

DONALD M. PAYNE
10TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE PROTECTION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE
RELATIONS

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA
RANKING MEMBER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

DEMOCRATIC STAFFING COMMITTEE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3010

WASHINGTON OFFICE
2209 FAYLEIGH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3010
(202) 225-3438

DISTRICT OFFICES
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
FEDERAL BUILDING
AND COURTHOUSE
60 WALNUT STREET
ROOM 1018
NEWARK, N.J. 07102
(973) 645-3213

333 NORTH BROAD STREET
ELIZABETH, NJ 07208
(908) 628-0222

Congressional Briefing – Thursday, April 22nd

***Water and Oil Do Mix: Corporate Scandals and Human Rights
Abuses in West Africa***

April 12, 2004

Dear Colleague:

I encourage you to join me at a Congressional Briefing on the topic of "Water and Oil Do Mix: Corporate Scandals and Human Rights Abuses in West Africa" on Thursday, April 22nd from 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. in HC-7 in the Capital Building. Two renowned civil society leaders from Nigeria and Ghana will discuss their concerns about World Bank policies in their respective countries. Please join me in welcoming:

- Asume Osuoka, Oilwatch Africa Coordinator for Environmental Rights Action and Friends of the Earth, Nigeria
- Rudolf Amenga-Etego, Integrated Social Development Centre and Campaign Coordinator for the National Coalition Against the Privatization of Water, Ghana

Mr. Osuoka and Mr. Amenga-Etego will be presenting firsthand reports on the impact of resources such as oil, gas and water. Environmental Rights Action was founded 1993 as an environmental pressure group, and joined Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) in 1996. The organization is dedicated to the defense of human ecosystems in terms of human rights, and to the promotion of environmentally responsible governmental, commercial, community and individual practice in Nigeria through the empowerment of local people. Much of the work has concentrated on multinational oil companies and the protection of the Niger delta. Mr. Osuoka survived imprisonment by the previous Abacha regime. His advocacy on behalf of human and natural environments in Nigeria has inspired activists around the world.

Mr. Amenga-Etego, a lawyer by training, became active in water issues in 1999 after a group of his neighbors in the capital, Accra, along with many other communities across the city, were struggling as water rates doubled, many fell behind in payments and others had their water cut-off. Backed by the World Bank and the IMF, Ghana's government was readying its water system for privatization. "I realized that if we subjected water to market forces, we were going to price out a lot of our citizens from accessing safe water," says Amenga-Etego. Globally, more than one billion people lack access to water services and more than 5 million people, mostly children, die each year from preventable water borne diseases. Mr. Amenga-Etego argues that water, essential for all human and planetary life, is a basic human right and should not be treated as a market commodity nor leased and managed by major transnational corporations.

I hope you will join us for this important event. Should you have questions, please feel free to call Kerry McKenney of Congressman Payne's staff at 53436.

Sincerely,



Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress

* * * * *Refreshments Will Be Served* * * * *