

TEXT OF MESSAGE PRESENTED BY OTUEKONG EMMANUEL IBIOK, HON. SPECIAL ADVISER, BUREAU FOR POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, AKWA IBOM STATE GOVERNMENT, TO UBIUM DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (USA) INC. ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 2014 COLLOSIUM

PROTOCOL:

I bring you all, special greetings from home. From this outset, I must acknowledge that Ubium Development Association (USA) Incorporated, has been doing a pretty marvelous work which impact has been tremendously felt both in the diaspora and at home over the years. I must commend this excellent and patriotic spirit.

When it was conveyed to me that I have been selected as one of the speakers at this event, my joy knew no bounds to have been so recognized by so great a people and whose sense of purpose and pride of place; can only be captured in a simple phrase that has been found so apt for the moment: that of having remained steadfast, focused and dedicated to achieving the growth and development of our people and race. I can't find anything more remarkable to say of this great and distinctive service to mankind and one's own race than acknowledging the quantum impact of your steady and collective stride to uplifting the place and glory of Ubium people in the global sphere.

Now, the theme of this year's collosium is something quite inspiring. And I wish, I was met with less state duty to physically share the podium and speak on the essence of "Ubium: Collaborating for a Sustainable Future:"

Ubium nation, it must be said, is a remarkable entity among the Ibibios of Akwa Ibom State. What distinguishes and marks it out is not its distinct size or dynamic population since our forebears migrated to its present area more than five centuries ago, but the increasing aspiration of its people to assert itself and define it in the light of modern achievements and accomplishments.

It should also be noted that Ubium people, besides being the first set of peoples living in the coastal regions of Nigeria, were among the earliest

to receive Christianity; which on the same footing, brought about the civilizing impacts of western education. Commendations must therefore be given to Qua Iboe Church, Lutheran Church, Salvation Army and the Catholic Church, which impacted a great deal on our educational progress.

Today, Ubium people are noted to have been among the first sets of indigenous Akwa Ibom groups to have embrace western education and with the founding of the Salvation Army Secondary School, Akai Ubium; the floodgates of achievement was opened to all. It lucidly explains why Ubium people of all walks and calling are found in the forefronts of social, economic, political and professional endeavours.

Though the first sets of the beneficiaries of the social and economic influence of education were largely teachers and pastors, the eye-opener of that impact did exposed our people to a wider world of opportunities and to which our children have been well rewarded thereof.

Ubium, I must be proud to note, have produced vastly educated citizens and have impacted advantageously on all spheres. And it is to our eternal pride that it was Ubium nation that was able to produce and give to Akwa Ibom State her first Senior Advocate of Nigeria [SAN] in the person of Barrister Akpan Ekong Bassey. It is not surprising too, that one of the highest positions of Exxon-Mobil, an American interest in global oil exploration industry, is filled by an eligible Ubium son – Mr. Udom Inoyo. This is also to our collective pride among other sons and daughters of Ubium of old and in the present and including the late Chief Joseph Dickson Esema, Chief Okoko who took the presence of Ubium into global politics, leadership and mentorship in education and also including the celebrated Ubium scholar Dr. J F D Ibiok, who has made his impact known in the diaspora.

In the military, we can't forget Ubium having produced the like of the late Brigadier-General Itu and Col. Otu Usenndia of blessed memory. Col. E P Eyienam rtd. of the Nigerian Medical Corps and Lt. Col. Udofia who also made an impressive impact in the military.

I must say that besides the name of Ubium, having come into the Hall of fame of Nigeria's Jurisprudence and global corporate administration, the Ubium educated elite boasts of celebrated scholars, technocrat, engineers, politicians, businessmen and women of repute, including Hon. JJ Eno, Senator Effiong Bob, Pro Chancellor, University of Benin, Hon. Dan Akpan of the National Assembly, Rt Hon Aniefiok Thompson, former Deputy Speaker Akwa Ibom House of Assembly, MMa Akpata, chief udoekpo umana (Abasi Essien) Obong Essien Esema, my humble self and Bishop Bassey Imowo, who has recently blazed the trail of being the first indigenous Akwa Ibom person to have established an oil/gas tank farm in Akwa Ibom State as a private sector investor. This is worth recommending and mentioning; because the achievement came through a collaborative effort, which was hinged to building synergies with like institutions. We must not also forget Barrister Ekpo Nta, the current chairman of Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), who has made equally an indelible mark in the Nigerian history.

In the light of the above, it must be however, noted that the role of Ubium Development Association (USA) Inc., is very strong, heartwarming and symbolic; as it reflects a passion among its highly educated elite to be dedicated and remain steadfast to the progress of Ubium nation. I believe, much as I am convinced that since the founding of Ubium Development Association (USA) Inc; it has remained and have been used as a formidable platform for the development of our community and peoples.

Much of these have result and has been seen in some of its key areas of achievement which include, granting of scholarships, provision of infrastructure, renovation of schools, and the regular provision of humanitarian services in the areas of free health services to Ubium peoples and communities, which often complimented government efforts; and on the other hand, exhibit a sense of patriotism by the donors in giving back to society with a bid to help the less privileged amongst us. Such substantial contribution by our people has been noticed from time to time and stands to be always encouraged.

