

2012 Communique from the 4th "Bonny Indigenes in Diaspora" Convention at the American Best Value Hotel Baltimore Maryland, U.S.A., between August 31st and September 3rd, 2012

Bonny Island Foundation (BIF), U.S.A., and Canada hosted her 4th "Bonny Indigenes in Diaspora" Convention at the American Best Value Hotel Baltimore Maryland, U.S.A., between August 31st and September 3rd, 2012, which turned out to be very successful.

The convention, with the theme: *Renewing our Passion: Unity, Service and Progress*, was declared open via teleconference on September 1st by our amiable and eminently distinguished Deputy Grand Patron of BIF in the person of Chief Dr. Osobonye Rogers Longjohn. Some other notable dignitaries who graced the occasion included Honorable Aye Atamah Pepple (Bonny Representative in the Rivers State House of Assembly); Amasenibo Dawari Longjohn; Dr. Iyalla Peterside; and Mr. Chika Nwosu.

As usual, the convention commenced with a warm welcome address by the President, Dr. Peter D. Hart, who thanked everyone for their presence and support. He emphasized the importance of the theme of this convention – *Renewing our Passion: Unity, Service and Progress*. He made clear that community building was the responsibility of everyone and that a strong community is built on the unity of its people, and selfless service to the community; the result of which will be progress and development.

The keynote address by Ambassador / Amasenibo Gordon Harry Bristol (Former Ambassador of Nigeria to France) which focused on the theme was delivered by Professor Adango Miadonye. The address by Dr. Charles T. Jumbo, former President of the Bonny Welfare Association, in the U.K., on the same subject was delivered by Engr. Norman Halliday. Also, there were panel discussions centered on the theme of the convention.

Other notable activities witnessed during the convention included cultural displays – Eremina Ogbo by the women folks and their male counterpart who thrilled the crowd with the Asati or Ikia-apa dance.

Resolutions

The panel discussions on "*Renewing our Passion: Unity, Service and Progress*" came to an end with the following resolutions:

- That, Bonny indigenes irrespective of distance or persuasion should re-commit themselves to a united and strong Bonny Kingdom, through collaboration and selfless service to our community.
- That, Bonny indigenes from all walks of life are encouraged to request for, and be granted access to the Bonny Light House forum, an e-communication network, used as a medium for brainstorming, sharing of ideas, and developing sound strategies – short, medium, and long-term, towards solving the myriads of challenges confronting the Bonny community.

- That, functionaries of government vis-à-vis the local, state, and federal, and the Bonny traditional council, along with other influential indigenes of Bonny should join forces to ensure that a modern and befitting Port-Harcourt-to-Bonny jetty, is built in an expeditious manner to ameliorate the sufferings of users of the jetty, as a travel platform to and from Bonny.
- There should be a public policy on safety, regarding sea transportation, ensuring that boat owners, operators, and passengers alike follow the safety guidelines (boat capacity and proper safety gears), set forth by the policy; violators should adequately be punished.
- That effort should be geared towards ensuring that qualified graduate and skilled youth employment are achieved in NLNG, Mobil, Shell and other companies operating in Bonny.
- That, a mechanism should be developed by the local government authorities to ensure youths with little, or no skills are encouraged, through collaboration with companies, to acquire the skills necessary for employment in the Oil & Gas sector.
- That, the proposed Technical Institute in Bonny, should be fast-tracked in order to train young people in basic and middle-level skills relevant to the needs of the Oil & Gas Sector.
- That, a robust manpower database of professional and non-professional indigenes should be developed, as a vehicle to harness the talent pool in the Bonny Kingdom, and also as a source for manpower development and placement of qualified Bonny indigenes throughout Nigeria, at the entry, middle, and upper management cadres.
- That, the Bonny Local Government Council, in collaboration with companies operating in Bonny, establish and run Small Business workshops to train graduates and other skilled indigenes on how to be entrepreneurs or self-employed.
- There should be open and honest discussions and enlightenment campaigns by the champions of the Waste-to-Wealth project, to address all the environmental concerns, and other issues raised by stakeholders, before moving forward with the proposed Waste-to-Wealth project in Bonny.
- That, functionaries at all levels of government and other influential Bonny indigenes should join forces with the state, federal governments, and companies operating in Bonny, to see that the Bonny-Bomu-Port-Harcourt highway, which has been on the drawing board for over four decades comes to fruition.
- That, Bonny professionals, especially those in the world of business and investment, in collaboration with the Bonny traditional council, Local Government Council, and state government, organize sensitization missions to Bonny, aimed at harnessing the investment potentials (like tourism, and hospitality business), inherent in the Bonny Kingdom.

God bless a united Grand Bonny Kingdom.

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Mrs. Ogunne Odulana (Vice President, Eastern Zone)
Mrs. Ibie Green (Vice President, at large)
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Mr. Norman Halliday (Public Relations Officer)
Mrs. Ibinye Olagoke (Treasurer / Financial Secretary)
Mr. Maxwell Brown (Provost)

Signed for, and on behalf of Bonny Island Foundation (BIF) USA & Canada:

Dr. Peter Hart (BIF President) – (Signed)
Engr. Norman Halliday (BIF General Secretary) – (Signed)
Dr. Leslie Green (Chairman, BIF Board of Trustees) – (Signed)