

Utuh gully erosion claims

From PATIENCE
OKECHUKWU, Awka

NO fewer than 20 persons, mostly women and children had lost their lives in the gully erosion that ravaged Utuh, Nnewi South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

A total of 75 families have been rendered homeless and lodged in refugee camps in neighbouring towns, while about 28 residential houses have also been submerged by gully erosion in Ekwulobia and its environs.

Spokesman of Utuh community, Mr. Austin Obika who also lost his father to the erosion in Nnewi bemoaned the destruction of several communication lines and access roads between the town and other neighbouring towns and villages.

According to Austin, the size and length of the gully erosion damage has assumed a dangerous proportion, noting that the gully erosion is a fearful sight to behold.

His words: The gully is now standing on a height of about 50 meters below the soil surface and a width of about 100 meters covering a distance of about four kilometres on two directions, thereby occasioning unimaginable damages to the land mass and landscape of the area.

"As you can see the people

of Okpo and Utuh communities are predominantly rural farmers who engage in subsistence agriculture for their livelihood. But today the gully erosion has unfortunately deprived them of the opportunity of farming," he lamented.

The Utuh community urged the federal, state and local governments to come to their assistance as the community is being threatened with acute shortage of water due to the fact that their seven streams have

been lost to the erosion.

The people also pleaded with government to provide new access roads and bridges so as to re-open and restore physical communication between the affected community and their neighbours. They urged government to as a matter of urgency, find a lasting solution to the people's predicament given the topography of the community.

20 lives

The communities badly affected by erosion include Utuh-Ebenato, Orlu (Imo State) road, Umehehin-Okpo-Osumenyi road and Okpo-Umueze road.

A resident of the area, who pleaded anonymity said, the implication is that people are forced to park their vehicles in far away places and then trek very long and distorted distances to their various destinations.



Gully erosion is part of Nigeria's environmental problem at the moment as can be seen in this photograph.