

## SERAC flags off anti-eviction litigation campaign in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Since February 2009, SERAC launched an intense anti-eviction litigation campaign in Port Harcourt, Rivers State as part of a broader strategy to bring to an end, the scheduled demolitions of the waterfront settlements and other marked locations in the state. Just recently, the state's Ministry of Urban Development started implementing a bulldozer-friendly Urban Renewal Programme that aims to 'clean up' Port Harcourt and restore its 'garden city' status.



Participants at the litigation campaign.

Under the auspices of the litigation campaign, Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC) filed a lawsuit - **Suit No. PHC/1144/2009: Pastor Ubong Usoro & 3 Others V. Governor of Rivers State & 6 Others**, on behalf of the Claimants on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2009. Among other reliefs, the suit is seeking legal redress for the forced eviction and demolition of the

Claimants, residential houses, apartments, churches, schools, and business premises at Nos. 16 and 21 Abonnema Wharf Road, Port Harcourt River State. The evictions were ordered and executed by the Rivers State Government on February 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13, 2009 without an order of a court of competent jurisdiction, and in contravention of its own laws and policies especially the provisions of Sections 86, 89 and 90 of the Rivers State Physical Planning and Development Law No.6 of 2003 and in disregard of several provisions of the 1999 Constitution protecting the right to movable and immovable property, private and family life, and their right to dignity and security.



SERAC Staff and Claimants in the newly filed suit

To take good work to scale, SERAC is offering legal consultancy and technical advisory services to Port Harcourt-based NGOs - Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN), Social Action and Ogoni Solidarity Forum and Sustainable Peace Initiative of Nigeria - with regard to the design of a comprehensive plan of legal action that would impress upon the Rivers State government, the importance of addressing the problems of urban poverty and access to affordable and adequate housing.