It is with a clear view to bolster such remarkable initiatives that I point the Ubium People on the peculiar need to sustain such commendable efforts. Ubium people in the USA must be found at all times as coming and working together to make a difference for our people.

By partnering and pooling available resources together to meet a common ground of interest, new grounds will be broken, new frontiers will be conquered; and a new awareness, created on the need to always build our oneness with a view to sustaining our interest at all times. The present and arising need as it has always remained is for Ubium people everywhere; to partner for the future of our children and a progeny yet unborn.

Again, I must say that you are keeping our legacies alive, and very as beacons of Ubium development and growth. The Initiative over the years, have been found worthwhile. It has been growing from year to year in the promotion not only of Ubium unity but in the strengthening of our common bonds as a people. And speaking of legacies and calling for a stronger collaboration on Ubium national issues, I must urge us all to continue to be a voice of courage and a hope for our people around the world.

UDA (USA) has over the time, shown the way not only to Ubium people but to other members of the black race in the Diaspora. This is quite fitting as only by such strides of good examples can a people be effectively awakened to its responsibilities. In fact, it can only be held true that for each generation, to inspire hope for its people, and in the timeless words of Frantz Fanon: "Out of relative obscurity, [a people must] discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it." I think this is what every succeeding generation of Ubium nationals abroad the world; and since the founding of Ubium Development Association (USA) Inc; have been doing in a much applaudable and sustainable way.

There has been a lot of sacrifice no doubt. The efforts have been most commendable in the search for providing a better life and a good standing for our people. But still, we must keep on committing ourselves to more sacrifices for the greatest good of the greatest number of Ubium

people. The efforts, I must remind us, all have never been in vain. We are collaboratively working to translate Ubium nation into the perceived giant of tomorrow.

It is said that nobody wants to be away from his/her home for too long. And here there is a message of hope. The government and present administration at home under the able and focused leadership of Chief (Dr.) Godswill Obot Akpabio (CON), and under the uncommon transformation agenda, is working hard to make our state to be effectively working in all ramifications.

This is so, that so many of our people out here would be happy to return, live and invest at home. I encourage all Ubium sons and daughters in the Diaspora to always find it within their capacity to come home and see the wonderful transformation the state has attained specifically, in terms of enduring critical infrastructure; which is set to change and indeed impact a clear revolution for our future. We must be clearly awakened today, to presently live in the spirit that will impact us a great future in our needed direction.

In conclusion, I appreciate everyone for your dedication and commitment. You have been steadfast in promoting Ubium nation; by staying true to values that will necessarily uplift us a people. I must, in essence urge you to be encouraged that you are never to allow politicians who have a different set of agenda to divide; and tear you apart from your existing goals and as a people. Please, I am urging again that for your good and appreciable works, you should never allow yourselves to be divided or distracted by people of shallow interest.

In spite of the fact that we still have some fundamental problem to deal with, such as poverty reduction and capacity building in our human resource base through good and qualitative education, we can only come together to overcome these challenges. Through stronger collaboration among ourselves, we can push for poverty alleviation among our people; provide access to good and quality health care delivery, fight hunger and starvation by ascertaining huge investments in agriculture, and provide for food sufficiency as well as guarantee food security through solid

investments. By partnering with foreign NGO's and donor agencies, we can combat illiteracy and complement the free education policy of the government. With good and qualitative education, our youths can be gainfully employed and there will be reduction in existing poverty levels, crimes and underemployment.

Ubium people can collaborate to solve the problems we are presently dealing with amongst our people; and if we come together with a determined mind to offset most of the social and economic deficits found among us. These are the enduring lessons we must hold among us amid equally a horde of problems we have to deal with.

We have to continue to sacrifice ourselves in no small way for a better tomorrow and there is no relenting in this duty.

We need to live and work wherever we are and dedicate ourselves to those Ubium peoples whose hope for a brighter tomorrow resides in us to reach out and touch and inspire them to a better awakening and greatness of sorts.

The march to Ubium greatness, now resides in you and me. We can work ourselves up the social and economic ladder to be the best we can be. We can attain our dreams for ourselves by believing and working to realize a greater Ubium nation. And we should not forget the famous quote of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the 35th President of United States, who said: "Think not of what your country can do for you but think of what you can do for your country."

We have our fair share of resources to indulge this with the greatest, being the huge and abundant human capital residing in all of us.

This is quite an essential challenge before us now as we deliberate the frontier for stronger collaborations toward a sustainable future. The home truth must never miss us. We must come together and live for something; which is our people and destiny. And this will remain the best and enduring path to Ubium greatness.

I urge Ubium people everywhere, to be awakened to a real greatness that is opened and possible to us all. There are many opportunities before us now. To you our great sons and daughters in the diaspora and also to us holding forth at home; it is a great work that calls for a great and urgent sense of duty. The power is within us. We must look within ourselves. To do and be the best we dream and think of ourselves. And God will help us all.

Thank you and God bless.

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