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# **Conflict In The Middlebelt Region Of Nigeria: Engendering Peace In Agila Community**

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Intervention by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
Implemented by Women Environmental Programme (WEP)



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Engendering of Peace in Agila Community project of Benue State Nigeria would forever be remembered, during the short time, which the WEP Team had the opportunity and privilege of working with community groups and individuals, meeting and interacting with the traditional leadership of Agila land, prominent sons and daughters of Agila, the Chairman of Ado LGA whose commitment and support was spot-on, the Benue State Government representatives and His Royal Highness Och'Idoma Elias Ikoyi Obekpa, to whom we would like to express our deepest appreciation.

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Finally, this report is dedicated to all members of the community development groups who, despite the pains they had gone through during the violent conflict in their community, dedicated their time and efforts towards the peace process.

*Blessed are those that embrace peace  
For they shall be called sons and daughters of God*  
**Gospel of St. Mathew 5:9**

## PREFACE

*"In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act"*  
George Orwell

There are always two sides to a story they say; perhaps there are more than two sides. In a conflict, truth is always the first casualty and prior to that innocence is killed. People often have their own axes to grind. And it is inevitably the poor and the vulnerable that bear the brunt of the pain and suffering as a consequence of conflicts.

Some of the key challenges faced by the post-military Nigerian states are that of the debacle of ethno-communal conflicts which has led to the loss of precious lives and properties, creating a humanitarian problem leading to forced migration, displacement of people and dwindling social and economic activities.

The interstate conflict between the Ngbo of Ebonyi state and Agila people of Benue state dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, while the intra-ethnic conflict in Agila has long existed but erupted in 1997 destroying properties worth of millions and loss of lives and since then, though successive governments both military and civilian have intervened, they have not been able to resolve the conflict nor have they been able to bring the

factions (classified as the Royals and Non-royals) together. According to the traditional leaders and others in the communities, since the eruption of the conflict in 1997, only Women Environmental Programme (WEP) has really been able to bring the two factions together for peace talks despite interventions by others, both state and non-state actors.

The numerous governments' judicial inquiry reports are yet to be released and the recommendations they contain are unknown and thus cannot be implemented.

This report provides an assessment of the conflict situation in the north central region of Nigeria, but focuses on engendering peace and Strengthening Community Based Early Warning and Conflict Monitoring Mechanism in Central States with the spotlight on the Agila Community.

It specifically examines the intraethnic conflicts between the Agila people and interstate conflict between the Agila and Ngbo communities of Benue and Ebonyi States. Though the main focus of the project was on strengthening community-based early warning and conflict monitoring

## PREFACE

mechanisms, in the course of the project implementation peace processes were also undertaken.

Structures have been erected towards the monitoring of the early warning signals as well as the transformation of the conflict into peace processes but it is worth stating that no matter what peace structures and processes are put in place or whatever the intervention of other external actors, it is only the Agila people's independent choice (as opposed to the intervention of external forces) that truly matters and would bring peace in the community. They must choose and decide what is best for them in terms of stopping those whose source of livelihoods depends on the conflicts (conflict entrepreneurs) and those elites (urban elites rural conflict sponsors) whose families do not and would not reside in the community but who take pleasure in destroying the lives of innocent people,

especially the youth, by supporting activities that are detrimental to development instead of investing in projects that would bring about community development and enhance livelihoods and standards of living.

For all those interested in peace processes across the country and indeed in the north central states, this report will serve as a reference material to researchers, students, NGOs, government and international agencies as well as higher institutions of learning.

We shall continue to contribute to the Nigeria's development agenda especially in the area of human rights and governance and therefore call on all in the promotion and support for peaceful co-existence.

Priscilla M. Achakpa  
*Women Environmental Programme*

## ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CAC	Corporate Affairs Commission
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDAs	Community Development Associations
CLTS	Community Led Total Sanitation
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CWO	Catholic Women Organisation
EU	European Union
EXCO	Executive
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FEWER	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
Hon.	Honourable
HRC	Human Rights Centre
HRH	His Royal Highness
IEC	Information, Educative & Communicative Materials
IPCR	Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution
JDPC	Justice Development and Peace Commission
Km	Kilometre
LGA	Local Government Area
NBC	National Boundary Commission
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
No.	Number
PICs	Project Implementation Committees
PR	Public Relations
TMG	Transition Monitoring Group
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNAED	United Nations Assistance for Democracy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN	United Nations
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peace Building
WEP	Women Environmental Programme
WES	Water and Sanitation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strengthening of Community Based Early Warning and Conflict Monitoring Mechanism in Central States intervention in Agila Community was two-fold: It was based on the fact that conflict in whatsoever dimension impacts negatively on socio-economic and political stability thereby aggravating poverty and hampering national development.

The second stems from the first, that growth and development cannot be realised without a secure and stable environment in which every citizen is a stakeholder and participates fully in the process of governance. In this sense, the project targeted women and youths who were hitherto not included in developmental processes to be empowered so that they will be in the forefront of creating the enabling environment for peaceful co-existence, for monitoring early warning signs and conducting research. Peace-building demands the sustained involvement and support of critical stakeholders. This is with the realisation that development and peace-building are integral parts of the social, political and economic realities in Nigeria.

The methodology processes involved a critical assessment of the conflict through review of

documented materials, in-depth interviews with representatives of the conflicting parties through individual and focus-group discussions: targeting community leaders, women and youth groups, government officials, civil society groups and religious groups working with the parties. The project team from WEP led the processes with support of the local project implementation committees. The workshops added value to the mapping exercise as it improved the quality of data and gave new insights into the mindsets of the parties.

The findings revealed that the impact of the conflict in Agila Land were multifaceted and had a dual dimension nature: a protracted inter-ethnic conflict and bitter land dispute with Ngbo, a neighbouring community in Ebonyi which shares boundary with Agila in Benue State; and thus an intra-ethnic conflict among the community members classified as the Royals versus the non-Royals (chieftaincy) dispute. While each of the communities and parties involved argue convincingly and trade innuendoes and counter accusations on each other, the resultant consequence of the bitter and often bloody clashes has had adverse effect on the collective well-being and socio-economic stability of the parties involved as well as engendering an atmosphere of



mistrust, suspicion and tension.

Economically, Before the Nigerian civil war in the 1960s, subsistence agriculture was the dominant economic activity of the informal sector in Agila community, thus ensuring regular supply of local foodstuff to town dwellers. This pre-war informal economic activity in Agila community generated the much needed income for the women, and also provided a sure way to economic self-reliance for the women in particular. The small-scale businesses also provided services to the generality of the people and Agila community in general. However, the post Nigeria civil war presented a situation where the Agila people could not return to their original farming land due to fear of attack and coupled with the intra-ethnic conflict in 1997, the economic activities of Agila Land has remain at a standstill in view of the fact that they do not even have a market place for trading. Politically, As far as politics is concerned in Agila community, an insignificant number of people are gladiatorial. The urban elites (godfathers) decide who becomes, for instance, the local government chairman and all other related political positions whether they are capable of handling the positions and bringing about change and development to the community or not. Women, for instance, do not have a say in any political

meetings/activities, even where peace discussions/processes are taking place, though they bear the brunt of the conflicts. Socially, like any other society affected by conflict, 95% of the Agila community that have been abducted or killed in the violent conflict are women. This has serious repercussions on the lives of women socially and in their reproductive activities. Many of the young people in Agila community have taken to drugs and political thuggery as those who are to help have taken advantage of the striking poverty that has engulfed the community and would rather sponsor the killings and maiming of others in the name of royals versus non-royals leadership tussle and the lack of information and interaction among the community members has a great impact psychologically and socially disconnected from each other.

### **Challenges**

The implementation of the project was not without some challenges as in the case of the mapping exercise most of the cases studied are historic processes and most of the key individuals and actors involved in the processes have since died and these events are interpreted through a historical lens informed by contemporary developments.

### **Recommendations**

- The project recommended that

since Agila is a fractured community which has been experiencing both intra and inter conflict security complexity, having to reconcile with the Ngbo boundary disputes and the various principal actors in the intra conflict (Royals vs. Non-royals) is in the best interest of the community towards development and nation building.

- At the same time, the leadership of the acting Otse Agila, Chief Michael Agbese, and indeed the whole community must be sensitive to the external (urban-rural conflict sponsors) connections with the community politics in Agila.

- The traditional practices which accord women less social status have to be carefully examined and reviewed in favour of women and their status.

- Mobilising stakeholders' involvement in the process in Agila is of paramount importance. The activities of development partners and international organizations as well as NGOs and faith based groups have played key roles in highlighting the conflict in Agila.

- These critical stakeholders in the peace and development process should continue with their activities and see that women and the youth are moved to higher levels for meaningful contribution for national development through various empowerment strategies.

- Related to this is the role of the Benue State Government. The report also recommends that the government should, through various programmes, provide the enabling environment for socio-economic development.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.0 Overview of Conflict Situation in North Central States

Conflicts of varying magnitudes have posed enormous challenges to the peace and stability of the north central region of Nigeria. Nigeria faces significant challenges to its development efforts in the form of sporadic eruptions of violence in various parts of the country, such as the Niger Delta and the central States. These episodes of violence over resources and identity expressed in Nigeria is common to many developing societies undergoing rapid change and may be linked to the fact that the development process inevitably causes conflicts, as significant resources and relations between groups and sectors are redefined, and new power equations established.

The North Central region of Nigeria has over the years witnessed large influx of people from other geo-political zones due to the abundance of fertile land in the region. States in this region share similarities and peculiarities such as ethnic groups,

agrarian occupation and peasantry with states like Taraba, Adamawa and Bauchi in the North East; and Enugu and Ebonyi to the South East. The region comprises the following states: Benue, Niger, Nasarawa, Kwara, Kogi, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria, which prior to the division of Nigeria into six geo-political zones was part of the political Northern Nigeria. Though the region can be regarded as a multi ethnic one, the major ethnic groups include Beroms, Tivs, Jukuns, Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, Igalas, Igbiras and Idomas. The search for identity and the disenchantment of the minority groups in the North led to the move for a Middle Belt identity since the early 1960s, shortly after the country's independence.

The rich and diversified natural endowment of North Central states has made it a major centre of attraction for migrants from other geo-political zones of Nigeria. This situation, in addition to the uneven distribution of the population within the zone, has contributed to a high level of migration in search of larger parcels of land for farming and grazing. The fast growing

population in the region, their continuous movement, and the seeming low level of development of the zone has all combined to quicken the pace of competition for resources including land, ethnic rivalry, and agitation for political offices among other issues. As a result, the peace for which the region was once commended has gradually given way to a plethora of violent conflicts. Conflicts in the zone revolve around several issues including boundary disputes, ethnicity, perceived marginalization, delineation of political constituencies, ownership and control of farmlands and fishponds, religion and chieftaincy.

The prevalent pattern of conflict challenges in the region over the years include: (a) inter- and intra-communal conflicts; (b) ethno-religious conflicts; (c) emergence of youth militia; and (d) conflicts between pastoralists and farmers.

Conflicts in this zone have a long history, but there has been an escalation and intensification of these conflicts in recent years. States such as Plateau, which were known for their relative serenity, now find themselves among the worst conflict-affected areas in the country compounded by indigene/non-indigene conflicts, land ownership, and other identity conflicts. One other notable protracted conflict in

the region is the Tiv/Jukun conflict in the Benue/Taraba axis.

In recent years, the Federal Government of Nigeria has brought significant resources to bear on addressing violent internal conflicts, including a strong recognition on the part of federal authorities that these conflicts could threaten Nigeria's cohesion and stability if left unaddressed. Federal and state governments have been working closely with civil society to support a number of peace-making efforts in these conflict flashpoints. However, deep-seated mistrust of government intervention by local actors, as well as persistent divisions among the latter has hampered these efforts.

While a number of laudable efforts have been launched at the local level to mediate an end to the protracted inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence, these efforts have yet to coalesce into an architecture for sustained management and mitigation of perennial disputes over land, resources, digene/settler issues, political representation, and participation, and local rights that manifest as violent.

### **1.1 Conflict Situation in Benue State**

Benue State, with its capital at Makurdi, is one of the States that

belongs to North Central region. It was created on February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1976 from the old Benue-Plateau State and was named after the River Benue, the second largest river in the country and the State's most prominent geographical feature. It shares boundary with five other States namely Nasarawa to the north, Taraba to the east, Cross River and Enugu/Ebonyi to the south and Kogi to the west. Idoma and Tiv languages are predominantly spoken in the state that has a population of 4.22 million according to the 2006 national census.

Benue State possesses a rich and diverse cultural heritage and has been described as the Foodbasket of Nigeria given its rich agricultural resources such as potatoes, cassava, soya beans, guinea corn, flax, yams and beniseed. Benue State has 23 local government LGA; fourteen in the Tiv-speaking areas and nine in the Idoma-speaking areas. The Idoma LGAs are Agatu, Apa, Ado, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Okpokwu, and Otukpo (Obi and Oju are Igede speaking) while the Tiv dominated LGAs are Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer East, Gwer West, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongu and Vandeikya. Benue is said to be largely a rural state and given this fact, priority attention has always been given to rural development as a deliberate government strategy to

improve the living standards of the people. The main thrust of these efforts is the opening of rural roads, provision of potable water, rural electrification and the establishment of cottage industries in the rural areas to arrest the perennial population drifts to the urban centres. (Benue State Website)

Like most states in Nigeria, Benue State has had its fair share of violent conflicts and tensions often resulting in the displacement of people and communities, wanton destruction of lives and property, human rights abuses and a climate of insecurity and mutual distrust and suspicion. Each conflict is unique in its origin and character, but underlying denominators are manifested in land space and boundary squabbles, indigene vs. settler palaver, chieftaincy tussles and disputed jurisdictions, competition to access scarce political and economic resources, and population growths. In the context of Benue, the prevalent pattern of conflict challenges in recent times are inter- and intra-communal in nature, and some even have direct bearing on neighbouring states. Those conflicts that are of interstate nature include;

- (a) Benue-Taraba (between the Tiv and the Jukun)
- (b) Benue-Cross River (between the Tiv/Igede and the Beter)



- (c) Benue-Ebonyi (between the Agila and the Ngbo)

Whereas conflicts identified within communities in Benue State include the Following:

- (a) Ushongu vs. Konshisha communities (ethnic, among the Tiv)
- (b) Ushongu vs. Gboko communities
- (c) Kwande vs. Ushongu communities
- (d) Nyiev vs. Uyough communities in Kwande LGA
- (e) Apa (intra-ethnic, among the Idoma)
- (f) Ado (intra-ethnic, the *Royal vs. Non-Royal* lineages of Agila)
- (g) Egba vs. Ologba Fishing Pond Dispute, in Agatu LGA
- (h) The Tiv and Jukun in Guma LGA
- (i) The Ishorov vs. the Kusuv, and the Etulo vs. the Mbagen communities in Buruku LGA
- (j) Tiv vs. the Igede (inter-ethnic) communities in Konshisha LGA

## 1.2 Responses to Conflicts in Benue State

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that '*... the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government... and that... national integration shall be actively encouraged [by the State]*'. Notwithstanding this constitutional

provision, the capacity of the Nigerian State to address the numerous security threats within its borders is weak owing *inter alia* to a poor policy framework with regard to peace building, conflict resolution and provision of security as well as the inadequacies of the major security organs and the ineffective conflict management methods employed by the State.

No comprehensive security, conflict management/resolution or peace-building policy has ever been developed by successive Nigerian governments in spite of the frequency and intensity of inter- and intra-group conflict in the country. Likewise no policies have been formulated to guide the nature, scope or form of state intervention in internal conflict situations. Though the state has established the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), this institution is not adequately funded and empowered to carry out its role of researching and responding to conflict situations in the country. State responses to serious armed conflict are consequently inadequate, reactive, heavy-handed and uninformed by peace promoting principles. Furthermore, the conception of *national security* as interpreted by successive governments is wholly restricted to the protection of the political interests of the incumbent

government to the exclusion of the peace and welfare of the citizens.

## **I. State Response to Violent Conflicts**

- a. Deployment of security forces to conflict areas for peace keeping, however the corruption, inefficiency and orientation of the Nigeria police and security personnel have severely compromised the ability of the police force to fulfil its primary function of maintaining public peace and protecting lives and property of Nigerians. Chronic under-funding has created ill-trained, ill-equipped and demoralised security agencies and operatives.
- b. Relief responses, which involve the immediate and short-term provision of relief items to victims of violence, after which no further steps are taken in order to restore peace completely or even, address the underlying causes of the conflict.
- c. The establishment of commissions and panels of enquiry on the conflict from a political standpoint. With this there is usually a problem of representation of the contending sides in the conflict on such panels while the reports

are sometimes considered biased in favour of certain groups and most of the reports are not made public.

- d. Social enlightenment campaigns by government on the need for citizens and groups in the conflict to stop hostilities and embrace peace and be tolerant instead.
- e. The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) was established in February 2000 as a research centre, a think-tank and an agency to strengthen Nigeria's capacity for the promotion of peace, conflict prevention, management and resolution. Based on its primary mandate, the institute is one of the institutional strategies the government of Nigeria has employed in dealing with conflicts in the country

## **ii. Non-Governmental Responses to Conflicts**

- (a) Political responses: The responses of traditional and religious leaders in the management and transformation of the conflicts through their interaction with the communities. Some traditional leaders belong to the state and local governments' security councils and they are called to support state efforts in nipping conflicts in the bud when these occur. The

challenge with this response has always been that these leaders themselves are often parties in the conflicts. Thus in a situation where some of them have lost the respect of the people, their role in the process can be minimal.

(b) NGOs responses: NGOs have been involved in all aspects of conflict resolution minor resource disputes to violent multi-national ethnic wars. The NGOs involved are extremely diverse and include anything from small grassroots women's organizations to huge

international relief and development organizations. Not only are the NGOs themselves extremely diverse, but the array of activities these organizations engage in is very broad and varied. Experience has shown that in Nigeria NGOs are involved in basic services in humanitarian camps, trauma counselling for victims, providing food or medical services, facilitating dialogue between warring factions, and conducting research in peace-building processes.



Walk for peace, during one of the training sessions in Makurdi

## CHAPTER 2

### TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Terms of Reference

Women Environmental Programme (WEP) was contracted in July 2009 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Nigeria to on their behalf implement a project geared at *Strengthening Community Based Early Warning and Conflict Monitoring Mechanism in Central States*. Building on the implementing partner's strategic focus and skills/strength on the management of peace and conflicts for sustainable development, WEP responded to the Call for Bids for this project. The main objective was to develop and test a pilot conflict early warning system as well as a rapid-response mechanism in Agila Community, a district in Ado Local Government Area on the Southern fringes of Benue State.

Agila shares a contentious border with the neighbouring community of Ngbo in Ebonyi state, which had resulted to violent clashes and heightened insecurity for the people in the area for many decades.

##### *a. Justification for the Project*

The justification for the *Strengthening Community Based Early*

*Warning and Conflict Monitoring Mechanism in Central States* intervention in Agila Community was two-fold: It was based on the fact that conflict in whatsoever dimension impacts negatively on socio-economic and political stability thereby aggravating poverty and hampering national development. The second justification stems from the first: growth and development cannot be realised without a secure and stable environment in which every citizen is a stakeholder and participates fully in the process of governance. In this sense, women and youths who were hitherto not included in developmental processes were targeted and empowered to be in the forefront of creating the enabling environment for peaceful co-existence, for monitoring early warning signs and conducting research. Peace-building demands the sustained involvement and support of critical stakeholders. This is with the realisation that development and peace-building are integral parts of the social, political and economic realities in Nigeria.

##### *b. Target beneficiaries*

The project's unique contribution to the sustained management and mitigation of perennial inter- and intra-community disputes over resources and citizenship issues, and chieftaincy disputes was concentrated in the local context of Agila Community and its environs. The key point of the intervention was to explore the complexities of the conflict in the view of building a structure and platform that connects women and youths for peace-building and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as well as mitigate the mistrust, decisions and acrimony on the part of local actors, which has before now hampered peace-building efforts.

### **C. Objectives of the Project**

WEP's intervention was anchored on the objectives of UNDP's Governance and Human Rights programme specifications, foremost of which is supporting the identified community (in this case Agila) to effectively utilize skills and tools to rapidly respond to conflict in their locality. In specific terms, among the objectives of the WEP's intervention included the following:

- Building early warning, monitoring and advocacy network of women and youth organizations to continually monitor and intervene for peaceful and harmonious relations;
- Provision of early warning and

crisis response support in situations of outbreak of hostilities;

- Creating a platform for research into the remote causes of the violent conflicts prevalent in the region and to identify possible solutions, and;
- Identifying and enhancing the traditional and alternative dispute resolution capabilities of members of the various communities.

