/CEO says the Commission has developed a new concept of working with the Niger Delta Chamber of Commerce in the training of youths and aspiring entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta region.

Speaking during a Youth Interactive Forum organised by the NDDC in Port Harcourt, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, stated that the Commission would collaborate with the Niger Delta Chamber of Commerce to support Small and Medium Enterprises in the Niger Delta region.

He said: "We are considering setting up a Niger Delta Chamber of Commerce that will strengthen young entrepreneurs in the region. It is no longer acceptable that our youths will be at home and be receiving

stipends. Hence, we are changing the NDDC Youth Volunteer programme to Youth Internship Programmes where youths will be attached to organisations for one year to learn skills.

"The chamber of commerce will help us to ensure that the programme is sustainable. We will focus on empowering young entrepreneurs because government cannot employ everybody. We will engage the youths to work for the benefit of everyone."

Ogbuku remarked that the NDDC was seeking partnerships through stakeholder engagements, noting: "We have gathered at this forum to hear from the youths; to interact with them and rub minds because we realise that we cannot

be planning programmes for youths without involving them at the foundational level.

In his contribution, the leader of Rivers Youth Forum, Mr. Blessing Fubara, urged the NDDC to make the Youth Interactive Forum a quarterly event, stating that the current management in the Commission had demonstrated sufficient interest in providing for the wellbeing of people.

In his closing remarks, the NDDC Executive Director Finance and Administration, Major General Charles Airhiavbere, (Rtd.), assured the youths that the new ideas put forward by the Commission's Managing Director had been incorporated into the Commission's 2024 budget.

## Ondo Communities Receive Relief Materials

Coastal communities, including Aiyetoro in Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State, recently ravaged by ocean surges, have received relief materials donated by the NDDC.

The relief materials were handed over to the community leaders by the NDDC Executive Director Projects, Mr. Charles Ogunmola, who was accompanied by the NDDC Director of Ondo State Office, Mr. Olaniyi Salami, and other directors of the Commission, at a ceremony at Naval Base Igbokoda.

Ogunmola said: "We are here to sympathize with you and to show you that the NDDC cares about your welfare and well-being. We have donated some palliatives, including food and non-food items, to cushion the effect of the ocean surge on you. We have also brought some

medical personnel to meet your health needs."

He added that the intervention was in phases and that the NDDC would also look into the possibility of completing the shore protection project awarded in 2006, which was stalled. He said the project was meant to prevent further erosion and devastation from the ocean.

Ogunmola Stated: "We are not here to make promises but to take action. We will do everything within our power to ensure that this project is completed and that your community is protected from future occurrences of ocean surges. We will also work with other relevant agencies and authorities to find a lasting solution to this problem."

The Director, Ondo State office of NDDC, Barr. Salami Olaniyi Okogie, said

Ogunmola's visit to Ilaje was mainly to flag off the distribution of Palliatives donated to Aiyetoro victims and also to inspect devastated communities in Aiyetoro for proper attention by the NDDC.

Speaking on behalf of the Aiyetoro community, Apostle J.I. Ajijo said that there was no proper study or research on how best NDDC and Federal Government could handle Aiyetoro ocean surge and urged the Commission to use modern technology to tackle the sea incursion.

The Secretary of the Aiyetoro Youths Congress, Emmanuel Aralu, who received the NDDC delegation and the relief materials, expressed appreciation for the gesture and commended the Commission for its swift response.



## Management of Uterine Fibroid...

women. Some of them include:

1. Frequent urination due to extra weight on the bladder. Anatomy has a womb positioned above the bladder. Therefore, the extra weight from the growth will frequently trigger the reflex or urge to use the rest room.
2. Heavy and painful (dysmenorrhea) menstrual periods. Associated with low blood levels (anaemia), and she has to apply double sanitary pads and change them almost by the hour. However, this is the main reason why she will avoid traveling or wearing white or bright colored outfits during her menses.
3. Menstrual clots
4. Menstruation that lasts longer than usual
5. Increased menstrual cramping
6. Pain in the pelvis or lower back
7. Pressure or fullness in the lower abdomen
8. Swelling or enlargement of the abdomen
9. Lower abdominal or pelvic aches and pain during sex.
10. Infertility. Fibroid tumors are capable of blocking the fallopian tubes, occupying the space where implantation of blastocyst should occur. Distortion of the normal physiology of the uterine lining. Leading to inability to conceive pregnancy, abortions and miscarriages of fetuses.
11. Negative psychological impacts - it has been noted that patients with fibroids may develop mental, social and emotional health issues. Right from the very first time she gets aware of fibroid tumors growing in her womb, she may develop anxiety, fear, hopelessness, low self-esteem and withdrawal from the society etc.
12. **Degenerating Fibroid**  
Fibroids are made up of living cells and require oxygen and other nutrients in the

