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Abstract

This paper examines the place of natural resources as a factor that generates conflict, insecurity and inhibits socio-economic and national development in the Gulf of Guinea. Three resource conflict approaches and resource regimes that generate conflict and insecurity in a community are identified and analyzed. It was indicated that natural resource-rich countries in the Gulf of Guinea have been the landscape of continuous instability in the form of internal turmoil, cross-border conflicts or both. While the conflicts have involved local regimes, opposition forces and rebel groups, they have been complicated by external influences driven by geopolitical and economic interests. To that extent, the grip and control of these resources is a strategic priority for both governments and armed groups who use these illicit revenues to finance their military operations thereby exacerbating the conflicts. The paper conclude by way of policy recommendation that, to overcome resource conflicts and insecurity and engender development, the sub-region must institute genuine public participation whereby the environment rather being a source of conflict and underdevelopment; would serve as a catalyst for peace and development. Without which resource governance and better management of the environment, human security and development will remain elusive in the Gulf of Guinea.

Index terms— natural resources, conflict, security, resource regimes, gulf of guinea.

1 Introduction

he Gulf of Guinea is a geographical area that conveys different meanings to different scholars, indeed whatever meaning or definition that is ascribed depend largely on the perspective from which the geographic entity is being looked at as well as the people attempting to define it. For instance, **??**gwu (2005:4) defines the Gulf of Guinea as strategic area of interest from earliest times. The area was a passage route for trans-Atlantic slave trade and since then the region has continued to contribute meaningfully to economic and strategic relations between Africa and wider world; as foreign ships anchor in the Gulf of Guinea for months before transporting items like cocoa, rubber and palm produce to Europe. Today the region is blessed with abundant fisheries, oil and gas minerals. This is evident as the mineral resources have attracted the attention of super powers to the region as an alternative of energy to the hitherto attraction in the Persian Gulf, amidst its volatile nature. For **??**te (1994:12), the Gulf of Guinea is a large area that has an open arm to the Atlantic Ocean and bends towards the coast of West Africa. The region extends from the coast of Cote d'Ivoire to the Gabon estuary and bounded on the south by the equator.

To **??**ary Vogt (1988: 36-37), the Gulf of Guinea is that zone of the south Atlantic, southwest of Africa considered as the geographical centre of the earth, because it is at zero degrees longitude and latitude. Vogt believes that the region derived its name from the former names of the coast of Africa, the south coast of Africa, north of the Gulf of Guinea was historically called Upper Guinea; whereas, the west coast of southern Africa to the east, was described as Lower Guinea, and names of countries like Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea and Papau New Guinea in Southeast Asia all derived their names from the region.

In Encyclopedia Britannica (2011), the Gulf of Guinea is seen as that part of the eastern tropical Atlantic Ocean, off the West African Coast, extending westward from Cape Lopez near the equator, to Cape Palmas at

longitude 70 West. Its major tributaries include the Volta and Niger rivers. While the International Hydrographic Organization (2011) defines south western extent of the Gulf of Guinea as a line running south-eastward from Cape Palmas at 00 38'S 80 42'E in Liberia to Cape Lopez at 0.6330 S 8.70 E.

The coastline of the Gulf of Guinea forms part of the western edge of the African tectonic plate and corresponds remarkably to the continental margin of South America running from Brazil to the Guianas. Encyclopedia Britannica **??**2011) indicates that the coincidence between the geology and geomorphology of these two coastlines constitutes one of the clearest confirmations of the theory of continental drift.

The continental shelf of the Gulf of Guinea is almost uniformly narrow and widens to as much as 160km (100mi) only from Sierra Leone to the Bijagos archipelago, Guinea Bissau and in the Bight of Biafra. The only active volcanic regions in the Gulf of Guinea are the islands arc aligned with Mount Cameroon on the coast of the Republic of Cameroon. The islands of this arc are Bioko (Fernando Po), Principe, Sao Tome and Annobon offshore to the southwest **??**Otora 2012:45). The entire northern coast of the Gulf is washed by the eastward flow of the Guinea current, which extends for about 400 -480km offshore from Senegal to the Bight of Biafra. Its tropical water is separated from the equator and flows off to cool the Benguela and Canary currents by a sharp frontal region off the Congo and Senegal rivers respectively. The warm tropical water of the Gulf of Guinea is of relatively low salinity because of river effluents and high rainfall along the coasts. According to Oluwafemi Ajayi, the warm water is separated from deeper, more saline, and colder water by a shallow thermoline. Coastal upwelling contributes to a rich production of plant and animal life, which occurs seasonally and locally off the central gulf coast of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire **??**Ajayi 2003:176-180).

