

**Date:** 25 March 2025

**To:** Wael Sawan, Shell Chief Executive Officer

**CC:** Shell plc Executive Committee – Sinead Gorman, Philippa Bounds, Robin Mooldijk, Rachel Solway, Huibert Vigeveno, Zoë Yujnovich

Shell plc

Shell Centre London

SE1 7NA

Dear Mr. Sawan and members of the Shell plc Executive Committee,

**We urgently demand Shell plc to confirm if the company will fully clean up the vast pollution legacy associated with Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) assets on the Niger Delta and share publicly how this essential clean up process will occur.**

We, the undersigned civil society organizations from across Nigeria and around the world, express our outrage that Shell plc has sold its Nigerian subsidiary SPDC to the Renaissance Group without cleaning up the vast oil pollution caused by its operations in the Niger Delta and without compensating the hundreds of thousands of people whose lives and livelihoods this pollution has affected.

Shell plc claims to have as core values honesty, integrity and respect for people.[1] Yet after 70 years of oil extraction in the Niger Delta region, yielding billions of dollars in profits, in our opinion, the company appears to have just walked away,[2] leaving the local communities to deal with severe public health problems due to the profound oil contamination of the water sources, soil, and surrounding environment.

The issues of oil pollution in the Niger Delta are well documented: organisations, academics, and hundreds of communities have repeatedly provided evidence and demanded that the company clean up the clearly visible levels of contamination. [3][4][5]

As a result, generations of Niger Delta communities have lived and raised children and grandchildren who will live and prematurely die breathing oil-polluted air, eating oil-contaminated food, farming on petroleum-logged soil, and fishing in rivers and streams choked with hydrocarbons.[6][7] Maximizing shareholder value should not trump everything. We believe that Shell plc should honour its corporate responsibility and commitments to human rights by remediating the oil pollution and its impacts on the Niger Delta communities.

Shell's divestment from the region, together with corresponding moves from other companies operating in the Niger Delta — Eni, ExxonMobil, and TotalEnergies — has taken place over the past year, during which there have been regular public calls for transparency about these processes.[8] Despite these calls, Niger Delta communities feel that consultation with affected people has been manifestly inadequate,[9] and Shell plc has responsibility to address these concerns due to their board membership of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI).[10]

In the case of Shell plc, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission rejected Shell plc's divestment application late last year due to concerns about Renaissance's ability to

manage the assets.[11] There is no evidence that Shell has provided the scale of funds necessary for a cleanup; the proposed incoming Renaissance Group is an opaque entity that has provided no evidence it has the resources necessary to support adequate cleanup. According to United Kingdom (UK) Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office documents obtained by UK civil society organisation Corner House, obtained through a public records process, when asked about cleaning up the Niger Delta by the UK's High Commissioner to Nigeria on a trip to Port Harcourt in 2024, a Shell executive stated, "***We just have to trust that [Renaissance] can handle the clean up.***"[12]

The affected communities and supporters are compelled to ask how Renaissance will be able to do that, given that the consortium is reliant on funding from SPDC. Shell has stated that, on completion, it "will provide secured term loans of up to USD 1.2 billion, to cover a variety of funding requirements." [13]

Clearly, the Shell's assertion to the UK High Commissioner defies logic: **If Shell is not setting aside a substantial sum, running to many billions of dollars, to ensure a full cleanup to international best practice standards, and Renaissance cannot pay such funds – then who will?**

The history of the energy transition is being written now. Shell's exit from the Niger Delta will, in this history, stand as perhaps the emblematic example of the global oil industry's irresponsible divestment strategy, passing toxic assets and liabilities to others. Unfortunately, the victims would be the hundreds of thousands of Niger Delta citizens forced to live with the vast pollution left by SPDC operations.

If there is no cleanup or remediation of environmental damage, we feel there is great risk that Shell plc will have greatly profited from Nigeria's oil resources and left the Niger Delta in a much worse state. Shell's name will be synonymous with one of the gravest oil industry pollution injustices in history.

The opaque deal to sell the SPDC's assets to Renaissance raises serious questions for Shell plc and for responsible shareholders and investors:

- Why was there no assessment of the oil spill liabilities undertaken by credible independent experts prior to the sale to Renaissance?
- Why did Shell not undertake any credible public consultation? It would be impossible to have assessed liability without engaging the communities who have made multiple legal claims against Shell, including in the UK courts.[14]
- Did Shell, as reported by the *Financial Times*, leverage its investment in offshore oil and gas to pressure Nigeria into signing off on a sale which the country's main oil industry regulator had rejected?[15]
- What funding did Shell provide to Renaissance for decommissioning and other liabilities, which could run to several tens of billions of dollars? If such funds exist, where have they been deposited, and what is the basis for their use?
- Why has the sale been so shrouded in secrecy?

