

Nigeria: New hope for old 'master plan' on Niger Delta

The government of President Umaru Yar'Adua says it is serious about tackling the root causes of violence and poverty in Nigeria's troubled Niger Delta with a 'master plan' to develop the region and provide basic services.

Yar'Adua's new budget proposal for 2008 commits 69 billion naira (US\$566 million) to the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for 2008, more than twice last year's federal budget allotment for the commission.

"[The Niger Delta will become] Africa's most prosperous, most peaceful and most pleasant region by 2020," according to Davies Okarevu of the NDDC, which is charged with implementing the master plan. Representatives from the commission met with representatives from the region in southeastern town of Calabar in mid-November.

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