## **2.2 Women Environmental Programme (WEP) Experience in Peace Building**

WEP's involvement in the peace building activities in Nigeria dates back to 2001. Since then, WEP has accumulated valuable experience in the area of conflict mapping and research in the North Central region, and has regularly published its findings. WEP had also successfully worked with the youth and women in Benue state with the support of various international and local partners and has over the years built credibility for itself in this area. For instance, through WEP's intervention in Benue State, the *Network of Youth against Violence and Electoral Malpractice* now registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) as *Global Youth Foundation in Makurdi* was formed in

2003. In addition, through the support of Irish Aid, WEP worked extensively with women groups in twelve (12) local government areas of Benue State leading to the formation of a network of women called *Benue Women Political Motivation Group*. This group has been very active and operates independently.

Between 2001-2002 during the violent conflict between the Jukuns and Tiv from Taraba and Benue states on the one hand and the Aragos and Tiv from Nasarawa and Benue States on the other, thousands of people were displaced in several camps in Benue State, WEP was involved in the peace-building initiatives and negotiations between the NGOs in Taraba and Benue States, as well as the management of the internally displaced persons (IDPs).

During the same period the United Nations Assistance for Democracy (UNAED) through the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) supported WEP to implement a project on curbing the ills of electoral violence targeted at youths in the build up to the 2003 general elections in Benue and Taraba States. A similar action was again supported by Centre for Development and Democracy (CDD) in the build up to the 2007 general elections, targeting specifically youth and bringing

youths from the Niger-Delta region to share their experiences of peace building initiatives and what lessons could be learnt with their counterparts in Benue State.

WEP intervened in the outbreak of the violent conflicts in Plateau State in 2004 by the mapping the conflict and conducting a needs assessment and stakeholder's forum which led to a publication titled *The Smoldering Peace on the Plateau: Mapping Conflict and Prospects for Lasting Peace in Plateau State*. WEP also conducted a rapid assessment of violent conflicts in Nigeria called 'Hot Spot Nigeria' which was used as a discussion paper by the German government when it hosted over 30 Nigerians in Berlin in 2004.

One aspect of WEP's Strategic Plan for 2008-2012 focuses on peace building and conflict transformation. WEP through this plan intends to intervene in the North Central region of Nigeria and erect structures targeting women and youths upon which long lasting and sustainable peace will be built.

### **2.3 Project Implementation Methodology**

The methodology employed during the *Strengthening Community Based Early Warning and Conflict Monitoring Mechanism in Central States* started with the mapping of

conflict exercise in Agila land to fully understand the situation on ground and generally to follow accepted standard procedures of the project. The process involved a critical assessment of the conflict through review of documented materials, in-depth interviews with representatives of the conflicting parties through individual and focus-group discussions: targeting community leaders, women and youth groups, government officials, civil society groups and religious groups working with the parties. The project team from WEP led the processes with support of the local project implementation committees.

The results and findings of the mapping exercise was synthesized and related to the structures and principles that govern constructive peace-building efforts. The mapping was followed by an information-sharing interactive workshop where representatives of the parties collectively reviewed critical aspects of the report and brainstormed on the way forward.

The workshop added value to the mapping exercise as it improved the quality of data and gave new insights into the mindsets of the parties. The workshop's technical structure was basically a presentation of findings made during the conflict mapping

exercises. However, it provided opportunity to initiate a peace process between the factions through rebuilding relationships, reconciliation, compromise and consensus at all levels. This was with the aim of not only uniting the factions to be able to confront in a more proactive and positive way the Agila-Ngbo boundary dispute, but also in ensuring fertile ground for development of the community.

The guide adopted by WEP stressed open-ended questions and participant-based data as the path to specifying conflict processes. This approach is particularly useful for intervention agents and students wishing to study a particular conflict, and possibly find fertile grounds for management and mediation. We employed an approach that valued primary information from the parties involved, both within Ado Local Government Area and from a much larger context. The process involved gathering relevant documents relating to the conflict; conducting meetings, interviews and focus group discussions with relevant government authorities and institutions on the one hand, and traditional and community leaders, prominent indigenes of the community, women and youths on the other. A mapping guide was prepared as a useful model to

generate information about the dynamics of any specific conflict.

The team also reviewed available literature on the area as well as reports of commissions of inquiry, and the unpublished submissions and positions of the various actors in the conflict to be able to identify the driving motivation of each community as well as the veracity or otherwise of their claims.

Following the mapping exercise, three (3) different sets of workshops were organised for the direct actors: an information sharing workshop and two training workshops. Each of these workshops had expert resource persons to facilitate the sessions. One of the training workshops had a training manual adopted for the purpose. This training manual on developing capacity for conflict analysis and early response was prepared with the support of the Conflict Management Capacity Building Project of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Administration and Development Management. The training framework presented in this manual is mostly based on the West Africa Network for Peace-

building (WANEP, Ghana) as well as FEWER's early warning and response methodologies.

To build the participants' capacity to understand the issues, concepts and sources related to the subject, the trainings combined a participatory methodology of concept clarification, case studies, real-life experiences in different contexts and situations on the part of both participants and trainers. The Project Team worked in tandem with the resource persons to develop the content of the agenda for all the trainings which was designed to cover these and the overall aim of the trainings. Central to the understanding of these was a persistent awareness of the linkages developed between the sessions, small group assignments for the entire duration of the trainings, and recap sessions the next day to ascertain level of comprehension of previous sessions. During the workshops, participants were randomly assigned to small groups to measure their comprehension of the sessions or review the details of some of the sessions before reconvening in a plenary to discuss the topics/issues under consideration.



## CHAPTER 3

### PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENT CONFLICTS

The available literature confirms that there are conflicts in all parts of Nigeria, and that these conflicts are on the increase. Anifwose (1982), Okoye (1998), Otite and Albert (1999), Osaghae et al (2001), Olowu (Ed) (2001) and Albert (2001). Alubo (2006), there are also studies on most of the major long-standing conflicts in Nigeria. See Bibliography for further details.

Several theories have been used to explain the causes of conflict. The first involves four factors that appear repeatedly as prominent causes of conflict: Insecurity, inequality, private incentives, and perceptions (Gardner, 2002). These factors often work in tandem: Economic inequalities may exacerbate security concerns, and perceptions fuel incentives to initiate or support conflict. Increasingly emphasized in the literature is the role played by economic factors such as economic inequalities or the economic incentives of sub-national actors. The second involves two factors that interact with each other across time--structural causes and mobilizing factors--that more directly

precipitate the outbreak of conflicts. Structural factors are the deeply rooted, underlying causes of conflict that may not always develop into violence. Mobilizing factors are more immediate to the conflict and often involve the actions of elites and/or masses. Thus, prevention efforts must use a multi-pronged approach, addressing multiple factors in a coordinated fashion, and emphasizing previously neglected economic factors. Prevention must also target underlying structural causes with long-term approaches and mobilizing factors with short-term prevention efforts--the latter focused on the role played by local actors, particularly the elite.

In Benue as in many other conflict prone areas in Nigeria, elites have and continue to play a central role in fuelling conflicts. They are often motivated by opportunities for private accumulation and use shared ethnic/clannish ties and discrimination primarily for their own achievement of power. In some cases, ethnicity and ideology have been used as instruments by leaders to pursue political goals. Those who choose to follow leaders may have

direct incentives for economic or other benefits if they are widely distributed. Leaders become less important in the path to conflict when the potential advantages will be conferred directly on group members; conversely, followers are most likely to support elites when they lack alternative sources of income.

Additionally, others who profit from conflict (e.g., business opportunists or criminals) may prefer continued conflict to resolution, thus erecting obstacles to, or spoiling settlement. Prevention or resolution of conflict must address private incentives of leaders and followers in order to be effective, as well as remove potential spoilers from the equation. The final report of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (1997) emphasizes that conflict arises from deliberate political decisions; leaders can be persuaded or coerced to use peaceful means of conflict resolution and followers' incentives to fall prey to violent arguments can be averted by alleviating the basis for grievances.

From the preceding review, conflict emerges from a combination of underlying insecurity and inequality, colored by perceptions and acted upon by individuals with private incentives. Thus, neither underlying conditions nor human

mobilizing actions alone are sufficient explanations, but rather both are necessary to describe the incidence of violent conflict. The challenge, therefore, is developing and implementing strategies that include institutionally uniting long- and short-term strategies; defining and articulating the mandate for prevention, especially long-term; dealing with recalcitrant communities, often both the crux of structural problems, as well as the conduit for prevention efforts; and understanding the incentives driving local leaders and followers to mobilize.

Literature on the conflict between the Ngbo and Agila community of Benue and Ebonyi States is scanty. However, there is a large and evolving literature on conflicts in Nigeria and in its North Central region specifically. Materials for literature review have been drawn from libraries and archives in Nigeria and abroad, academic and other resources available on the Internet, and local publications purchased and borrowed in the course of the project.

Almost every academic discipline has its theoretical approach of understanding conflicts economists are focused on game-theory and decision-making, psychologist explore interpersonal conflicts, sociologists take status and class

conflicts as the focal point, while political science is centered on intra-national and international conflicts. Therefore, to review the conflict literature as a whole is an almost impossible task. However, our review will mainly be concentrated on intra-national conflict of the Nigerian state, within the North Central region of the country.

It should be noted that conflict literature in general describes conflict's dynamic-circle as basically composed of tension, escalation, de-escalation and settlement phase. That is the classical model of a conflict-dynamic. However, it is very important to bear in mind that these four basic phases neither do follow necessarily upon each other after certain period of time, nor does each conflict passes through all phases in its development.

At the present time, there is plethora of views on the nature and cases of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria. Several complex crises are currently manifesting themselves in inter and intra ethnic forms. These conflicts stem in part from the success of modernization, which have equipped ethnic communities with new political resources and aspirations. This literature review partly looks at some writers' opinions concerning the ethnic conflict issue.

Ottawa (1999) said some shift has been witnessed now. He declared that for after a long time of being treated as some kind of pariahs' ethnic identities and ethnic nationalism have gained strength and even a degree of legitimacy in recent years. To him, alongside the interpretation of ethnic passions, ethnic hatred, ethnic cleansing and genocide, ethnic dynamics could also be viewed as struggles by the dominated and oppressed groups for greater autonomy and for the protection of their rights.

Wallerstein (1979) asserts that ethnic consciousness and conflict occur when groups feel threatened with loss of previously acquired privilege, or conversely feel that it is an opportune moment politically to overcome a longstanding denial of privilege. He said, the mechanisms and machinations through which these groups advance their aims is what causes ethnic tensions and conflicts. To him, the present manifestation of ethnicity in Nigeria is an elite and class phenomenon where one community's elites feel excluded by another from control of economic and political power. They then indoctrinate members of their ethnicity to believe that this is a conspiracy by a whole community against another, which should be violently resisted.

Nnoli (1995) asserts that ethnicity

hold individual together, gives them internal cohesion, encourages them to provide natural security for each other and promotes their sense of identity and direction. To him, ethnicity offers a personal solution to the problems of exploitation, oppressions, deprivation and alienation. Furthermore, he notes, in the context of an interventionist state, the ruling class use the state to build up their business enterprises. The struggle of the ethnic factions of these classes for state patronage in the process of *embourgeoisement* generates and promotes ethnicity.

Ibrahim (1995) says a major contributory factor to ethnic conflicts is the undemocratic nature of governance. He says many African regimes and rulers have repressed sections of the people, and by implication, ignored their aspirations. Some have employed divide-and-rule method in governance, and created more ethno-religious divisions than the colonialists ever did. To him, once degenerated regimes find their legitimacy put in question, because they no longer care for the majority of the people, or protect the public good, and fail to protect or defend the people's rights, they tend to identify the process of repression. He believes when governance decays, the people retreat into sectarian enclaves, which are seen as

providing security.

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) stated in 1995 that ethnicity is a resilient paradigm used in explaining the nature of conflict in Nigeria. In UNRISD Report, it is held that Nigeria as a political society comprises many ethnic groups, which rub shoulders with each other, so there is bound to be conflict. The central assumption of this viewpoint is that ethnicity has the potential to transcend other loyalties and obligations and become the sole basis of identity. This may lead to conflict when peoples' multiple identities are narrowed down to a single focus, and social division become deeper and more rigid. The submission of the UNRISD Report is that, ethnicity is a deeply emotional basis of mobilization that not merely distinguishes one group from the other, but also dehumanizes the other group.

Agbu (2000) believes poverty alone can provide inducement for such conflicts. He says we all know the economic conditions of most people in Nigeria. We have seen whole groups impoverished. Unless such groups are empowered adequately and deliberately, strife may never end on the continent of Africa and in Nigeria by extension.

From our point of view, the ethnic situation in Nigeria acknowledges the heterogeneity of ethnic groups in terms of culture and languages that are endemic in diverse origin and history. Ethnic conflicts erupt when the claims of one party to land and territory become incompatible with the desire of others to satisfy their own basic interest and needs within the same physical territory. The consequences of the ethnic conflicts, whether in Nigeria or elsewhere, have important implications for nation building and societal cohesion. No country can afford the luxury of allowing ethnic conflict free rein or ignoring it. Every multiethnic state has tried to devise ways of coping with conflicts. Failure to resolve conflicts over access to commonly valued scarce resources, and over divergent perceptions of socio-political situations, has the high potential of degenerating into wanton destruction of lives and property.

In analysing the conflict in Agila land, our facts shall be based on the theoretical framework of the Conflict Theory.

Ethnic conflict may take several forms, which can be classified, as violent and non-violent. Violent ethnic conflicts usually erupt in places where the government is an

instrument of group domination and where the channel for articulating demands is closed. These form ranges from riot to secession and civil wars (which have been experienced in most part of the continent of Africa notably Congo, Nigeria, Liberia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Cameroon). While Non-violent conflict includes articulation of changes of discrimination, neglect or domination, demands for redress through the press, ethnic leaders, political parties, law courts, and other civil methods of articulating demand (Osaghae, 1992).

Ethnic conflict entails a clash of cultures. It pits against each other people whose values are in conflict, who want different things, and who do not understand each other. Ethnic conflict is brought about by modernization. Modernization makes people want the same things, not different things, and this sets up a great scramble for resources. Ethnic conflict is the result of economic competition between ethnically differentiated segments of the working class or ethnically differentiated traders and customers. Elite competition and the actions of ethnic entrepreneurs drive ethnic conflict. Elites manipulate ethnic identities in their quest for power, and they construct ethnic conflict. Ethnic conflict is

produced by the insecurity that emerges when an actor is unsure of the intentions of another actor and the two are already mutually hostile (Horowitz, 1998).

Nigeria with a large number of ethnic groups, inequalities among

them is size, resource endowment, education and access to state power and resources, are highly developed and fractionalized indigenous bourgeoisie, make her ethnic situation perhaps the most complicated in Africa (Osaghae, 1994).

“ Elites manipulate ethnic identities in their quest for power, and they construct ethnic conflict ”



*Group photograph of participants at training on ADR & negotiation skills*

## CHAPTER 4

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN AGILA LAND

#### 4.0 Preliminary Remarks

To put the conflict situation in Ado Local Government Area, specifically in Agila, into right perspective, it is necessary to indicate the dual dimension of the nature of conflict within this area. The mapping exercise carried out revealed: (a) a protracted inter-ethnic conflict and bitter boundary dispute between the Agila people in Benue State (of the Idoma ethnic stock) with the Ngbo people (of Igbo extraction), a neighbouring community in Ebonyi State; and (b) an intra-ethnic conflict among the Agila people, on the dominance of one group and the right of ascension to the traditional chieftaincy position, with roots in clan-lineages that has bifurcated the community along *royalty* and *non-royalty* lines. Both have had devastating effects on the communities with lingering bitterness and animosity, thus with the high possibility of resumed hostilities in despite the calm that currently persists between the Agila and Ngbo peoples, and among the Agila themselves.

Secondly, it is important to note that both dimensions of the conflict in Agila are rooted in historical

antecedents; for instance, the boundary issue (which now is an interstate matter between the states of Benue and Ebonyi) dates back to the colonial period. The intra-ethnic crisis among the Agila however, is fairly recent in comparison.

Third, it is also imperative to note that the discovery of the intra-ethnic element of the conflict in Agila was an unintended result of the current intervention. Within the scope of the Terms of Reference (ToR), the specific purpose of the action was to develop and test a pilot conflict early warning system, as well as a rapid-response mechanism with particular emphasis on the Agila-Ngbo debacle.

A careful analysis of the conflict revealed to the WEP Project Team that for any meaningful and sustained intervention for conflict management and transformation to be achieved within the area in relation to the boundary dispute, it was necessary for coordinated focus and action at resolving the intra-ethnic element of the conflict relating to the Agila people. Findings revealed a link between the boundary dispute and the polarity in Agila in Benue vis-à-vis the Ngbo

in Ebonyi. Thus the aim of the project as implemented by WEP went beyond the development and testing of a pilot early warning system/a rapid-response mechanism. It also attempted to see to what extent the process of transparent dialogue could be facilitated among the Agila people, as well as trust among the parties involved (between the Agila people themselves, and between the Agila and the Ngbo).

#### **4.1 Geographical Location of Conflict Area**

Agila is officially recognised as a one of the nine major districts in present day Ado Local Government Area of Benue State. Ado LGA has a population of over 400,000 people and is situated in the south-south fringe of the Benue border with Ebonyi State. It is bounded to the north by Otukpo LGA, on the east and west by Oju and Opokwu LGAs respectively. Agila is a sleepy and seemingly quiet community. It is located about 26 kilometres from Igumale, the administrative headquarters of the local government area. The community is largely an agrarian one, with vast arable land for agricultural purposes. The vegetation is thick with huge trees and wild life for game. Like much of the larger part of Ado, the Agila people are basically farmers.

Ngbo is synonymous with the people who live in a borderline community in Ohaukwu LGA of Ebonyi State, south-eastern Nigeria. Ohaukwu's headquarters is the town of Ezzamgbo. It has an area of 517 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 196,337 according to the 2006 census figures.

#### **4.2 Benue-Ebonyi Interstate Boundary Dispute: Historical Context**

The inter-ethnic conflict between the Agila and the Ngbo has its source in disputed boundary/border-lines. Boundaries and border-lines were purely a colonial construction for the administrative purposes among other considerations of demarcation of communities, regions and nations, an exercise, which spanned the better part of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the dawn of Nigeria's Independence from the British. The colonially constructed boundaries within Nigeria are contained in the 1936 boundary description and the Definition of the Countries Proclamation of 1954. Parameters such as water courses and distances, physical features, existing farm boundary and meridian turning points were used. Whether the system employed by the British was arbitrary, ambiguous or lack precision is another discourse entirely and not within the scope of this report; the fact is that the exercise was aimed at clear



demarcations and was evidently done. It is also a fact that present day conflicts across Nigeria arising from boundary disputes are due to evident gaps in the exercise. Another vital point in the equation was the actions of successive governments of 'radical re-engineering' i.e. the creation of more states and local governments without well grounded principles. A theoretical explanation highlights the increased number of internal boundary crises as products and logical consequences of the dynamics of state building process. According to the national boundary commission, many of the boundary conflicts across Nigeria are tied to issues of land squeeze, competition over access to resources, and disputed jurisdiction of certain traditional rulers and chiefs.

There exists a conflict on land boundary between Benue and Ebonyi State (Benue/ Ebonyi interstate boundary). This conflict dates back to the 1930s when the district re-organisation in the Kabba, Munchi and Muri provinces was reportedly stabilized. With particular reference to the boundary conflict between the Agila and the Ngbo, it is a historical certainty that the colonial authorities of Northern Nigeria demarcated this boundary, traced it severally with beacons and then set up the Agila Forest Reserve by the 1959 Ordinance No. 75 to

serve as a buffer zone between the Agila and the Ngbo. The colonial masters noticing the stabilisation (rate of migration/unit time being constant) decided to establish the Agila Forest Reserve Ordinance of 1959 in the Northern Nigerian Gazette. The southern portions of the boundary of this Forest Reserve coincided with the boundary between the southern and northern provinces which metamorphosed from the southern/northern protectorates established by colonial administrators.

At present the Benue/Ebonyi Interstate Boundary stretches from the tripartite Benue/Ebonyi/Enugu Interstate boundary point marked by two boundary pillars on the Agila/Nkalaha/Eha path near Osudu in Agila to the Benue/Cross River/Ebonyi Interstate tripartite point along the Oyongo/Anyim River. It forms part of the Legal Notice No. 126 of 1954 describing the boundary between the old northern and southern protectorates of Nigeria. The Legal Notice 126 of 1954 defined this boundary making the Agila Forest Reserve Ordinance as a check document against anybody contesting the area on all the four subsectors of the boundary.

