

Executive Director of the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN), Nnimmo Bassey, has been re-elected for a second term as chair of Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), the largest grassroots environmental movement in the world.

The re-election which will see Bassey presiding over the affairs of the movement for another two-year term spanning 2010 - 2012, was the highpoint of FoEI's Biennial General Meeting (BGM) just ended in Penang, Malaysia. Other excom members are from South Africa, Malaysia, Uruguay, United Kingdom, El Salvador, Sri Lanka, Croatia and the United States. Bassey's first term as helmsman of the 77-member countries network after his election at FoEI's BGM held in Honduras in 2008 was characterized by intense mobilization of member groups to resist current economic models promoted by developed nations and big corporations that have not taken people's needs into account.

In December 2009 he led thousands of FoEI campaigners and volunteers to the UN Climate Talks in Copenhagen, Denmark, where the movement demanded emission cuts in developed countries, and money for developing countries to grow cleanly while adapting to the effects of climate change.

Bassey also in April led FoEI campaigners to the historic World Peoples' Climate Conference in Cochabamba, where the structural causes of climate change and the inadequacy of the Copenhagen Accord were discussed. That conference also discussed and agreed on the need for a Universal Declaration of Mother Earth Rights.

Back home, Bassey continued to speak out forcefully against unfriendly environmental practices like gas flaring in Nigeria's Niger Delta and the lack of transparency in the oil industry. He also popularized ERA's Leave the Oil in the Soil campaign which, among others, seeks to stop booming oil theft in the Niger Delta and entrench a regime of transparency and accountability. Bassey was in October named along with three other environmentalists as winner of this year's Rights Livelihood Awards, popularly referred to as the Alternative Nobel Prize. He was also listed among the Time Magazine Heroes of the Environment for 2009.

Friends of the Earth International has over 5,000 local activist groups in every continent and over two million members and supporters around the world campaigning on urgent environmental and social issues as well as current models of economic and corporate globalization.

Bassey is the first African to chair the movement in its 40 year history.