

## **COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE**

### **16<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Ubium Development Association in USA (UDA)**

#### **Introduction**

Ubium Development Association in USA (UDA) held its 16th National Convention in Dallas, Texas, July 13-15, deliberated on a wide range of community development issues, and set priorities aimed at redressing rural urban imbalance, and promote optimal development of human and natural resources in Ubium jurisdictional area of Nsit-Ubium Local Government of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

The 16th National Convention was held at the Dallas/Addison Marriott Quorum by the Galleria in Dallas, Texas.

The three day Convention featured a reception, business session, cultural night, and a youth meeting, followed by a Town Hall Forum with moving presentations by key leaders and special guests. Other activities included sightseeing and a charity fundraising dinner, culminating in a thanksgiving service on Sunday, July 15, 2018.

Special guests and delegates from the homeland, as well as officials, were received by the National President, E. Samuel Essien, during a welcoming reception on Friday, July 13, 2018. HRH Etebom Ukpong Noah Udoewa, Clan Head of Ubium, was in attendance as Father of the Day.

Hon. Archibong Okono, Chairman, Board of Directors, declared the Convention open during the Business Session on Friday, July 13, 2018. Deliberations at the business session could not be completed at one seating; therefore, following due process, the session reconvened on Saturday, July 14, 2018 at 10.00am.

#### **Business Session**

The Business Session, chaired by the National President, E. Samuel Essien, featured deliberations on the theme, "Engaging the Ubium Diaspora: Partnership, Civic Participation, and Community Development." Noting progress on the conclusions of the last National Convention (New

Jersey 2016), the Convention deliberated on a wide range of agenda items, and authorized:

- Expansion of the role of its home based Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Measures to address alleged vandalism that is affecting its community development projects like borehole installations in rural communities.
- UDA National Executive, based on the association's commitment to providing short term medical missions to medically underserved communities, to address the alleged conflict between the 2019 political calendar in Nigeria with Nsit Ubium 2019 prescheduled short term medical mission; furthermore, to reschedule the medical mission after appropriate consultation with its host community and other partners.

Noting the limited involvement of elected officials in this year's Convention through the views made known in various presentations, the Convention expressed concern with:

1. Inadequate representation of Ubium people by their elected officials at all levels of government
2. Poor basic services delivery in underserved communities

In view of the foregoing, the Convention appealed to elected officials representing Ubium to be more engaged with the communities that they represent through appropriate collaboration with UDA.

The Convention also discussed strategies for improving the implementation and evaluation of UDA's Community Empowerment Program (UCEP), and:

- Ratified recommendations to address, through CAC, delinquencies and defaults in repayment of previously approved UDA-financed microcredit loans to small scale business owners,
- Authorized the National President to take appropriate steps to implement the recommendation to start a community based Micro-Finance Bank in Ubium

- Passed a motion naming Houston, Texas, as the host Chapter of the next National Convention in July 2020.

On responsibilities of Chapter Officers, the Convention urged UDA chapters to exercise their responsibilities to the Association, in response to a concern expressed by a delegate that other than Dallas and Houston Chapters, no other chapter has lived up to their responsibility of maintaining the frequency of their activities. Areas for improvement included:

- the promotion of chapter activities
- communication with the National Association by paying required dues in a timely manner
- mandated reports of officers and contact information.

### **Correspondence and Goodwill Messages**

The Convention noted with appreciation the correspondence and goodwill messages from Texas State Governor, Greg Abbott, and others.

“As you gather to celebrate the Ubium community, foster discussion on community service and prepare for the challenges ahead, I applaud your organization and its members for your humanitarian efforts,” Governor Abbott wrote in his goodwill message to the just concluded 2018 National Convention of Ubium Diaspora.

Mayor Joe Chow of Addison, the host city of the event, expressed his gratitude for the decision to hold the Convention in his city within the Dallas Metropolis.

“We are pleased that you chose the Town of Addison to conduct your 16th National Convention, and I welcome each of you to our great city,” he said in his welcome message to delegates.

Senator Effiong D. Bob, Pro-Chancellor of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, who previously represented Uyo Senatorial District and Ubium in the Nigerian Senate, an indigene of Ubium, applauded the work of UDA.

“Your contributions towards the provision of portable water supply in select primary schools in Ubium are commendable. I call on you to continually speak in one voice for the development of Ubium and its people, encourage the education of Ubium people so that the future generations of Ubium will be assured.”

Foreign based Akwa Ibom professionals who commended Ubium Diaspora on their commitment to development in the homeland included Prof. Offiong Aqua of New York University and Prof. Abel Udoh of Gazi University, Turkey Republic.

“If such conventions could be arranged in Ubium, back home from time to time, it would carry more weights and Ubiumites back home, rich and poor, will appreciate their sons and daughters better,” Udoh, professor of Hydrobiology, wrote in his goodwill message to UDA.

## Town Hall

The Town Hall was chaired by Dr. Victor Uko, CEO of Victor Uko Associates, a real estate firm in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, who also doubled as moderator.

