

Message from the Freeman Elohor Oluowo, Founder and Centre Coordinator for African Centre for Climate Actions and Rural Development Initiative (ACCARD), the focal and lead person for DeltasUNite initiative and UNCCRD on the Unveiling of the United Nations (UN) Convention on Conserving River Deltas (UNCCRD). December 4, 2023 at the 28th Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP28), Expo City, Dubai.

Good afternoon distinguished and respected invitees, speakers, and Governments this important life-fulfilling and people-centred event. Permit me to recognise the following distinguished personalities and note it is not in the order of hierarchy.

The Executive Governor of Bayelsa State, Senator Governor Douye Diri – again congratulation on your re-election to lead the good people of Nigeria’s Bayelsa State and deltaic people committed to this course. Senator Henry Seriake Dickson, former Governor of Bayelsa State; Nigeria’s Senate Committee Chairman on Ecology and Climate Change in the 10th Assembly; the large senate delegation from Pakistan led by Senator Sherry Rehman and Minister’s present. My friend, former Senator and minister of information in Pakistan, Senator Nasir Memon from Pakistan, Ministers, Honourable Commissioners, Directors and our partners present.

Finally, you that sited here is very much respected, which is why I started by acknowledging you.

Today’s special event leading to the Unveiling of an International multi-stakeholder’s platform is geared towards the protection of the human, socioeconomic, environmental and health perspective faced by a large population of hardly discussed people living around rivers and ocean facing deltas across the globe.

It is a targeted journey that started small but with committed stakeholders as drivers. We are hopeful that when UNCCRD is fully operationalise will substantially address the common challenges and peculiarities of our global deltas, including the less discussed impacts

but also the terrifying highland to lowland scientifically documented challenges.

Climate change induced challenges in our deltas are increasing daily with new devastating reports of impacts, especially on local communities and indigenous peoples living in such prone landscapes.

An estimated half billion of people is a huge number of people to be neglected in global discuss, especially as global financing including for climate action are limited. Only a little amount of these monies flow or directly get to where the challenges are seriously felt – this is disheartening. We are concern not to reach a stage where the problem far outweighs the available finances either to adapt, mitigate or build resilience or come back aftershocks.

We well understand the role local communities or active citizen’s participation can play in finding local-to-global solutions – indigenous knowledge are key to global solution.

These are some of the disturbing and heart-breaking emerging issues UNCCRD has come to address and help us look at the global goals before and after 2030 – in good faith. More people are displaced yearly due to flooding, pushed into hunger, getting more food insecure, with new form of migration with an astonishing population “**migrating for survival**” and conflict, put together will distort global peace and stability.

UNCCRD has come to address emerging issues leading to food insecurity, coastal, river and ocean pollution, the expansion of extractive activities, reshape or rethink the blue economy development from global North to South, Poverty, migration for survival and their associated conflicts and abuses especially at the local level.

The 2022 flooding incidence in Nigeria and Nigeria’s Bayelsa State for example, place 7 out of the 8 local governments under water including

the capital Yenagoa, parts of Bangladesh and Pakistan (- leading to loss and damage funds), and in developed economies with built infrastructures in the US, with Germany estimating 33 billion Euros to fix damaged public and private infrastructures.

This budget far outweighs the annual budget of many Africa countries put together. Secondly, many of such well-developed infrastructures to control, mitigate, respond or financial to recovery from shocks are not in existence in many of these countries - we saw the aftermath of COVID-19 and even the current aftermath of war in low income and developing countries.

We need to be more proactive than reactive in our global access to finance including for climate action by these countries. People are the grassroot suffers more from lack of appropriate solutions and limited financing and inclusive participation.

We need to promote equal access and participation in financing, governance, and negotiation.

UNCCRD fall into the United Nations (UN) “game changer” global drive to promotes inclusive and active citizen’s participation in governance and decision-making, and access to finance as well as providing for indigenous knowledge and solution.

We don’t want to wait further until these problems consume us particular as finances are limited including for political governance. UNCCRD will drive locally-led and adaptive solution to issues of our deltas. Thank you

It is UNCCRD.

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