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NEITI catalyst to right wrong in Niger Delta —Don

The Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative law that was recently signed into law has been described as the catalyst that would right the wrongs that have taken place in the Niger Delta and other areas of Nigeria where there are active mining activities.

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Efe Dike of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi made the prediction in a paper titled 'NEITI, Extractive Sector and the Environment' presented at a road-show organised for the North-East region of the country in Bauchi.

In the paper, Dike said the crisis in the Niger Delta can be abated by implementing environment-friendly regulations and law such as the NEITI law to protect the economic life of the inhabitants of the area by enforcing environmental best practice standards.

He also said the law could help in restoring the environment by remediation of the land and air and stopping gas flaring and the attendant discharge of radioactive substances into the atmosphere.

This he said also include adequate compensation for loss due to degraded and agriculturally unproductive soils, polluted streams that can no longer yield fresh water fish, the mainstay of the livelihood of the inhabitants, curtailing the acid rains due to gas flaring which degrades the soil and affects the aquatic life both fauna and flora.

"The NEITI law is a new beginning for the extractive industries. It offers a transparent initiative to ameliorate the degradation of the Nigerian environment where active mining, oil and gas exploration and exploitation is going on."

"It offers the opportunity for the general public to participate in the future development of these industries. It gives the companies and the government the opportunity to make amends for previous inactions and insensitivity on issues of the environment. It provides the opportunity to carry along the general public in the development of our mineral resources as effected by mining, oil and gas industries."

The university Don called for a halt to the destruction of social infrastructures but that social activities like fiestas and regattas be encouraged and revived, strategic environmental Assessment put in place to regulate upstream oil and gas activities in deciding choice and use of materials for pipelines, tank farms and flow stations and in the offshore platforms and facilities and in the deep offshore floating production storage and offloading systems (FPSOS).