

Doing business in Nigeria: challenges and questions

July 23rd, 2009

Hello, I'd like to invite you to a web-chat on the topic of doing business in Nigeria.

In that web-chat, we will discuss opportunities, challenges, questions ... difficulties associated with doing business in the country. So, why are we focusing on Nigeria?

Nigeria is an important oil and gas producer and potentially an engine for growth in Africa. Unfortunately, that potential is yet to be fulfilled. Not all Nigerians have benefited from the country's oil wealth.

In the Niger Delta, where much of this wealth is created, many people remain poor, and some critics say we should do more to bring development to those populations.

Among Niger Delta communities, frustration has grown and the history of our relationship with those communities has known some tragic moments in the past. Today, poverty, crime and militancy have become overlapping problems.

Militant groups attack oil and gas facilities, while criminals steal oil and take it by barge to tankers waiting offshore. We believe any solution to the crisis will have to address poverty and ensure a shared development to the Nigerian people.

We believe that Shell and other oil companies can contribute by generating income and jobs and investing in community development. But they cannot take the place of government, despite many people's over-expectations of the role we can, companies can and should play.

One in five Africans is a Nigerian, that's important. And I heard somebody say that if you actually can get Nigeria right you will get a huge part of Africa right.

I must admit I'm really proud of my country and proud of the region I come from which is the Niger Delta as well. A lot has been achieved but not really presented properly in the world.

We hope you can join us on Thursday the 23rd of July to discuss this vital issue.

The webchat will take place at 2pm in London – that's 9am in New York, 3pm in Brussels, or 2pm in Lagos. We'll be taking questions from across the world and hopefully together we can make some progress.

Thank you.