

Following ERA's first visit to the two spill sites at Kalaba and the ensuing reports, Africa Independent Television (A.I.T) developed interest and decided to visit the sites with ERA. This visit became necessary in view of the fact that ERA's first report indicated that a spill point along the pipeline was still spewing petroleum product into the environment two months after it was noticed by the community and Agip.

The ERA/AIT team was received at the community town hall. After explaining their mission to the community, the chiefs, elders and other community leaders expressed happiness at the visit and gave approval for the team to go about their mission in the community. A.I.T's Ovieteme George then went ahead to request for interview with some of the community folks, including the paramount ruler of the community. This was captured on video by the camera man, Charles Kosipre.

Paramount Ruler of Kalaba

*Let me start by saying that Agip laid that pipeline here in 1987. We have gained no benefits from the operations of Agip in our territory. Instead of positive benefits accruing to us as host community, we have been experiencing the negative impacts of Agip's oil business in our environment. We experienced a major oil spill on the western side of the Taylor Creek in 2005. Though that spill was attributed to equipment failure, we were not paid any compensation by Agip. Our forest, ponds and farms were destroyed. A lady who was going to farm, unaware of the spill, with live coals got enveloped in fire as she got to the spill impacted site (then in 2005).*

*Not long ago we also suffered from the spill and fire from our neighbouring community (Ikarama), as a result of a ruptured Shell pipeline there. Coming to the current double oil spills in our community, they occurred in February, 2009. Although, three weeks after they occurred, Agip came to clamp one of the spots, we are really surprised that the other one is still left like that, spewing large volumes of petroleum product into our environment. It is two months now since that spill occurred and it is still left unclamped. This has affected our swamps, ponds, economic trees and herbs, farms and the environment in general. Official reports from joint investigation revealed that the two spills were caused by equipment failure. We have copies of the report with us which, we can show you. All the spills that have occurred in this community were as a result of equipment failure.*

*In the light of the above, and as a peace loving people, we would like to use this medium to call on the Government to prevail on Agip to come and clamp the ruptured spot on their pipeline and save our environment. After clamping, Agip should also take immediate steps to properly clean up the impacted sites. We are particularly worried because, if urgent steps are not taken before the rains, more harm would be done as the slick would spread over the whole swamp in our bush. It is during such times that fishes breed here. Unless the proper thing is done, our people and environment will suffer too much from this spill. Ordinarily, we expect that our community would be compensated after the clean up and remediation by Agip. Please help us carry this message to the appropriate quarters*

Mrs. Nwolo Orukali is the lady who was burnt during the 2005 oil spill in the community. She said:

*On that faithful day, I never knew that there was an oil spill along the Agip pipeline and as I was going to my farm with some charcoal to burn some dry weeds, I suddenly experienced fire all around me. I was really lucky that some persons came to my rescue and rushed me to the hospital for medical attention. Parts of my right side were severely affected by the fire; my right arm, abdomen and my face. To avoid more harm to our people and the environment, we are calling on Agip to come and stop the spewing of that oil into our swamps, ponds and farms. It has really affected some farms, even as we lead you to the site you will notice some of the farms impacted. Agip should please come and stop the spill and clean up the environment before the rainy season proper. Besides, they should compensate us too. We have suffered too*

*much from Agip*

Copies of the official report in relation to the two spills were shown to the ERA/AIT team. These were also captured on video. They stated that the spills were as a result of equipment failure. While the team was ferried across the Taylor Creek to the spill site, enthusiastic women and youths of Kalaba swam or walked across the Creek to the spill site. On getting to the unclamped site, the team came face to face with the petroleum product, gushing and spraying like a fountain of water into the environment. A.I.T's Ovieme George made some statements there that were recorded, stating the fact that the spill has lasted two months and has impacted on the people and environment of Kalaba negatively. ERA condemns Agip's nonchalance and sees it as an act of corporate social irresponsibility.

ERA recommends that

- 1 Agip clamps the ruptured spot on the pipeline.
- 2 Agip renders a written apology to the people of Kalaba.
- 3 Agip carries out clean up after the clamping, before the heavy rains come.

4 Agip compensates the community people.

5 Agip be fined for negligence.