

Surveying of Oil Theft Activities in Wetlands Nigeria – A Case Study of Niger Delta Region.

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SUMMARY

Surveying, a means of finding the area of any part of the earth's surface, the lengths and directions of the boundary lines, and the shape of the surface and with accurately showing the results on paper, has been effective in the exploration of oil and gas reserves, development of oil fields, and laying of flow and pipelines in wetlands Nigeria; and also, in the discovery of oil theft activities in the region.

Commercial exploitation of Nigeria oil and gas reserves began in 1956, shortly after the discovery of oil at Oloibiri in Bayelsa State. The export of the crude oil accounts for 90% of the country's foreign exchange earnings and more than 70% of its total budget expenditure. Over the years, oil that is meant to be a blessing has constituted a nuisance, leading to environmental degradation, loss of farmlands, loss of fishing grounds, communal clashes, militancy, cultism, and the total breakdown of moral values in the region.

The total neglect of the region because of poor governance and corruption provided the platform for the twin problems of oil theft for export and illegal refining. It is estimated that Nigeria losses 470,000 bpd of crude oil amounting to \$700 million monthly due to oil theft, although others speculate much more than this figure. Artisanal refining has worsened the already degraded environment by oil spills and industrial discharges. The art of the oil theft is an organized crime with local and International Oil Company (IOC) staff, government officials, security personnel, local leaders, and sundry. This menace has led to environment degradation, huge economic losses, and social vices, and if not stopped now, the impact could be more devastating.

The oil theft popularly known as illegal oil bunkering has become a regular activity in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Despite the huge financial cost on the part of the government and the

multinational oil companies, the perpetrators of this business continue to expand their operations in the creeks leading to environmental degradation of the region.

This paper presents a review of surveying involvement in oil theft activities in terms of providing geomatics information of the locations and pipelines right of ways in the region, and guide as a tool to exposing the illegal activities such that they can be curbed to stop the activities completely.

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