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*Without nutrients, some of the cells die off until the tumor is a more sustainable size. The dead cells and the toxic chemicals released cause pain during fibroid degeneration.*

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blood to live. They receive these nutrients through the uterine artery and other minor blood vessels from ovaries.

A fibroid starts to degenerate when it stops receiving enough nutrients from its blood supply. This can develop after a period of rapid growth, which may cause blocked blood supply. Without nutrients, some of the cells die off until the tumor is a more sustainable size. The dead cells and the toxic chemicals released cause pain during fibroid degeneration.

When these patients recognize the symptoms, they can seek help from a medical professional.

If you think you have uterine fibroids, watch for the following fibroid degeneration symptoms.

- a) Acute and sharp pain in the pelvis: This is the most common symptom of a degenerating fibroid which is focused on the site of the fibroid. Pain can last from a few days to a few weeks with associated swelling of the abdomen.
- b) Chronic pain: People with fibroids sometimes experience less severe, lasting pelvic pain due to fibroid degeneration. Though this symptom may seem less significant, don't ignore it — treatment for fibroids could significantly improve your comfort and quality of life.
- c) Fever: When fibroid degeneration can occur during pregnancy, also known as necrobiosis, it's often accompanied by a mild to moderate fever.
- d) Bleeding: Fibroid degeneration may cause severe bleeding. You should seek immediate care for abnormally heavy bleeding, even if it occurs during your period.

Necrobiosis during pregnancy can be pretty frightening because it can lead to severe abdominal pain and abnormal bleeding. Patient may think she is having a miscarriage because of the symptoms. If you experience these symptoms and have fibroids, you should seek medical attention immediately.

Pedunculated fibroids are more susceptible to degeneration. This type of fibroid grows on a stalk that extends out from the uterus wall. The stalk can get twisted, which shuts off the blood supply to the fibroid. It can cause severe pain and last even longer than a regular degeneration.

To be continued in the next edition

contractors, relating with external stakeholders – Federal Inland Revenue Services, International Oil Companies (IOCs) and soon.

In terms of further challenges, the pressure on Finance is a lot. The reason is that we are servicing several stakeholders, starting from the contractors. We have thousands of projects ongoing; contractors are coming to meet you concerning your obligations to them, but the funds are not available. How do you manage and balance these? Every new management awards new contracts so there is a tendency to overshoot, chewing more than you can swallow. The pressure is so much on Finance. At the end of the day, everything empties there, either from contractors or from staff. The other day, we had a meeting where the MD was telling us that a lot of staff entitlements have not been paid and that is because of accumulations of all arrears due to staff. The same thing with contractors who have genuinely worked. It is quite tedious because you need to meet up with all these obligations. Every now and then, you, as the Director, Finance, you will be invited for one assignment, clarification or the other.

*Were the financial operational standards of the Commission of any concern to you while you lasted as the Director of Financial Services?*

The Commission is a public institution and a government agency that must adhere to all the extant rules and policies. Beyond the financial guidelines, there are other extant rules. We have the Public Procurement Act, the Financial Act, the Public Financial Regulation. We also have our internal operational manual – policy documents of the board that we must adhere to. All our operations are guided by these provisions, regulations, and acts.

As a professional accountant, you are also guided by your professional ethics and the guidance of the accounting profession, and the standards of accounting practice.

Wherever you work, regardless of the department, you will always encounter issues of concern. For me, I am an advocate of team work. When there are issues or challenges, we will meet to interrogate and analyze the issues in order to mitigate such challenges. These challenges will always come, regardless of where you find yourself. Your ability to balance the pressure is what is important. You are serving different



people; the nature of the Commission entails serving the community, the people, the government, the contractors and so on. You must also balance this with the Commission.