The Niger Delta has become a rallying cry for justice in the energy transition and for making the Polluter Pays principle non-negotiable. Shell may have sold its Niger Delta assets, but we do not believe that any oil majors who profited from the Delta should be let off the hook. By all

legitimate means available, we will continue to pursue justice for the Niger Delta affected communities.

**We urgently demand Shell plc to confirm if the company will fully clean up the vast pollution legacy associated with Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) assets on the Niger Delta and share publicly how this essential clean up process will occur.**

Sincerely,

195 representatives of Nigerian and international civil society organizations, community groups, and concerned citizens listed below

Citations:

- [1] <https://www.shell.com/who-we-are/our-values.html>
- [2] <https://www.thecable.ng/breaking-fg-has-approved-our-acquisition-of-spdc-says-renaissance-africa>
- [3] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR44/017/2009/en>
- [4] <https://report.bayelsacommission.org>
- [5] <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0205114>
- [6] <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/DecodersReport.pdf>
- [7] <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/nov/06/niger-delta-oil-spills-linked-infant-deaths>
- [8] <https://centurypost.com.ng/breaking-environmentalists-rise-against-shell-ask-fg-to-stop-the-oil-giant-from-selling-assets-until-all-impact-concerns-on-niger-delta-are-addressed>
- [9] <https://saction.org/shell-must-clean-up-rumuekpe-before-divesting-community-insists>
- [10] <https://eiti.org/eiti-standard>
- [11] <https://www.reuters.com/markets/deals/nigeria-rejects-shells-13-billion-oil-asset-sale-thisday-reports-2024-10-16>
- [12] <https://www.newsroomnigeria.com/why-spdc-divestment-proposal-should-remain-rejected-heda>; FCDO reference: EIR2024\_18094
- [13] <https://www.shell.com/news-and-insights/newsroom/news-and-media-releases/2024/shell-agrees-to-sell-nigerian-onshore-subsiadiary-spdc.html>
- [14] <https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/uksc-2018-0068>
- [15] <https://www.ft.com/content/a56fb99d-f95e-4e0f-9312-3b56e14a94fb>

Signed by:

**Nigerian organisations:**

Accountability Lab Nigeria  
AGWOMEN Ikot Ekpene  
Centre for Children's Health Education, Orientation & Protection Nigeria  
Centre for Renewable Energy & Action on Climate Change  
Foundation for Environmental Rights Advocacy & Development Nigeria  
Foundation for the Conservation of the Earth  
Gbolekekro Women Empowerment & Development Organization

Health of Mother Earth Foundation  
Human & Environmental Development Agenda Resource Centre  
Ibom People Empowerment & Ecosystem Restoration Foundation  
Kebekache Women Development & Resource Centre  
Lekeh Development Foundation  
Lokiaka Community Development Centre  
National Association of Ijaw Female Students Alumnae  
Neighbourhood Environment Watch Foundation  
OLEGH Centre for Community Development  
Peace Point Development Foundation-PPDF  
Policy Alert  
Procurement Observation & Advocacy Initiative  
Social Action Nigeria  
Women in Action for Positive Development and Gender Enhancement Centre  
(WAPDAGEC)

**International:**

198 methods  
350 Dallas  
350 Kishwaukee  
350 New Orleans  
350 Seattle  
350.org  
350Hawaii  
A Community Voice Louisiana  
AbibiNsroma Foundation  
Accelerate Neighborhood Climate Action  
Activists for Climate Justice Initiative  
Africa Climate & Health Alliance  
African Coalition on Green Growth  
African Industrial Solution  
Allegheny County Clean Air Now  
Animals Are Sentient Beings  
AnsvarligFremtid  
Bargny Coast Waterkeeper  
Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community  
Beaver County PA Peace Links  
Beaverdam Green Team  
Berliner Wassertisch  
Better Path Coalition  
Between the Waters  
Both ENDS  
Breathe Easy Susquehanna County  
Businesses for a Livable Climate  
Call to Action Colorado  
Campax  
Canadian Interfaith Fast for the Climate

