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6 die, 17 missing as flood ravages Akwa Ibom island

[National News](#) Aug 16, 2010

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By Tony Nyong

UYO—AN unprecedented flood in the history of Akwa Ibom State has swept through Itak Abasi fishing community in Ibena Local Government Area of the state leaving in its trail six persons dead and 17 others missing.

No fewer than 40 fishingboats were also swept into the Atlantic Ocean by the flood. The villagers who described the incident as a tsunami, said the flood swept more than three quarters of their once lively community into the ocean.

Governor Akpabio who visited the island, weekend, expressed sadness over the disaster, assuring that he would take care of the victims and ensure that they were relocated in a safe settlement.

The governor also directed the Local Government Council to gazette names of all victims affected and to forward the list to his office.

Akpabio who was touched by the plight of the victims, asked the council Chairman to arrange a make shift shelter for the people who had been suddenly rendered homeless as the agony of those who lost their loved ones lingered.

However, Vanguard learnt that Akwa Ibom State Government might not be able to address what

appeared to be its worst flood disaster alone, except the Federal Government and the other agencies collaborated with it.

Executive Director, Projects, of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Arc. Esoetok Etteh who hails from the area told Vanguard that the 15, 000 strong citizens of the settlement needed help as the flood had wrecked havoc on them.

Some of the residents told Vanguard that they were worried because the flood had washed away nearly all their fishing materials and had taken over their only primary school and health centre.

Vanguard was told that the attention of ExxonMobil, a U.S. international oil company was drawn to the impending danger, but that the company was allegedly insensitive to their plight. Vanguard also learnt that in 2002, Hon. Nduese Essien, the current Minister, Housing and Urban Development had advised the people of Ibeno to channel the matter to NDDC and the National Assembly through him.

In 2008, the Senate Committee on Environment visited the area with Secretary to the Akwa Ibom State Government, Mr. Umana Okon Umana, and recommended what should have been done in the area.

Vanguard investigation revealed that NDDC had allegedly awarded the contract to reclaim the land, said to be receding at about four metres yearly to a certain firm at the contract value of N6 billion, but three years after, nothing had been done even when the said firm had loaded shoreline protection equipment that had long been rotting at Upenkang village in Ibeno.

Councilor representing Ward II of the local council, Patrick Usenekong, who was evacuating some of the people trapped by the flood, told Vanguard that some of the people trapped by the flood now lived on top of their houses or on roof tops.

Usenekong said: “We haven’t seen anything like this in a decade. The last this happened was 25 years ago.”

At press time NDDC had donated relief materials worth about N500,000 comprising 700 tubers of yam, 60 bags of rice, 60 gallons of groundnut oil and other food items.

NEMA also donated materials worth N5 million including 300 mattresses, 300 bags of rice, 300 buckets for carrying water, 30 bags of beans, while ExxonMobil was said to have only made promises of support.