*Tell us the new changes you will bring to bear in line with international best practices on the activities of your new department?*

Supply was a department in the Directorate of Finance and Supply, while I was the Director, until recently. What is our main function here? It is to collate the needs of various directorates, departments, state offices – the working tools, consumables, vehicles, the furniture and equipment – everything needs to work, to ensure that the needs of various offices and departments are met for them to perform effectively and efficiently.

Beyond that, we also store what we procure and distribute periodically. That is basically our function. What is the new thing I am bringing? The new thing I am bringing is ensuring that the due process is brought to bear. I believe in process; I believe in systems – to ensure that things are done right. That is what I am bring to the department – to ensure that the processes are done in line

with extant rules, the provisions of the law, and all regulations – both internally and externally as it relates to the Commission and the government.

*What is your relationship with your staff and, what are your expectations from them?*

Like I told you earlier, my pattern of leadership is teamwork because nobody knows it all. I have a wonderful relationship with my staff. I have been here for about three months. Previously, where I worked, everyone is my brother and my sister. I have a wonderful relationship with my staff here too. I believe in teamwork. When there are issues, we must meet.

When I was in Finance, I usually had meetings with Management staff on Mondays and then, we had monthly general staff meetings including State office staff who are Accountants. The reason is that we hear and communicate with each other; everybody has something to contribute, even if you are a cleaner. There might be something you must have observed and more importantly, you assess me too so we can work together. I believe that an office a system and if part of that system is not working, that office has failed. If we

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*As an Accountant, you are also guided by your professional ethics and the guidance of the Accounting profession, and the standards of accounting practice.*

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My advice is teamwork.

The Board has its functions, the Management also has its functions, if each group is doing their functions, there will be progress and we will move forward.

There is so much to do in the region; our people are yearning for our services.

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come here and the place is not cleaned, it is not complete. So, everybody, regardless of level or cadre has something to contribute. If there is that unity of purpose, sometimes you might disagree, but you agree to disagree. It is part of life.

What is your advice for the governing Board?

I think the first thing I would say is that the Board started well. The first thing they did was the Board/Management retreat. That idea was to bring us together to define where we are, where we are going, the issues, how to improve on our past mistakes and successes. That is the first thing I observed, and think is commendable. We had a quite engaging retreat.

My advice is teamwork. The Board has its functions, the Management also has its functions, if each group is doing their functions, there will be progress and we will move forward. There is so much to do in the region; our people are yearning for our services. Most of us are from this region, there are a lot of problems to be solved. Until we work together as a team, we cannot deliver. So, first, let us work as a team and establish that we are all here to serve the region. That is my take.

Are there any window of opportunities for training of your staff?

Training and re-training is a part of life in any organized system. I am glad that the Commission has that as part of our programs. Some of us who have grown in the system have benefitted from that. I have gone to several leadership programmes. I have been to Harvard twice, like I told you, I have been to Stanford; I have been to Houston, to Cambridge and Lagos Business School, and to Ascon too. Having done that, I know the benefits of training, so I always recommend my staff for training.

I have mentioned that to Human Resources. I always encouraged my staff to train themselves beyond official training. You must upgrade yourself; the only thing you have is what you have in your head. It is not the car you have but what is in your head. Everything has value, so I recommend that. It is also a major part of our Condition of Service.

In the context of emerging realities, can you briefly sum up your advice for Staff and Management of the Commission?

At the level of Board/Management,

there must be some sort of synergy, working as a team. We must also know that we are here to serve our people. We must be focused and dedicated to that; whether you are a staff, a management staff, or a board member; we must know that we are here to serve our people. If we have that at the back of our mind, whatever position we are in, we must serve.

Advice for all media managers

I am glad. I was excited when I saw the Newsletter. I have always said that if you do not tell people who you are, nobody will tell you who you are. If you do not tell people what you are doing, people will say it negatively. I am happy with the type of engagements you are having. The role you are playing is very important, especially for our Commission. The reason is that we have been on the news for the wrong thing for some time now. So, there is a need for us to package and rebrand ourselves. How do we rebrand ourselves? Some of these good things we are doing, we must tell the public about them. Those days, we had Shell by our backyards, when they give you a toilet, they make news about it. We should make news of what we are doing so that people will not capitalize on our errors. That has been a burden. I am not saying we have done so well, but we have not done badly.

