

women's community-based organizations.

Nnimmo Bassey, Director of Environmental Rights Action in Nigeria, offered his thoughts on "Democratic Transformation in Nigeria: Canadian Foreign Policy Options". This paper situated the current political situation in Nigeria within the continuing tension to sustain civil society and the environment in the face of natural resource exploitation, specifically oil extraction. Mr. Bassey outlined the efforts of various NGOs and CBOs to resist the activities of both central government and multinational corporations in the Niger Delta, particularly around land use and protection of the natural environment. The paper noted the negative impact of the Petroleum Act and the Land Use Act in the affected areas, and stated that non-enforcement of the Environmental Protection Act by the central government is partly due to its dependence on foreign oil revenues to pay down foreign debt. Various local peoples' demands have included: recognition of local sovereignty over resources; repeal of central laws that govern the extraction of resources in unfair ways; and promotion of means for peaceful co-existence among affected communities. Instances of cultural, social and political resistance were highlighted. Empowerment of civil society organizations working on environmental and local self-determination issues was put forward as a key strategic area, along with improved local development efforts to improve the quality of life for those affected.

A private sector perspective on economic and political transition in Nigeria was provided by Donna Kennedy-Glans of Canadian Occidental Petroleum, a company that currently owns some Nigerian oil concessions. She stressed that investment in this sector necessitates a 20 to 30 year time frame, so that NGO and corporate objectives for Nigeria need to be reconciled in a cooperative manner. Companies like Canadian Oxy have to assess investment opportunities and think about how to manage them in future. As a 'second layer' Canadian investor with relatively small holdings, the situation has to be monitored closely. The corporation has created a code of ethics to govern their investment decisions, which has been adopted by other Canadian companies. The code mentions human rights specifically. In Nigeria, consultations have been held with a variety of stakeholder groups to discuss the feasibility of the code, resulting in specific strategies for community health and safety. Gas flaring has been a particular concern. The issue of 'complicity' in human rights abuses has been a key issue for the corporation, therefore they have tried to inform themselves and also positively influence other key corporations regarding best practices. Canadian Oxy shares some operating agreements with larger multinationals, and it carries out dialogue with these companies about their practices. In fact, some corporate partners have been rejected due to their practices. Issues such