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DEDICATION

**For all members of BACDA-USA
So we may be bound
By this official document in Love
Acting as one body
In unity and respect for one another
In the pursuit of
Development and happiness
For the love of
Bakossi, Cameroon and all Mankind.**

PREAMBLE

We, the posterity of Ngoe and Sumedjang resident in the United States *of* America
Bound by our rich traditions and culture, which we seek to nurture and perpetuate,
Mindful of our responsibility to leave our footprints in the sands of history. Willing to
act as a catalyst for the progress and prosperity of our people everywhere.
Resolved to collaborate with persons and groups that share our objectives and goals,
determined to forge unity among the Bakossi people and to use our diversity to
advantage.
Do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution as the foundation of BACDA-USA.

ARTICLE I: THE ASSOCIATION, JURISDICTION, MOTTO AND LANGUAGE

A. NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Association shall be known as BAKOSSİ CULTURAL and DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION, USA, herein under referred to as BACDA-USA.

B. JURISDICTION

The Jurisdiction of BACDA-USA shall be North America.

C. MOTTO

The motto of BACDA-USA shall be Unity, Peace, and Progress.

D. LANGUAGE

The official language of BACDA-USA shall be Akosse and English. All members of BACDA USA shall endeavor to speak Akosse when and wherever necessary.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND GOALS

A. PURPOSE

1. BACDA-USA shall be an apolitical non-profit organization dedicated to the nurturing and fostering of the Bakossi cultural and traditional values amongst the Bakossi.
2. BACDA-USA shall collaborate with other organizations in advancing education and economic development within Bakossi, Cameroon.
3. It shall promote Bakossi history, culture, and language.

B. GOALS

The goals of BACDA-USA shall be to:

1. Promote economic, academic and social empowerment among the Bakossi everywhere.
2. Promote a networking forum for BACDA-USA members.
3. Encourage fraternity amongst the Bakossi through cultural and social interactions as well as with other communities
4. Foster cultural integration in our host country, the USA, in strict compliance with its laws.
5. Impart the spirit of self-pride within the Bakossi everywhere.

ARTICLE III: MEMEBERSHIP

BACDA-USA membership shall be open to all decedents of NGOE from the Bakossi clan and their spouse's resident in the United States of America. The association shall have four (4) classes of membership.

A. FULL MEMBERSHIP

Full membership shall be open to all persons originating from Bakossi, or through marriage, belonging to a chapter. Such membership shall be effective through registration, regular meeting attendance and payment of membership dues and levies. Such attendance and payments shall not be less than seventy (75) percent.

B. INDEPENDENT MEMBERSHIP

Independent members shall comprise persons who are resident in areas where there are no chapters. Such membership shall be effective through registration, regular meeting attendance and payment of membership dues and levies at the national level. Such attendance and payments shall be no less than seventy-five (75) percent.

C. DEPENDENT MEMBERSHIP

Dependent members shall comprise children of BACDA-USA members up to age of eighteen (18) years old or full-time students up to the age of twenty-one (21) years old.

D. HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Honorary membership shall be conferred on any Bakossi persons visiting the USA , non-Bakossi person or organization, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the ideals and objectives of the BACDA-USA organization.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

- A. All members shall be entitled to attend the national convention, including its meetings and social events. Members shall have equal rights to participate in meetings of the general assembly.
- B. Only full and independent members shall hold office and be member of the National Executive Council (NEC).
- C. Only full and independent members may receive any privileges provided under the By-laws

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

- A. Members of BACDA-USA shall be required to adhere to its constitution and any amendments thereto, as well as all its resolutions and bylaws. They shall also participate in all BACDA-USA endeavors, attend meetings, meet financial obligations and contribute to its development.

ARTICLE VI: SANCTIONING OF MEMBERS

- A. Two unjustifiable and consecutive absences from National Convention payment of seventy (75) percent of financial obligations shall be considered a loss membership at the national level.

ARTICLE VII: ORGANS AND FUNCTIONS

A. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The General Assembly shall be the supreme organ of the organization independent, dependent and honorary members.
2. It shall formulate all policies and laws, draw up yearly objectives, executive committee, delegate various functions, and define its financial disbursement of association funds.
3. Resolutions and decisions arrived at by the General Assembly shall be consider law.