The variety of the marine flora and fauna of the Gulf of Guinea is limited when compared with that of the western tropical Atlantic and, especially with the Indo-Pacific bio-geographic realm. This relative biological poverty according to Encyclopedia Britannica (2011), results from geological and environmental factors. Geologically, it is due to lack of coral-reef ecosystems because of low salinity and the high turbidity of Guinea current water. On the environmental front, that, the climatic regression to cool conditions during the Miocene Epoch (some 23 to 5.3 million years ago), during which far fewer refuges for tropical species of plants and animals were available in the Atlantic than in the Indo-Pacific region.

The ecosystem of the region is a source of global interest. In addition to openness to the Atlantic Ocean, Ondo Mane submits that, countries of the Gulf of guinea enjoy a rich bionetwork, made of diverse flora and fauna. He indicates that natural riches in the region include among other endowments, rain forest (which accounts for much of the oxygen-generating sources of the world) and water courses with access to the sea such as the Congo and Niger rivers **??**Mane 2004:6). For instance, the Congo possesses the second strongest streams of the world after the Amazon River in Latin America, and represents the main commercial artery of equatorial Africa on one hand. On the other hand, River Niger which takes its source from Guinea and crosses nine other countries is essential to the life of over 110 million people in West Africa. Interestingly, the Congo and Niger River and its tributaries remain preferred vectors for local trade. This is because access to the sea and other rivers from the River Niger provides the neighbouring countries with a remarkable pool for fishing.

The Gulf of Guinea is endowed with abundant human and natural resources which, if carefully and properly managed can contribute to global prosperity. The region has large reserves of mineral resources such as diamond and gold, including forest for timber, fibre and pharmaceutical products as well as oxygen generating source **??**Mane 2004:6) The Gulf of Guinea encompasses a large number of countries from West and Central Africa. They range from English to French, Portuguese and Spanish speaking nations.

In analyzing intra-state conflicts in Africa, scholars tend to focus on the historical perspective and most times failing to emphasize the deep links between resources and conflicts in global history. The nexus between natural resources and conflict has been a security challenge in the Gulf of Guinea. Arguments on the abundance of or otherwise, the lack of natural resources in the region is being advanced as a major cause of intra-state conflicts. One strand of this argument according to Oshita (2007:245) attributes intra-state conflicts arguably described as "new wars" to the contest by internal and external actors, for resources; while a second strand of the argument points to conflicts triggered by scarcity, which causes actors to fight over control of scarce resources. Both dimensions of the argument (resource abundance and scarcity), serve herein as a confirmation for economic linkage between resources and conflict. However, the idea that natural resources might be more an economic curse than a blessing began to emerge in the 1980s. In this light, the term resource curse thesis was first used by Auty Richard in 1993 to describe how countries rich in natural resources were unable to use that wealth to boost their economies and how, counter-intuitively, these countries had lower economic growth than countries without an abundance of natural resources. Current thinking about conflict suggest that competition over natural resources has historically been seen as a legitimate justification for going to war; while the redistribution of resources especially territories in favour of the victors was frequently integral to the settlement of conflicts **??**Melvin and De Konning, 2010:40).

However, with the rise of political wars, conflicts with competing political ideologies apparently provided the fundamental motivation for war, as illustrated by the Second World War and the Cold War whereby resources were relegated as a minor consideration in conflict discourse. Melvin and De Konning (2010) further indicated that, the post-Cold War era witnessed a decline of inter-state conflicts as well as major armed conflicts. From the 1990s, the dominant form of conflicts shifted to complex and fluid internal struggles pitting governments against rebel groups and even by-passing state involvement altogether. In explaining this phenomenon, analysts

shifted emphasis to grievances linked to ethnic or religious hatred or social inequality. Resources at least were still considered as a secondary issue.