My place of origin, Mmahu, became the Local Government Headquarters in 1976, from then till now, I cannot identify a major Federal or State Government project done in the area, not even the ISOPADEC, but I can tell you that everything you find in the two oil-producing LGAs in Imo State is done by the NDDC. Go to all the states too, here in Port Harcourt, there is no internal street that is not done by NDDC. Why are we not telling our story? We are not telling people enough about our milestones.

Everything we have in Mmahu is provided by NDDC, and so, it is in other places. We are always in the news for negative reasons because we have not told our story enough. My recommendation, the little we do, we must tell the public about it. All the things you see IOCs do, when you even evaluate them, they are not compared to what we do here in NDDC, but they make a lot of news about them. We have not done entirely bad; you cannot come and de-market the NDDC. Let us start there and improve on the things we have not done right. I am happy with this, and hope it continues.

# Staff Welfare Remains Our Priority – MD/CEO

The MD/CEO, of NDDC, Dr Samuel Ogbuku, has said that staff welfare and entitlements will remain priority of the current Management.

Ogbuku said this during the first quarter interactive session between Management and staff of the Commission which held at the Commission headquarters in Port Harcourt Rivers State.

He said that the recurrent account of the Commission was well funded to ensure that all staff entitlements were paid as at when due.

He stated " My mission is not to criticize what has taken place in the past,

but to make things work and build a cordial relationship, between management and staff'

The MD stressed the need for the commission to be self-sufficient outside its statutory contributors, stating that the commission would host a PPP summit in April, which would showcase the new face of NDDC to the world.

Speaking further, he informed the staff of the management's meetings with International Oil Companies, IOCs and expressed happiness that the IOCs were happy with the Commission, and have

therefore readmitted NDDC into their quarterly meetings.

The MD also stated that staff promotion Exams had been approved and promotion arrears were being processed for payments. " The annual health checkup for staff has been reviewed and checkup can be done in any approved hospital in the region", he said.

Ogbuku emphasized that there would be internal reorganization of all directorates to bring them to its original structure as provided by the NDDC Act which provides for 13 Directorates. While commending staff for there commitment towards improvement of the Commission, the MD called for collaboration and support.

The staff union chairman, Mr Gbendo Anthony, in his remarks thanked the management for working as a team that listens to the union and sees staff matter as priority. He stated that the staff have the capacity to work with management, and called for regular training and departmental capacity development. He also appealed to management to expedite action on the setting up of a Staff Club.

He thanked the management for the approval of the staff condition of service, noting that the Commission has been without one for 11 years.



## NIGER DELTA PROVERBS

S/NO.	ORDINARY MEANING	REAL MEANING	SOURCE
1.	He who first gets to the mountain top may sit wherever he likes	The first entrant into a place reserves the right to first refusal	Opobo, Rivers State
2.	A drunken man is useless to his wife, while a drunken woman is an asset to her husband	A drunken man will sleep all through while a drunken woman is beneficial to her husband	Opobo, Rivers State
3.	Do not be a tree that sprouts out only roots without leaves	Consider the interests of others in whatever dealings, if you want to succeed	Akwabom State
4.	No matter how ugly a woman is, she is better than an empty bed	It is better to hold on something than nothing at all	Isoko – Delta State
5.	The tortoise said that whatever he chewed and shook his head in disapproval, such food is filled with sand	Truth is constant and indisputable	Egbema, Imo State





## Work to Resume on Okrika Bridge Project - Ogbuku

The MD/CEO, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, says that work will soon resume at the 3.65-kilometre Okrika-Borokiri Road with three bridges connecting Kolabi, Abotoru and Okpoka creeks to Port Harcourt.

Speaking after inspecting the project in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State, Dr Ogbuku said that the Commission would revive the project because it would provide a lot of benefits to the people.

The NDDC Chief Executive Officer was accompanied by the Commission's Executive Director Finance and Administration, Major General Charles Airhiavbere, (Rtd.), the Executive Director, Projects, Mr. Charles Ogunmola and other Directors.

Ogbuku noted that the project connects several communities to the Rivers State capital, stating: "It is one projects that can take traffic off Aba Road and East West Road. You will find people living in Okrika, Akpajo, Eleme commuting to Port Harcourt through the road."

He said that when completed, the road would reduce traffic congestion on the refinery road as well as reduce travel time from Okrika to Port Harcourt.

