

Bonny Island Foundation (BIF) 2018 Convention Communique

The Bonny Island Foundation USA/Canada (BIF) held its annual convention this year in Houston, Texas, from August 31 to September 3, 2018. As usual, the convention was an occasion to celebrate Ibani culture, deliberate on matters of importance to Bonny, and raise money for scholarship awards to Bonny indigenes attending universities in Rivers State.

As a carry-over from the planned convention of 2017, which was canceled because of a hurricane, the theme of this year's convention was "Empowering the Youth, Celebrating Our Culture." In furtherance of this theme, we had a young girl be the irabo in our demonstrative iria ceremony. We also featured the youth in the panel discussion, which was complemented with adult discussion of major issues in Bonny. These discussions gave rise to the following declarations:

1. That Ibani youth who are being raised abroad are keenly interested in Ibani culture and traditions and every effort should be made to sustain that interest.
2. That Ibani youth who are being raised abroad feel privileged to be in families that imbue them with the Ibani values of pride in oneself and sense of dignity.
3. That in accordance with the changing times, Ibani youth who are being raised abroad would like to be listened to a little more as they bring perspectives with which parents might not be conversant.

Pertaining to developments in Bonny, we make the following declarations:

4. That the security situation at the Bonny-Port Harcourt waterway remains problematic despite resolutions by stakeholders in 2016 to effect safety measures. We call on those responsible for actualizing the resolutions to commence or intensify the implementations.
5. We are also concerned about the security of Bonny itself. Given the "herdsmen" violence elsewhere in the country and the influx of herdsmen into Bonny kingdom, we urge all stakeholders to be vigilant so as to preclude such violence on our soil.
6. Finally, we are concerned about the general sanitary situation in Bonny, including the nuisance of cow dung and the haphazard dumping of refuse. Bonny town is pristine by nature. It behooves all stakeholders — leaders and followers, indigenes and non-indigenes — to preserve this natural endowment.

Signed:



Professor Minabere Ibelema, Ph.D.
President, Bonny Island Foundation (BIF)
(on behalf of the BIF membership, Executive Committee, and Board of Trustees)

October 27, 2018