Resources have gradually re-emerged as a broadly held concern in respect of conflicts and security risk. The recent revival of a materialistic conception of the resources of violence has been due to understanding of the trends and challenges related to resources access, exploitation patterns, scarcity and trade flows (Jawit, 2010). Arising from this conception, the opening decade of the twenty-first century has seen a persistent rise in three different but interconnected perspectives on current thinking about conflict and security, which situate resources at the mainstream of contemporary violence in the Gulf of Guinea. These can be broadly categorized as economic, environmental and resource-geopolitical approaches to resource conflicts.

2 II.

3 Resource Conflicts Approaches

Economic considerations to the understanding of conflicts in the Gulf of Guinea have been the primary factor for the renewed focus on the role of resources. **??**ollier and Hoeffer (1998) have demonstrated that with a sharp decline in assistance from the Soviet and Western blocs from the end of the Cold War, rebel groups in the Gulf of Guinea became increasingly dependent on mobilizing alternative sources of income, including revenues from illegal exploitation and trading of natural resources, to keep fighting. As the importance of financing conflicts become an issue, the economic character of many conflicts came to the fore. For example, in the 1990s struggles for power between opposition power groups within Liberia and Sierra Leone were fueled by arms and capital obtained through the sale of rubber and "blood diamonds" which left many people fleeing as refugees (Martson et al, 2008).

Current research by Melvin and De Konning (2010:41) highlights several ways in which resources economics influences conflicts. First, are the armed movements initiating violence in order to gain access to natural resources and the wealth they can amass for themselve. Second and most important is the resource revenues providing the funding necessary to continue the armed struggle. Indeed, maintaining control over resource revenues can both become a means and a major reason for conflicts to become protracted. A less direct type of influence is seen in the role of national resource dependence in creating conditions that increase the risk of conflicts **??**Basedau 2008). The weight of this evidence suggests a tendency for dependence on natural resources to lead the poor government policy choices in terms of investment and over reliance on export revenues as well as imports of essential commodities, leaving their economies vulnerable to international market stocks.

Resource dependence can also become a factor in the emergence of weak and even failed states and the associated security risk of violent conflicts. In the Gulf of Guinea, the classic examples are Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Nigeria. In Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone for instance, Harden (2000) indicated that, diamonds were mined or smuggled across national borders and became associated with corruption, violence and warfare. Being easy to transport, diamonds were increasingly used to purchase weapons, and it was suggested that these 'blood diamonds' contributed about ten percent of the global trade in diamonds. In the Catoca mines in Angola which produced about one and a half million carats of diamonds in 2001, an excess of $500,000 was paid to the Angolan army for security against the UNITA rebel group which controlled the region. The effect of this is that, money associated with diamonds mining and rubber theft has funded an increase in number and magnitude of arms proliferation on every side of the conflict in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone, including the purchase of landmines that have maimed thousands of innocent civilians.

The ambitions of the people and the government often times conflict, due to the large amount of resources and money a country's government amass for their own luxuries rather than for the people. Thus natural resources serve as a curse for the people, who then have a lower relative standard of living. As different groups and factions fight for their share. Sometimes these emerge openly as separatist conflicts in regions where the resources are produced such as in Angola's oil-rich Cabinda province (Djankov, Montalvo, Reynal-Querol 2008: 172). In Nigeria, the Niger Delta situation is more worrisome because of the complex and deep-rooted causes of the problem. There are apparently strong mistrust that predates independence between and among the several communities that make up the Niger Delta region which is primarily, a result of stiff competition for resource control, land-use, farming and fishing in the past. At the moment, these communities still express the tendency to aggressively compete for greater share of the dividends and royalties from oil and gas as well as farmlands. Dennis Balogu (2009:3) submits that, the fundamental cause of the Niger Delta crisis represents a microcosm of the general problems facing Nigeria. While drilling or exploitation, environmental degradation and inadequate compensation for the indigenous groups of the region form the bone of contention, the problem assumed a very complex and violent dimension in the post-Cold War era. As a result of complaisance and inaction by the Federal Government, militancy ruled the Niger Delta; championed by the Asari Dokubo led Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Multinational corporations became targets of bombing and kidnapping by the militants (Asuni, 2009). The corporations in turn, decided not to invest on long term basis, as oil pipelines were either destroyed and oil stolen from them or bombed. Nigeria's oil revenue plummeted and scarcity of petroleum products within the country was rife. The militants were heavily equipped to the point that they even attacked the Nigerian military positions in an attempt to poach into their activities.