The NDDC team also paid a courtesy visit to the Amanyano of Okochiri, King Ateke Michael Tom, at his palace in Okochiri, Okrika Local Government Area.

“We assure you that work will soon resume on these projects. For example, the bridge that links Port Harcourt to Okrika mainland, is a very laudable project which is going to ease the traffic on the East-West Road;

Ogbuku said it was necessary to visit the monarch because the Commission had a lot of respect for the traditional institution.

He said: "We are here in Okrika and Okochiri on project inspection. We have inspected about two major projects. These projects, from our findings, are all stalled for many reasons. We felt the need to find out why the projects are stalled and the need for us to re-activate them.

"We assure you that work will soon resume on these projects. For example, the bridge that links Port Harcourt to Okrika mainland, is a very laudable project which is going to ease the traffic on the East-West Road; it is an alternate route to Okrika.

In his remarks, King Ateke Tom urged the NDDC to expedite action on some stalled projects in his kingdom. He remarked that on completion the projects would bring more economic and human capital development to the people of Okrika,

The Okochiri monarch also requested the NDDC to partner with his Kingdom in promoting the Okochiri International Beach Festival and Carnival, which, according to him, "promote peace amongst our people."

## STAFF PARLIAMENT

### Challenges Women Face Working in a Corporate Organisation

Female Staff recount their experiences and expectations in their daily routine as staff of the Commission's



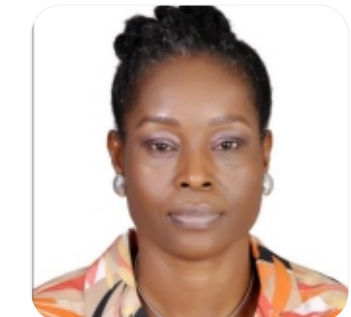
Monica Adamu



Mrs Pereseighe Adumein



Mrs Sennie Udofia



Mrs Queen Mensah

Monica Adamu, Principal Manager (PM) and Head of HR, Liaison Office, Abuja.

Personally, I have not had any challenge working in NDDC as a woman. I have seen other women rise to the peak of their careers in the Commission.

NDDC is not gender biased, women have risen to the level of Ag.MD. The only challenge I have seen facing women is in child bearing/nursing mothers, where NDDC gives 1 hour off duty for the sake of the child but the PSR says 2 hours.

I would want to suggest that NDDC nursing mothers should also enjoy the 2 hours as stated in the PSR. It is my opinion that NDDC Offices should have a Crèche so that nursing mothers will not have divided attention while at work.

Mrs Pereseighe Adumein, Principal Manager (PM) and Head of Planning and Procurement at the Abuja Liaison Office.

As a woman working with the Commission for over 18 years now, I have not faced any major challenge with work, apart from the general challenge of balancing family life with work. The Commission has

created the enabling environment for women to contribute to its growth.

I have always worked with supportive bosses who have been understanding.

Women care a lot about the safety of their families. It is sometimes challenging, balancing work family life but by the grace of God, I have been coping.

Finally, the challenge of career growth. I have to sacrifice extra time aside working hours to develop myself professionally, knowing that one has to keep learning and unlearning things to be relevant in our today's world.

Mrs Sennie Udofia

The challenges, of recent have been the participation and inclusivity of women in the workplace. While it might seem like the world is progressing and there's a rising involvement of women in the workplace, the reality is quite different.

I see women in their workplaces beginning to break their potentials; thus, accomplishments of several women in NDDC are testament to some progress made in eliminating gender barriers at our workplaces. Juggling the role of a wife, a mother and

a care giver and also pursuing a career can be really challenging. These, in my experience can be achieved seamlessly and effortlessly through proper planning and adequate support from our spouses.

As we continue to push for equity, I would like to highlight few issues in our workplace.

The first of which is the importance of separating the office restrooms. We must acknowledge that men and women's needs differ and should be handled as such; unisex toilets should be discouraged. Men and women should have separate suitable and accessible toilets for privacy. It should be arranged to protect especially pregnant and nursing mothers too.

The limited workspace and tools are another area of concern. This will equally enhance fresh and purified ventilation if properly managed. On the whole women need a healthy and safe working environment in order to promote their productivity.