This boundary sector has witnessed a lot of Igbo migration into the present-day Benue State. The affected local government areas

where massive migration from the neighbouring states into Benue State are; Ado and Oju with their Ishelu, Ohaukwu, Izzi LGAs, in Ebonyi State. The boundary stretches over a distance of about 130km and is heavily dissected by the rivers and streams with no good roads linking the border communities. The border corridor is left undeveloped. The area is a rich agricultural land and this has attracted many Ezza, Izzi, Ngbo and Ishieke people of Ebonyi State origin to Benue State. The migration started long ago and has resulted in Benue State losing huge chunks of her farmland to Ebonyi State at the advent of colonial administration. The colonial administration set up this boundary, adjusted it several times to favour the Ibo immigration and finally set the boundary in the 1930s. This boundary is known to the border communities and is being respected by them with the exception of the Agila/Ngbo segment. Here the Forest Reserve has been destroyed and the area is farmed.

Series of clashes have been witnessed between the Ngbo and their Agila neighbours with the area remaining a lingering war theatre. Shortly before independence in 1959 the Agila people in the Northern Province resisted the encroachment of the Ngbo from the Eastern Group of provinces upon their land. The resistance of the Agila resulted into

many casualties and uncountable loss of lives. The series of crisis in 2004-2007 reached epic proportions with devastating results for each of the communities. In January 2008, some skirmishes were reported.

According to information gathered in the field, peaceful coexistence between the communities was disrupted by the 1967 Civil War, because the presently disputed area witnessed clashes between the Biafra secessionists and the Nigerian regular armies. It was reported that while the Agila moved far from their homesteads for safety, the Ngbo came to farm on the land vacated by the Agila. At the return of the Agila at the end of the war in 1970 they were shocked by the level of the devastation of the Forest Reserve and wrote a petition to the authorities of the East Central and Benue/Plateau States. It is difficult to ascertain the validity of this claim.

The views of some Ngbo persons we spoke to during the project seem to point to the possibility that the present Agila settlement was part and parcel of the then Abakaliki province. They were workers of the Eastern Region's prisons and paid their taxes to Abakaliki authorities. The Ngbo and Agila shared in the past the same markets and were taking treatment in the same hospitals.

The enmity between the two

communities became more pronounced with the hasty and rough boundary demarcation done by the colonizers without the involvement of the affected local authorities and communities. After the demarcation between the North and the East, the Agila were given the opportunity to choose to either stay in the North or in the East. They opted for the North because of political interest and language affinity. But still the two communities were farming side by side.

Responses from successive government authorities in both states have been by way of ensuring the presence of security forces along the disputed borders as well as other professional measures to delineate the borderlines. Some of the recent practical attempts included the setting up of a new buffer zone by the Ado and Ohaukwu local government councils. Earlier on there were efforts at field tracing and provisional demarcation of the boundary between 1986 and 2001. In 1997 specifically, an attempt was made at tracing the boundary of Agila Forest reserve. These efforts were subsequently intensified with joint meeting of officials of the National Boundary Commission, Federal Surveys and the two States governments held in 2000 which undertook field tracing and provisional demarcation of this

boundary in 2001. In addition were the efforts of Church leaders in 2005 and 2006, and the stationing of mobile police security units at Agila and Ngbo since 2005 crisis.

Professional field work started sometime in 1999 with the use of the Agila Forest Reserve ordinance to checkmate the protests brewing over the use of names of rivers like Okpinya, Idaka etc. But the work was frustrated by one of the communities. Field tracing again started from 2006 to 2007 and this time the whole boundary was traced/identified. Cartographic production proved that the boundary was plotable and so could be traced on the ground. It was, however, discovered that one of the communities had broken the pillars constructed by the colonial surveyors during the early delimitation. In 2008, more precisely 16<sup>th</sup> September, the documentation started at Oju/Ebonyi sub-sector and completed within 1½ months.

The Ezzi/Ado sub-sector was met with resistance and when the Ado local government had provided all the needed logistics for the Joint Technical Team in the location including police protection, as the Ezzi local council could not meet the requirement of the Team. The Team changed direction to Ishelu local council and completed the work at Ishelu/Ado sub-sector but could not

start at Agila/Ngbo due to the resistance received from the Ngbo people (Ado/Ohaukwu) subsector).

The field tracing and provisional demarcation of this boundary was carried out in 2000/2001 and the report is before the National Boundary Commission for consideration. During this exercise, there was only one point that the border communities agreed upon between Agila and Nkalaha at Odiputu crossing and this agrees with the Legal Notice No. 126 of 1954 description.

There are two pillars marking the Benue/Ebonyi/Enugu Interstate tripartite point, acceptable to Benue and Enugu States, Ebonyi State community of Nkalaha disagreed and showed a point too arbitrary though they farm and respect this on the ground till now.

Benue and Ebonyi States border communities showed a point at the confluence of rivers Oyongo and Abe as the tripartite Benue/Cross River/Ebonyi point, but the point was rejected by Cross River State and also it does not agree with the Legal Notice description. Ebonyi State border communities made claims during the exercise trying to put all Ebonyi indigenes settled in Benue into Ebonyi State. Thus the Ezzas in Agila were to be carved into Ebonyi State as well as Odoke, Inikiri Icheri, Nwedoga (with the

Idoma Native Authority) and Odokem. The Benue State claims agree with the Legal Notice descriptions. Apart from the Ngbos, the Ezazas, Izzi and Ishieke living inside Benue State did not deny being on Benue land and the people making the claims are usually leaders coming from outside the immediate border region.

### **4.3 Historical Context of the Agila Intra-Ethnic Conflict**

The origins of the intra-ethnic conflict among the Agila people lies basically in one fundamental issue: unofficial social stratification in terms of superiority of one over the other and the direct correlation with who occupies the chieftaincy throne. The perceptions of marginalisation, agitation for change in the traditional political system, the leadership style of the then *Otse Agila*, among other remote factors, snowballed into serious feud and killings in 1997. The immediate cause of the violent conflict of March 1997 was an attack by one of the groups on a bridal train.

Agila society is unique in a way. On one hand it is based on rigid social stratification. On the other hand it could selectively be flexible. The Project Team found that the society is patrilineal and to a limited extent matrilineal in some aspects of their traditional, social and political systems. In Agila District unlike the

other 22 districts in Idoma land, it is possible to inherit property and office from one's maternal lineage under certain prescribed conditions and situations. For example one can ascend to the throne of *Otse Agila* if he is a female descendant, and can on prescribed oath, renounce completely his patrilineal lineage and opt for his matrilineal lineage in accordance with the prescribed rites of passage.

Agila is made up of twelve units. They are Ogbilolo, Osudu, Efoha, Anmeta, Otokilo-Anidu, Akpoge, Okpatobom, Onogwu, Okpakor, Onwa, Efofu and Osiroko. For administrative convenience, these clans are sub-divided into two major blocks known as **Akpoge** and **Ogbilolo**. The Akpoge block is made up of Onwa, Okpakor, Akpoge, Okpatobom, Onogwu, Otokilo-Anidu and Osiroko. The Ogbilolo block on the other hand consists of Ogbilolo, Osudu, Efoha, Anmeta and Efofu.

The Team also found out that since between 1715 and 1745 when the main ruling houses were established, only two lineages the Osiroko and Efofu -- have been occupying the seat of *Otse Agila* in rotation. However, according to oral tradition, one Otse Ome and Otse Okpe from Onwa and Osudu, presently regarded as non-royal kindred respectively, had at one time or the other ruled Agila

chiefdom. None of the oral historians was able to state the time frame when the Onwa and Osudu kindred produced the Otse Okpe and the Otse Ome as one time district heads of Agila. But according to a book *The Idoma Nationality 1600 1900* by Prof. E.O Erim of the University of Calabar, the post of District Head of Agila had rotated between the Osiroko and Efofu since 1715 until today.

In the course of the mapping exercise the Team found that there was confusion as to the meaning of the following words: (a) clan (b) kindred, and (c) lineage. Although it out of the scope of this project to go into great lengths on sociological and anthropological findings on Agila, the correct meaning of these words particularly by the emergent political and cultural elite would have helped matters in reducing tension and controversy. For example the Team made the following discoveries:

- (a) That Agila is just one clan;
- (b) The District before 1976 with which the Idoma Area Traditional Council is not a federated District like Onyeagede; Agatu and Otukpa with many clans and Clan heads.
- (c) All the other 12 units in the present day Agila starting from Osiroko, Efofu, Onwa, Osudu, Ogbilolo, Akpoge, etc. are kindred and not clans and within these

kindred there are lineages.

The Team also found that the issue of **Royalty and Non-Royalty** has existed in Agila as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Nobody among the present-day Agila people knows when the tradition of Royal or the custom of Royal culture started in Agila. It appears to be an accident of birth. All Agila people were born into the system. None of them chose what he is or was at birth. It is, however, on record that one family acquired royalty by renouncing their partilineal lineage of Ogbilolo for their matrilineal lineage of Osiroko and became the District Head of Agila.

*The Idoma Nationality 1600-1900* has treated in great detail the issue of Royalty and Non-Royalty in Chapter 5 under the heading "Idoma Political Units in the 19<sup>th</sup> century." The Team found that the issue of Royalty is not peculiar to Agila District alone. All the 22 districts in Idoma land have ruling families and *commoner* (a term which evokes annoyance and anger in the person it is directed to) kindred, or Royal and Non-Royal families.

In recent times in Agila, and specifically before the enthronement of the then Chief of Agila, late Chief Philip Onazi Agbese, there began agitation from

mainly the non-royal group. This was spearheaded mainly by the Akpoge Ogbilolo political elite group. The agitation was for a change in the Agila social and traditional authority system. Under the umbrella of an elite pressure group called Akpoge-Ogbilolo Union, the non-royals demanded for a change with their eye on the District Headship of Agila, and the abolition of the existing social structure of Royal and Non-Royal in Agila so that the non-royal group can qualify for the District Head of Agila. The Royals argued that such change was not feasible, unwarranted and contrary to the tradition and custom of Agila people.

The Royals traced their origin to Apa, Idah back to their present location. According to them all other Idoma people in the 22 Districts in Idoma land do so. The claim was that the Non-royals are of female descendant of Ogwa's children and that are of Benin not of Apa Kingdom, and that their royalty is founded on custom and tradition of Agila people. The Non-royals claim that they had at one time in the history of Agila been *Otse Agila* by the persons of Otse Ome from Osudu and Otse Okpe from Onwa and that these two persons were in fact the first traditional rulers of Agila.

#### 4.4 Leadership of Late Chief Philip Agbese

Agila came out of the Civil war completely devastated following its occupation by the warring troops. The town was in complete ruins. The Agila people became refugees taking temporary shelters elsewhere in Idoma land and beyond. The situation of “no peace no war” still persisted when Chief Philip Onazi Agbese became the District Head of that turbulent region. It was evident that it was his bravery and gallantry as a war-leader in his community during the Nigerian Civil War that endeared him to the Agila community, both among Royals and Non-royals. So when the post of District Head became vacant he had an edge over his rivals. After he was appointed District Head, communal disturbances between his people, the Agila and the Ngbo broke out.

Tackling the problems and changes brought all sorts of allegations and counter allegations against the person of the Chief and his style of leadership caused discomfort among his people, particularly the non-royal group and to a lesser extent the royals too. He was accused of many wrong doings including the sale of Agila land, mismanagement of relief funds and materials, unilateral conferment of traditional titles to non-Agila indigenes, particularly the Igbos,

partiality and an autocratic style of leadership.

It is important to state here that during the team's literature review and field studies conducted most of these allegations were not proved beyond reasonable doubt by Chief Agbese's accusers. Some point to the fact that some of the accusers had some personal grievances against the chief on issues that had no bearing on his role as District Head.

#### 4.5 Immediate Cause of the 1997 Crisis: The Attack on the Bridal Train

There are two versions of what actually transpired that fateful day. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1997 a marriage ceremony took place at Efoha kindred between one Ikwebe Eje and Mercy Adoche, a Non-royal couple. There was a procession accompanying the bridal train. In this procession was a local musical band known as *Okanga* and a song group, singing a song the Royals regarded as provocative and insulting. Based on the uneasy calm in the town as well as other factors, the situation was not ripe for merrymaking social gathering. The song sang in Idoma on that day, was regared as provocative and a declaration of war. It ran thus: *Oche lonye ibi, Oche lonye bo'oma;Ogbodo botu o'donye gogo*, meaning “Kingship is sweet, kingship is as

sweet as salt. Anyone who is offended can come forward and challenge us to a duel". The non-royals sang the song from the non-royal area of Efoha through to the royal area in Ikpilogwu on their way to Okpako. The bridal train could have avoided the areas of the Royals because of the prevailing fluid situation. Instead, the band (royal drum) plodded on even when challenged or advised by the royals not to abuse them in the song. The drum being used was a royal one. It is the right of the Royal kindred in Onwa not only to own, keep and play the drum when the need arose; but also for the keeper of the drum to collect money for its use. The Royals claim the drum can only be played for a royal wedding. The non-royals said that it could be played for anybody who paid for the services of the *Okanga* as customarily prescribed.

The story from the non-royals is slightly different. What happened on that day is that one Oche Onmonya had courted Mercy Adoche and paid dowry but later the girl jilted him. So when Oche Onmonya heard that she was to be married to Ikwebe Eje on that day, he organized boys to disrupt the wedding. When the wedding procession was coming Otokpa Odogo came and informed Oko Ochai who tried to attack the procession but Ocheme Ogbo

prevented him because he did not want trouble to start at Ai-Unazi, which was becoming notorious for such acts. Oko Ochai then quickly went to Ikpilogwu and waited for the bridal procession. When the procession got there he went and held the *Okanga*, which Samuel Ogezi was beating and the two of them started struggling over it. While this was going on Godwin Onoja came from behind with a knife and pierced the *Okanga*. Fighting then ensued and the throwing of stones by the youths began. While the stone throwing was going on a thatched house nearby was set on fire. When that house was burning the Non-royals took revenge by burning the house of a Royal.

Those who argue that the Royals used the occasion as a smoke screen to launch an attack on the Non-royals ignore the argument put forward by the Royals that the provocative display of joy and happiness along a route which could have been avoided was premeditated and intended to invite the Royals who had been in a bad mood over a rescheduled local election, which one of their kith and kin was barred from contesting. Whatever the arguments and counter-arguments that are brought up, this singular incidence had catastrophic consequences for all that were involved.



A number of deaths and casualties were recorded. Many buildings were either burnt or damaged and properties looted. Over two hundred persons claimed to have had their buildings and farm produce destroyed and properties looted. The estimated cost of properties destroyed was at over N65million. The feud also led to displacement of the Royals to a new settlement outside the Main Agila.

Owing to the monumental scale of the intra-ethnic conflict, the then Benue State Military Government deployed security personnel to the area and thereafter instituted a judicial commission of inquiry to look into the causes of the crisis. It was headed by Justice Terna Puusu.

The panel carried out extensive investigation into the remote and immediate causes of the conflict as well as a thorough investigation into the historical, social and cultural underpinnings of the building of the Agila nation-state and kingship among the Agila and its evolution through the years. A number of people, many of Agila extraction from all the segments, were called to testify. At the end of its mandate, the report of the Puusu Panel did not see the light of day. There are allegations that some of the arrowheads of the crisis waded in to suppress the report findings. It is interesting to note here that all the sides spoken to during the project year for the release and full implementation of the Puusu Report.



The Otse Agila, Left, exchanges pleasantries with Prof. David Ker (OON), WEP board of trustees member

## CHAPTER 5

### CONFLICT MITIGATION AND PEACE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN AGILA: *THE ROLE OF STATE & NON-STATE ACTORS*

The government (at both state and local levels) through its various agencies have to some extent been actively involved in resolving the boundary dispute. Some of the recent attempts included the setting up of a new buffer zone by the Ado and Ohaukwu Local Government Councils; the field tracing and provisional demarcation of the boundary by state designated professionals between 1986 and 2001; the attempt at tracing the boundary of Agila Forest Reserve in 1997; joint meetings of officials of the National Boundary Commission, federal surveyors and the two State Governments in 2000 and the subsequent field tracing and provisional demarcation of this boundary by a joint field team (the team's report was submitted in 2001), and the stationing of mobile police units at Agila and Ngbo since the 2005/ 2008 crises. However, field work on retracing and mapping, featuring ethnographic surveys have never been smooth.

The Ado local government council on its part has hosted peace meetings between the communities of Agila and Ngbo, and between the local councils of Ado and Ohaukwu. Benue State's Governor Gabriel

Suswam's visit to Agila in January 2008 to assess the peace situation after an inter-ethnic onslaught is another case in point. There was also a joint peace meeting between Benue and Ebonyi states in July 2008 where it was formally resolved that the interstate boundary be properly demarcated.

The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), a government think-tank on issues of peace and conflict in Nigeria and Africa, with the Justice Development and Peace Commission (a non-state faith-based organization), in June 2008 jointly organized a meeting with the Benue and Ebonyi warring communities to attempt a resolution of the age-long boundary dispute. The meeting comprised delegates of traditional rulers from the two communities; commissioners of police from the two states, the Deputy Inspector General of Police (Operations), the director of the State Security Service from both states, officials of the JDPC as well as officials of the National Boundary Commission. One of the major outcomes of the meeting was getting the agreement of the two state governments to jointly develop the

areas in dispute for the benefit of the two communities. Though the IPCR stated that they were not aware of the internal conflict, they however aware of the interstate boundary conflict but expressed the willingness to collaborate with WEP in getting involved in the process as well as developing a systematic approach in dealing with the intra-ethnic issue. The Institute requested WEP and UNDP to share the findings of the mapping process with the IPCR so that the latter can strategise on how best to intervene.

Following a strategic conflict assessment in the project locations the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) decided to consider the Agila-Ngbo interstate conflict as one of its top priority areas. In 2007 the JDPC decided to initiate two separate meetings with the parties with a view to identifying the root causes of the conflict, its actors, their positions, interests, and needs. Each meeting provided an avenue for verification of facts and information sharing. After initiating the process by having the separate meetings with the parties, the JDPC was able to bring them to the negotiating table with other stakeholders such as the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, National Human Right Commission (HRC), and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

The role of religious institutions as

key actors in the conflict was equally noteworthy. The Methodist and Catholic churches are the religious denominations active in Agila. Both have used their positions of authority among their flock to manage the inter-community conflict. The churches were not spared during the clashes as many structures were burnt and desecrated. Leaders of the Methodist Church in the affected areas have made various attempts at reconciling the Agila and Ngbo communities.

Copies of the proceedings of joint peace and reconciliation initiatives under the auspices of the church from Benue, Ebonyi and Enugu states obtained during the field work indicate a call to parties involved in the dispute to proffer practical solutions to the conflict from the context of sacrifice, forgiveness, concession/compromise for peace and harmony.

The church has also joined forces with the Idoma Traditional Council in resolving the conflicts in that area. The paramount ruler of the Idoma nation, His Royal Highness Agabaidu Elias Ikoyi Obekpa, Ochi Idoma IV, during one of such exchanges with the Methodist Church, charged elders and opinion leaders of warring communities in his domain to tackle the challenge posed by the incessant communal conflicts in their areas and ensure

lasting peace in Idoma land.

The royal father made the plea while welcoming the Archbishop of the Methodist Church in Nigeria, Dr. Joseph Oche Job who was on a peace mission to his palace in Otukpo. He particularly made reference to Agila where he lamented the continued bloody tussle amongst indigenes of the area over chieftaincy issues, advising that the people must put their heads together and come out with a generally acceptable deal on the matter. While commending the efforts of the church to finding lasting solution to the chieftaincy and boundary conflicts in Agila, the Ochi Idoma expressed the readiness of the Idoma Traditional Council to work in tandem with the people and the church to ensure that peace reigns in the area. Archbishop Job on his part had intimated the paramount ruler that he and a group of concerned Ado Christians were at the palace of the Ochi Idoma to

formally present him with a copy of the resolution and peace agenda issued at the end of a three-day Ado prayer and peace revival conference held in Otukpo.

The conclusion that can be reached is that very few individuals and organisations have played prominent roles in mitigating the intra-ethnic conflict among the Agila. Perhaps due to the sensitive nature of the conflict many have shied away from intervening. Another explanation could be the fact that there has been no record of physical attacks or outbreaks of violence so the assumption would be that there is peace in Agila land given that the communities in Agila are in different settlements. This is a wrong assumption as it is highly probable that a chain of events arising from unresolved fundamental issues could trigger off another round of violence.



*Acting Otse Agila, Chief Mike Agbese, third from left, signs a peace accord as WEP Executive Director watches*

## CHAPTER 6

### THE IMPACT OF THE AGILA CONFLICT ON DEVELOPMENT

#### 6.1 Economic Impact

Before the Nigerian civil war in the 1960s, subsistence agriculture was the dominant economic activity of the informal sector in Agila community, thus ensuring regular supply of local foodstuff to town dwellers. This pre-war informal economic activity in Agila community generated the much needed income for the women, and also provided a sure way to economic self-reliance for the women in particular. The small-scale businesses also provided services to the generality of the people and Agila community in general. The production and marketing of local foodstuff to town dwellers complemented government efforts to provide food to the public but during the civil war, however, these economic activities were severely disrupted because the Agila had to relocate from their villages, thus making it easy for them the Ngbo people in Ebonyi State to take over their land.

