

The Executive Director of Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, Nigeria (ERA/FoEN), Nnimmo Bassey has been elected chairperson of Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), the largest grassroots environmental movement with members and associates from 77 countries of the world. Nnimmo Bassey was elected as FoEI chairperson at the Biennial General Meeting of the organisation held at Piliguin, Honduras on November 10-15, 2008.

In a speech after the election, Bassey paid tribute to Meena Raman, immediate past chairperson of FoEI, describing her four-year term as an exemplary one which provided excellent work and leadership to all member groups of the federation. He promised prompt actions to mobilize and resist any form of environmental injustice in any part of the world, even as he maintained that corporate greed had fuelled avoidable crisis in all facet of life including the financial sector, where the current bail-outs of bankrupt companies in the global North was skewed in favour of the rich.

He stressed that with the backing of undemocratic financial institutions that keep the majority of peoples in poverty, disease and unacceptable conditions, the world has been wracked by odious debt owing to huge financial outlays set aside for military adventures and the support of the military-industrial complex.

³We stand at the crossroads of history with the scaffoldings erected by capitalism and neo-liberalism collapsing like a pack of cards. No matter how many people live a lie, the lie remains a lie. People may decide to live in the imaginations of their minds, but the truth is that sooner than later the reality knocks us back to concrete challenges. We stand at a crossroads, but we must take the right turn and FoEI is well positioned to take the lead in that march².

In response to the challenges, he pledged to bring on board the organisation his experience as a grassroots mobilizer and campaigner, promising to sustain and heighten the practice of collective leadership to raise FoEI banner in legitimate struggles of it's allies.

The Biennial General Meeting also witnessed the admission of the Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (PENGO) as full member of Friends of the Earth International. Other groups admitted as associate members were from Liberia, Zambia, Sri Lanka, Mexico, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique and Timor Leste . Among a number of resolutions reached at the end of

the meeting was one calling on the Federal Government of Nigeria not to shift the goal post for the termination of gas flaring in Nigeria beyond 31st December 2008.