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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Shell can improve impacts in the Niger Delta, says new report

As Shell faces a lawsuit in the Netherlands over alleged oil pollution in Nigeria, a new report published today argues that the oil giant can and should take both prompt and longer-term action to reduce the negative social and environmental impacts of its operations in the Niger Delta.

The report, *Shell in the Niger Delta: A Framework for Change*, published by church-based investor coalition and membership organisation the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR), considers how the operations of Shell's Nigerian subsidiary, the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), affect the human rights and living conditions of Niger Delta communities.

Based on case studies researched and written by five civil society organisations working in the Niger Delta, the report raises concerns about Shell's operations in relation to international social and environmental standards, pollution levels, communities' health and livelihoods, and the right of local people to a say in decisions that affect their lives.

ECCR acknowledges that many of the problems in the Niger Delta are the responsibility of the Nigerian government. But it argues that the report's ten concluding recommendations offer Shell and its operating subsidiary SPDC immediate confidence-building measures (quick wins) as well as longer-term ways to tackle some of the challenges they face.

'The case studies in our report identify opportunities for Shell to do things better in the Niger Delta,' says ECCR Co-ordinator Miles Litvinoff, who edited the report. 'After years of unresolved community tensions, Shell could reap benefits by making accountability to local people a higher priority.'

Among the report's most urgent recommendations are an end to gas flaring, provision of sustainable drinking water for communities, action to replace ageing pipelines, and commencement of a major environmental audit and rehabilitation programme. Longer term, the report calls for continuous human rights training for Shell's Nigerian staff, greater respect for principles of open dialogue and community consent, independent monitoring and effective grievance mechanisms.

Senior Shell staff remuneration should be linked to progress on human rights and environmental challenges in the Delta, ECCR says.

Citing the increasingly recognised corporate duty to respect human rights by 'doing no harm', the report argues that Shell has both responsibility and opportunity to improve its operational practices in Nigeria.

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Notes for editors

1. The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR), PO Box 500, Oxford OX1 1ZL, UK, www.eccr.org.uk, is a company limited by guarantee in England & Wales (No. 2764183) and a Body in Association with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.
2. ***Shell in the Niger Delta: A Framework for Change - five case studies from civil society***, published by ECCR, February 2010, 88 pp, download available at www.eccr.org.uk/ShellintheNigerDelta.
3. Case studies and contributors:
 - i. 'Shell's Social Licence to Operate: A Case Study of Ogoni' - Legborsi Saro Pyagbara, Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)
 - ii. 'Shell's Poor Stakeholder Engagement' - Patrick B. Ereba and Boniface B. Dumpe, Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility (CSCR)
 - iii. 'Three Challenges Facing Shell in Nigeria' - Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN)
 - iv. 'Shell in Nigeria: A Conflict Perspective' - Dr Emmanuel O. Emmanuel, Trans-Border Missionaries Interface Initiative (TMII)
 - v. 'SPDC's Global Memorandum of Understanding' - Tracey Draper, Pro-Natura International (Nigeria) (PNI)
4. ***Media inquiries:***

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5. The report is sponsored by the Netherlands-based international development organisation Cordaid.
6. Using the report: ECCR hopes that the report will contribute to improvement in the lives of the Niger Delta's communities by helping clarify priorities for Shell and SPDC and providing a framework for constructive dialogue and prompt action. ECCR encourages engagement on the part of faith-based and other responsible investors and fund managers - and others who seek a more equitable and sustainable global economy – in sharing concerns with Shell directors and urging changes along the lines recommended.
7. ECCR is a church-based investor coalition and membership organisation working for economic justice and environmental sustainability. A Body in Association with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, it undertakes research, advocacy and dialogue to encourage companies to meet the highest standards of corporate responsibility and transparency, as well as assisting faith communities, their members and other investors in upholding these same high standards through responsible and positive-impact investment.
8. Past ECCR reports: *Vulnerable Migrant Workers: The Responsibility of Business* (2009), *Water Sustainability: Meeting the Challenge* (2008), and company reports on Rio Tinto (2006), BHP Billiton (2005), GSK (2004), AstraZeneca (2003), Shell (2002) and BP (2002). www.eccr.org.uk/Reports

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