Since the war, the 1997 intra-communal crisis further deepened the situation, as currently, the Agila people do not have a market where

goods and services can be sold or exchanged, there are no business activities taking place in the community for the fear of being attacked by the Ngbo people. This fear is mirrored in the Ngbo community. This development has disempowered them economically and has added to the hardship being experienced by the community but more especially among the women who are daily faced with the challenge of providing for the family in terms of food, water, etc but are constantly faced with kidnapping, killings and abduction.

#### 6.2 Political Impact

Various studies have given analyses on the level and degree of political participation in many societies. Milbrath (1965) argues that, members of a society can be divided into four categories in terms of their degree of political participation. These are:

- (a) the politically apathetic, who are unaware of the political world around them;
- (b) those involved in spectator activities such as voting and taking part in thuggery or discussion about

politics;

(c) those involved in transitional meetings or making financial contributions to a political party;

(d) the fourth group are described as gladiatorial. This seeks and holds public office or control party affairs.

Using Milbrath's model to locate Agila community position on the political scale, one discovers that many are apathetic and uneducated. Few are mere spectators, this is particularly so with rural elite, while some are mainly used as instruments in terms of involving them in meetings and provision of information. As far as politics is concerned in Agila community, an insignificant number of people are gladiatorial. The urban elites (godfathers) decide who becomes, for instance, the local government chairman and all other related political positions whether they are capable of handling the positions and bringing about development to the community or not.

Women, for instance, do not have a say in any political meetings/activities, even where peace discussions/processes are taking place though they bear the brunt of the conflicts. They are usually considered second class citizens and are highly discriminated against in many respects, forced by the cultural norms to play the second fiddle

while the customary law ensures that they remain insignificant in the society.

Some of the women and, indeed, men in Agila community confessed that since the crisis in Agila community, this intervention was the first time women were allowed to participate actively in the peace process. It is perhaps, because a women organization that is in charge of the project activities, which explains why women had to be recognized to play critical roles. In a state where women are considered as insignificant in political and developmental activities, it is worthy to note that development cannot thrive, hence the issue of women participation in peace processes as well as political arenas must be considered as vital for development to take place.

### 6.3 Social Impact

Agila community can be said to be the least developed in Benue State even though it is one of the communities in Benue State that has prominent sons and daughters in positions of authority and leadership (both in military and civilian governments) and whom can influence the development of the community. The deplorable state of the roads, the lack of electricity, and commerce has made the situation terrible for the people

of Ado local government area and, indeed, Agila community for any meaningful development to take place.

Like any other society affected by conflict, 95% of the Agila Community/persons that have been abducted or killed in the violent conflict are women. This has serious repercussions on the lives of women socially and in their reproductive activities. It is worth noting that in the past, both royals and non-royals intermarried, however since the violent intra-communal conflicts in 1997, no social activity such as the Masquerade, neither marriages nor births have been able to bring the Agila community together due to the royals versus non-royals saga which has brought untold hardship to the people and community of Agila because of some selfish individual's political interest.

Many of the young people in Agila community have taken to drugs and political thuggery as those who are to help have taken advantage of the striking poverty that has engulfed the community and would rather sponsor the killings and maiming of others in the name of royals versus non-royals leadership tussle. Some of the so-called leaders have become conflict entrepreneurs, as their source of livelihoods depends heavily on what the conflict

situation is at a particular time and they would go to any length to ensure that the conflicts deepens. We state that until the urban elites-rural conflict sponsors realize that the only way to bring about development is the empowerment of the young people in a positive manner, then the societies to which they hold claim and ancestral roots to will remain theatres of chaos, under development and retrogression.

#### **6.4 Psychological Impact**

Truth telling dampens the desire for vengeance, thereby eliminating acts of retributive violence, and it has therapeutic value, healing psychological trauma of victims and survivors. This in turn facilitates reconciliation among warring groups, and dampens the risk of recurrence of war. But does truth telling in fact have such salutary psychological effects? Some evidence indicate that victims and survivors prefer that the "truth" be told and "justice" be done, believing that it will bring relief from psychological pain, anguish and suffering. But are victims' positive expectations of the truth-telling process generally met after the truth has been told and justice dispensed? Do victims actually experience anticipated psychological benefits? Does truth telling in fact dampen feelings of vengeance? These and

many more are the questions that the case of the intra-Agila community conflict raise.

The consequences of human rights abuses, including sexual assaults are not only physical but also psychological. Studies suggest that a high level of psychological trauma is associated with the displacement and those exposed to the various forms of human rights abuses. Most of the people affected by the conflict who were interviewed exhibited signs of distress on physical, emotional and behavioral levels. It is also reported that, on the emotional level, depression, anger, anxiety, fear and resentment were observed. And finally, withdrawal from friends and family, changes in normal behavior patterns, inability to function the way they used to do

are symptoms that were particularly noticed during the field work and interviews we had.

The lack of information and interaction among the community members had a great impact psychologically and socially disconnected from each other. In view of this, the peace process created a widow for interactions and networking which culminated to the symbolic cleansing of conflict out of Agila which was tagged "*Operation Clean Out Conflict in Agila Land*" by the women group and youths though, initially the project only targeted 100 beneficiaries, the project ended up having a multiplier effect on the whole community through the subtle delivery of peace-building messages.

“ Truth telling dampens the desire for vengeance, thereby eliminating acts of retributive violence, and it has therapeutic value, healing psychological trauma of victims and survivors ”



## CHAPTER 7

### SETTING UP EARLY WARNING MECHANISM IN AGILA COMMUNITY

“Engaging in Conflict Prevention without an Early Warning System is like entering into a cave without a torch”  
- William Godwin Nhara (1996)

#### 7.1 Defining Early Warning Systems

Early Warning is a tool for preparedness, prevention and mitigation with regard to disasters, emergencies, and conflict situations. While preparedness, prevention and mitigation, as the three pillars of an Early Warning System, are of critical importance in understanding the purpose of such a system, it should be borne in mind that even if the detection mechanism is perfect, it is of no use unless there is the capability for a timely reaction. In this regard, the provision of information alone does not constitute Early Warning. Such information should serve a specific purpose. One of the critical issues is the origin of the information and data, and the time frame in which it has been developed. The receiver of such a forecast and what is done with the information provided become critical in determining the success or failure of an Early

Warning System.

Early warning is ultimately aimed to assist in addressing the 'root causes' of conflict and must allow for the development of proper understanding of situations, their development, conditions for resolution and guidance to better settlement. It entails ways of forestalling or alleviating the worst effects of conflict, including early intervention to transform or resolve conflicts.

Most conventional conflict early warning systems generate macro level analysis and policy prescriptions that are generally based on a snapshot rather than a dynamic view of the changing situations on the ground. In fact, the majority of references to conflict early warning are top-down, inter-governmental early warning systems with limited (if any) links to local communities. The field of conflict early warning is therefore

shifting towards a more bottom-up approach, emphasising the need for something like an indigenous “local information network” to get a better notion of “the view from below”.

Focal points are crucial and an integral part of any Early Warning system. They represent the real communities and are closer to the domain of conflict. These focal points will need to be trained to be aware of the importance of their work, as well as the nature of indicators constituting situations that warrant early warning. It is on this premise of the preceding that Women Environmental Programme-led intervention in Agila was based mandated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): The UNDP framework entail supporting the identified community to effectively utilise skills and tools to track, monitor and rapidly responding to conflict in their locality, ensure the effective implementation of the conflict early warning and response system in the community as well as enhancing effective partnership between community based groups and officials at the state and local government levels in responding to conflict.

This indigenous bottom-up approach with respect to Agila was unique in its own way. It had mainstreamed gender in view of the representation of women as a

cardinal feature of the approach to setting up an early warning system for conflict prevention in Agila.

Following the pre-project contacts, advocacy and mapping exercise, the Project Team critically designed a structure for the formation of networks in Agila that would have the character of an early warning and response system, as well as the person specifications of the networks' constituent. Elements considered included Information (identification of reliable persons as well as the target group), Action (identification of audience, exchange of information on crisis when tensions are evident), Monitoring and Initiating appropriate preventive measures. Central to the success of the networks was in gathering information. It was paramount that that the selected persons must be reliable, well prepared, and have the necessary background knowledge of the issues as well as that of Agila. Having considered elements such as these, the Team went ahead to begin to assemble the proposed network team members in full consultation with the Agila community leaders as well as the local civil and security authorities. The Team then developed the training modules with the resource consultants who were engaged to facilitate the technical sessions during the training workshops. Being aware

that a successful early warning system gives third-party intervention the opportunity to put positive, confidence-building measures to play, WEP's strategy was hinged on advocacy, diplomacy, neutrality and tact in handling all the information acquired from the conflict mapping exercise as well as the advocacy and pre-contact drives.

The building blocks for the early warning system as adapted by WEP is based on WANEP's (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding Nigeria). The steps are:

- (a) Identifying the proximate conditions
- (b) Defining the indicators
- (c) Monitoring the indicators
- (d) Analysing the information
- (e) Communicating the warning
- (f) Receiving and believing the warning
- (g) Acting on the warning
- (h) Consistent support and inclusive participation in Early Warning

## **7.2 The Role of the Media in Early Warning System in Agila**

One of the preliminary findings in the field on the conflict situation in Agila was the dearth of media coverage of two dimensional conflicts. The crisis was even termed by some as 'The Forgotten

Crisis' in view of the limited reportage of the conflict. It then became imperative for the Team that for any early warning mechanism to be successful, the media became part and parcel of the process. Irrespective of the fact that some have argued that the Nigerian media have been occasionally been found wanting in the way and manner the contents of their coverage are presented, they nevertheless have maintained a level of professionalism, ethics, objectivity and caution in reporting some conflicts and crises in Nigeria. This makes them indispensable partners in conflict prevention from the standpoint of early warning mechanisms.

Media representatives were met during the conflict mapping exercise, and some were invited to be part of the conflict early warning mechanism that was being set up in Agila via the networks that were formed. For the media the point stressed was aimed at positive-journalism to stimulate space to productions and publications which emphasis peaceful resolutions of conflicts and collaborative problem-solving.

### **7.3 Formation of Networks by Women & Youths: Precursors to Early Warning Mechanism in Agila**

Imminent to the setting up of early warning systems in Agila was the brainstorming session at the Information Sharing Workshop at Makurdi in September 2009. Under the expertise of the resource persons participants were guided to strategise on the way towards establishing early warning mechanisms. To get the salient issues among the groups present (traditional leaders, women and youths), a break-out session scheme was employed and each of these groups were asked to come up with concrete steps in achieving and sustaining lasting peace in Agila as well as preventive measures to forestall outbreaks of violence. Part of the practical measures adapted by the groups of traditional leaders, women and youth groups was the formation of groups that would work for the promotion of peace/peace-building activities as well as monitoring of signs that would, among other things, lead to the breakdown of peace. The women group was far more vocal and articulate in their proposed strategies.

Empowering the networks as formed by the youth and women groups as well as that of elders

through the appropriate skills and knowledge on the nitty-gritty of monitoring, early warning and crisis prevention, alternative dispute resolution, advocacy and negotiation skills as well as networking took centre stage. This was done in course of two major training workshops. The networks have commenced the formal process of registration with the appropriate civil authority and have outlined activities they hope to start implementing.

To kick-start the process and overcome initial challenges, the groups received personal cash donations from some personalities (during the project's life span) including the WEP Executive Director (N40, 000), the representative of UNDP (N20, 000), the LGA Ado Executive Chairman (N100, 000), the Benue State Surveyor General (N5, 000), and a number of Ado/ Agila indigenes (Barrister Rose Ojabo N5, 000; Hon. Rose Ameh N2, 000; Princess Orkar N20,000; Chief Mrs. Regina Agbese N30, 000).

### **7.4 Training Workshop on Monitoring of Early Warning Signs, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Advocacy & Negotiation Skills**

Given the conflict situation in Agila including the internal and external dimensions, the workshop was

meant to provide participants with requisite skills for monitoring early warning signs, ADR and negotiation and advocacy techniques.

The training's technical sessions were handled by Mrs. Betty Bassey (of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja), Mrs. Grace Atim and Mr. John Tor Tsuwa (both of the Benue State University, Makurdi). The training manual adopted for use was *Developing Capacity for Conflict Analysis and Early Response*. This training manual on developing capacity for conflict analysis and early response was prepared with the support of the Conflict Management Capacity Building Project of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Administration and Development Management. The training framework presented in this manual is mostly based on the West Africa Network for Peace-building (Ghana) as well as FEWER's early warning and response methodologies.

In order to build the participants' capacity to understand the issues, concepts and sources related to the subject, the training combined a participatory methodology of concept clarification, case studies, real-life experiences in different contexts and situations on the side of both participants and trainers. The Project Team worked in tandem

with the resource persons to develop the content of the agenda for all the trainings which was designed to cover these and the overall aim of the trainings.

Central to the understanding of these was a persistent awareness of the linkages developed between the sessions, small group assignments in the entire duration of the trainings, and recap sessions to ascertain level of comprehension of the previous sessions. During the workshop, participants were randomly assigned to small groups to measure their comprehension of the sessions or review the details of the some of the sessions before reconvening in a plenary to discuss the topics/ issues under consideration.

Present at the 5-day training was the Special Adviser to the Benue State Government on Security Matters Col. Aboho Rtd, in his remarks at the workshop appreciated the work of WEP in the area of conflict resolution. He stated that the present administration in the state was aware of the long standing conflict in Agila and the underdevelopment it has caused the place. Early in the life of the present administration, the Governor of Benue State, His Excellency Barr Gabriel Suswam visited Agila to ascertain things for himself following an Ngbo attack on the community. Col. Aboho said the

government was willing to partner with any agency or organization in the attempt to bring about peace and development for the Agila people. He challenged the Agila people to be partakers in generating solutions to the problem. Col. Aboho solicited WEP intervention with other conflict situations in the state.

The content of the training had among others Gender analysis of the conflict, early warning issues, monitoring, theories of conflict,

causes of conflict, the human and political needs, why conflict mapping, and overview of the elements of conflict, conflict stages, dimension of conflict, stakeholders analysis of the conflict, why monitoring and early warning response, different method of resolving conflicts. At the end of the five days training a communiqué was issued and jointly signed by the *Otse Agila* and one of the Clan Heads (see below contents of the communiqué).

**COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A 5-DAY TRAINING WORKSHOP ON MONITORING OF EARLY WARNING SIGNS, ADVOCACY, ADR AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS, BETWEEN 12 TO 17 OCTOBER 2009 AT GBIHI ROYAL HOTELS, MAKURDI**

The workshop was designed to enable participants understand and identify the causes of conflict, the nature, the actors, stages and dimensions and how to resolve it. During the workshop the major causes of conflict in Agila land were identified to include land dispute, chieftaincy dispute and political factors.

The stakeholders in the conflict were also identified as women, youths, chiefs and elders within and outside Agila land. The workshop also brought out the issue of monitoring to help participants identify early warning signs of conflict.

It also brought out the need for the incorporation of women in the peace generating process. It was therefore agreed that the stakeholders in Agila land should apply negotiation, mediation, adjudication, arbitration and conciliation in order to settle dispute between them. It was finally agreed that for peace to return to Agila all the parties involved must embrace peace, accommodate others feelings and make compromises where necessary.

## **7.5 Training on Peace Network Formation**

This training was the last major activity under the project involving a large number of participants. It provided the

opportunity for participants to enhance further their capacity in peace-building in their community and also support women's networking for peace and security in Agila. The need for

strengthening networking and continued interaction between the Agila Community and other critical stakeholders in peace-building was a key component of the action. Examined during the training also were opportunities and challenges of collaboration, the need to share information, achievements, breakthroughs, and the methods and mechanisms of networking.

The issues discussed included how to better take advantage of best practices in order to network and communicate more efficiently and broadly, how to monitor early warning signs and report appropriately, how to effectively

engage other actors and how to empower women and youth to take a central role in this process, and how to strengthen and consolidate the capacities of organizations and networks formed during the process.

The highlights of the workshop were the plans presented by each of the groups for peaceful co-existence in Agila land. Table 1-3 shows the plan as presented by the groups.

*Group work on Strategic Plan development for Peace Network*

Participants were divided into three groups. The youth, women and council of elders

**Table 1: Youths**

Activity	Time frame	Materials	Resources	Monitoring	Evaluation	Responsibilities
Cultural carnival	Annually (September)	1. Radio announcement 2. Poster 3. Traditional costumes 4. Akpoge playground 5. Money		Twice a year		Finance committee Entertainment committee Publicity committee Technical committee Prize/award committee
Peace summit	ONCE EVERY TWO YEARS (Easter period)	Technical expertise (WEP) Apa Comm. Sec. Sch. Hall Public address system Finance Mobility		Quarterly		Central planning committee Publicity committee Technical committee Security Finance Transport
Youths general meeting	Monthly (last Saturday of every month)	Information dissemination (PRO) Mobility (transportation) Stationeries Registration/ dues School hall (rotational)		Executive meeting twice a month		EXCO meeting Constitution committee Disciplinary committee Social/welfare

**Table 2: Council of elders**  
 Project title: Promoting peace in Agila land

Activity	Time frame	Materials	Resources	Monitoring	Evaluation	Responsibilities
Formation of sub-committee and mobilization	November 2009 2 <sup>nd</sup> week		Fiancés and venue	Feedback from minutes and documentation No of sub-committee reports		Elders
Awareness campaign	December 2009 – December 2010	Posters (2000 copies) Radio jingles and Financial resources		Quarterly		Publicity Technical Financial
Elders peace forum	Easter 2010	Communication, letters, phone calls, venue, mobility, financial input from Agila in Diaspora		Minute/feedback from monthly meetings		Sub-committee WEP/UNDP, Elders
Organize Ojo festival	September 2010	Finances, venue, communication, publicity		Annual		



**Table 3: Agila women Unite for peace**

Activity	Time frame	Materials	Resources	Monitoring	Evaluation	Responsibilities
Calling of stakeholder meeting	Twice in a month	Money	Chairs	Monthly		PRO of women for Peace in Agila
Love feast	Annually	Money, radio jingles, chairs, canopies, posters		Bi-monthly		Events organizing committee
Agila women for peace conference	Annually	Posters, handbills, radio jingles, money, chairs and canopies		Bi-monthly (Easter)		Events organizing committee
Training workshops	Quarterly	Machine, skills acquisitions centres, money, venue and chairs		Bi-monthly		WEP, UNDP, JDPC, LGC, Agila in Diaspora, WFPA

The three groups agreed that they cannot embark on the peace process alone but would require identifying individuals and other organizations both within and outside Agila land to form peace allies. Thus, the following organizations were identified; Agila Youths Development Association; Agila Vigilante Group; Agila Development Association; Ai-oba (hunters) group; Agila Youths Initiative For Peace in Agila Land

Other coalitions identified by the youths include:

- Agila Traditional council of Elders
- Women unite for peace in Agila
- Young Alhaji Foundation (YAF)
- Global 2000 (Carter Foundation)
- Red Cross Society
- European Union (EU)
- UNDP

- WEP
- Ado LGA
- State and Federal governments

Women groups also identified the following groups;

- Women for peace in Agila
- Market women
- Catholic Women Organizations.
- Committee of friends
- Age grade
- Peace and love association

Other groups are;

- Youth
- UNDP
- WEP
- JDPC
- Council of Elders
- Agila in Diaspora
- Religious Leaders
- Local Government, State and Federal

Women for peace in Agila developed their interim programme as follows:

- Calling of stakeholders meeting
- Inviting all the leaders of coalition
- Moving from one church to another
- Organize a social gathering
- Training people for monitoring
- Embarking on the registration of the network with the corporate affairs commission



*Sweeping out animosity & conflict in Agila land, in a symbolic ceremony that brought all segments of Agila together. It was led by the women*

## CHAPTER 8

### THE FINDINGS, CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

#### 8.1 Report Findings

1. Findings on the conflict situation in Agila have indicated a dual dimension nature: a protracted inter-ethnic conflict and bitter land dispute with Ngbo, a neighbouring community in Ebonyi which shares boundary with Agila and thus Benue State; and an intra-ethnic conflict among the community members classified as the Royals versus the non-Royals (chieftaincy) dispute. While each of the communities and parties involved argue convincingly and trade innuendoes and counter accusations on each other, the resultant consequence of the bitter and often bloody clashes has had adverse effect on the collective well-being and socio-economic stability of the parties involved as well as engendering an atmosphere of mistrust, suspicion and tension.

2. The Team discovered that the conflict in Agila has been in existence since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The first being the interstate boundary conflict between the Agila and Ngbo communities of Benue and Ebonyi States, and the second being of the intra-ethnic which is based on the agitation for a change in traditional

political system, that is change in royalty, the *Otse Agila*. In respect of the intra conflict, WEP Team that the immediate cause of the crisis was the attack on the bridal train in March, 1997.

