

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 21-YEAR ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION OF BONNY ISLAND FOUNDATION (B.I.F.), U.S.A. AND CANADA HELD AT DOLPHIN HOTELS, GRAND BONNY, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA FROM DECEMBER 20TH – 23RD, 2024.

Bonny Island Foundation (BIF) hosted its 21st Anniversary Convention, with the theme “BIF at 21: Our Homecoming, Celebrating Jonathan Adagogo Green (JAG), and Outreach to our Community” at the Dolphin Hotels, in Grand Bonny, Rivers State, Nigeria, from December 20th to December 23rd, 2024. The convention was well attended, very colorful, and successful.

Over 120 Ibani sons and daughters, distinguished guests, and special guests from North America, Europe, and Nigeria, attended the occasion, and were received with remarkable warmth, and hospitality by members of the Organization.

Some of the dignitaries who graced the occasion included the Vice Chairman, Bonny Local Government Council, Honorable Omoni Longjohn, Chief Elliot Kalada Jim- Halliday, Dr. May Banigo, Warisenibo Emmanuel Green, and Professor Chidi Halliday.

The 21-year Anniversary Convention was officially declared open with an opening prayer. It was followed by a welcome address by the 2024 Convention Planning Committee (CPC) Chairman, Dame Joyce Simon-Ogan, who welcomed everyone, and expressed her profound appreciation to all who honored our invitation to attend our 21st anniversary convention. She also thanked all BIF members for their commitment, diligence, and support, in making this event a successful reality. She used the opportunity to state the theme of this year’s convention “BIF at 21: Our Homecoming, Celebrating Jonathan Adagogo Green, and Outreach to our Community”

In his welcome address, the President of BIF, Engr. Norman Halliday, expressed his profound gratitude to all distinguished guests, special guests, and members and friends of BIF who graced the occasion, as well as members and patrons of the organization, who were not able to attend due to unforeseen circumstances, but contributed in no small measure to see to the success of our 21st anniversary convention. He used the opportunity to, on behalf of BIF, congratulate the Amanymanabo of Bonny (Grand Patron of BIF), on the 28-year anniversary of his ascension to the throne of Amanymanabo of Bonny. He also congratulated the Chairman of Bonny Local Government Council, Dame Anengi Barasua-Wilcox, DSSRS, JP, on her success at the polls, following the recently concluded Rivers State Local Government Council elections, and becoming the first duly elected female Chairman of Bonny Local Government Council. Felicitations were also extended to Hon. Victor Oko-Jumbo DSSRS, for emerging as the 1st Speaker of Bonny extraction, of Rivers State House of Assembly. The President talked about the importance of the theme of this year’s convention “BIF at 21: Our Homecoming, Celebrating Jonathan Adagogo Green (JAG), and Outreach to our Community”, touching on BIF’s 21-year journey so far, our homecoming to Bonny, the life, and times of Jonathan Adagogo Green, including the unveiling of a 17-foot-tall granite monument erected by BIF over the old monument, the renaming of a major road in Bonny after Jonathan Adagogo Green (all in an effort to immortalize this great Bonny man), as well as Outreach to our Community, by way of food distribution to over 400 widows, and the elderly amongst other highlights.

Dr. Leslie M. Green, (Chairman, BIF Board of Trustees) in his speech, welcomed everyone to the convention, using the opportunity to harp on his observation of filth and deplorable sanitary conditions in Bonny, the deplorable state of Bonny roads, as well as serious security concerns, which deterred some would-have-been distinguished guests from attending the convention. He urged for the collaboration of all key stakeholders to, as a matter of urgency, address these pressing challenges in Bonny Kingdom.

The keynote address was delivered by The Chairman of Bonny Local Government Council, Dame Anengi Barasua - Wilcox, DSSRS, JP, being ably represented by her Vice Chairman, Honorable Omoni Longjohn. Hon. Longjohn thanked BIF for the invitation, and the work BIF has been doing to advance Bonny Kingdom’s causes. He acknowledged the concerns expressed by BIF’s Board of Trustees Chairman, promising to bring these issues to the fore, with a view to tackling them in earnest, and ameliorating the situations. Hon. Longjohn also unveiled the newly erected BIF-sponsored 17-foot-tall granite monument of Jonathan Adagogo Green, and the newly renamed road, Jonathan Adagogo Green Road (formerly Wilbros Road).

Highlights of the Convention included the unveiling of a 17-foot-tall granite monument, erected by BIF over the old one, to commemorate Jonathan Adagogo Green, Nigeria’s first indigenous photographer (1873 -1905), the renaming of a major road in Bonny to Jonathan Adagogo Green Road, Masquerade displays (courtesy of Jonathan Adagogo Green’s family),

Leadership and Service Award ceremony, cutting of BIF's 21-year Anniversary cake, the distribution of food items to over 400 widows and the elderly, through BIF's Outreach program, and a Sunday morning Thanksgiving Service at St. Stephen's Cathedral, Bonny.

Resolutions:

At the conclusion of BIF's 21st Anniversary Convention, and based on the theme "BIF at 21: Our Homecoming, Celebrating Jonathan Adagogo Green (JAG), and Outreach to our Community", the following resolutions were taken:

- 1) That, in keeping with the theme of BIF's 21st Anniversary convention, "BIF at 21: Our Homecoming, Celebrating Jonathan Adagogo Green (JAG), and Outreach to our Community" this year's convention was very successful. BIF as a 21-year-old organization has matured with tremendous achievements under its belt; BIF members' homecoming was very exciting and rewarding.
- 2) That, in celebrating Jonathan Adagogo Green, BIF has successfully completed and unveiled a 17-foot-tall granite monument of Jonathan Adagogo Green (1873 -1905), Nigeria's first indigenous photographer of Bonny extraction.
- 3) That, in celebrating Jonathan Adagogo Green, BIF applied for and was granted approval to rename a major road in Bonny to Jonathan Adagogo Green Road. This road was unveiled during BIF's 21st Anniversary convention in Bonny.
- 4) That, BIF, through its "Outreach to our Community" program, distributed over 400 bags of rice, and over 400 packages of condiments to widows and the elderly.
- 5) That, BIF has committed to the deployment of Ibani Language training to BIF members, and all Bonny indigenes in the diaspora who want to avail themselves of the opportunity to learn Ibani language.
- 6) That, all key stakeholders in Bonny should, as a matter of urgency, come up with ways and means to address the deplorable state of filthiness, and unsanitary conditions in Bonny Kingdom, to avoid serious health risks.
- 7) That, all key stakeholders including all tiers/levels of government, and corporate entities operating in Bonny, should join hands to ensure that roads in Bonny meet acceptable standards and guidelines for the construction, design and safety of roads, including the requirements for pavement, geometry, and traffic control devices.
- 8) That, Bonny as a major economic hub, does not have a good, and befitting, intra and intertown transportation system. We therefore encourage the local authorities and other major stakeholders to investigate this, with a view to modernizing the Bonny transportation system, for easy, affordable, and convenient transportation, which will concomitantly improve the lives of the citizens, and outlook of Bonny.
- 9) That, security continues to be a challenge in and around Bonny. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the local authorities to employ and use our local youth as vigilantes for surveillance in and around Bonny, including Bonny villages, to ensure that the lives and properties of all citizens in Bonny, and its environments are secure and protected.

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

Engr. Norman Halliday (President, BIF) – (signed)

Dame Joyce Simon-Ogan (Chairman, BIF 2024 Convention Planning Committee) - (signed)

Dr. Leslie M. Green (Chairman, BIF Board of Trustees) – (signed)