

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY OIUSA, INC. AT THE END OF ITS 1ST
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON IKWERRE HELD AT THE
HONORABLE SENATOR OBI WALI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTER IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA, JULY 20 - 23 2016.

PREAMBLE

The 2014 Convention of the Ogbakor Ikwerre USA/Canada held in Nashville Tennessee deliberated on the state of the Ikwerre Ethnic Nation and reviewed our positions on the National Question and the Unity of Ikwerre. The Convention took a detailed look at the National and Ethnic polity, especially as they affect the welfare of the Ikwerre ethnicity.

Arising from the 2015 New York Convention, the General Assembly supports the convening of an International Conference on Ikwerre to hold in Port Harcourt, Rivers State of Nigeria to examine all relevant issues fundamental to Ikwerre unity, development and corporate existence.

International Conference on Ikwerre

The three-day conference was attended by over 3000 persons of Ikwerre and other ethnic nationalities. The attendees included His Excellency, the Governor of Rivers State, Chief (Barrister) Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, and Her Excellency, Justice, Suzette Nyesom Wike, First Lady of Rivers State

Others were Professor G.O.M. Tasié, FNAL (Special Guest Speaker); Professor Blessing Didia, Vice Chancellor of Rivers State University of Science & Technology (Conference Chairman); Chief (Barrister) O.C.J. Okocha, SAN, MFR, JP and former President of Nigeria Bar Association (NBA); Chief (Hon.) Kenneth Kobani, Secretary of Rivers State Government and Chief (Hon.) Emeka Woke, Chief of Staff, Rivers State Government House.

Other prominent participants included Sir (Hon.) Austin Opara, former deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Federal Republic of Nigeria; Hon. Frank Owhor SAN, former Commissioner for Justice and Attorney-General of Rivers State and now Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Commissioner; Mr. Mike Anwuri, Rivers State Commissioner for Power; Prof. A. M. Onyeozu, President-General, Ogbakor Ikwerre Cultural Organization Worldwide; Sir (Hon.) Sony Ejekwu, CTC

Chairman, PHALGA; Mr. Oliver Wolugbom, State Director – National Orientation Agency and Chairman, Ikwerre Development Association (IDA); Dame Josephine Chukwuigwe, Permanent Secretary, UBE; Mr. Felix Odungworu, Permanent Secretary, Budget and Economic Planning; Sir (Chief) Hon. Azubuike Nmerukini, Chairman, Rivers State Local Government Service Commission; Prince Paul Wonodi, National Coordinator, Ikwerre Chiefs and Elder’s Forum and HRM, Eze (Dr.) Leslie Eke, JP Eze Gbakagbaka of Evo Kingdom.

Other equally prominent attendees were His Royal Majesty, Eze Morgan Amadi, Eze Oha of Rumucheta; HRH Chief S. Odum of Oginigba; Prof. Emenike N. Wami, Former Lecturer Rivers State University of Science and Technology; Prof. Chris Wolumati Ogbondah, University of Northern Iowa and former President of OIUSA; Dame Eunice Igwe, former Federal Electoral Commissioner for Imo and Gombe States; Prof. (Mrs.) Edith Chuku, Lecturer. University of Science & Technology Port Harcourt; Professor Mrs. Joyce Akaninwo, Lecturer University of Port Harcourt; Prof. Nsirim Nduka, Member, Rivers State Judiciary Service Commission; Prof. Okey Onuchukwu, Lecturer, University of Port Harcourt; Chief (Dr.) Chris Akani, Lecturer – Amb. Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni; Prof. Chris Achor Akani, Lecturer – University of Port Harcourt; Hon. & Mrs. Chidiebere Okwuworlu – former Member, Rivers State House of Assembly; Ven. Okey Owhonda – Represented His Lordship, Bishop Ordu of Evo Diocese of the Anglican Communion; Rev. (Engr.) Emeka Boms; Barrister G.W. Onuekwa – Community Leader in Ikwerre; Members of Iwhuruoha Women Association; Madam Lizzy Ohochuku – Liaison, Ogbakor Ikwerre USA, Port Harcourt Office.

Others whose presence were highly missed, but remained equally engaged were Professor Emeritus Otonti Nduka, Ochi Oha X (out of the country); His Excellency Sir (Hon.) Celestine Omehia, former Governor of Rivers State; His Excellency Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi, former Governor of Rivers State and current Minister of Transportation; Chief Sampson Agbaru, immediate past President, Ogbakor Ikwerre Cultural Organization Worldwide; Sir (Chief) Hon. Andrew Uchendu, etc.

The following resolutions were reached at the end of the conference:

- 1) There is a very strong need for a central leader for ALL Ikwerre.

- 2) To foster Unity, Love and Collaboration among Ikwerre citizens as a way forward for the Ikwerre ethnic nationality.
- 3) The Ikwerre people are self-confident, trusting, open-minded, and tolerant with our neighbors, accommodating and extremely hospitable to government and businesses in Ikwerre community, especially oil-producing companies. And that these attributes should not be taken for granted. Our people and land must be respected. **Ikwerre is NOT a NO man's Land. Ikwerre is the land of the Ikwerre People of Rivers State of Nigeria.**
- 4) Extreme lack of cooperation and collaboration and unnecessary political infighting among the indigenes of Ikwerre creates lack of foresight and common front to strive for our common good.
- 5) Our Traditional Rulers and Institutions must be the custodians of Ikwerre culture and customs, and NOT political patronages.
- 6) The need for sustained actions to check Ikwerre Language and Culture which are under threat of extinction.
- 7) To continue the funding of OIUSA scholarship scheme and Health Outreach Projects both at home and abroad.
- 8) The need to investigate and implement federal character principles in the employment/recruitment with a view to adequately reflect the inclusion of Ikwerre people in the Police Force, Army, Navy, Air Force, Nigerian Defense Academy, Aviation, Marine, Customs, Immigration, etc.
- 9) The Ikwerre people have been marginalized in the distribution of the natural gas and petroleum wealth that accrues to the federal treasury from Ikwerre land.