3. The colonial constructed boundaries within Nigeria are contained in the 1936 boundary description and the Definition of the Countries Proclamation of 1954. Parameters such as courses and distances, physical features, existing farm boundary and meridian turning points were used.

4. Many of the boundary conflicts across Nigeria are tied to issues of land squeeze space, competition over access to resources, and disputed jurisdiction of certain traditional rulers and chiefs.

5. There exists a conflict on land boundary between Benue and Ebonyi State (Benue/ Ebonyi interstate boundary). This conflict dates back to the 1930s when the district re-organisation in the Kabba, Munchi and Muri provinces was reported stabilized. In particular reference to boundary conflict between the Agila and the

Ngbo, it is a historical certainty that the colonial authorities of Northern Nigeria demarcated this boundary, traced it severally with beacons and then set up the Agila Forest Reserve by the 1959 Ordinance No. 75 to serve as a buffer zone between the Agila and the Ngbo.

6. This boundary sector has witnessed a lot of Igbo immigration into present day Benue State. The affected local government areas are Ado and Oju of Benue State with their Ishelu, Ohaukwu, Izzi and Ebonyi of Ebonyi State. The boundary stretches over a distance of about 130km. The boundary is heavily dissected by the rivers and streams with no good roads linking the border communities. The border corridor is left undeveloped. The area is rich agricultural land and this has attracted many Ezza, Izzi, Ngbo and Ishieke people of Ebonyi State origin to Benue State. The migration started long ago and has resulted in Benue State losing huge chunks of her farmland to Ebonyi State at the advent of colonial administration. The colonial administration set up this boundary, adjusted it several times to favour the Ibo immigration and finally set the boundary in the 1930s. This boundary is known to the border communities and is being respected by them with the exception of the Agila/ Ngbo segment. Here the Forest Reserve has been destroyed and the area is farmed.

7. Professional field work started sometime in 1999 with the use of the Agila Forest Reserve Ordinance to checkmate the protests given over the use of names of rivers like Okpinya, Idaka etc. But the work was frustrated by one of the communities. Field tracing again started between 2006-2007 and this time the whole boundary was traced/ identified. Cartographic production proved that the boundary was plotable and so could be traced on the ground. It was however discovered that one of the communities had broken the pillars which were constructed by the colonial surveyors during the early delimitation. In September 2008, the monumentation stated at Oju/ Ebonyi subsector and 1 ½ months were used. The Ezzi/ Ado subsector was met with resistance and when the Ado local government had provided all the needed logistics for the Joint Technical Team in the location including police as the Ezzi local council could not meet the requirement of the Team. The Team charged direction to Ishelu local council and completed the work at Ishelu/ Ado subsector but could not start at Agila/ Ngbo (Ado/ Ohaukwu) subsector).

8. That the Ngbo people have submitted a petition before the National Assembly, calling for among other things, a peaceful adjudication of the boundary dispute and a dialogue with the

Agila. The petition, we were told, was neither copied to the National Boundary Commission nor the Benue State government.

9. In Agila community, the team found out that the society is patrilineal and to a limited extent matrilineal in some aspects of their traditional, social and political systems. Unlike the other Districts in Idoma land, in Agila it is possible to inherit property and office from one's mother's lineage on certain prescribed conditions and situations. For instance, one can ascend to the throne of Otse Agila if he is a female descendant, and can on prescribed oath, renounce completely his patrilineal lineage and opt for his matrilineal lineage in accordance with the prescribed rites of passage.

10. The Team found out that since 1715 to 1745 main ruling houses had been established so that since then only two lineages the Osiroko and Efofu lineages have been occupying the seat of *Otse Agila*, in rotation. However, according to oral tradition, one Otse Ome and Otse Okpe from Onwa and Osudu presently regarded as non-royal kindred's respectively has at one time or the other ruled Agila chieftdom, however, no one was able to state the time frame when the Onwa and Osudu kindred's produced Otse Okpe and Otse Ome as one time District Heads of Agila. But we were told that the post of

District Head of Agila has rotated between the Osiroko and Efofu since 1715 until today.

11. The Team found that the issue of Royalty and Non-Royalty had existed in Agila as far back as the eighteenth century and nobody among the present day Agila people know when the tradition of Royal or the custom of Royal culture started in Agila.

12. The Team also found that no government since the beginning of time when Agila came into being has ever tried to find out how the operation of the traditional system until the outburst of the 1997 crisis when the Justice Puusu commission of inquiry came into existence, even then, the report of the commission is yet to be made known public and the recommendations therein.

13. During the reign of Chief Philip Onazi Agbese as the District Head, there began agitation from mainly the Non-royal group spearheaded by the Akpoge Ogbilolo political elite group for change in the Agila social and traditional authority system.

14. The Non-Royals demanded for a change with their eye on the District Headship of Agila, and the abolition of what they call the existing social structure of Royal and Non-Royal in Agila so that they too can have a go at the change and the change to be immediate, so that

the non-royal group can qualify for the post of District Head of Agila.

15. The Royals argued that such change is not feasible, unwarranted and contrary to the tradition and custom of Agila people. The royals traced their origin to Apa, Idah back to their present location. According to them all other Idoma people in the 22 Districts in Idoma do so. And that the non-royals are of female descendant of Ogwa's children are of Benin not of Apa Kingdom. That their royalty is founded on custom and tradition of Agila people.

16. The Agila conflict is often regarded by some as 'The Forgotten Crisis' as it has received little media attention. Previous efforts and attempts at managing the crisis and resolutions by state and non-state actors have not borne much positive results. Agila remains divided within itself along the so-called 'royal and non-royal' lineages and this has not helped in the efforts of resolving the boundary dispute, even with the involvement of critical institutions such as the National Boundary Commission, the state governments of Benue and Ebonyi, security agencies, churches, traditional leaders and non-governmental organizations.

17. The Team was informed that during the intra conflict many buildings were either burnt, damaged and properties looted worth millions of naira.

18. As long as the intra conflict continue to linger on, the interstate boundary dispute between the Ngbo and Agila communities in Benue and Ebonyi will also continue to strive, this is because the Ngbo people will continue to build on the fractured nature of the Agila community to drive further their desire to acquire more land for family since the so-called boundary is not inhabited by the Ngbos, but merely used for farming.

## 8.2 Challenges & Lesson Learned

The mapping exercise presented some challenges to the Team. For example, most of the cases studied are historic processes and in the case of internal crisis in Agila took place over a decade ago. Some key individuals and actors involved in the processes have since died and these events are interpreted through a historical lens informed by contemporary developments.

A number of key issues were considered under this heading, focusing on how to sustain the capacity of the networks to do peace work. During the training workshops, many cited the need for a long-term commitment to the networks working in the area of peace and conflict. They also urged donors to support capacity-building. Discussion have also centered on difficulties relating to fundraising, an essential component of sustaining the networks, as well

as the early warning mechanisms. Some participants noted that it is especially challenging to ensure funding for community-based associations and they cautioned against channelling money through the state and local government authorities.

Some of key actors interviewed during the process expressed caution against embarking upon major new initiatives without proper reflection. There is no need to “reinvent the wheel,” they said and it is important to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of previous initiatives with respect to the interstate boundary issue when designing new programs, taking the strengths and weaknesses of previous initiatives by both the state and non-state actors into account.

Training has an important role in the conflict transformation repertoire for several reasons: It can i) sensitise for conflict causes and dynamics in the environment in which one works; and ii) strengthen skills for dealing with conflict and the sensitivity for (intended and unintended) consequences of specific activities. Training local activists, training other trainers and training third-parties can, in addition, contribute to a) supporting and strengthening people who work for a shift towards constructive conflict management, b) build networks of support and

empowerment among such people who otherwise may work in isolation from each other, and c) spread sensitivity and skills to more strategically placed people, contributing to creating what is metaphorically referred to as critical mass or critical yeast. This poses a challenge for WEP as the Agila Peace process winds up: providing on-going support and follow-up to the networks. On-going, long-term financial, organisational and personal commitment on behalf of those working on the ground in terms of ensuring early warning responses would go some way to ensuring empowerment and supportive networking which are regarded as crucially important in building capacities for peace.

One other challenge that might compromise the slight gains made towards peace and development in Agila District are the high levels of poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and unemployment. Hundreds of youths across the District are still out of work. A largely number of them is seeking a living from farming, petty trading, narcotic drug peddling, and theft. Even for the few educated and gainfully employed people across Agila, knowledge and access to information and technology of the 21st Century, which could improve opportunities for personal life-style and community development, is weak. Basic computer know-how is

yet in the infancy, due mainly to a combination of factors including costs, availability and/or access. In the township of Igumale, for example, computers are mainly used on a rather small scale by the bank, and to a lesser degree, the Ado local government council.

A significant majority of tertiary-level students in most disciplines lack basic computer skills. Few students and individuals can afford to use computers and are only just beginning to explore this option. There is no real enthusiasm from all sectors to encourage people to become computer literate. Nonetheless, the mapping results revealed that there is an overwhelming demand for computer literacy among the youth across Agila striving to use this skill as a gateway to employment, to improving business opportunities,

social networks, peace building, advocacy activities, education levels and access to information about new technologies.

Getting a better grasp of the conflict situation meant going beyond the laid down Terms of Reference. Secondly, the factional nature of the Agila community portended a challenge given that the Team has to visit each community and conduct interviews/ research in the same fashion as the previous to avoid perceptions of non-neutrality and impartiality.

Another challenge that confronted the team was the illiteracy and language barrier of some of the beneficiaries during the intervention, most particularly during the training sessions, however this was mitigated through translations which slowed the process.



*Agila women leaders pose for a group photograph with WEP project staff*



## CHAPTER 9

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

As a fractured society, Agila Community faces conflict security complexity: that of having to reconcile with the Ngbo boundary disputes and the various principal actors in the intra conflict (Royals vs. Non-royals) in the interest for community development and nation building. At the same time, the leadership of the acting *Otse Agila*, Chief Michael Agbese, and indeed the whole community must be sensitive to the external (urban-rural conflict sponsors) connections with the community politics in Agila. In fact, the community must rise up to demand for developmental programmes and projects rather than the supply of arms for the destruction of the future (youth) leaders. The traditional practices which accord women less social status have to be carefully examined and reviewed in favour of women and their status. Against this background, the following recommendations are made:

1. Advocates of the historical theories of conflict are reluctant to look for sweeping analysis for all conflicts. But there is agreement among them that there are standing conditions and situations that make

violent conflicts likely to occur. Agila community, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century has long-standing problems of royals versus non-royals, though this issue was never projected the way it is today. It is this fear and suspicion which had continued for long, manifesting in various phases that culminated in this violent conflict. It is therefore recommended that, such long standing differences should be addressed with the view to removing fear and suspicion in order to avoid the re-occurrence of the ugly situation.

2. Though WEP and UNDP has been able to facilitate a meeting of the Agila elites for the first time in twelve years since the violent conflict in 1997, it is recommended that the government follow up on this process to bring about lasting peace in Agila.

3. Agila community has the most successful sons and daughters in the whole of Ado LGA, but in terms of development, Ado records as one of the least developed local councils in the whole of Benue State, providing arms and inciting the youth towards violent conflicts

destroying properties worth of millions and killing of the people will not in any way bring development to the community but would rather continue to impoverish and weakens their capacity to participate meaningfully in economic and political activities. To this end, it is recommended that, the government and indeed the prominent sons and daughters of Agila should provide strategic empowerment for their youth and women. They should be provided with basic skills and helped to acquire competences to enable them participate in economic activities in both the informal and the formal sectors of the economy. Education will also enable them to think for themselves and voice out on issues that concern them.

4. The activities of International organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the NGOs, churches and a host of others have played key roles in highlighting the conflict in Agila and also helping them to overcome their difficulties and to become integrated into the society, it is recommended that they should continue with their activities and see that women and the youth are moved to higher levels for meaningful contribution for national development through various empowerment strategies.

5. A lot of people lost their means of livelihood during the conflict given that most of them are peasant farmers, and their farm lands have been taken away without the hope of having getting it back or standing on their feet again. Such persons should be provided with the means such as micro finance for small businesses in order to sustain themselves.

6. Government should embark upon extensive rural development programme with the provision of some basic infrastructure such as rural electrification, good water system and all-season feeder roads, schools, basic health services among others. These, apart from improving on the living standard of the rural people, will also provide an enabling environment for micro-economic activities for the people.

7. Ultimately, the burden of rebuilding is the responsibility of the Government of all stakeholders but mostly on the part of the government. In order to effectively emerge from the trauma of the past twelve years, major institutional, political and social reforms are necessary to establish a culture and environment that will nurture the healing process.

8. From the information gathered in the field, we discovered that there is indiscriminate use and

possession of firearms in Agila and most of the people using these arms are under aged and not licensed. We recommend that Government sets up machinery to control the present indiscriminate use of fire arms and process of re-integration should be initiated by the Bureau of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs as soon as possible.

9. We recommend that due to the proximity of Agila to the border between Benue, Ebonyi and Enugu States, coupled with frequent clashes, there is need for government to construct a road that will give a clear demarcation between the Ngbo people and the Agila community. This will also provide the opportunity for commerce and other economic activities to resume between the communities.

10. Finally, it must be noted that, no matter what other external actors might do towards peace in Agila land, it is only the Agila people that would bring about lasting peace in their community.

## **Conclusion**

The project *Strengthening Community Based Early Warning and Conflict Monitoring Mechanism in Central States* has been one of the most challenging projects WEP has

undertaken due to its fractured nature and the dual dimension of the area under study but also the actors involved in the conflict. Again given the short period of five months for the implementation of the whole exercise was quite intensive and the gravity of issues was and is still being addressed. It is worthy of note that this has further placed WEP in a strategic position to intervene in even more complex issues and projects. The principle of neutrality must at all times prevail in any peace project and with this principle at the back of the WEP team a variety of diplomatic strategies both in the short and long term were employed towards the targeted minimum objectives.

At this point we wish to state that Governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, social and educational institutions and other civil society players need to combine their efforts to encourage real peace. The long suffering of the Agila people have heightened the international community's awareness for intervention through the UNDP in order to promote lasting peace, such an opportunity should not be wasted.

To survive as a human being is possible only through love, peaceful coexistence and harmony. And when Thanatos is ascendent, the

instinct must be to reach out to those we love, to see in them all the divinity, pity and pathos of the human and to recognize love in the lives of others even those with whom we are in conflict, love that is like our own.

It does not mean we will avoid conflict or death nor does it mean that we as distinct individuals will survive. But love, in its mystery, has its own power. It alone gives us meaning that endures. It alone allows us to embrace and cherish life. Love has the power both to

resist in our nature what we know we must resist, and to affirm what we know we must affirm. Love is the only force that finally can counter the force of death, the death instinct. One cannot go through an experience of violent conflict where loved ones are killed and one is helpless and not understand the palpable power of love, the power of that one act of reconciliation and forgiveness. We therefore call on the Agila people (Royal and Non-Royal) to unite for the sake of harmony and development.



*Participants at high level meeting of Agila Sons & Daughters, pose for a photograph with UNDP resident representative*

# Annexes

# Annexe 1

## Bibliography (Abridged)

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# Annexe 2

## Glossary

**Actors:** Whosoever (individuals, groups, and institutions) that bears part or contributes to conflict; and/or influenced by it (positively or negatively); and/or involved in handling conflict

**Advocacy:** Interventions or appeals to decision makers, power brokers, actors and other stakeholders

**Beneficiaries:** Recipients of outputs deriving from specific interventions and participants in the intervention

**Capacity Building:** Activities aimed at improving the expertise and skills of personnel in relation to the responsibilities and tasks which they will carry out

**Causes:** Such elements that contribute to grievances, they include structural (factors built into policies, structures and fabric of a society), proximate (factors that provide room for violent conflict or its escalation); and triggers (acts, events etc that set conflict off)

**Civil Society:** A realm in which citizens freely group together according to their own chosen interest. It is different from the state and market

**Conflict:** The result of parties disagreeing about the distribution of material or symbolic resources and acting on the basis of these perceived incompatibilities

**Conflict Analysis:** A comprehensive look at all aspects of a particular conflict, providing a "big picture" understanding of the profiles, dynamics, actors and causes of the conflict.

**Conflict Entrepreneur:** Unidentified individuals or groups that cause or fuel conflict for selfish end

**Conflict prevention:** Any attempt to stop conflict from happening between individuals, groups or institutions; and/or efforts that seek to halt a dispute from becoming violent through proactive means

**Conflict Sensitivity:** The awareness of the causes of historical, actual or potential conflict, and of the likelihood of further conflict and its likely severity, in terms of promoting an understanding of the interaction between the intervention and the context.

**Conflict (Violent):** Acts of open hostility. Displays of psychological or physical force to resolve disagreements unilaterally

**Context:** The environment of operation, which ranges from the micro to the macro levels, e.g. community, local government, state, country etc.

**Demand-driven:** Bottom-up or people-driven decision-making process on goods/services needed by the society

**Development:** Activities that seek to bring about and/or promote the economic, political and social condition, environmental condition, stability and the quality of life of all segments of the society

**Donor:** Philanthropists or institutions (local & international) that make available grants and other forms of financial aid or assistance to governments and civil society or groups

**Dynamics (Conflicts):** A relationship or interactions that exists between the actors in a particular conflict situation at a particular time

**Evaluation:** A one-off assessment that takes place at the end of a project, but can also be carried out as a mid project review. It is done in relation to stated goals and objectives

**Ex post factor:** After the occurrence of an event

**ex ante:** Prior to the occurrence of an event

**Programme:** A proposed plan with a medium- to long-term focus and possibly without a defined end, often incorporating strategic objectives, multiple projects and activities

**Project:** Time-bound and specific activities typically contributing to a larger programmatic objective, which are planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated in relation to the issue or issues that they seek to address

**Project Cycle:** A framework that comprises of four key phases planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

**Needs Assessment:** Pre-intervention assessment of the context in which humanitarian, development and peace-building organizations operate in order to identify entry points and plan their work

**Monitoring:** Systematic and continuous examination of a project's actual outputs and impacts during implementation

**Sectoral Approach:** A partnership between donors and government based on a government-led national

poverty reduction frame work within which there are programme priorities for specific sectors e.g. health, education etc

**Supply-led:** Top-down (paternalistic) determination of what the social needs of the people are

**Triangulation:** A mix of data gathering methods, such as desk study, qualitative surveys, expert interviews, stakeholder consultations and feedback workshops to present and discuss conclusions.

**Planning:** Act of identifying problems, explaining their causal relationship and developing effective solutions

**Goal:** Actors' long term aim or ambition

**Government:** The system or machinery that exercises rules over a given territory and people

**Implementation:** The process of realizing an objective and/or the operationalisation of an idea or proposal. It involves regular review to enable plans to be adjusted as necessary

**Indicators (conflicts):** Milestones identified in order to monitor and evaluate the interaction between a

project or intervention and conflict factors and dynamics, set down as required what to measure

**Intervention:** Policy, activity, project or programme designed to reduce or address a development need, conflict environment or potential conflict

**Management:** Supervision of the entire process of the implementation of the intervention

**Mainstreaming:** To comprise as a part. To bring about by integration or "inclusion"

**Micro:** Minute quantities, objects or values' and /or small Area.

**Meso:** Middle, moderate

**Macro:** Long, great, big, large, etc

**Peace:** Characterized by harmony, order, development, justice and mutual coexistence

**Partners (International):** Different stakeholders who are working together to achieve common goals and objectives

**Peace-building:** Strategies put in place to ensure peaceful relations and strengthen viable political, socio-economic and cultural institutions capable of mediating conflict, and to strengthen other

mechanisms that will either create or support the necessary conditions for sustained peace

**Peace-enforcement:** Operations including the use of an armed forces, or threat of such use, in order to compel combatants to cease their fighting and seek peace

**Peace keeping:** The prevention or termination of violence within or between state through the intervention of third party neutral military, police, or civilian observers

**Profile:** The characteristics of the

context within which the intervention is to take place

**Scenarios:** An actual or hypothetical assessment/projection of what is/will happen next in a existing time frame

**Sector:** A part or division of (e.g. national economy, private sector, public sector, health sector)

**Situation Analysis:** An analysis of the state of affairs in a given place and with regards to some phenomena about which information is sought as a basis for action

# Annexe 3

## **Summary Report of Project Activities**

The realisation of key objectives and the overall aim of the intervention by Women Environmental Programme (WEP) lay in the implementation of specific project activities. These ranged from making prior contacts with the project beneficiaries, information sharing workshops following the conflict mapping exercise, high-level meetings and two training sessions. In this section, we present summary reports of these activities to give an insight into the process and the results achieved.