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace  
CatholicNetwork US  
Center for Coalfield Justice  
Centre for Citizens Conserving Environment & Management (CECIC)  
Cherokee Concerned Citizens  
Climate Action for Lifelong Learners  
Climate Civics International  
Climate Organizing Hub  
Climate Reality Northeast Pennsylvania  
Climate Reality Project Susquehanna Valley PA  
Climate Stick Project  
Colorado Businesses for a Livable Climate  
Community Conciliation and Development Initiative  
Community Development Advocacy Foundation  
Community for Sustainable Energy  
Concerned Citizens of St. John  
Connected Advocacy  
Connecticut Citizen Action Group  
Corner House  
Deignan Institute for Earth & Spirit at Iona University  
Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Creation Care Ministry Team  
Earth Ethics  
East African Crude Oil Pipeline Host Communities  
Ecologistas en Acción  
EKOenergy ecolabel  
Emmaus International  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Endgame Strategy  
Extinction Rebellion Netherlands  
Fair Finance International  
Faith Lutheran Church of Cockeysville MD Green Team  
Fossilvrij Netherlands  
Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice  
Frack Free Aotearoa New Zealand  
FracTracker Alliance  
Gender Action  
Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives Africa  
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance  
Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Coalition  
Green House Connection Center  
Green Party of McKean County PA  
GreenFaith  
Habitat Recovery Project  
Hann Baykeeper  
Hawkmoth  
In the Shadow of the Wolf

Inclusive Louisiana  
Indivisible Ambassadors  
Initiativkreis Energie Kraichgau  
Inland Ocean Coalition  
Innovation pour le Développement et la Protection de l'Environnement  
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program  
Interstate 70 Citizens Advisory Group  
Just Share  
Justice 4 Nigeria  
Justice Institute Guyana  
Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Franciscans Africa  
Kallop Humanitarian & Environmental Center  
Knit Together Initiative  
Koalisi Rakyat Untuk Hak Atas Air  
Larimer Alliance for Health, Safety, & Environment  
Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern Peace Center  
Les Amis de la Terre / Friends of the Earth France  
Linha Vermelha / Red Line  
Littleton Business Alliance  
Long Island Progressive Coalition  
Louisiana Bucket Brigade  
Louisiana League of Conscious Voters  
Mac-Jim Foundation  
Mahabahu  
Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network  
MARBE SA Costa Rica  
Mayfair Park Neighborhood Association  
Mental Health & Inclusion Ministries  
Mind's Eye Productions  
Montbello Neighborhood Improvement Association  
Mossville Environmental Action Now  
Mothers Rise Up  
Multicultural Educational Development Trust  
Nature Talk Africa  
Nordic Center for Sustainable Finance  
North American Climate, Conservation & Environment  
North Range Concerned Citizens  
Northeast Pennsylvania Green Coalition  
Nuclear Energy Information Service  
Oil & Gas Action Network  
Oil Change International  
Oilfield Witness  
Oilwatch International  
Our Sacred Earth  
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum  
Phil Peace-Building Foundation  
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania  
Plastic Pollution Coalition

Progressives for Climate  
Protect All Children's Environment  
Public Citizen  
Putnam Progressives  
re•generation  
ReCommon  
REK Rowlands & Partners  
Réseau des Associations pour la Protection de l'Environnement et de la Nature  
San Antonio Bay Waterkeeper  
San Diego 350  
San Luis Obispo Clean Water  
Save Our Susquehanna  
Save RGV  
Save the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Shifting Advocacy  
Small Business Alliance  
SoCal 350 Climate Action  
Social Action International  
Solidarité Ci Sutura  
South East Communities Against Pollution  
South Texas Environmental Justice Network  
Southern Africa Climate Change Coalition  
Southwest Organization for Sustainability  
Spirit of the Sun  
Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen (SOMO)  
Strategic Response on Environmental Conservation  
System Change Not Climate Change  
Texas Campaign for the Environment  
The Environment & Conservation Organisations of New Zealand  
The Firm of Rose & Associates  
The People's Justice Council  
The YEARS Project  
TIAA-Divest!  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community  
Unite North Metro Denver  
United Native Americans  
urgewald  
Veterans For Peace Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter of Baltimore MD  
Vivek Training Academy  
Wall of Women  
Western Slope Businesses for a Livable Climate  
Women Development Action Initiative  
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom Canada

Womxn from the Mountain  
Youth for Green Communities  
Zadok Foundation  
Zimbabwe Climate Change Coalition