The event was co-chaired by Ed. Akpaita, Vice President, Global Quality Shaklee Corporation, Pleasanton, California. Other panelists and presenters included Dr. Etuk Idem, Chairman of Ubium Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Chief Medical Director of Mt Zion Medical Centre, Calabar, Cross River State of Nigeria; His Royal Highness Etebom Ukpong Noah Udoewa, Clan Head of Ubium, and Dr. Mrs. Odunayi Ani, award winning author and a director with the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Lagos, Nigeria.

**Convention noted the role of Diaspora from the presentation of Dr. Uko, who:**

-Spoke on theme of the Convention and the role of the Diaspora in community development

-Stated that the Diaspora always sought the development of their homeland, regardless of where they found themselves.

-Put forward compelling reasons for Ubium Diaspora to continue to collaborate and ignite the entrepreneurial capability to the populace at home, and

-Stressed the need, “to actively collaborate and participate in community development.”

Convention also noted the brief overviews and contributions of other speakers:

Dr. Idem, CEO, Mt. Zion Medical Center, Calabar, presented a case study of the Comprehensive Health Center at Ikot Akpamba, a satellite primary health Center of the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. He explained the initial plan to hand over the Center to the state government and was advised against the decision. The Center was, however, handed over to the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. The hospital has been a source of help to the community.

In his remarks, Mr. Ed. Akpaita stressed the need for cooperation in areas of food production and distribution as well as strategies for drug manufacturing in the state.

Dr. Ani of NIMASA explained the principles of participation, collaboration and economic development as a tool for economic development. She pointed out that there were several agencies that would be willing to assist Ubium in development, and that she would link UDA to these agencies for sponsorship and funding.

The last presentation on Immigration was given by Barrister Emem Ottong Akpabio of Akpabio Law Office, Dallas, who explained the array of immigration services her law firm was in a position to offer Ubium people in USA.

In conclusion, HRH Udoewa, Clan Head, called on the Diaspora from all the locations in the world to come together and develop the clan.

In his closing remarks, the Chairman and Moderator, Dr. Uko, noted that our youths require personal development and training. He explained the need to improve the development of human resources in the community. Regretting the level of decadence among the youths and the problems they

were facing in their various homes, Dr. Uko recommended measures aimed at facilitating development in the homeland and expanding opportunities for gainful employment.

### **Youth Forum**

Discussions at the youth forum were led by Edwin Akpaita, Jr., an estimating engineer at MSL Precision, Christie Echikwa, and Charles Bryce.

### **Convention Banquet and Charity Dinner**

The Convention's Charity Dinner was chaired by Mr. Ed Ekpaita, Vice President, Global Quality Shaklee Corporation, Pleasanton, California, who was accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Akpaita. Also at the high table were the Clan Head of Ubium, HRH Etebom Ukpong Noah Udoewa; Dr. & Mrs. Idem, Chairman, CAC, and the Chief Medical Director of Mt Zion Medical Centre; Ikpafak and Mrs. Thompson Essien, immediate past president of Ibibio People's Union (IPU); Dr. & Mrs. Emmanuel Umoh, former National President of Akwa Ibom State Association in USA. Other dignitaries at the high table were Mrs. Idongesit Inoyo-Etiebet, Abuja; Obong Bassey Ema, CEO of House 20, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria; Elder Victor Uko, CEO of Victor Uko and Associates, Uyo. Proceeds will support the expansion of on-going projects of UDA in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

### **Thanks giving Service/Sightseeing**

A thanksgiving service was held on Sunday, July 15, 2018 at the Apostolic Church, Dallas. Following the service, Mr. Ani Edohoukwa, Chairman of the Convention Planning Committee, led the remaining delegates, including HRH Udoewa, on a sightseeing bus tour of Dallas, along historic downtown routes, which included the location, where President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

### **Appreciation**

Thanks are due to the President of Dallas Chapter and the Chairman and members of the Convention Planning Committee and all those who, through their financial support, ensured the success of the event.

The Convention was sponsored in part through the contributions of members and chapters, special guests, delegates, and individual donors, as well as organizations.

Thanks are due to those who graced the high table and donated generously. UDA is immensely grateful for their contributions and support, and to our officials and members, who have been the main source of moral and financial support. Thanks are also due to Western Union for their souvenirs and financial support; to Preferred Home Care, York, PA for sponsoring the Convention bag; to Destiny Home Health Care Foundation, Moreno Valley, CA for their financial support

We use this medium to thank those who supported us through their ad in the Convention Souvenir Program Booklet, and extend to them our best wishes for continued success.

### **About UDA:**

Ubium Development Association in USA (UDA) is 501 (C) 3 non-profit charitable membership based organization. UDA fosters support for programs and services to ensure that underserved communities and villages in Ubium jurisdictional area of Nsit-Ubium in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria have access to basic services.

To address poverty, health needs, and other challenges facing rural folks, UDA seeks to establish relationship with individuals, corporate bodies, elected representatives of Ubium and appointed officials in ranking positions, whose role and support are vital to strengthening UDA's intervention and developing the capacity of people in UDA target communities.

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