Mrs Queen Mensah

As a woman, my challenges are tied to time. I usually have a very tight schedule in the office, making it impossible to close early. This is on daily basis. There is a



Staff Parliament



Charity Alabraba



Uwasagerry Ikput



Christy Chimezie

conflict between my office and my family. Against this backdrop, less attention is given to my family which is my primary constituency, But I cannot abandon my work, which remains my source of income. As a mother and a married woman, sometimes before I could get home, my husband has gone to bed, same is applicable to my children. In all, I thank God for the understanding husband that I have. I however, still remain thankful to the Commission because there are still many women out there without job. Some other women also have similar experience, I know.

Charity Alabraba, Senior Manager, Human Resource

“Whichever nationality you come from, we are all Niger Deltans, we are all united by underdevelopment and exploitation.”

Department. I began my journey in the defunct OMPADEC as a cleaner in the year 1993. I was ambitious and I wanted to grow and not remain where I started so, I took to developing myself. And the people around me saw it because the evidence was there. And the then Chairman of OMPADEC Chief J.K Horsfall had us trained to develop our skills and those of us that proved ourselves were given job opportunities and since then, I have been growing through the ranks,

one step at a time. Today, I am a Senior Manager in the Department of Human Resources. I will say my greatest challenge as a HR personnel in NDDC have been dealing with people. People who have different backgrounds and training coming to meet you to help them fulfill their expectations, not in line with the Commission's goal. And these people expect you to go against the work ethics and the Condition of Service laid down by the Commission. I will also say managing work and raising family can be very tasking. That is why I will advise the single women to marry a man that is friendly and understanding. A husband that will help you manage and achieve the task that comes with your job and family, not someone that will try to shut you down. Also, the women should try to relax and relate with their colleagues away from the work environment. Find your social circle and fit in. This will also help in creating a work-life balance.

Uwasagerry Ikput, Manager, Project Monitoring and Supervision. I have been a staff of the Niger Delta Development Commission for the past 2 years. I have worked in the Project Monitoring and Supervision

Department since my assumption of duty. For a new staff, I have been given such great treatments by my colleagues in the office. My only challenge is catering for my new babies and managing work, especially site inspection when I have to be away for one or two days. You know motherhood can be demanding, my twin babies are just 6 months old and I have to leave them to work as well as leave my husband for a few days. My advice to younger women is to carry themselves in the manner they wish to be addressed. We have a saying that goes, “you are addressed the way you are dressed”. If you carry yourself loosely, people will treat you loosely too. Christy Chimezie, Senior Admin Assistant, Department of Administration. I began my journey in NDDC from the Transport Unit in the Department of Administration before I was redeployed to the Entertainment Unit. During my short stay in the Transport Unit, I was greatly taught and carried along by Mr. Richard Okey. He taught me all that was involved in the NDDC transport; the purchase and repair of vehicles for the Commission's Headquarters and State offices. Now, I enjoy being a staff in the Entertainment Unit. I never knew it would become something I would love so much. The joy on the faces of people when we cater for their welfare is exciting to see. There is this Joy I feel seeing people eat. I can boldly say that my experience here in NDDC has been life transforming!



Pre-retirement Plan: Entrepreneurship and Skill Development For NDDC Staff

Pre-retirement plan starts from day one -Victor Asibor Assistant Director, Learning & Development Unit, HR, shed more light on sustainable pre-retirement planning

Retirement plan is expedient for all staff of NDDC. This plan starts as soon as you can. Ideally, from day one of your engagement in NDDC and when you begin receiving your salary and allowances. Some staff always think that they have years ahead of them to work, without taking into cognizance that exit from active service shall one day come to reality. If we fail to have a well outlined retirement plan while working, then we may be inviting hardship at retirement. Retirement generally refers to the period/duration of a person's life after they left the workforce. This means that a person who has retired has withdrawn from active type of labour

and engages in less active activities. In Nigeria, retirement begins at age 60, or putting 35 years in the civil service, which ever come first. During the period of retirement, you will have control over your own time. What is retirement Planning? Retirement planning is the task of identifying your retirement income goals and outlining the steps required to achieve them. The steps for achieving your retirement income goals also include creating saving and investment plans that help you accomplish them. After these steps are clearly defined, you can begin to make adequate action that will lead to you achieving these goals. When is the best time to begin