Criminal and insurgent networks that control transnational trade frequently emerged and find root in the conflict-afflicted or fragile post-colonial states (UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010:ii-iii). Thus, combating them effectively requires balanced and integrated approaches. While the trade in certain resources can fuel conflict and attract criminality, it provides livelihoods for local communities and can allow economic development. Formalizing informal resource trade and diversifying economic activities can improve economic conditions at the local and national levels and can also reduce illicit rent seeking, trafficking, crime and corruption **??**Cockayne, 2010:190).

In other words, failed states situations are characterized by the rise of warlords, criminal syndicates and ethnic wars fuelled by the ready availability of small arms and natural resources like oil and diamonds, which both are the remnants of the state forces and warlords seek to control. Neighbouring states must prepare for spill-over effects of the anarchy of failed states by increasing border security or by intervention (Ibeanu, 2008:7). In a contrary postulation, it is argued that, the idea of failed states arises principally from ideological nations of the West dominant groups in Africa that the states established by colonialism is desirable. Whereas, this serves the purpose of foreclosing the legitimate rights of excluded and marginalized groups to seek the expansion and demonstration of the political, economic and cultural spaces through the reconstitution of the colonial state. The failed state argument as Okechukwu Ibeanu (2008:7) has concluded is therefore:

The finale of the colonial state-making project in Africa, not state failure. It is rather the authoritarian global environment during the Cold War which made it difficult to bring the colonial state-making project to a closure before now.

The fact is that globalization is having both decomposition and re-composition effect on the postcolonial state in Africa and the "new wars" as Mary Kaldor labels them, reflects these transformational impacts. Kaldor notes that they result from the underbelly of globalization, especially, the inequalities of free trade and the collapse of the authoritarian state system. More so, international trade interventions and policing mechanisms are confronted by an everglobalizing and illicit trade in primary resources.

The environmental perspective has identified a number of mechanisms by which the environment serves as a common denominator of conflict, insecurity and underdevelopment in the Gulf of Guinea. Among these are increases in competition for essential resources such as water due to increase in population and famine due to environmental degradation, loss or poor management of arable and pastoral land (Humphreys, 2005). Contemporary thinking about climate change has offered perhaps the most comprehensive way to advance the environmental perspectives on natural resource conflicts. In their scheme, Melvin and De Konning (2010:41) submit that, one set linkage that has gathered wide support sees resource scarcities endangered by climate change creating competition, instability and social dislocation, which in turn leads to tension and some cases, violent conflicts in vulnerable countries. Climate change and related resource issues are also potential security risk factors at national and international levels.

For instance, in 2008, the European Union made its own assessment of the security risks emanating from climate change. The report indicated both the likelihoods of conflicts over resources and the risks associated with climate change (EU Report 2008). In September 2009, the United Nations released a report that identified five ways in which climate change could affect international security. These include creating vulnerabilities, for example, threatening food security; slowing down or reversing the process of development; increasing the risk of domestic conflict over resources and migration through increasing statelessness as a result of loss of territory; and by negatively affecting international cooperation over shared natural resources (UN Report of the Secretary General, 2009). In that report, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) sought to deepen understanding of the relationship between conflict risk and climate change.

The key issue that emerged from the report to date shows that the thread link between climate change and conflict risk is resource scarcity, which is seen as having several distinct elements.

In other words, the issue of scarcity is at the heart of the third strand of current thinking about resource conflict link which is resource geopolitics. In this perspective, the main propelling force of increasing conflict and security risk is seen as a historically unprecedented demand for resources. This is due to the increasing needs of major new consumer and manufacturing countries of China, India and Brazil; while industrialized nations of Western Europe and North America maintain already high levels of consumption of natural resources. However, the rise of major new consumer and manufacturing countries has aggravated concerns about how competition for access to natural resources has affected international relations (Blas, 2010). With this new development and its daunting challenges for marginalized Africa generally and the Gulf of Guinea in particular, one can say that, it is nothing but the rivalries to dominate and control the pillaging of the region, and the exploitation of its people and resources in what has described as the "new scramble for Africa" **??**Nwoke 2010:61). A scramble where the interests of the Asians, like those of the Europeans, are to obtain investment opportunities, markets for their products and services, and raw materials. After all, the advanced capitalist economies have been plundering Africa and simultaneously under-developing African countries by ensuring that they consume imported goods and export raw materials. Bode Onimode captured the situation vividly well that: This is the source of profound disarticulation and distortions and paradox of colonial and postcolonial economy to this day? it produces what it does not consume and consume what it does not produce **??**Onimode, 1985:74).

