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General

Oil spill kills 15 in Rivers State

By Victor Edozie, Port Harcourt | Publish Date: Nov 6 2015 8:55PM | Updated Date: Nov 7 2015 12:47AM

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About 15 persons have been confirmed dead in Emago/Kugbo community in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State, following the recent oil spill that occurred in the area, at one of the facilities of Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC). This was disclosed yesterday, by Omini Walson-Asaco, spokesman of the community before the members of Rivers State House of Assembly Committee on Environment, held at the Assembly Complex in Port Harcourt.

The House of Assembly Committee had summoned the management

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of the Italian oil giant, on the heels of a petition from the lawmaker representing Abua/Odual Constituency, the Deputy Speaker, Marshall Uwom, requesting the House to intervene in the matter. At the meeting, which had in attendance representatives of the community and Agip company, the spokesman of Emago/Kugbo community, accused the company of insensitivity to the plight of the people.

Dr. Walson-Asaco said that the spill was caused by an explosion, pointing out that Agip had not carried out remediation and clean-up of the area.

Responding to the allegation, the Government Relations Manager of Agip, Ijuwe Albert, told the Committee that the spill was an act of sabotage. According to him, the act of "using explosives" on Agip's facilities had returned in the area, noting that the company had recorded several cases of sabotage with explosives and other destructive devices on their pipelines.

In his response, the Deputy Speaker and lawmaker representing the community wondered why Agip should carry out investigation without involving the host community. He accused Agip of making pre-emptive accusations.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Committee, Israel Ngbuelo, had advised Agip to ensure that its corporate social responsibility in host communities were implemented.



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