planning for retirement? There is no better time than right now. You might think it's too early and that you have a few decades before you retire. But the truth is, you can never be too young for planning for life after you have retired. Long-term planning is good to achieve those goals you have outlined in your plans. There is much more time to put those plans into action and achieve your goals when you start early Steps to help you get started in your Planning: 1. Outline your needs: The first step is to outline your needs for retirement. These can fall under a number of categories like accommodation, the kind of business you want to retire to. Retiring without having your own personal house, will definitely put you under great pressure. At retirement, struggling with paying rent, comes with much pressure. As you begin working, you should work towards building your own home where you will retire to. You decide the location where you would live at retirement and begin immediately to save towards building your own home. Deciding the kind of investment / Business you would want to engage in, is very important. Going into business, farming or any other endeavor is good, but with a well outline business plan. Staff should make out time to study, go for entrepreneurship and skill development before venturing into such business and begin in a smaller scale and gradually nurse the business now and keep growing that business before you retire to it. You can engage your spouse to join you in managing the business while you both gradually and systematically build it up into an empire. This is possible with focus and commitment on your side. When you have already established business, it would be easier and less risky to invest more money into that business already nurtured before your retirement. 2. Estimate how much it will cost to cover these needs: As you draw a list of needs for retirement. You can estimate how much you need to cover your retirement needs. When drafting these needs, also do factor in inflation. Retirement is something you should begin to plan for as early as you can. You can begin saving and investing ahead of retirement seamlessly.



Desist From Unethical Behaviours That Are Inimical To Effective Service Delivery



# Management of Uterine Fibroid:

...An Issue of Great Concern - Dr. Pat Ezugwu

## What is Uterine Fibroid?

Uterine fibroid is one of the diseases of the uterus, it's also known as leiomyomata, a noncancerous or benign growth, that can grow inside and on the uterus. Uterine fibroids are made up of smooth muscle cells, fibrous/connective tissues and blood vessels derived from the wall of the uterus. They can appear as single, multiple or pedunculated positioned within the uterine mucosa, muscle and serosa. Fibroids can be as small as a pea to as large as a basketball. They are usually round and pinkish in colour and can grow anywhere inside or outside of the uterus.

However, the uterus, aka the womb, is a hollow pear-shaped, female reproductive organ located in the pelvis. The normal size of the uterus is equivalent to a lemon. The uterus carries out many functions:

- It's the implantation site of the blastocyst (outcome of a fertilized ovum by a spermatozoa).
- Protective and supportive roles, like conducive milieu and nourishment respectively to the fetus (unborn baby) to develop and grow.
- ❖ Labor
- ❖ Menstruation

## TYPES OF FIBROIDS

There are various types of fibroids. The types differ, depending on their location in or on the uterus.

**Intramural fibroids:** are the most common type. They appear within the muscular wall of the uterus. Intramural fibroids may grow larger and can stretch your uterus.

**Subserosal fibroids:** form on the outside of your uterus, which is called the serosa. They may grow large enough to make your uterus appear bigger on one side.

## Pedunculated fibroids:

Subserosal fibroids can develop a stem, a slender base that supports the tumor. When they do, they're known as pedunculated fibroids.

**Submucosal fibroids:** Develop in the



myometrium, the middle muscle layer of your uterus. Submucosal tumors aren't as common as other types.

**Cervical Fibroids:** develop on the cervix which connects the uterus to the vagina. Very large fibroids of any type can cause more complications.

## Are there any Risk Factors Of Developing Uterine Fibroids?

There are several risk factors that influence the development of fibroids.

1. Obesity or higher body weight (more than 20% over the weight that's considered healthy for you).
2. Family history of fibroids.
3. Not having children. This goes with a saying "When a pregnancy failed to occupy the womb, fibroid tumors may do".
4. Early onset of menstruation (getting your period at a young age).
5. Late age for menopause. There're high

estrogen levels in this condition.

6. Lifestyle changes like dietary factors (consumption of food additives and soyabean milk)

7. Hormones (High estrogen levels), woman of reproductive age can develop fibroids.

8. African or black women. They're more likely to have fibroids than any race group, according to doctors and gynaecological research. A report by the National Center for Biotechnology Information found that Black women are three times more likely to develop fibroids than white women and are less likely to have small-sized fibroids compared to their counterparts. Too many Black and African women suffer in silence with their symptoms making it difficult to share knowledge about its effects.