### **Preliminary Conflict Assessment**

In July 2009, WEP Project Team made contacts with some critical stakeholders in Ado Local Government Area and selected some of the beneficiaries to serve on the Project Implementation Committee (PIC). The aim was to brief them of the project and seek their support and partnership. Those who were met during this period included the leadership of the Ado local government council, traditional leaders as well as women and youth leaders in Agila (across the divides). Concrete achievements at the beginning of this process was the hand of support that was extended to WEP as well as the positive disposition to divulge some

information that gave the Team a deeper insight into the nature of the conflict, the intricacies and dynamics and the identification of some critical actors to meet during the mapping exercise, and the formation of the PICs that was highly gender balanced. In view of the fractioned character of Agila there was need for the Team to be balanced in its approach in dealing with each of the communities.

### **Information Sharing Workshop**

In order to critically validate the findings made during the conflict mapping exercise in Agila and develop strategies for finding lasting solutions to the conflict situation as well as promote elements of dialogue and conflict prevention, an interactive Information Sharing Workshop was organised. The workshop was held at Makurdi, 18-19 September 2009. Participants included representatives of the aggrieved parties in Agila community and the larger section of Ado Local Government Area: elders and traditional leaders, women and youth leaders, media representatives and officials of the Ado local council.

Also invited to the workshop also was the Benue State Surveyor General and a representative of UNDP. It is instructive to note that

even though they had desired observer status to the workshop, they unwittingly got drawn into guiding the delicate dialogue and discussions that took place during the workshop.

The choice of Makurdi as venue for the workshop was informed by the polarised situation in Agila, occasioned by the internal crisis that had divided the community into two major factions (and another splinter one) since 1997, could not permit holding the workshop in any of the splinter-communities. This matter was discussed with UNDP and agreement was reached to hold the workshop in the Benue State capital at an additional cost to UNDP.

The workshop's technical structure was basically a presentation of the

findings of the conflict mapping exercises. However, it provided an opportunity to initiate a peace process between the factions of Agila Community through rebuilding relationships, reconciliation, compromise and consensus at all levels; from the traditional leaders, women groups to the youths. The aim was not only uniting the factions to enable to engage in a more proactive and positive way the boundary dispute with their Ngbo neighbours, but also in ensuring that there is fertile ground for development of the community that has suffered neglect and degradation over the years while the intra-conflict lingers. The project as implemented by WEP was careful not to leave out any faction in the process, as neglecting any would make the possibility of the conflict re-emerging very real.



*Participants, resource persons, WEP project staff all pose for a group photograph during one of the training sessions*

During the workshop, a closed-door meeting was arranged and held with actors representing the two major factions in Agila. Present at the meeting were selected traditional leaders, the Ado LGA Chairman and a member of his Council, a youth and women representative, the Benue State Surveyor General, the UNDP representative, and the WEP Team.

Issues discussed included the question of who becomes the *Otse Agila*, the lingering divide among the Agila and how this impacts on their collective confrontation of the boundary dispute with the Ngbo. Each party was able to discuss the issues frankly and openly. The need for restraint, healing and reconciliation and a change in body language was advocated. The Chairman of Ado LGA called for self-discipline and calm among the traditional rulers. He stated that leaders must be able to make sacrifices for peace and look for a best way out of the quagmire. He said he would support and contribute to any initiatives that would bring back peace to Agila. He said it was important to forget the past and proffer solutions to be able to forge ahead. On his part, Prof. David Ker (OON) called the meeting a unique and historical opportunity to improve the current situation through sustained interaction and a change of body language among the major parties. Once this was done, the followers would expectedly

change their ways for the better too. To chart a new way forward and for whatever wrong that happened in the past among the groups, the UNDP representative apologised to the factions of Agila in the interest of peace, he said this is no sacrifice too much to pay for peace to reign. He called on the leaders to resolve that whoever ignites or provokes others to violence will incur the wrath of the Agila nation and the entire society. He called for enhanced consultations between the leaders of Agila.

The Surveyor General of Benue State, Surveyor Zacharias Ade, appreciated the contribution of everyone in the room in making peace a reality. According to him, a house divided cannot stand and makes the process of boundary demarcation daunting. He appealed to the Agila communities to unite and agree among themselves and encourage harmonious existence and exchange visits. To make a symbolic sign of peace, he called the two traditional leaders who were present at the closed-door meeting to together lift up the Executive Director of WEP who was on her knees pleading to the factions for peace to reign in the community. This was done to the delight of all.

Part of the strategies employed and practical steps taken for peace to reign in Agila during the workshop included the formation of networks by the women and youth groups.

## **S y m b o l i c   A c t i o n s Ceremonial Sweeping Out Conflict by Women in Agila Land**

Following the resolution by the Agila people during the two-day Information Sharing Workshop organized WEP with support from UNDP, the women of both communities (Apa-Agila and Main Agila town) decided to come together on Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2009 under the Agila Women Unite for Peace to carry out a peace sensitization exercise featuring a symbolic sweeping of the entire community. According to the women, this symbolic sweeping of the community will serve as a mark to cleanse both the Royal and non-Royal lineages, who are the genesis of the internal crisis that erupted Agila since 1997, of evil.

The event commenced at 10 a.m. with the arrival of the women group from ApaAgila and were received by their Agila counterpart. The reception of women from Apa-Agila was warm and emotional as tears flowed down the cheeks of many who had not seen their siblings and relations for over a decade

The sweeping exercise lasted about six hours as the women joyfully sang and danced throughout the community while praying and sweeping. It is important to note that about 300 women turned out for this

activity alongside the youths of both communities who had also arranged to hold a meeting the same day to encourage and show solidarity for the women.

The women alongside the WEP Team also paid a courtesy call on the council of elders who coincidentally had their meeting going on during the exercise. It is also important to state that prior to this day the women of both communities had come together to form a body and elect their executives. These executives were presented to the council of elders who advised and admonished them to uphold virtues that would indeed bring about lasting peace in the communities. The WEP team leader assured the elders of the felicitations of UNDP and assured them of the support to ensure peace is restored and sustained in Agila.

The symbolic sweeping of the community coming to end, the women gathered and for the first time in more than a decade refreshed themselves to the amazement of some of the men in the community who watched from a distance while a good number identified with them. Amongst the men who identified with the women were Chief Otokpa Edeh (Main Agila), Chief Obande (Apa-Agila) and Chief Michael Agbese.

The occasion also witnessed the



presence of media practitioners,, especially the Manager Radio Benue (Zone C) substation.

When interviewed, the President of Agila Women Unite for Peace expressed her profound gratitude to WEP and UNDP and stated that her joy knew no bounds as she had long waited for that day. She assured the WEP team of her determination to ensure and promote lasting peace and unity amongst the women in the community as she also said she lacked words to express her joy and appreciation to God, for such a timely intervention.

Chief Ede, while expressing his happiness, went further to state that more still needed to be done most especially as peace had returned to the community. He emphasized infrastructural development as a major way to ensure that peace remains in the community. This according to him would engage the youths and indeed the entire community and keep them busy giving them little or no time to engage in conflicts.

### **Symbolic Sweeping out Conflict: Second Round**

The second round of Sweeping out Conflict in Agila by Women Unite for Peace in Agila took place on 10th October 2009 at Apa-Agila. The activity is one of the resolutions by Agila men and women as part of the

peace-building and reconciliation process. The sweeping was carried out by both Agila and Apa-Agila women with the youths and community leaders participating.

In his opening remarks Hon. Ocheme, former Vice Chairman Ado LGA, stated that UNDP's intervention in the Agila crisis is timely. He further said that apart from the conflict that Agila is experiencing in recent years, water is another problem in both Agila and Apa-Agila, though the quality of water is good, the terrain is made up of weak clay soil that does not retain water. In terms of diseases, Hon. Ocheme said Agila used to experience guinea worm epidemics, which have reduced as a result of intervention by government through the Water Environment and Sanitation (WES) unit of Ado LGA with the support of Water Aid and in which WEP is also building the capacity of the communities under Community Total Led Sanitation (CLTS).

The acting Otse Agila, Chief Mike Agbese, granted an interview to one of the journalists present. One of such questions was after the experience sharing workshop, how did the chief assess the behaviour of his people? Chief Agbese in response said that change is evident especially in terms of interaction, even at the peak of the conflict, the



*Following the symbolic cleansing, Agila women call on the traditional leaders*

Apa-Agila people who lived along the only major road linking the two communities did not molest any person from the other side of the divide, as they are considered themselves brothers and sisters.

The sweeping commenced afterwards, covering a distance of about three kilometres.

The Chairlady of Women Unite for Peace in Agila stated that women are rallying points for any development, be it political, social or economical, so women should consider the peace process as a baby. She reaffirmed that this is because every woman knows, when, where and how to talk to her baby as well as their husbands, it is women that will make this process successful.

Chief Agbese, in his closing remarks, appreciated the efforts of

UNDP and WEP for this wonderful initiative. He further stated that the community members trekked for about three kilometres, which was a wonderful thing. He equally stated that people should change their idea of using their resources for buying arms to fight their brothers; instead they should concentrate their resources to sponsor their children or relatives in schools. He equally solicited UNDP to assist in tackling the poor infrastructural base of Agila. Anybody who wants to fight and the conflict to linger should use his or her own children, he advised.

Chief Agbese stated that since peace has been restored in Agila, he is presenting this request to WEP and UNDP that the problem of water supply could be achieved because the youths' are ready to ensure the sustenance of the project.

On how to monitor the peace process, Chief Agbese said Agila people have their ways of doing things; the elders, youths, women and children have their punishment whenever one of them commits any offence, so when UNDP eventually disengages, Agila people should be able to continue from where UNDP stops in ensuring that peace is maintained and sustained.

Mrs. Elizabeth Jeiyol, who represented the Executive Director of WEP, in her remarks stated that what she observed in Agila made her believe that even if UNDP were to pull out, the youths and women will continue doing things that will empower them and will have something to sustain the peace process, as sustainable peace in Agila will stimulate development partners to assist the community rebuild its decayed infrastructure.

### **High Level Meeting of Prominent Sons & Daughters of Agila**

A High Level meeting involving a number of prominent sons and daughters of Agila extraction was held on Tuesday 20 October 2009 at the United Nations House, Abuja, under the aegis of WEP and UNDP.

Although not initially planned for during the projects conception, the meeting was deemed necessary by both UNDP and WEP as it became imperative to bring major

stakeholders, parties and actors involved in the Agila peace process for frank discussions on the issues, thus providing grounds for convergence and resolution of the bone of contention which is the royals versus the non-royals.

Involved in facilitating the meeting was the Benue State Government through the offices of the Deputy Governor, HRH Oche Idoma of Idoma Land, the Special Advisers on Conflict Resolution and Security. The Benue State Government sponsored its officials as well as members of the State House of Assembly and some community members to participate in the meeting. The chairman of Ado Local Government led the Council team comprising officials and staff to the meeting. The meeting opened with a prayer in both English and Idoma languages.

### **Opening Remarks by UNDP Representatives**

Mr. Matthew Alao of the UNDP emphasized the need to design a lasting peace process in Agila and in planning strategies for development. Giving a broad overview of the project, he stated that the purpose was to develop and test a pilot conflict early warning system and a rapid-response mechanism in Agila, however, the scenario changed when the intervention started.

The proliferation of arms in the conflict area was a matter of concern and he therefore called on delegates to frankly discuss issues involved to ensure the success of the Agila peace process. He stated that demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of former combatants is government business and a situation where the government of Benue State is fully involved in the whole processes that would lead to healing of wounds and bring about lasting peace is highly recommended. He appealed to conflict merchants to channel their resources to the development of the area instead of sponsoring crises and violence. Some critical questions were asked of the government and other stakeholders on how to resolve the crisis and other key issues.

In his comments, Dr. Abiodun Onadipe (UNDP) stated UNDP's interest in the process (as enunciated by Mr. Mathew Alao) and hoped the meeting would help the process succeed. In dealing with the resolution of the inter-communal conflict in the area, it was necessary for the Agila people to do away with internal frictions and divides. The internal dimension of the crisis was an unintended result of the project but then its management will impact positively on resolving the external conflict. He stated that healing,

dialogue and communication can only begin when people tell each other hard truths and that each person is open to accepting certain truths and facts. He appealed for frankness, openness, understanding and willingness on the side of the parties to forgive each other.

He said conflicts have devastating effects and that rebuilding takes a long time and a lot of resources. A climate of peace is a necessary condition for development and the key actors and stakeholders should all work towards this. He said the role of women in the process is commendable and that they needed the support of all and sundry.

**Opening Statement by Priscilla Achakpa, Executive Director WEP**

Ms. Achakpa traced a brief history of the consultancy service WEP is providing to UNDP. The desire to make a positive change propelled WEP to apply for the consultancy and intervene in Agila. She went further to explain how the project started with the help of UNDP, how WEP was selected, how mapping of the conflict was conducted in Agila community, assuming that the crisis was just a boundary dispute between the Agila and Ngbo community, but discovering that there was a more debilitating conflict within the Agila community. These discoveries were

startling to say the least, particularly on the internal nature of the conflict. As a result, WEP sought UNDP's permission to expand the Terms of Reference and deepen the level of intervention. She informed that the main purpose of bringing the prominent actors in the Agila conflict to Abuja was to facilitate honest dialogue in breaking the impasse that followed the violent clashes over a decade ago, as well as beginning a lasting process towards resolving the boundary dispute with the Ngbos of Ebonyi State.

She went further to briefly assess the project thus far, stating the process WEP went through to bring the Agila community together, like the Information Sharing Workshop, the subsequent formation of the women and youth groups. She listed some of the few activities that were being carried out at Agila community. She commended the Surveyor General of Benue State on his enormous efforts and support towards peace-building in Agila community. She informed the participants that the peace-building exercise in Agila was one of the numerous activities WEP was going to undertake in other parts of Benue State.

### **Benue State Government Delegation**

*i. Special Adviser to the Benue State Government on Conflict Resolution*

The special adviser informed participants that the Benue State Governor and the Deputy Governor (who chairs the Benue State Boundary sub-committee) sent their good tidings to the UNDP and WEP for facilitating a meeting where critical issues on peaceful co-existence would be discussed, went further to state that the administration of Governor Gabriel Suswam is very much disposed to the intervention in ensuring peace in any part of the state and the work of non-state actors is critical to the process and very much welcomed. He commended UNDP and WEP for the attempt at resolving the disputes in Agila.

He admitted that the state government had met in the past with representatives of Ebonyi State government in the attempt to resolve the boundary dispute between the two states and that the Agila/Ngbo axis had proved to be a difficult one. Certain challenges marred the field work of the Joint Technical Team that was constituted by the National Boundary Commission. He said it was therefore imperative for the people of Agila to resolve whatever differences they had among themselves as it is a prerequisite to negotiating with the Ngbo community.

*ii. Permanent Secretary,*

*Internal Affairs, Office of the Deputy Governor*

Benue State is vulnerable to different kinds of crises. Efforts in prevention have had results of varying degrees so the efforts of WEP in resolving the Agila conflict will be a test case that could be used in other conflict locations in the state. He appealed to WEP to ensure proper documentation and transmission of project findings and lessons learned.

On the issue of infrastructural development in Agila, the Permanent Secretary confirmed that work was in progress on the Otukpo-Agila road through Igumale. The National Boundary Commission had also requested for the completion of this road and the presence of community projects along the border. On disarmament and integration of former combatants, he said that this was an issue that could not be handled by the state government alone but would require the involvement of other stakeholders notably UNDP and he called on WEP to incorporate this in the final report.

*iii. Representative of Ochi'Idoma*

The representative of the Ochi'Idoma Elias Ikoyi Obekpa said His Royal Highness was extremely delighted with the recent development in respect of peace in

Agila. According to him, everyone was desirous of peace and called on delegates to be very open in discussing issues that divide the community. He invoked the wrath of the gods of Idomaland on any person working against peace in Agila. He thanked UNDP and WEP for the particular interest in Ado Local Government. He said peace would continue to reign in Agila land and offered prayers for the continuous peace in Agila land.

*iv. Representatives of Youth and Women Groups*

Both representatives were grateful especially for the steps taken so far, their participation in the peace process and peace-building activities, and pledged their commitment to continue working towards peace in Agila. While the youth leader thanked the UNDP and WEP for the intervention in the crisis and bringing peace to Agila community, thus addressing the use of illicit drugs and hard drinks by youths, the women leader said that the women will strive to embrace peace by talking to their husbands, their children and among themselves and to work harder to make peace within Agila community a reality.

*V. Chief Samuel Edeh Otokpa (Clan Head, Agila)*

Chief Samuel Edeh Otokpa is one of the clan heads in the non-royal

segment of Agila. He called for a new pro-peace mindset in Agila. He said elites should be part of the healing process in the community and not be responsible for division. He decried the lack of infrastructure in Agila and called on the government to do more in this respect.

*vi. Chief Michael Agbese (Ortse Agila, Acting District Head of Agila)*

He declared that elders are contributors or stakeholders in any situation. He asked a critical question on whether peace should return to Agila and the answer was a resounding YES from the participants. He said bickering should give way to constructive dialogue.

*vii. Chief Dan Agbese*

His statement was two-fold: first in English and a longer version in the local Agila dialect. He expressed personal delight in meeting those that have began the peace and healing processes in Agila, a community that has witnessed internal and external upheavals. He recalled his personal efforts at different times in ensuring that the crisis within his community did not escalate but with minimal success. He pledged his support to ensuring sustainable peace and reconciliation in Agila. He said initially he was apprehensive as to the success of the

peace process when WEP approached him for discussions on the internal dimension of the conflict, but the outcome of the information Sharing Workshop in Makurdi, the process of neutrality in which WEP had undertaken in the whole process but most especially the success stories that had come of the process made him have more confidence in the organization of UNDP and WEP, which made him to be more involved in the process. Of particular interest was the fact that since the intra conflict in 1997, UNDP through WEP was the only organization that had been able to bring them (Royals versus Non-royals) together for dialogue and that it was not an accident that Agila was chosen as a pilot location for peace process by the UNDP. He asked for patience as the results of the peace-building efforts would be slow in coming and added that peace building was not an easy task.

*viii. Representative of Chief Mike Onoja*

The representative sang in the local dialect before making his presentation. According to him, the negatives should give way to the positives stating that enough was enough. There was the abundance of both natural and human resources in Agila and that if the community was united, anything could be achieved. For 'outsiders' (UNDP and WEP) to take the bull by the

horns in tackling the Agila issue, then he Chief Mike Onoja was committed completely in giving his full support.

He stated without equivocation that the resolution of the problem rested between him (Chief Mike Onoja) and Chief Dan Agbese. They are however the best of friends who communicate with each other and both are looking forward to establishing peace in Agila Community and that as a person he will stand by every move made towards peace.

*ix. Chairman of Ado Local Govt. Area*

The Chairman Hon. James Edeh stated once more that a resolution of the internal and external conflict in Agila would be a tremendous boost to his administration. He appreciated the approach taken by UNDP and WEP in resolving this and pledged the support of the local government in the process.

*x. Surveyor General of Benue State*

Surveyor Zacharias Ade gave a summary of findings on the Benue/ Ebonyi interstate boundary issue. According to him, there exists a conflict on land boundary between Benue and Ebonyi State (Benue/ Ebonyi interstate boundary). This conflict dates back to 1935 when the district re-organisation in the Kabba,

Munchi and Muri provinces was reported stabilized.

The colonial masters noticing the stabilisation (rate of migration/ unit time being constant) decided to establish the Agila Forest Reserve Ordinance of 1959 in the Northern Nigerian Gazette. The southern portions of the boundary of this Forest Reserve coincided with the boundary between the southern and northern provinces which metamorphosed from the southern/ northern protectorates established by colonial administrators.

The Legal Notice 126 of 1954 defined this boundary making the Agila Forest Reserve Ordinance as a check document against anybody contesting with Ado local government area on all the four subsectors of the boundary.

*Field Work*

- Work started sometime in 1999 with the use of this forest reserve ordinance to checkmate the protests given by the Ngbos over the use of names of rivers like Okpinya, Idaka etc. Here the Ngbos frustrated the work.

- Field tracing again started between 2006 and 2007 and this time the whole boundary was traced/ identified. Cartographic production proved that the boundary was plottable and so could be traced on the ground. It was however discovered



that the Ngbos had broken the pillars which were constructed by the colonial surveyors during the early delimitation.

- In 2008, more precisely on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2008, the monumentation started at Oju/ Ebonyi subsector and 1 ½ months were used. The Ezzi/ Ado subsector was met with resistance and when the Ado local government has provided all the needed logistics for the Joint Technical Team in the location including police as the Ezzi local could not meet the requirement of the Team. The team charged direction to Ishelu local government and completed the work at Ishelu/ Ado subsector but could not start at Agila/ Ngbo (Ado/ Ohaukwu) subsector.

The Surveyor General advised the Agila people not to be deceived by anybody claiming to come and dialogue with the community on the boundary problem as government has taken over the matter. He said no form of dialogue or signing of any document given to Agila community should be accepted because the government might encounter a problem in helping in the boundary issues. He also appealed to Agila community to be very careful at this point because their enemies might take advantage of the fractured nature of Agila.

