

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE
FIRST BONNY IN DIASPORA CONVENTION, WASHINGTON DC.
ORGANIZED BY BONNY ISLAND FOUNDATION USA/CANADA**

PREAMBLE

Close to 150 eminent Bonny indigenes from Canada, the USA, Europe and Nigeria, with friends of Bonny Kingdom and sister organizations converged in Washington DC from September 1 to September 3, 2007 for the First Bonny in Diaspora Convention, hosted by Bonny Island Foundation (BIF). The convention met and exceeded our expectations and objectives. Our people for the first time came together for a worthy cause. Delegates came from all over the USA, Canada, and from Nigeria.

BIF thanks members and non-members who graced the occasion. We extend a special thank you to those who came from home to attend the convention: Chief (Dr). O.R.LongJohn (Our Patron), Chief Harrigan Pepple, Mr. Elliot Halliday, Ms. Dabota Bull, and Justice Alex Oko Jumbo.

One of the goals of the convention was to raise money for Bonny General Hospital fund. The response was great. In addition to the funds pledged and donated, we received pledges for two EKG machines, one ultra sound machine, one echocardiogram machine, and 10 sphygmomanometers. The money raised will be used towards the purchase of additional equipment once the final need assessment has been completed.

Another important aspect of the convention was the keynote presentation by our Patron Chief (Dr.) Osobonye R. LongJohn, which drew comparison on the social, economics and cultural changes between pre and post NLNG Bonny Kingdom. This keynote paper is now available on our website www.grandbonny.org. Six other invited speakers made presentations on various issues affecting the community in particular and the Niger Delta in general, under the following categories:

- (i) Environmental issues
- (ii) Health issues and
- (iii) Youth, Education and Economic issues.

Each presentation was followed by a deliberation on the issues raised in the presentation, with further contributions from delegates on wide ranging issues concerning Bonny Kingdom as a result of oil and natural gas exploitation and exploration.

The third component of the convention was the showcasing of the Bonny culture and tradition which was accomplished by the men owuogbo masquerade display (the squid masquerade) and the women eremina-ogbo and iria dance.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FROM THE CONVENTION

(I). The purpose of the convention was to create awareness of the impact of over 50 years of petroleum exploitation and exploration in Bonny Island, and the lack of development and economic empowerment of our people.

(II).We are not a political organization and do not support any political party or individual. However, we are opposed to the current practice of selecting and imposing political leaders with no accountability whatsoever to our people. We are in a democracy and our people should be free to choose their leaders based on their accomplishments.

RESOLUTIONS

The convention rose with the following resolutions:

(I).TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

(i).We are saddened by the state of insecurity in Bonny Kingdom. We demand that the government provide adequate security for our water ways because of the strategic importance of Bonny to the State and Federal government. We also recommend that government should recruit, and adequately train and equip additional local law enforcement officers to conduct round the clock land, sea and air patrol.

(ii).The construction and completion of the Bonny / Bodo which was promised to Bonny people by the past Federal administration (since Gowon's administration) is of critical importance to our community. We therefore, call on the present administration to complete the road without further delay.

(iii).We would also like the Federal government to give full attention to another unfulfilled promise made by the last administration; that is, the siting of Petroleum and Gas Institute at Bonny Island. Mr. President, despite the gas and oil activities that have devastated our community, the Federal government has no major presence in Bonny. The NLNG plant is sited in Bonny. We strongly recommend that the Petroleum and Gas Institute be sited in Bonny as was originally promised.

(iv).We call on your administration Mr. President to invite responsible and knowledgeable Bonny people to your proposed summit of all stakeholders in the Niger Delta. Our people would like to be on the table representing our interests because no one else will.

v). Finally Mr. President we extend an invitation to you to visit the Island. We are a very hospitable and non-violent people and you will be received with open arms. While you are there, please make an attempt to meet all stakeholders, take a tour of the Island and see the devastating effect of oil and gas exploration on the environment and the people. Our people cannot drink even rain water anymore. The human cost is too much to ask a small community like ours to bear alone.

(II). TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT:

(i).Your Excellency, we are the sons and daughters of one of your constituencies; Bonny Kingdom. We are saddened by state of insecurity in Bonny waters ways and we are calling for urgent intervention by your government to provide round the clock security.

(ii).Your Excellency, considering the strategic importance of Bonny to both the Rivers State and Federal government, there is hardly any state presence on the Island. We call on

the government open a campus of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology in Bonny.

(iii).Your Excellency, traveling to Bonny from Bonny waterside in Port-Harcourt has become a nightmare for our people. We call on the government to renovate the Bonny water side jetty.

(III). TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

(i). Our local government has been an abysmal failure with hardly anything to show for all the Federal allocation collected since 1999 to date. We call for purposeful leadership, transparency and accountability in government.

(ii). We are extending a hand of friendship to the incoming administration and would like to work with you for the betterment of our people. We have professionals, businesses, engineers, doctors, university professors, and many other professionals with ideas on how our community can be developed.

The Bonny Island Foundation is a non-profit and non-political umbrella organization established by Bonny indigenes for Bonny indigenes residing in the United States of America (USA) and Canada, with strong focus on perpetuating the Ibani heritage and existence through peaceful means.

Signed:

BIF Board of Trustee members:

Harrington Pepple	signed	Josephine Banigo	signed
Sam James	signed	Chris Ben Jumbo	signed
Dr. Leslie M. Green	signed		

BIF Executive Members:

Prof. Adango Miadonye(President)	signed.	Dr. Peter D. Hart(Vice President)	signed
Inye Hart(General Secretary)	signed.	Clara Boma Pepple(Asst Secretary)	signed
Atedoghu Denton Banigo(PRO)	signed.	Beauty Jumbo(Fin. Secretary)	signed
Nengi Halliday(Treasurer)	signed.	Maxwell Brown(Provost)	signed

Members/Delegates:

Amasenibo Stephen Benstowe	signed	Theodore Allison	signed
Dima Brown	signed	Joyce Amoni Halliday	signed
Mercy Halliday	signed	Ibie Green	signed
Joseph Bara-Hart	signed	Elliot Jim Halliday	signed
Norman Halliday	signed	Asamawari Tobin	signed
Tonye Pollynn	signed	Joyce Soso Halliday	signed
Alfred Irringere	signed	Klebo Hailsham	signed
Ibinye Olagoke	signed	Mimi Briggs	signed