Abstract Title: Accountability of the Government in the Niger Delta Oil and Gas Pollution

The grave challenge of oil and gas pollution in developing countries have been over stated. Indeed, scholars have pointed to the negative impact on the environment and public health of local inhabitants in affected areas by the pollution. Particularly, in the Niger Delta, writers have argued that the exploitation of oil and gas resources have caused severe environmental and health harm in the region. Scholars have also pointed out how pollution acts (such as the gas flaring in the Niger Delta) have hugely contributed to the global warming and climate change. As expected, several oil and gas firms (both indigenous and multinational) have been accused of contributing to the pollution menace. However, little effort has been made to establish the liability of the government in the pollution. This becomes necessary, considering that s.12 of the Nigerian Constitution inputs an obligation on the government to protect the environment and prevent pollution. Moreover several ratified and domesticated treaties, as well as national environmental statutes in Nigeria have created this obligation. These statutory instruments have also created enforcement mechanisms and agencies through which the Nigerian government could regulate its oil and gas industry. One would therefore, wonder why pollution in Nigeria has continued, undeterred. This presentation shall therefore, review the criminal liability that could arise from an inability of the government to adequately regulate environmental aspects of her oil and gas industry (in line with statutory standards).

Keywords: Pollution, liability, legislation, oil spill, gas flaring, environment.