Adding his voice to the Surveyor

General's advice, the Permanent Secretary added that there is a well established boundary; therefore the government is working towards making its clear definition a possibility. He said all efforts should be made both by the government and the Agila community to work together and not complicate matters.

### *Discussions and Comments*

Samuel Onazi from Agila community appreciated the efforts of UNDP and WEP for bringing peace in Agila. He also said that everyone should avoid self denial and need to admit their faults in the entire episode asking for genuine desire for peace on the side of everyone. He expressed his doubt that everyone present at the meeting was sincere on transmitting the message of peace to Agila community. He asked WEP some critical questions:

- Was there any mechanism put in place to address issues of ensuring peace in Agila?
- If everyone has agreed they had wronged someone, and then which should be pursued as the best move forward?

In reply the Executive Directive of WEP said the problem of Agila has been recognized, therefore the selection process for participants in the different phases of the project was purposely made to reach everyone. She said in every problem

there is a solution and that any conflict is resolved amicably depending on the way and manner it is handled. She said the responsibility rest on the district head of Agila to continue to ensure peace as some level of differences and disputes cannot be resolved house to house by WEP; there are strategies the community could employ in solving these problems.

In reply Chief Ede Otokpa also said that the selection process was done properly because every clan from the Main Agila was represented.

Hon. Ogaba Ede thanked the efforts of all the chiefs and the government and said that any society that is built on inequality cannot guarantee the presence of peace. He said the fundamental issues on inequality should be addressed in Agila as several government officials has been sent to resolve the conflict in Agila but with no success, therefore the issue of non-royals and royals should be seriously addressed in other to avoid future occurrences of conflict.

Princess Orkar said that Agila should make among them an example of peace. She cited an example of America who finally elected Barack Obama (a black African American) as president. She said that everyone has their grievances but it is with God's

intervention that UNDP and WEP had come to their rescue. She said the peace issue should be taken seriously and appealed to everyone to accept the challenge of bringing peace to Agila. She commended the Agila women for a job well done on the formation of their association, the fasting and prayers, symbolic cleansing of conflict in Agila. In support of the women's initiative, she pledged N20, 000 for the women unite for peace in Agilaland.

Chief Mrs Regina Agbese said that there are two different people who were present, some to just listen and others to listen and accept their faults. She advised the Agila people to forgive each other and proposed suggestions to help in the development of the community. She also supported the women initiatives for peace by donating N30, 000 cash towards the registration organization with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) tagged Women Unite for Peace in Agilaland.

Hon. Mrs Rose Ameh, a member of the Ado Local Government Council, advised that there was no point in pointing accusing fingers and blaming each other, whether as royal or non-royal, everyone is equal and therefore should work together towards peace and begged government support in the whole peace process.

It was observed that poverty is the tap root for all problems. However there is the need for planned development in which the youths and women will be empowered rather than the divide and rule strategy which currently is in place.

*Developing of Communiqué & Resolution for Peace in Agila*

At the end of the meeting's exhaustive deliberations and discussions, a communiqué and a statement was issued and adopted in plenary. The text of the Communiqué is presented below:

The Chairman of the Ado LGA expressed happiness and gratitude towards the success of this program and donated the sum of N100,000 in support of the peace process.

The youth leader requested for funds for the registration of the youth network that has been

formed. He also spoke about the need to empower the youths for enhanced livelihoods.

*UNDP Resident Representative's Comments & Closure*

The Resident Representative of the UNDP acknowledged the presence of delegates to the high level meeting. He stated that the issue of peace-building was an important one for UNDP not only in Nigeria but for the rest of the world as it pertains to development. He appreciated the trust Agila had in the UN and also thanked Agila and the Benue State government for supporting the peace process. He informed participants that Benue state is one of the six states in Nigeria that the UN is focusing on and would go extra length in supporting the peace initiatives. The meeting was officially closed by UNDP Resident Representative.

*The High Level Meeting of stakeholders on the Agila internal crisis was held in the UNDP hall, UN House Abuja to discuss at the higher level the way forward on the road map to peace in Agila land. The Benue State delegation was led by Hon. Titus Madugu while the Agila community was led by Chief Michael Agbese. The Ochi Idoma was represented while the UNDP was led in delegation by Dr. Aboidun Onadipe. Ms. Priscilla Achakpa led the delegation of Women Environmental Programme. The Chairman of Ado Local Government was in attendance. After exhaustive deliberations, the following resolutions were reached:*

1. The meeting commended the efforts of the Benue State government in resolving the boundary dispute with Ebonyi State and requested that the state should not relent in her efforts at the ongoing demarcation and monumentation exercise.

2. There must be internal unity and peace between the community members to enable resolution between the Agila and Ngbo to be addressed.
3. The issue of the royal and the non-royal as a conflict in Agila should be referred to Idoma area traditional for consideration. The meeting frowned at the way the conflict has taken the community back and sued for arrest of this situation to allow development to come back to Agila.
4. The federal and state governments are requested to consider efforts at developing Agila. Such development as roads like the Agila Igumale and Agila Ngbo are of paramount importance as they are tied to the security of Agila people.
5. There should be conscious efforts by the state government to increase staff strength to the government school and the community school in the area to boost the quality education.
6. The meeting resolved also that the Local government chairman should grade the road to Agila from Igumale and update the medical facilities in the Agila clinic and attach a youth corp doctor there.
7. No part of Agila community should be fooled into signing an agreement with the people of Ngbo on the interstate boundary.
8. The state government should repost a judge back to the grade II customary court now that peace has returned.

UNDP is urged to show case Agila as best practice in the resolution of crisis.



*UNDP Resident Representative addressing participants at the high level meeting at UN house, Abuja*

# Annexe 4

## Terms of Reference

### PROGRAMME: Governance and Human Rights

### ACTIVITY: Strengthening Community Based Early Warning and Conflict Monitoring Mechanism in Central States

#### **Background Information:**

Nigeria faces significant challenges to its development efforts in the form of sporadic eruptions of violence in various parts of the country, such as the Niger Delta and the central states. These episodes of violence over resources and identity expressed in Nigeria is common to many developing societies undergoing rapid change and may be linked to the fact that the development process inevitably causes conflicts, as significant resources and relations between groups and sectors are redefined, and new power equations established.

In recent years, Nigeria has brought significant resources to bear on addressing violent internal conflicts, including a strong recognition on the part of federal authorities that these conflicts could threaten Nigeria's cohesion and stability if left unaddressed. Federal and state governments have been working closely with civil society to support a number of peace-making efforts in these conflict flashpoints. However, mistrust of officialdom on the part of

local actors as well as deep-seated divisions among the latter, have hampered these efforts.

While a number of laudable efforts have been launched at the local level to mediate an end to the protracted inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence, these efforts have yet to coalesce into an infrastructure for sustained management and mitigation of perennial disputes over land, resources, indigenes and settles issues, representation and local rights that manifest as political or religious conflicts.

Central Nigerian states have been especially prone to violence in recent years, largely along communal or religious lines. These conflicts over land, pasture, boundary demarcation, chieftaincy rights, have particularly affected Plateau, Nassarawa, Taraba, Bauchi, Kaduna and Benue states.

#### **Justification:**

The relationship between development and conflict has long been established. Violent conflict invariably impacts on national

development through destruction and vandalism of property and loss of lives ultimately deepening the level of poverty and lowering the country's human development indices. Thus development and peacebuilding must be regarded as integral parts of the social, political and economic realities in Nigeria. Minimizing conflict and sustaining peace are imperative, albeit difficult tasks that require the support of everybody especially CSOs with the required experience, skills and capacity to engage public institutions and officials. Government has taken initiatives to address violent conflict but recent developments in Plateau state have shown that peacebuilding cannot be left to government alone.

### **Purpose**

The main purpose of this intervention is to develop and test a pilot conflict early warning system as well as a rapid-response mechanism in the Agila community in Benue state sharing a contentious border with the neighboring community in Ebonyi state, which has resulted in violent clashes and heightened insecurity.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the intervention are:

- To support the identified community to effectively utilize

skills and tools to track, monitor and rapidly respond to conflict in their locality;

- To ensure the effective implementation of the conflict early warning and response system in the community;
- To enhance effective partnership between CBOs in this community and officials at the state and local government levels in responding to conflict in the pilot community.
- Working with and through traditional authorities, and amplifying the voices of women and young people, facilitate processes that allow communities affected by conflict to play a prominent role in resolution.

### **Specific Tasks**

- Identification/mapping of conflict issues/factors/actors in the community.
- Develop/adapt training manual and organize peacebuilding skills workshops for CBOs / government officials/media. Focus may include conflict mediation training community workshops and/or arbitration forums.
- Facilitate the establishment and testing of an early warning and early response system for

- the community.
- Activities and processes that strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations as facilitators of peacebuilding processes;
- **Set up a peacebuilding network of CBOs/individuals in the community.**

### **Reporting and Deliverables**

The CSO is required to submit the following reports:

- **Inception Report submitted** not later than 2 weeks after commencement of the assignment. The report will outline understanding of the Terms of Reference, overview of methodology and data analysis that are planned to be used along with the work plan, describing how work will be scheduled and providing milestones for completion of key activities.
- Monthly Reports submitted no later than one week after the end of the month describing activities undertaken, successes recorded, challenges faced (and how they were addressed or mitigated) and lessons learned within the reporting period.
- Draft Final Report submitted within the time frame of the assignment and not later than week 12 of the assignment. The

report will describe work carried out and results obtained. The CSO will present findings to UNDP and based on feedback from UNDP, the CSO will provide a final report.

- **Final Report** within 2 (two) weeks after receiving comments on the draft final report. The final report will describe the overall work carried out and results answering to the objectives (1-4) stated in 2 above.

### **Project Outputs/Deliverables:**

- Conflict issues in the community mapped and documented
- Training manual developed and tested
- Early warning and early response mechanism developed and tested in the community.
- Identified CBOs/NGOs trained on how to monitor and respond to conflict issues in the community
- Existence of peacebuilding network/individuals in the community.
- C o m p e t e n t CBOs/NGOs/Individuals to monitor/respond to conflict issues within the community.

### **Qualifications:**

Interested CSOs must have:

- Substantive and technical expertise of not less than 10 years in one or more of the following areas:
    - Conflict analysis and assessment.
    - Facilitating multi-stakeholder national/local dialogues for tension reduction.
    - Building capacities to manage/prevent/reduce conflict.
    - Conflict sensitive programming.
  - Proven ability to train, build capacity and provide timely policy advice
  - Proven strong networking and advocacy ability
  - **Good knowledge of the north central zone, including the political, economic and social dimensions, and their relation to the main engines of conflict in the zone.**
- Duration:** 3 months



# Annexe 5

## **Guide for Discussions & Interviews**

Understanding the Conflict: What is about? History and Root Causes, positions and interests at stake, dimensions of conflict; what resources are at stake?

Understanding the Parties: Who are they? What is their base of authority and influence of leadership? Are there people who are benefiting from the conflict?

Understanding the Larger Context: Identify indigenous efforts & institutions for managing conflict

### **The Context**

Geographical location of the conflict and particularly its regional setting Demographical details (social and cultural distinctions that exist and the conditions of life that influence the conflict) Analysis of economic and developmental trends in the conflict area

### **History**

What is the conflict's history? There is need to develop a time chart for the conflict, outlining its duration, significant dates, periods of conflict escalation, mediation attempts, and any other event of significance.

#### *Root Causes*

- Identify the events that triggered the conflict
- Historical, political, social, economic, cultural dimensions of the conflict

- Underlying tensions that may have provoked the conflict

### **Parties**

Identification of all parties involved in the conflict

### **Issues**

What fundamental issues define the conflict?

### **Phases**

What are the critical phases in the escalation of the conflict?

### **External Influences**

The external influences can be many and varied. These influences can be broadly divided into those that feed into the conflict and those that work to alleviate it. In the mapping process it is necessary to know about the external influences that impact negatively or positively on a conflict.

### **Effects**

What has been the effect of the conflict and its impact on development? Economic, political, social and psychological

### **Women and Youths**

How have women/ youths experienced the conflict? What happened to them?  
How were the elderly affected by the conflict?

# Annexe 6

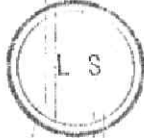
## Archival Documents

B 357

Supplement to Nigeria Gazette No. 53, Vol. 41, 30th September, 1954—Part B

L.N. 126 of 1954

### THE NIGERIA (CONSTITUTION) ORDER IN COUNCIL, 1951 The Northern Region, Western Region and Eastern Region (Definition of Boundaries) Proclamation, 1954



By His Excellency, SIR JOHN STUART MACPIERSON, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Nigeria.

J. S. MACPIERSON  
Governor

*Date of Commencement : 30th September, 1954*

WHEREAS by paragraph (a) of sub-section (2) of section 5 of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1951, it is provided that the Governor, acting in his discretion, may by Proclamation, with the approval of a Secretary of State, define and from time to time vary the boundaries of any Region ;

AND WHEREAS the existing boundaries of each Region are defined in divers instruments made between the year 1915 and the year 1951 ;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to define the boundaries of each Region in a single Proclamation, but without varying the same ;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN STUART MACPIERSON, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Nigeria, with the approval of a Secretary of State do proclaim, and it is hereby proclaimed, as follows—

1. This Proclamation may be cited as the Northern Region, Western Region and Eastern Region (Definition of Boundaries) Proclamation, 1954.

2. (1) The boundaries of the Northern Region are hereby defined as being those set out in the First Schedule to this Proclamation. First Schedule.

(2) The boundaries of the Western Region are hereby defined as being those set out in the Second Schedule to this Proclamation. Second Schedule.

(3) The boundaries of the Eastern Region are hereby defined as being those set out in Parts I and II of the Third Schedule to this Proclamation. Third Schedule.

GIVEN under my hand and the Public Seal of Nigeria this 9th day of September, 1954.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

#### FIRST SCHEDULE

Boundaries of the Northern Region  
North. The northern frontier of Nigeria  
East. The eastern frontier of Nigeria



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SECTOR K—*continued*

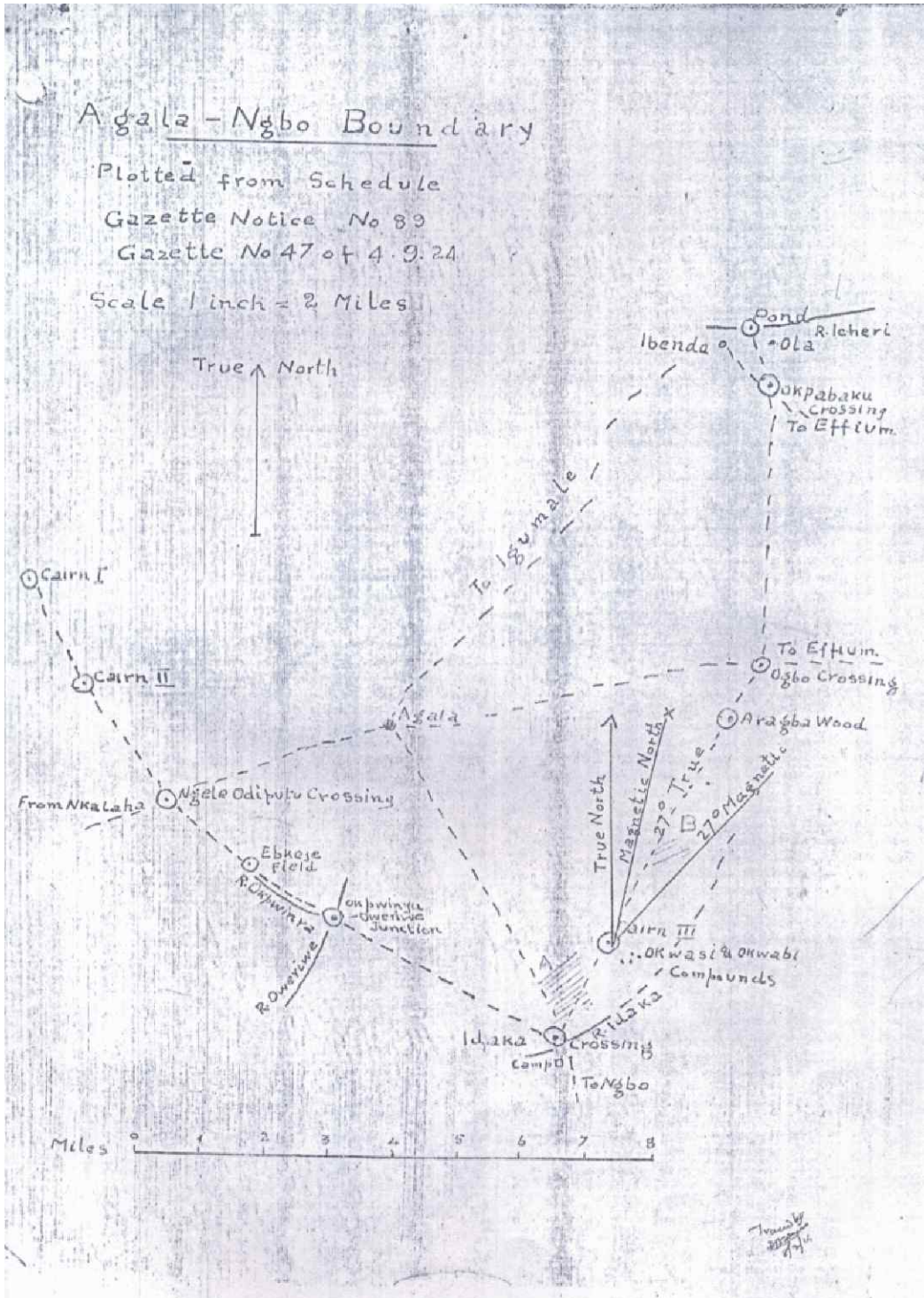
village of Echichopu in the Northern Region and the villages of Amuogbu and Inyi in the Eastern Region; thence in a south-easterly direction for a distance of 1,980 feet to a post marking the junction of the village areas of Ako and Utabona in the Northern Region with the village of Amala in the Eastern Region; thence in a southerly direction for approximately 1,980 feet to a post on the Obolo-Okwoga road; thence in a south-easterly direction to a post on the Oba-Amala path marking the boundary of the villages of Amala and Obolo; thence continuing in the same direction for an approximate distance of two miles to a point on the Obolo-Okpudu path approximately 660 feet south-east of the River Ayube; thence in a south-easterly direction for an approximate distance of 1,980 feet to the River Abiamadu; thence following this river for about 2,000 feet to a post on its right bank; thence in an easterly direction for a distance of approximately 2,970 feet to a post on the Obolo-Ipiegi path; thence in a southerly direction for an approximate distance of 4,620 feet to the confluence of the Rivers Ojaw and Addor; thence following the latter river downstream for approximately 4,290 feet to its confluence with the River Ngelukpo; thence following the latter river upstream for approximately 3,300 feet to a blazed tree on its left bank; thence in a north-easterly direction for a distance of approximately one mile to a post on the Ihaje-Otiepe path; thence continuing in the same direction for approximately 1,980 feet to a post on the right bank of the River Ayube; thence downstream along this river for approximately three miles to its confluence with the River Okporku; thence down the River Okporku to its confluence with the River Ohari; thence in a southerly direction for an approximate distance of three miles crossing the River Ngene Ukpoto a point on the River Ngene Umuoro approximately 1,650 feet west-north-west of the River Addor Railway Bridge; thence downstream along the River Ngene Umuoro to its confluence with the River Addor; thence downstream along the latter river passing under the railway bridge at Mile Post 193 to its confluence with the River Igbebe; thence upstream along the River Igbebe in a south-south-westerly direction for an approximate distance of two miles; thence in a south-south-westerly direction for an approximate distance of six miles and crossing the River Edu and Emo stream to a post on the right bank of the River Owum; thence continuing in the same direction for an approximate distance of four miles to a point marked by beacons on a true bearing of 294° from Agala.