B. BACDA-USA CHAPTERS

1. BACDA-USA chapters shall comprise Bakossi persons living within and governed by bylaws.
2. Such chapters shall establish bylaws consistent with BACDA-USA
3. Chapters of BACDA USA will have designation BACDA USA- Metro area chapter

C. THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NEC)

1. The NEC shall provide leadership for the Association within the General Assembly. It shall:
 - a. Draw up and present budgets, propose policies and bylaws for Assembly.
 - b. Interpret the constitution, convene and conduct meetings, arbitrate and implement all matters entrusted to it by the General assembly.
 - c. Maintain the financial wellbeing of the organization.
 - d. Receive appeals of disputes from members and chapters.
 - e. Appoint two (2) adhoc auditors that are not members of NEC.
2. The NEC shall comprise of:
 - a. The President
 - b. Vice President
 - c. Secretary-General
 - d. Assistant Secretary-General
 - e. The Treasurer
 - f. Financial Secretary
 - g. Organizing Secretary
 - h. Committee Chairpersons
 - i. Chapter Presidents
 - j. Protocol officer
 - k. Advisers

3. FUNCTIONS OF NEC OFFICERS

The President

- a. The BACDA-USA President shall be the Chief Executive officer.
- b. He or she shall be elected for a term of office of two (2) years.
- c. He or she shall be eligible for reelection once
- d. The President shall:
 - i. Preside over General Assembly and NEC meetings
 - ii. Be the primary spokesperson for, and representative of, BACDA-USA.
 - iii. Ensure the enforcement of BACDA-USA Constitution and its Bylaws.
 - iv. Present the budget and financial situation of BACDA-USA at each Convention as well as the status of planned programs.
 - v. Authorize all financial disbursements and be a signatory to the organization's bank accounts.
 - vi. Appoint three (3) advisers during his or her term of office and a moderator during NEC meetings as and when necessary.
 - vii. Propose specific goals for the association.
 - viii. Represent the association in all legal matters, in conjunction with the Legal Affairs Committee.

Vice President

- a. The Vice President shall have a term of office of two (2) years, renewable once
- b. He or she shall:
 - i. Assume the duties of the President of BACDA-USA in the absence or incapacitation of the latter.
- c. Carry out such other duties as shall be assigned by the president of BACDA-USA

The Secretary-General

- a. The Secretary-General shall record the deliberations of BACDA-USA both at the General Assembly and at NEC meetings.
- b. He or she shall:
 - i. Be in charge of all BACDA-USA correspondence
 - ii. Communicate all notices to Association members in a timely manner
 - iii. Maintain all BACDA-USA records and keep the Association's seal.

Assistant Secretary-General

- a. The Assistant Secretary-General shall:
 - i. Assume the duties of the Secretary-General in his/her absence.
 - ii. Perform other duties as shall be delegated by the Secretary-General.



Treasurer

- a. The Treasurer shall:
 - i. Collect and be custodian of all assets and liabilities, and the enforcer of all financial policies.
 - ii. Maintain duplicates of all financial transactions and be responsible for all banking activities.
 - iii. Be a signatory at the bank on behalf of the organization.
 - iv. Present a written up-to-date account of the association's assets at the General Assembly with the aid of the Financial Secretary.
 - v. Be the point person regarding the IRS and the keeper of all tax records.
 - vi. Collect and record membership and chapter dues as well as other fees and levies.
 - vii. Review and present all Committee budgets to the NEC where such budgets shall be defended by the Committee Chairpersons.

Financial Secretary

- a. The Financial Secretary shall:
 - i. Maintain a set of independent financial records from those of the Treasurer.
 - ii. Be responsible for records such as bank statements, investment and fund raising records, independent of the financial secretary.
 - iii. Work in collaboration with the treasurer to maintain accurate and up-to-date financial records.
 - iv. Work with the treasurer in presenting quarterly financial reports to the NEC, and an annual report to the General Assembly.

Organizing Secretaries

- a. There shall be two Organizing Secretaries who shall jointly be responsible for the social and cultural affairs of the Association.
- b. The Organizing Secretaries shall, in collaboration with the President, arrange and coordinate all social and cultural events, and such other events as shall be deemed necessary by the Association.
- c. They shall be responsible for publicizing all BACDA-USA activities in collaboration with various committees.

Protocol Officer

- a. The Protocol Officer shall be responsible for maintaining order in all BACDA-USA deliberations, and shall carry out other duties as shall be specified by the President.

ARTICLE VIII: LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- A. The legal affairs committee shall, in conjunction with the President, represent BACDA-USA in all legal matters. It shall be responsible for the:
1. Interpretation of the BACDA-USA constitution and its Bylaws, in collaboration with the NEC.
 2. Updating of BACDA-USA members on changes in US immigration laws.
 3. Supervision of the Electoral Ad Hoc Committee of five members.
 4. Addition of amendments to the Bylaws and the Constitution.
 5. Handing over process from one administration to the next.
 6. All BACDA-USA archival records.

ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

- A. The General Assembly shall create the committees that shall implement its planned objectives for any given year.
- B. Each committee shall be headed by a Chairperson selected by the General Assembly.
- C. The Chairperson shall form a committee by selecting competent and willing BACDA-USA members who together shall develop strategies and carry out the committee's mandate as specified by the General Assembly.
- D. The Chairpersons shall be members of the NEC to which they shall present their plans prior to their implementation.
- E. The cost of implementing those committee plans shall be borne by BACDA-USA.
- F. Each Committee's budget shall be approved by the NEC.