It was on these perverse pillars that the colonial regimes erected a global system of unequal capitalist development between the metropoles and Africa. This was how according to Walter Rodney (1972), Europe

under-developed Africa, and according to Samir Amin, the development of under-development was entrenched in Latin America. The resources and surplus in the colonies were systematically plundered for the development of the metropoles and African countries remained underdeveloped; while the metropoles developed even beyond the capacity of their indigenous resources. As observed by Nwoke (2010), Africa thus, remained the poorest continent, despite being one of the most richly endowed regions' of the world, because the drive in the colonial and post-colonial periods to use the mineral and raw materials to develop manufacturing industries and highly skilled man-power to sustain growth was a lost war.

Nevertheless, the resource geopolitics approach has focused primarily on the issue of energy, specifically hydrocarbon reserves. Developments since the early 1970s have redefined the relationship between hydrocarbon consumer countries and the producer countries. The growing market power of oil producers was manifested in 1973 when their actions imposed embargo on oil shipments, coordinated through the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) precipitated an oil crisis. Since the 1970s, policies of nationalization in many producer countries have led to the world's principal hydrocarbon reserves, for example in Libya, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, being placed under the control of state owned energy companies rather than western-backed multinationals (Mel and De Konning, 2010:55). This has raised concerns in consumer countries that access to hydrocarbon supplies and pricing could be determined more by political than market conditions. The rise of vast new consumer countries such as China and India has put further pressure on hydrocarbon resources, helping to drive oil prices to records high above $147 a barrel in July 2008. In this sense, Michael Klare categorically concludes that these developments, along with concerns that, the world is at or approaching the peak in oil production and that hydrocarbon reserves could be exhausted perhaps as early as 2050, have raised questions about the ability of industrialized countries to ensure access to energy supplies **??**Klare, 2008: 210-237).

4 III.

5 Resource Regimes and Security

In the aftermath of the Cold War, there have been far reaching conceptual changes in security analysis. These changes were reflected in a shift of emphasis from a discourse of national defence and security of the nation-state to a discourse of protection and security of nationals. The origins of this shift lies partly in the fact that, the end of the Cold War engendered a new thinking about nation-states, particularly their security. The Cold War was one driven by bipolar politics, domination and hegemony. According to **??**yden (1999), emphasis was placed on defence against the real and imagined intentions of states to dominate one another and against the subversive activities of elements within national borders. Defence and security in this framework, were placed above everything else. The duties of national to the state were privileged over the responsibilities of the state to nationals. Assessment of external and internal threats and capabilities was the central concern of policy and security was defined in the narrow, militarist terms of the ability of the armed forces.

Whereas, the post-Cold War period has spawned changes in thinking about security, which emphasized not national security but the security of nationals; not duties of nationals to the state, but the responsibilities of the state to nationals (Ibeanu, 2008). Here, the concern is not just securing state boundaries and people in power, but about human security and the responsibility of both state and the international community to protect people, vulnerabilities of nationals creating opportunities for overcoming those vulnerabilities. Thus, issues of poverty, environmental protection, equity and freedom are being elevated over military issues in what Ken Booth (1991), has described as the emancipation of the individual in human security conception. Human security in the scheme of **??**lare and Thomas (1994) is aligned to modern thought about global security, with emphasis on human safety and survival. They strongly emphasize that the referent object should be the individual, where the integrity of mankind is upheld. Its main focus is diseases, poverty, natural disasters, violence, conflicts and landmines, rehabilitation of war victims, gender and human rights.

In the context of the distinction between the environment and security, we locate our understanding of the interface between resources and security. National security discourse, unlike the security of nationals, constructs the environment as a natural category separate from the society and existing to be exploited in the service of national security **??**Ibeanu, 2008:8). This construction of the environment coheres with a very competitive view of natural resource governance anchored in individualistic, non-profit oriented and non-communally controlled. Consequently, its application in many parts of the Gulf of Guinea has conduced rivalries and conflicts over resource flows and livelihoods. The many conflicts that have bedeviled the sub-region (in Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire and Mali), are directly or indirectly been at the very root of resource mismanagement and underdevelopment in the Gulf of Guinea. Crucial in this respect, especially amongst rural peoples, according to Otite and Olawole (2001), is the desire to achieve subsistence in the economic order and the sphere of raw material and physical resources.