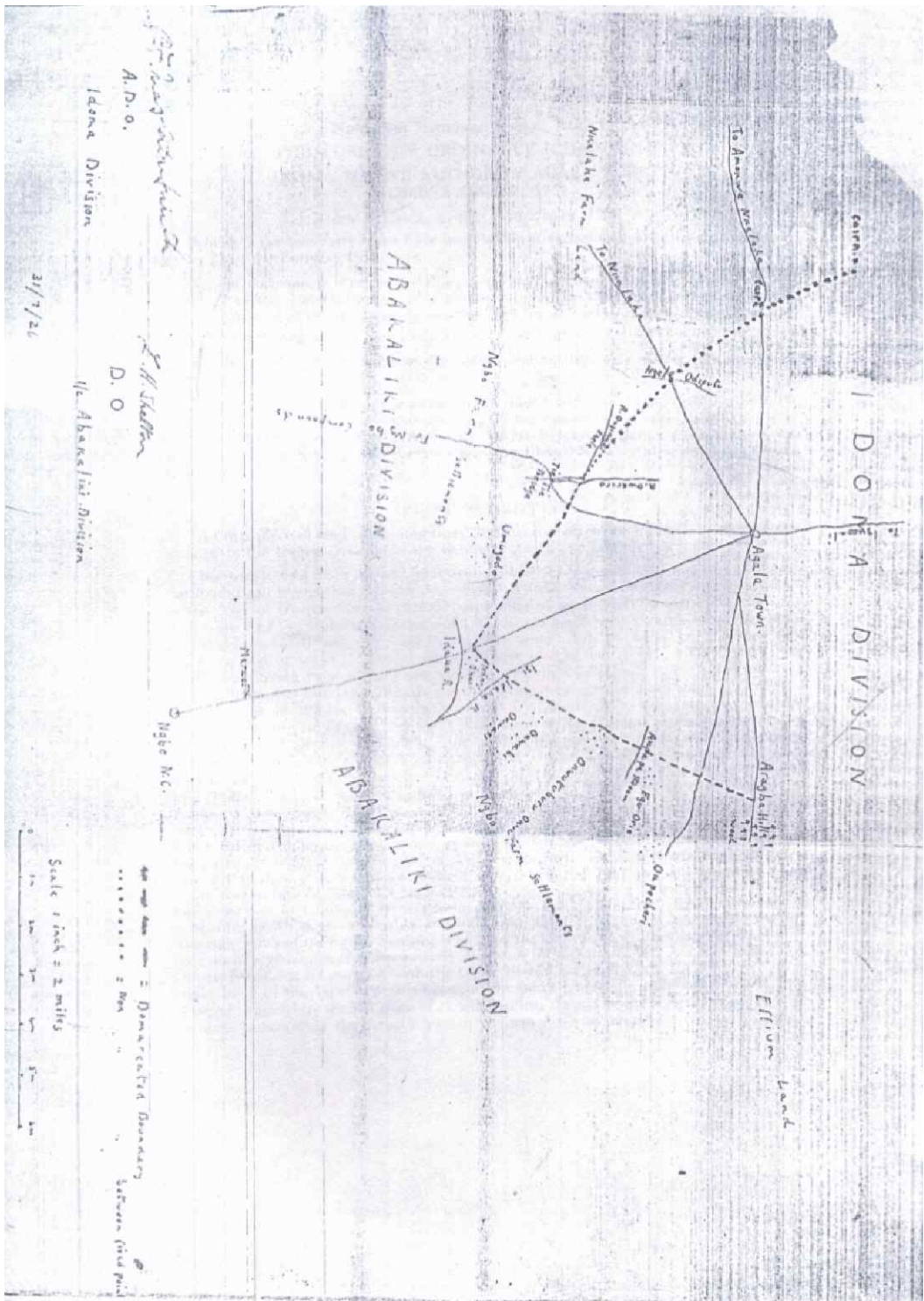
## SECTOR L

Thence along a general bearing of 157° for approximately 2 miles to a cairn on the path from Agala to Amokwe compound of Nkalaha; thence on a bearing of 145° for approximately 2½ miles to the Agala-Nkalaha path where it is crossed by the Ngele Odiputu stream; thence on a bearing of 134° for approximately 1½ miles to a field known as Ebkele on the right bank of the Okpwinya stream; thence downstream along the Okpwinya for approximately 1½ miles to its confluence with the Oweriwe stream which is the intersection of the boundaries of the Agala Ngbo and Nkalaha tribal areas; thence on a bearing of 122° for approximately 4 miles to the Ngbo-Agala main road at the Idaka crossing; thence on a bearing of 27° for approximately 1½ miles to a point marked by a cairn about ½ mile north-west of the Ngbo Ndiagu compounds of the Ekwasi and Ukungba sub-clan; thence on the same bearing for approximately 4½ miles to a wood known as Aragba ½ mile north-east of the Okporoku stream; thence on a bearing of 28° for 1 mile to a point marked by two cairns on the Agala-Effium path where it crosses the Ogbu stream; thence along the Ogbu stream upstream for 1½ miles to a blazed cotton tree on the left bank of the stream; thence on a bearing of 1° for 3½ miles to the old Ibenda-Effium path where it crosses the Okpabaku stream; thence on a bearing of 343° for approximately 1 mile passing between the Agala hamlet of Ibenda and the Effium hamlet of Ola to a pond on the Icheri stream on a bearing of 67° and about ½ mile north-east of Ibenda; thence downstream along the Icheri for approximately 3 miles to a point where it crosses

SECTOR L—*continued*

the Igumali-Effium path being the intersection of the Igumali, Olai and Effium boundaries; thence on a bearing of  $96^\circ$  for an approximate distance of 4 miles to the Okpirigu Pond about 150 feet east of the Effium-Ijibga path; thence on a bearing of  $103^\circ$  for approximately  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles leaving Ndegbaraso to the Northern Region and Ohaguledé to the Eastern Region, to the Okpuru Pond about 30 feet west of the Ijibga-Ugbala market path and approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south of the hamlet of Ndegbaraso; thence on a bearing of  $20^\circ$  for approximately  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the point where the Odidi Abe stream crosses the Ijibga-Aloma path; thence along this path in an easterly direction for approximately 5 miles; thence in a northerly direction for approximately  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the River Awo at the Aloma crossing; thence downstream along this river for approximately 10 miles to its intersection with the Ikerrri-Egedde boundary and the Abakaliki-Ogoja Divisional boundary marked by a cairn; thence on a bearing of  $95^\circ$  for an approximate distance of 4,410 feet to Adum, a common settlement of Worku and Wanakadi people; thence on a bearing of  $147^\circ$  for approximately 1,020 feet to the Ugboko stream; thence on a bearing of  $118^\circ$  for approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the Adum-Ulogu boundary stream; thence on a bearing of  $87^\circ$  for approximately 1 mile to the Okposa stream; thence on a bearing of  $107^\circ$  for approximately 1,800 feet to Udogu (Worku) leaving this village in Northern Region and continuing on the same bearing for approximately 3,150 feet; thence on a bearing of  $42^\circ$  for approximately 1 mile 1,890 feet to a point on the right bank of the River Egwa; thence on a bearing of  $358^\circ$  along this bank for approximately 1,560 feet; thence on a bearing of  $48^\circ$  for approximately 2,025 feet crossing the river to a point marked by a cairn about 750 feet south of Aba Ekoli; thence bearing  $66^\circ$  distance 4,800 feet to a point on the Ekoli-Obotu boundary road; thence bearing  $92^\circ$  distance 2,700 feet to the Ekoli-Ishingele path; thence bearing  $103^\circ$  distance 2,700 feet to the River Abe; thence upstream along this river on a bearing of  $36^\circ$  distance 4,560 feet to its intersection with the Wanakadi-Wanashi boundary; thence bearing  $340^\circ$  approximate distance 3,300 feet crossing the river to the Wori Obotu-Ugbegi path leaving these two villages in the Northern Region; thence on a bearing of  $62^\circ$  for approximately 3,360 feet to the source of the Otakpa stream; thence in a north-easterly direction along this stream to its confluence with the River Okolo; thence downstream along the latter river to its confluence with the River Oloko; thence upstream along the River Oloko for an approximate distance of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles to a point marked by a concrete pillar on its left bank; thence on a bearing of  $43^\circ$  for 1,032 feet along a line marked by two intermediate concrete pillars to another concrete pillar on the Oju-Lafin road; thence on a bearing of  $96^\circ$  for 834 feet along a line marked by one intermediate concrete pillar to another concrete pillar; thence on a bearing of  $102^\circ$  for 1,761 feet along a line marked by one intermediate concrete pillar to another concrete pillar; thence on a bearing of  $74^\circ$  for 3,132 feet along a line marked by two intermediate concrete pillars to another concrete pillar; thence on a bearing of  $68^\circ$  for 8,859 feet along a line marked by nine intermediate concrete pillars to another concrete pillar; thence on a bearing of  $125^\circ$  for 990 feet to a concrete pillar; thence on a bearing of  $106^\circ$  for 1,251 feet to a concrete pillar; thence on a bearing of  $91^\circ$  for 990 feet to a concrete pillar on the Ida-Ibegi path; thence in a north-easterly direction along this path to Ibegi market place which is shared in common by the inhabitants of the joint settlement of Egedde and Wanashem at Ibegi; thence along a line of cairns on a general bearing of  $83^\circ$  for approximately 2 miles to the native boundary mound on the Okpwala-Alamola path; thence on the same bearing for approximately 2 miles to the River Ikwata; thence downstream along this river in a southerly direction for approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to a point marked by a cairn on its left bank; thence along a line of cairns on a bearing of  $76^\circ$  for approximately  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to a point on the Ohio-Itakpa road approximately  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Ohio; thence on a bearing of  $79^\circ$  for approximately 1 mile 4,220 feet to a native boundary mark on the Itakpa-Otukpo road; thence on a bearing of  $57^\circ$  for approximately 1 mile 720 feet to Ida Water; thence upstream on a bearing of  $320^\circ$  for





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N.R.L.N. 81 of 1959

## NORTHERN REGIONAL PUBLIC NOTICE

## THE FORESTRY ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 75)

IDOMA NATIVE AUTHORITY AGALA FOREST  
RESERVE ORDER, 1959*Date of Commencement 20th August, 1959*

WHEREAS the necessary steps have been taken in accordance with the provisions of section 23 of the Forestry Ordinance;

Now THEREFORE in exercise of the powers conferred upon native authorities by section 22 of the said Ordinance, it is hereby ordered by the Idoma Native Authority with the approval of the Resident, Benue Province, to whom the powers of the Governor of the Northern Region under the said section have been delegated as follows:—

1. This order may be cited as the Idoma Native Authority Agala Forest Reserve Order, 1959.

2. All that piece of land, the situation and limits whereof are set forth in the First Schedule hereto, subject to the rights affecting the same as set forth in the Second Schedule hereto, shall constitute a Native Authority Forest Reserve within the meaning of the Ordinance, which Reserve shall be known as the Idoma Native Authority Agala Forest Reserve.

## FIRST SCHEDULE

All that piece of land containing three decimal five seven square miles or thereabouts situated in the Idoma Division of the Benue Province and bounded as follows:—

Starting from a point marked by beacon No. OBB 135 on the 1951 boundary between the Benue and Ogoja Provinces as described in Public Notice No. 35 of 1951 published in the *Nigeria Gazette* No. 36 of 1951, and situated on the left hand side of the 1951 path from Agala to Ngbo at a distance of 1,672 feet in a northerly direction from the point where the Idaka stream is crossed by the path from Agala to Ngbo, by a straight line cut on a bearing of  $293\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 455 feet to beacon No. OBB 136; thence continuing by a straight line cut on a bearing of  $293\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 762 feet to beacon No. OBB 137; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 299 degrees for a distance of 802 feet to beacon No. OBB 138; thence continuing by a straight line cut on a bearing of 299 degrees for a distance of 1,180 feet to beacon No. OBB 139; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of  $298\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 1,582 feet to beacon No. OBB 140; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 298 degrees for a distance of 1063 feet to beacon No. OBB 141; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of  $297\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 841 feet to beacon No. OBB 142; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 299 degrees for a distance of 800 feet to beacon No. 142A situated on the 1951 boundary between the Benue and Ogoja Provinces at a point distant 1,800 feet measured along the same boundary from the left bank of the Okpiho Stream; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of  $33\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 2,640 feet to beacon No. PB 5; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of  $123\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 4,140 feet to beacon No. PB 4; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of  $22\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 4 miles 1,200 feet to beacon No. PB 3; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of  $40\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 1 mile 838 feet to beacon No. PB 2 situated on the right bank of the Oloko Stream; thence by the right bank of the Oloko Stream downstream in a general east-north-easterly direction for a distance of 2,500 feet crossing the Ikpele Stream at its junction with the Oloko Stream to beacon No. PB 1 situated on the right bank of the Ikpele Stream opposite the point where the right bank of the Oloko Stream is joined by the left bank of Ikpele Stream; thence by the right bank of the Oloko Stream (now called the Aragba Stream) downstream in a general east-south-easterly

direction for a distance of 1,300 feet to a point situated on the right bank of the Aragba Stream where it is joined by the 1951 boundary between the Benue and Ogoja Provinces and marked by beacon No. OBB 100 which is distant 12,118 feet on a bearing of  $165\frac{1}{2}$  degrees from Trig point No. 186; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 218 degrees for a distance of 1,086 feet to beacon No. OBB 101; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 223 degrees for a distance of 1,566 feet to beacon No. OBB 102; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 230 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 547 feet to beacon No. OBB 103; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 231 degrees for a distance of 1,707 feet to beacon No. OBB 104; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 225 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 990 feet to beacon No. OBB 105; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 197 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 940 feet to beacon No. OBB 106; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 203 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 987 feet to beacon No. OBB 107; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 206 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 911 feet to beacon No. OBB 108; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 204 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 1,099 feet to beacon No. OBB 109; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 203 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 817 feet to beacon No. OBB 110; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 205 degrees for a distance of 823 feet to beacon No. OBB 111; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 204 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 841 feet to beacon No. OBB 112; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 206 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 520 feet to beacon No. OBB 113; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 201 degrees for a distance of 695 feet to beacon No. OBB 114; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 218 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 416 feet to beacon No. OBB 115; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 204 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 77 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet to beacon No. OBB 116; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 200 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 1,489 feet to beacon No. OBB 117; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 204 degrees for a distance of 815 feet to beacon No. OBB 118; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 209 degrees for a distance of 455 feet to beacon No. OBB 119; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 205 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 713 feet to beacon No. OBB 120; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 197 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 676 feet to beacon No. OBB 121; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 169 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 699 feet to beacon No. OBB 122; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 195 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 1,100 feet to beacon No. OBB 123; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 202 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 1,182 feet to beacon No. OBB 124; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 205 degrees for a distance of 725 feet to beacon No. OBB 125; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 202 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 1,753 feet to beacon No. OBB 126; thence continuing by a straight line cut on a bearing of 202 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 816 feet to beacon No. OBB 127; thence continuing by a straight line cut on a bearing of 202 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 689 feet to beacon No. OBB 128; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 200 degrees for a distance of 1,296 feet to beacon No. OBB 129; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 204 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 494 feet to beacon No. OBB 130; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 203 degrees for a distance of 992 feet to beacon No. OBB 131; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 204 degrees for a distance of 515 feet to beacon No. OBB 132; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 205 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 579 feet to beacon No. OBB 133; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 217 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees for a distance of 844 feet to beacon No. OBB 134; thence by a straight line cut on a bearing of 207 degrees for a distance of 1,229 feet to the starting point.

*Note.*—(1) All distances and bearings are approximate only, distances being those actually measured along the ground and not reduced to the horizontal.

All bearings are referred to True North and adjusted from magnetic bearings observed during the month of February, 1951.

(2) All beacons are concrete pillars.



ANNEXTURE

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No. 34/1926/88.

The Divisional Office,  
Oturkpo, 16th August, 1932.

FROM THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER, I D O M A.

TO THE RESIDENT B E N U E PROVINCE, MAKURDI.

BENUE - SOUTHERN PROVINCES BOUNDARY.

With reference to your memorandum No. 234/1926/105 of 7th June, 1932, the boundary concerned is that portion of the Idoma - Abakaliki Divisional Boundary which lies to the South of the Igumale District. The Benue - Onitsha Provincial Boundary is not affected. I attach a sketch map prepared by Mr. Frampton which clearly shows the situation.

2. It should be understood that the situation which has arisen is similar to that which obtains on the Tiv - Idoma Boundary i.e. Units of expanding tribes taking the land from their less virile neighbours and willingly divorcing themselves from the remainder of their tribe for that purpose. I do not think that it can be said that the immigrants are under any less effective control than are their kith and kin who have been left behind.

3. A temporary settlement which will restore the integrity of the units concerned can without difficulty be effected by a re-adjustment of the boundary so as to exclude all the immigrants from this Division, but if this be done there is in my opinion no doubt but that, thus encouraged, immigration will at once recommence and the same situation will arise in the immediate future.

4. The Resident Ogoja is, I think, incorrect in suggesting that the encroachment is merely a peaceful occupation of unoccupied territory of doubtful ownership. There exist two examples which seem to prove that the policy has

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has been one of aggression over a protracted period. Some fifty years ago the Ufie clan was forced by Ishieke pressure to migrate en bloc from its lands to the East of Igumale and travelling some twenty miles North became what we now know as the Utonkon District. In 1927 these same Ishieke attacked and sacked the thriving village of Ijigbam (having previously sequestered the farming land up to the very edge of their village Kurmai) and although a collective punishment fine was inflicted upon them, their tactics were successful inasmuch as the Ijigbam inhabitants were afraid to remain in their homes and fled to scattered hamlets across the Ckpauku near the Igumale - Utonkon District Boundary. One household alone remains in Ijigbam.

5. There is no scarcity of farming land available to the Idoma Units in these parts and possibly this has been a cause of the encroachment, but Mr. Frampton (who is closely acquainted with this part of the Division) points out that a large proportion of these people are hunters and do not depend for their living on agriculture. With the approach of cultivation their livelihood from this source is being taken away from them and it is to be expected that in the future there will be a far greater demand for farming land. There is in fact already a marked tendency in that direction.

6. The immigrants are from East to West; The Ishieke the Nzza and the Effium, in the case of the former the encroachment has been by aggression and in the latter by abuse of friendly arrangements. The following table shows the growth of the encroachment during recent years. The introduction of taxation in the Southern Provinces has naturally given an impetus to emigration.

Tribe	Adult Males		
	1929	1930	1932

- 3 -

Tribe	Adult Males		
	1929	1930	1932
Ishieke	1200	1300	1390
Ezza	130	160	336
Effium	-	297	422

7. From the map it will be seen that the area now occupied by the Ishieke is bounded by the Okpauku River on the North and the Ogbafi on the West but that this area includes also the Ijigbam Village which, although practically deserted, contains a considerable number of economic trees the produce of which are enjoyed by the former inhabitants. To the West of the Ogbafi and bounded on the North by the Addor lie Ezza and Effium hamlets on land belonging to Ulayi, whose farms are now across the Addor. The Ezza and Effium farms and hamlets are intermingled and in the West merge into the Idoma farms which lie to the East of the Igunale - Agala Road.

8. It will be seen therefore that the line of the Rivers Okpauku and Addor would exclude the Ibos from this Division whilst cutting off the villages of Ijigbam and Ulayi, and that the line of the Rivers Okpauku - Addor - Icheri would leave Ulayi in this Division whilst excluding most of the immigrants. The number left in this Division would be in the neighbourhood of 382 A.M. (1452 population) not taking into account the two hamlets in the Agala Sub-District - Ebiya and Aganacha - which have shown no appreciable increase during recent years and may be considered to have been absorbed in this Division.

9. Mr. Frampton considers that neither Ulayi nor Ijigbam would have real cause for any great objection to the adoption of the line Okpauku - Addor - Icheri Rivers it being fully realised that it is no longer possible to

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to enforce their claim to the land that has been annexed. He considers however that adoption of the line of the Okpauku and Addor Rivers to a point on the latter to be determined would cause considerable concern to the people of Igumale Town, although from an administrative point of view the latter would be more satisfactory in that it would be practically impossible to prevent the hamlets left in this Division from being reinforced by their friends and relatives from across the border.

*This seems reasonable & practicable.*

*This provision will land hamlets in confusion & difficulty.*

*I prefer A above.*

10. With a view to facilitating the re-organisation of the Ibo Units, I am therefore prepared to recommend the advancement of the boundary to the line of the Okpauku - Addor - Icheri to the point where the present boundary leaves it, provided that the village of Ijigbam becomes an enclave as long as it is inhabited by Idomas <sup>and without prejudice to all existing rights of Idomas</sup> to take produce from economic trees.

11. If however you consider that it would be advisable altogether to exclude the immigrants I am prepared, somewhat reluctantly, to recommend that the boundary be advanced to the line of the Okpauku and Addor Rivers to a point on the latter to be determined, thence South following a line far enough West to exclude all Ibo hamlets and existing farms to the point on the Icheri River where the present boundary leaves it, subject to the same conditions as in paragraph 10 supra being made to apply to the villages of Ulayi and Ijigbam.

12. I should like to emphasise that these recommendations are made purely in the interests of the Ibos and in no way on account of any difficulty in their control experienced by the Igumale administration. The loss of revenue to this Division would amount to about £184 <sup>the</sup> for line given in paragraph 10; £224 for that in paragraph 11.

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13. If these adjustments be carried out I think that it is essential that our future policy towards these tribes be clearly laid down in order that it may be known whether encroachment is to be allowed or definitely prohibited.

*D. Sample*

for Divisional Officer A.D.O.

*Drafted by Capt. Henry, on 10/1/1911*

