

## **THE NIGER DELTA YOUTH**

I wish to comfort your minds with this simple message. **“There is Hope”**. While this may sound trite in the harsh realities of hopelessness that faces the Nigerian youth from Niger Delta, I believe that there is more to live for if we choose to take up the responsibility of leadership that our situation is thrusting on us as the strength of the Nigerian nation.

But let me ask you: What is your stand regarding our destiny as a youth of the Niger Delta? Is Nigeria worth our time, effort or sacrifice? Is our dream of a prosperous, equitable and just nation worth pushing for? Can we dare to make another attempt at achieving justice, fairness and equal rights for us as bona fide citizens of the Commonwealth of Nations that make up Nigeria? Is Nigeria worth taking a stand for?

Whatever your answer, posterity makes a demand on us to break the shackles of ignorance and distrust that has polarized us in the Niger Delta. There is an urgent need for all well meaning Nigerians to deal with the real issues together. The time has come for the youths of this gifted nation to begin to articulate their thoughts because we cannot let our vision of the Nigeria of our dreams get smouldered by the constant deprivations that our psyche has been subjected to by a cabal that holds the Nigerian nation to ransom.

Youths of the Niger Delta, our land which is so strategically located in the elbow pit of Africa is an asset of no mean value to this nation. You as an emerging generation play an important role in this nation and its future. I plead with you to maintain the momentum and let us work together for a positive change.

The very vibrancy that the youths of the Niger Delta have exhibited over the years is the same vibrancy which nations who have freed themselves from political and ideological bondage have exhibited. We need to channel this vibrancy and energies positively to achieve our common goal.

The youth of the Niger Delta hold the ace in the quest to inspire this nation to greatness. There is no reason why Niger Delta or even Nigeria as a whole cannot be what we, even in our most elevated desires, will it to be, let us discern the signs of the times; let us discern that the time for change has come, and the world will not wait for us.

I seize this opportunity to declare in very clear terms, to all and sundry that I will do everything necessary to see that our visions and dreams come true, no matter the cost, and I need the Niger Delta youth to take this stand with me. The world will

stand aside for people who know where they are going and if we take this march forward with one mind, nothing can hold us back from what we set out to accomplish. Let us set out to rebuild our great nation before we are driven to self destruct.

The problems confronting the girl child in the Niger Delta are multi-farious ranging from cultural practices to socio-political and economic issues. These problems have bedevilled us for so long that they have become second nature to our people.

These issues however, are my main concern. While the balance of political power in our nation as it exists today is deliberately tilted to disfavour our region, in spite of the fact that the wealth which keeps the nation going is derived from this region, as a bonafide son of the land, I have put myself up for the highest political office of the land.

This crusade we have embarked upon to resuscitate the belief of our people in the electoral process and to join us at work to install a credible leadership for our nation. The dreams of the people of the Niger Delta are in consonance with those of the people of every other part of the country, particularly the youth.

Our leaders have become more interested in what they stand to benefit from the offices they occupy, rather than what they can use the office to achieve for the common good. We must avert this looming predicament that confronts our collective destinies by drawing deep from the fountain of nationalistic sentiments within ourselves to declare a national plebiscite.

As I conclude, I wish to reiterate my strong belief in the strength that we possess as the youth of this nation. This country will be great again and we must all be part of the process. Our collective dreams and desires must kindle and fan the needed flame in us to play our individual roles for a collective result – **VICTORY!**