Contrariwise, the security of nationals' discourse to which this study subscribes to, sees the environment as integral to the society, and exists principally to support all members of the society in both the present and the future. The perspective sees the environment to involve values, expectations, structures and institutions that organize human existence within a specific biophysical structure. In other words, such a biophysical structure exists in unity with social, economic and political processes and none should in any case be treated in isolation. Okechukwu Ibeanu concludes that: this unity is expressed in resource regimes (local and international), which

defines access, exploitation and management, with the politico-juridical regime (the state and international regime) holding these intricate linkages together by playing intervening roles in each, as well as solidarity role for all. Collectively, these regimes congeal the character of governance of natural resources?. It is their failure in specific socio-historical circumstances that generate conflicts and underdevelopment **??**Ibeanu, 2008:10).

Based on the above ideas, we identify three resource regimes. The first is resource access regime, which today is defined principally by the market. In spite of claims of freedom, equity, opportunities and choices, proponents of this regime put forward market forces as the most dominant contemporary definer of resource access. The market is patently the most regimenting and exploitative regime (Mahmood, 1996). It is this tendency that portends grave consequences for local communities, minority groups, the poor and others living at the margins of the society. The attempts sometimes by these groups to seek redress for their plights have easily led to conflicts and insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea (Ibeanu, 2008).

The second is the resource exploitative regime, which is expressed in technology. That is, the level of understanding of the laws of nature and application of the knowledge in the exploitation of natural resources. This argument is anchored on developing and improving on tools, reducing over consumption by devising better ways of using natural resources in creating goods, including recycling as well as better waste management that is not harmful to both man and the environment. Thomas Homer-Dixon (1995), has argued that, existing global structures controlling the distribution of technology, particularly research and development (R and D), has created a world of technological inequalities and dependence. Indeed, this is primarily responsible for the gaps between African States and the developed economies that own and control technology. However, the wider the gaps, the more likely that conflict would arise as groups seek to maximize control of resources in the face of technologically induced scarcity.

The third resource regime is resource management which is enshrined in the culture of the people. This has to do with the stock of knowledge that a community has accumulated over time for the use and preservation of the environment, and the mode of transmitting the said knowledge from one generation to another. However, if within a political community, different resource management regimes exist and come into contradiction with one another, such a community is bound to degenerate into chaos and conflict **??**Ibeanu, 2010: 12). In other words, the state holds together these complex interlocking chains of regimes, but when the state fails to express the collective interests of all segments of the political community, the resource regimes are likely to fail, giving rise to conflicts insecurities and underdevelopment.

IV.

6 Conclusion

The Gulf of Guinea is undoubtedly emerging as an important element in the global economy. Natural resource conflicts and geopolitical parameters remain the main challenge to the region. Its enormous potentials are constantly beings undermined by unreasonable policy choices, weak institutions as well as persistent exposure to adverse factors of wars, natural disasters, commodity and exchange rate fragility. Since the region cannot be able to wish away the pull of globalization in the age of technological advances, there is the need therefore for the Gulf's States and by extension Africa, to participate in the bargain of its terms and as active participants and not as objects or victims of globalization. Africa's resources should be overwhelmingly used by Africans to redeem themselves from induced poverty and scarcity in the face of affluence. Most importantly, as an interest group and a negotiating bloc in the global market, the Gulf of Guinea should start making their rules of engagement in the global economy, including conditions of external participation in the region. For the region to become a development zone, the Gulf of Guinea must strive to be a haven of stability, and should be regarded as a global common.

With regards to the natural wealth of the region, it is critical to prevent the symptoms of natural resource curse so as to ensure that the benefits that accrue from these resources are maintained and distributed for posterity. This would however, require genuine public participation whereby resources rather than being a source of conflict and underdevelopment; would serve as a catalyst for peace and sustainable development. Without which resource governance and better management of the environment, human security and development would remain elusive in the Gulf of Guinea. [1]

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