- 10) A recognition that the discovery and extraction of oil and gas in Ikwerre land (in such communities as Rumuekpe, Rukpogu, Obelle-Ibaa, Elele, Ndele, etc) has not benefited the indigenes of Ikwerre ethnic nationality.
- 11) A need for the development of skills acquisition center to train Ikwerre youths for the skills necessary to compete in the 21st century global economy and beyond.
- 12) All companies operating within Ikwerre Communities must be required to allocate at least 20% (twenty per cent) of their work force at all levels employment to citizens of Ikwerre.
- 13) Ikwerre indigenes must be placed in strategic management positions in companies (particularly Banking, Oil and Gas companies) operating **within** their localities in Ikwerre.
- 14) Automatic admission must be granted to any Ikwerre candidate who qualifies for admission into any institution of higher learning **within** the Ikwerre communities.
- 15) **There should be no post UTME for Ikwerre indigenes at institutions of higher learning in Ikwerre land.**
- 16) That all lands acquired from Ikwerre communities by the federal and state governments must be used for the specific purposes they were acquired, and that otherwise those lands should be returned to the communities.

- 17) The re-introduction of the indigenous names of our Communities, Landmarks must be made, e.g., ‘Rumuwoji’ in place of ‘Mile one’, ‘Rumuogba’ in place of ‘Artillary one’ ‘Rumuepirikom in place of ‘Whimpy’. etc.
- 18) Ikwerre Ethnic Nationality need a befitting Ikwerre House.
- 19) **That a powerful committee should be set up to ensure the proper implementation of the above resolutions.**

It was strongly resolved that Ikwerre being a distinct ethnic group from any other in Nigeria should continue to welcome and remain hospitable to their visitors and guests from other parts of Nigeria and the world. We will continue to share our endowed natural resources, but **will refuse to bow to ANY blatant conspiracy from any person or group of persons to exploit our God-given natural resources.**

LECTURES AND ADDRESSES;

The Executive committee of OIUSA Inc. wishes to express its gratitude to everyone that responded to its invitation and participated in the International Conference on Ikwerre. We extend our thanks to the management of the Obi Wali International Conference Center, Hotel Presidential and Starking Hotel & suites. Our gratitude finally goes to the numerous dignitaries, chiefs, Professionals, Educators, Clergies and Cultural organizations that presented papers, lectures and cultural displays during the three-day conference.

Among them are:

- His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Chief (Barrister) Nyesom Ezenwo Wike’s, who was ably represented at the opening ceremony by Chief (Hon.) Kenneth Kobani, Secretary to the Rivers State Government.

- His Lordship Rt. Rev. Blessing C. Enyinda, Ph.D., JP. led the Conference's opening prayer.

- Professor Blessing Didia-Vice Chancellor, University of Science & Technology, Nkpolu Oroworukwo, the Chairman of the Occasion.

- His Royal Majesty, Eze Blessing Wagor, The Wagidi of Isiokpo Kingdom who led Ikwerre Royal Majesties, Highnesses, Ezes and Chiefs.

- Professor Godwin O. M. Tasié-FNAL (Special guest Speaker) who delivered a lead paper on 'The Identity and Culture of the Ikwerre People'.
- Hon. (Barrister) O. C. J. Okocha, SAN, MFR, JP who lectured on 'Land acquisition, sales and policies in Ikwerre- Implications for future generations'.

- Eze (Dr.) Christian Akani who made a presentation on 'Chieftaincy institutions in Ikwerre-challenges and Recommendations'.

- Mr. Patrick Anyawoke-Wiro who moderated the breakout session, and was supported by Dr. Eseze Obilor, Professor Nsirim Nduka, Professor Darlington Didia and Professor Joyce Akaninwo as discussants.

- Professor Emenike Wami who lectured on 'Environmental policies for sustained eco-system development in Ikwerre'.

- Professor Chris Ogbondah who presented a paper on 'Leadership Challenges in Ikwerre-The way forward'.

- Professor Okey Onuchukwu who lectured on 'Strategies for the achievement of economic empowerment of the Ikwerre people'.

- Dame (Chief) Eunice Igwe who presented a paper on ‘The Role of Ikwerre Women in Political Development and Dispensation in Rivers State and Nigeria’.
- Professor (Mrs.) Edith Chukwu who lectured on ‘Challenges facing Ikwerre Youths in the 21st Century’.
- Promoter Eze and his Ikwerre Musical Group from Rumuji that illuminated the conference with the ever-colorful Ikwerre indigenous music and cultural displays.
- Eregbu Cultural Dance from Rumuekini.
- Egelege Cultural Dance from Omaawa

Thank you all and God bless.

Dr. Fortune Wolugbom, President OIUSA Inc.

Mr. Chika Wosu, Secretary General OIUSA INC.

Dr. Nneruka NeOkogbule Opara, Chairman ICI Planning Committee OIUSA Inc.

Professor Chris Ogbondah, Past President OIUSA Inc.

Engr. Geoffrey Tata, Committee Member

Engr. Joe Israel, Committee Member

Chief Faith Wokeh, Local Organizing Committee Member

Dame (Mrs.) Josephine Chukuigwe, Local Organizing Committee Member

Goldie Adele, Esq., Legal Adviser