

COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 3rd BONNY IN DIASPORA CONVENTION ORGANIZED BY THE BONNY ISLAND FOUNDATION OF USA/CANADA.

Preamble

The Bonny Island Foundation (BIF) hosted a very successful 3rd Bonny in Diaspora Convention with the theme *“Celebrating Ibani culture and strengthening our community”* on September 4th and 5th, 2010 in the city of Westampton, New Jersey.

Notable for its warmth, camaraderie and hospitality, during the two-day convention, over one hundred and fifty delegates and representatives of sister organizations from all over the United States and as far as Nigeria, England, Sweden and Canada converged for this epoch-making event. Among the numerous distinguished guests in attendance were Chief (Dr.) O.R. LongJohn who has on many occasions showed incalculable support and patronage to the Bonny Island Foundation since its inception, Hon. Aye Atamah Pepple (Hon. Member, Rivers State House of Assembly), Dr. Sowaribi Tolofari, Mrs. Boma Simon-Hart, Amasenibo Dawari LongJohn and Philip Oweife (both representing Ijaw nation).

The session started with a warm welcome address by the acting President, Dr. Peter Hart who reiterated the reason for the formation of the organization, the need for unity amongst the Bonny people and the mission to project Ibani cultural heritage, language and history that helps to foster unity and progress among our people. He reminded everyone that the Bonny Island Foundation is a non-profit and non-political umbrella organization for all Bonny indigenes in diaspora-USA and Canada and urged all to come together to build and strengthen our community.

Other notable events at the convention included the Oporo Masquerade display, the Iria Ceremony and Ereminaekpete. Also featured for the “first time” were a traditional play titled “Marriage in Belema Village”, the kids’ talent and fashion show and the “great forum and panel discussion” where all members and delegates gathered in a town-hall meeting to share their individual thoughts on Bonny Issues entitled *“Strengthening Our Community”*.

Resolution

At the conclusion of the panel discussion on “Strengthening Our Community”, delegates and members “resolved as follows”:

1. We strongly appeal to the Amanyano-in-Council, government officials-Local, State and Federal and community leaders to take every communiqué seriously to help build and sustain an increasingly strong, fair, and socially justifiable and united Grand Bonny Kingdom.
2. All three levels of Government - Local, State and Federal should establish medium and small-scale industries in Bonny to help alleviate the poverty and suffering in our community despite the oil and gas boom.
3. The Federal, State and local government in consultation with Bonny community organizations should address the immediate and long-term adverse effects of the extreme population explosion as a result of the Oil and Gas operations in Bonny.
4. Bonny Community Organizations in liaison with the elder statesmen in the Kingdom should form a Political Action Committee (PAC) to monitor, encourage, promote and ensure adequate representation of our community at all levels of government.
5. We advocate for the formation of a Bonny Study Group that includes various stakeholders and community activists to identify and evaluate the multi-faceted urban/rural community problems in Bonny and make appropriate recommendations to the Local, State and Federal government.
6. Bonny in Diaspora in the USA and Canada will develop a framework to further strengthen our interaction and partnership with the Local government particularly in the areas of education, health, energy, transportation, water supply and good governance.
7. We strongly recommend creation of indigenous jobs initiative and the employment of qualified Bonny indigenes into skilled and professional jobs in the Oil and Gas industries operating in Bonny.
8. We observe with dismay the continuous decline of the Ibani language and traditional etiquettes amongst Bonny people.

9. Bonny District School Board through the Bonny Local Government Council should promulgate the immediate incorporation of the Ibani language into the Primary and Secondary school curriculum.
10. We reject the notion that today's problems can be solved with yesterday's solutions for example the signpost at the Bonny waterfront reads "Welcome to Bonny" instead of "Oboma" or a combination of both. We call on the Bonny Local Government to introduce and implement the use of bi-lingual (English and Ibani) notices on all official billboards and signposts in Bonny kingdom.
11. We strongly support the efforts of Amanyano-in-council, State and Local governments, community leaders and various security agents to ensure that peace reigns in the kingdom.
12. Finally, we encourage and advocate for the need to place God fearing, industrious, truthful, fair and socially justified leaders and individuals in positions of authority so that they will be able to bequeath an enduring legacy to our future generations.

God Bless the United Bonny Kingdom.

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

Board of Trustee members:

Professor Adango Miadonye
Dr. Leslie M Green
Dr. Ellis Wilcox
Mr. Nengi Halliday
Mrs. Fortune Jumbo Bello

Executive Members:

Dr. Peter D Hart (*President, BIF*)
Mr. Atedoghu Denton Banigo (*Vice-President, Western zone*)
Mrs. Ogunne Odulana (*Vice-President, Eastern zone*)
Mrs. Ibie Green (*Vice-President, at-large*)
Mr. Gibson Green (*General Secretary*)
Mrs. Joyce Soso Halliday (*Assistant General Secretary*)
Ms. Adiebonye Jumbo (*Public Relations Officer*)
Mrs. Ibinye Halliday Olagoke (*Treasurer*)
Mr. Maxwell Brown (*Provost*)