

Bonny Island Foundation (BIF)
2016 Convention Communique

The Bonny Island Foundation (BIF) North America held her 7th bi-annual Bonny in Diaspora Convention in Ewing, New Jersey, USA, from September 2 to September 5, 2016. The convention was attended mostly by Bonny indigenes and friends, resident in North America. The highlights were the traditional Ereminaekpete and Iria ceremony by the women group, the Agiri-owu masquerade display by the men group, and the awards of BIF scholarship to 31 (thirty-one) University students across all the Major Houses of Bonny Kingdom.

The security situation in the Bonny-Port Harcourt waterway was also discussed by a special panel. There was a historical overview of the state of transportation between Bonny and Port Harcourt. The summation was that while there has been both progress and regression with regard to the mode of transportation, the condition of the departing and arrival facilities has remained the same or regressed. Worse still, the security situation has worsened tenfold.

The convention was also briefed on health issues. The summation was that oil and gas pollution is having severe health and mental repercussions, including predisposition to cancer, kidney failure, pre-mature aging, birth defects, still births, hypertension, asthma, and several other pathologies on our community.

In consideration of the panel discussion and in full knowledge of the concurrent security meeting convened on the same issue by the Amanyabo-in-Council with stakeholders, BIF is issuing the following declarations:

1. Regarding insecurity in the Bonny-Port Harcourt route, BIF endorses the plan by Bonny Stakeholders to institute security measures, as contained in their communique of September 3th 2016. -
2. BIF urges the expeditious adoption and implementation of such a regimen to immediately safeguard passengers and property, even if on an interim basis pending a more permanent solution.
3. To facilitate such security measures, BIF also endorses the proposal to implement a regular schedule of departures to and from Port Harcourt.
4. Furthermore, BIF endorses any reasonable regimen by which boat drivers are certified for operational competence and boats are regularly inspected and certified for seaworthiness. These are all pertinent to the safety and welfare of passengers.
5. BIF also urges the expeditious development of the Bonny Waterside in Port Harcourt, including the construction of a modern jetty to enable safe boarding and disembarking.
6. Regarding the health threats, BIF recommends the establishment of a Public Health program at the Oil and Gas Polytechnic that would investigate/monitor the health consequences of oil and gas pollution, suggest solutions, and educate the public about related health-preservation measures.
7. Taking into consideration that NLNG has agreed to fund 50% of the Bonny-Bodo Road project, our community should put pressure on the Federal and State governments to come up with leverage funding for the project.

Signed by:

Professor Minabere Ibelema (President)

Professor Adango Miadonye (Vice President and Immediate Past President)

Dr. Diari Banigo (Secretary)

Dr. Leslie Green (Chair, BIF Board of Trustees)