9. Vitamin D deficiency - reports have it that normal level of vitamin D3, inhibits growth of fibroid tissue.

## What are the Symptoms and Complications of Uterine Fibroids?

Fibroid growths have different and associated morbidity or effects on affected

African or black women. They're more likely to have fibroids than any race group, according to doctors and gynaecological research. A report by the National Center for Biotechnology

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Courtesy Visit:  
The Chairman of the NDDC Governing Board, Mrs. Lauretta Onochie, (right) receiving documents from the Port Harcourt Chamber of Commerce, Industry Mines and Agriculture (PHCCIMA) President, Eze Mike Elechi, during a courtesy visit at the NDDC headquarters.



Courtesy Visit:  
MD/CEO, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, speaking during a courtesy visit by a delegation from the Rivers State University at the Commission's headquarters, (1st left) is the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nlerum Okogbule, while the EDF, Maj-Gen. Charles Airhiavbere (Rtd), is second left and the EDP, Mr. Ogunmola is on the right.



Bayelsa State Governor, Sen. Douye Diri, presenting a plaque to the MD/CEO, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, during a courtesy visit at Government House, Yenagoa.



Courtesy Visit:  
The Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III, (middle) flanked by the MD/CEO, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku (left) and the EDP, Mr. Charles Ogunmola (right), during a courtesy visit in his palace in Warri, Delta State



Courtesy Visit:  
With the Amanyanko of Okochiri, King Ateke Michael Tom, at his palace in Okochiri, Okrika Local Government Area.



Working Visit:  
The MD/CEO Dr. Ogbuku receiving a banquet at University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State during a working visit to the University



Working Visit:  
L-R: The EDF, Major Gen. Charles Airhiavbere (Rtd); the MD, Dr Samuel Ogbuku; the Pro-Chancellor, of UNIPORT, Sen. Andrew Uchendu; the Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Georgewill Owunari and the EDP, Mr. Charles Ogunmola, during the working visit of the NDDC Management team to the University.



The MD/CEO, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku (middle) cuts the tape to commission the 4-kilometre Yenagoa Internal Road in Etegwé-Agudama-Epie, Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State. With him are the Paramount Ruler of Etegwé community, Chief Ile Gard, (2nd right); the Bayelsa State representative on the Board of the NDDC, Senator Denyanbofa Dimaro (right) and the NDDC Director of Corporate Affairs, Dr Ibitoye Abosede.



The Chairman, Mrs. Lauretta Onochie, receiving a document from the Chairman, Ijaw Association in Abuja and Northern Nigeria, Hon. Alagba Ebifemowei, (1st r) during a courtesy visit by the association at the Commission's headquarters. 2nd left is the Rep of Cross River on the NDDC Board, Hon. Orok Duke and Hon. Olugbenga Edema the Ondo State Representative, and the Zonal Representative of the North-West, Prince Sule-Iko Sadeeq.



Anioma People's Forum, Rivers State Chapter with the NDDC Chairman Mrs Onochie (middle)



Ondo Electricity: The EDP, Mr. Charles Ogunmola (4th left), inspects the 132/33kv electricity sub-station in Okitipupa, Ondo State.



The NDDC Executive Director Projects, Mr. Charles Ogunmola; arrives Aiyetoro, in Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State to inspect the communities affected by ocean surges after donating relief materials on behalf of the NDDC to the people.



The MD, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku (middle) cuts the tape to commission the 1.5-km internal road at the Niger Delta University, Amassoma, Bayelsa State, flanked on the right by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Samuel Edoumiekumo and the Bayelsa State Rep. on the NDDC Board, Senator Denyanbofa Dimaro (left). First left is the Director, Bayelsa State Office, Engineer. Theophilus Allagoa.



Igbogene Commissioning: The MD, Dr Samuel Ogbuku, (2nd left) cuts the tape to commission the 1.39-kilometre Rigid Pavement Igbogene-Polako Rd, in Bayelsa On his left is the EDP, Mr. Charles Ogunmola, on his 1st left is Bayelsa State Rep. on the NDDC Board, Sen. Denyanbofa Dimaro, Others are the Paramount ruler of Igbogene, Prof. Augustine Ikein, (3rd R) the NDDC Director, Bayelsa State office, Engr. Theophilus Allagoa, (2nd right) and the NDDC Director, Corporate Affairs, Dr Ibitoye Abosede (1st right).