

#STOPTHESOOT CAMPAIGN

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October 15, 2018

The Secretary General

United Nations
405 East 42nd Street,
New York - NY 10017
U.S.A

ATTN: António Guterres

Dear Sir

RE: PETITION ON THE PREVALANCE OF PARTICULATE MATTER IN PORT HARCOURT

We refer to our letter dated August 03, 2018 that had enclosed three scientific reports that captured the unhealthy atmosphere and environment of Rivers State and this was delivered to your office by United Parcel Service (UPS) at 01.15pm on the 20th of August 2018 (<https://eugeneabels.com/advocacy/stopthesoot-petition-to-the-united-nations>)

We congratulate the United Nations, World Health Organization and its Director General **Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** as they host its first **Global conference on air pollution and health in Geneva** this week, including a high-level action day at which nations and cities are expected to make new commitments to cut air pollution.

We also quote the Guardian Newspaper where the Director General of the World Health Organization Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus gave reasons for the summit:

"Air pollution is the "new tobacco", the head of the World Health Organization has warned, saying the simple act of breathing is killing 7 million people a year and harming billions more.

Over 90% of the world's population suffers toxic air and research is increasingly revealing the profound impacts on the health of people, especially children. "The world has turned the corner on

tobacco. Now it must do the same for the 'new tobacco' – the toxic air that billions breathe every day." said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO's director general. "No one, rich or poor, can escape air pollution. It is a silent public health emergency."

"Despite this epidemic of needless, preventable deaths and disability, a smog of complacency pervades the planet." Tedros said, in an article for the Guardian. "This is a defining moment and we must scale up action to urgently respond to this challenge." (The Guardian.)

In the light of the above we wish to remind you that 71 days after our letter which was signed by circa 420 Nigerian residents of Rivers State directly affected by the polluted atmosphere in the state have not been obliged with a basic modicum of respect inter such as a basic 'Acknowledgement of receipt' nor a 'Reply to our letter' neither from either the United Nations nor the World Health Organization.

We believe that as Nigerians whose nation contributes to the upkeep of the United Nations that its ideals should at least speak for us. Once again we wish the participants and its host at the Geneva summit on Air pollution & Health happy deliberations but wish to remind them that the case of 5.2 million residents of Rivers State is peculiar and require urgent action that MUST not be dependent on the Nigerian State.

We the community and civil society groups on the 11th of September 2018 gathered again to observe the day for "**Rise for Climate**" campaign where the following were noted:

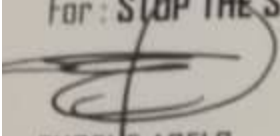
1. The **Nigeria Medical Association of Nigeria Rivers State branch** officially declared the inhalation of sub-micron particulate matter as "**Ebola in slow motion**" if the present state of affairs persists.
2. The representative population of the community that attended the "**Rise for Climate Summit**" lends their voice to the call for the United Nations and the World Health Organization to intervene and declare Rivers State an Environmental disaster area.
3. We have come to a conclusion though from interacting with the community that there is a frightening spike in respiratory related medical problems particularly amongst the indigent groups like children, pregnant women and the aged. Also it would be worthwhile to note a spike in the number of cancer related deaths in the state, thus we are reiterating our call for Cancer Testing kits and centers to be established within the state for a deliberate easy audit of the state of wellbeing of the 5.2 million residents of the state.
4. We believe that our call is proactive and preemptive to avert a looming disaster and that it would be uncharitable to ignore our call to action now and only respond when an epidemic eventually breaks out in Rivers State.

5. May we borrow from your **Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment** that states that: "A safe, **clean, healthy** and sustainable **environment** is integral to the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation...and we will insist on these rights.
6. It was agreed that a non-response from your organization will leave the group with no option than to seek legal redress in the United States and Nigeria for the purpose of compelling the United Nations and its agencies to act in accordance with its statutory obligations to us.

It is our hope that this letter will cause a stir in the hearts of the managers of the United Nations and its agencies to act and not give us the comatose Ogoni Cleanup treatment.

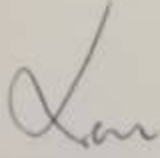
Yours Faithfully

For: **STOP THE SOOT CAMPAIGN**



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TUNDE BELLO
Convener

CC:
Amina Mohammed (Deputy Secretary General United Nations)
Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Director General, WHO)