ARTICLE X: MEETINGS, ELECTORAL PROCESS AND ELECTIONS

A. *MEETINGS*

All business meetings and assemblies of BACDA-USA shall be held in compliance with proper parliamentary procedures using the "Robert's Rules of Order" as guidelines. The Protocol Officer shall be charged with the enforcement of these parliamentary rules at such meetings.

B. *GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS*

1. General Assembly meetings shall be held annually during Conventions except as otherwise indicated by the General body, and shall be convened by BACDA- USA President
2. Conventions shall start on a Friday and end on a Sunday.
3. The venue of each convention shall, as much as possible, rotate amongst BACDA-USA chapters or geographical locations.
4. Decisions taken at the General Assembly meetings shall be binding.
5. It shall advise the President as to the venue of the next convention
6. The General Assembly shall proceed with Business only after a quorum of seventy-five (75) percent of members is attained.
7. Resolutions shall be adopted on the basis of a simple majority of members present.
8. General assembly meetings shall take precedence over refreshments or entertainment by the host chapter.

C. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NEC) MEETINGS

1. NEC meetings shall be held not less than twice a year and shall be convened by the President of BACDA-USA in consultation with NEC member.
2. A quorum shall be attained when fifty (50) percent of the NEC members are present.
3. Decisions taken by the NEC shall be binding.
4. Resolutions taken by the NEC shall not be in contravention to the provisions of the Constitution and General Assembly decisions.

D. EMERGENCY MEETINGS

1. Emergency meetings shall be convened either by the President or fifty (50) percent of the NEC for specific purposes or for projects that require immediate action.
2. The NEC, Chaired by the President or Vice President, shall be authorized to form Ad Hoc committees to handle urgent cases for a specified period. In most cases such Ad Hoc committees shall be chaired by the Vice President and shall report to the NEC.

E. THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

1. An Ad Hoc Electoral committee of five members shall be selected and supervised by the Legal Affairs Committee
2. The Ad Hoc committee shall in turn choose its chairperson and conduct elections in accordance with the following procedures:
 - a) Full and independent members shall have the right to vote and be voted
 - b) The Ad Hoc committee shall take nominations from the floor.
 - c) Membership status of nominated candidates shall be certified by the Legal Affairs committee.
 - d) Candidates for the Presidency shall be allocated time for canvassing and to present running mates.
3. Elections to the Presidency shall be conducted by secret ballot
4. After balloting, the Electoral Committee shall summarize, authenticate, and announce the results.
5. Based on the results, transfer of power shall be automatic.
6. All members of the NEC in possession of property belonging to BACDA-USA, including but not limited to, files, records and official papers, shall be required to hand over such property to the Legal Affairs Committee Chairperson not later than one month following the elections.
7. He shall be required to hand same to the NEC.

F. ELIGIBILITY AND TERMS OF OFFICE

1. BACDA-USA Officers shall be nominated and elected from amongst the assembled members
2. By a simple majority vote members in good standing may not be denied the right to vote in absentia.
3. In the event of an unavoidable vacancy, the President shall appoint a member to fill such vacancy. Appointments so made shall be confirmed by NEC.

4. The term of office shall be two (2) years for elected Officials. They may be eligible for reelection once
5. Voting shall be done by secret ballot for all posts.
6. Candidates for any office shall be bona-fide full and/or independent members.

G. ELECTED OFFICERS

1. Each executive member shall be elected separately, except the President who shall be elected along with his/her running mate.
2. In the event of a first place tie, subsequent balloting shall be held to determine the winner.
3. Any elected officer of BACDA-USA shall be dismissed from office in the event of gross misconduct, as specified in the Bylaws.
4. Officers who fail to execute the duties entrusted to them shall be held in contempt. They shall be notified in writing of such conduct and, if need be, dismissed from office.
5. Prior to the removal of an elected official from office before the end of his /her term of office, the NEC shall present the case to the General Assembly.

H. VACANCY WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE

1. Any vacancy other than that of the President shall be filled within 30 days.
2. The Vice President shall temporarily hold that position until the NEC meets in an emergency session to vote in a new officer.
3. The President shall nominate, and two-thirds (2/3) of NEC members shall approve of, the new candidate.
4. All resignations shall be tendered to the President who shall in turn inform members of the NEC.
5. Resignations by the President shall be tendered to the Legal Affairs Chairperson who shall in turn inform members of the NEC. The NEC shall temporarily hand over functions of the presidency to the Vice President. A new President shall be voted into office at the following convention by the General Assembly.
6. All resigning officers and those leaving office shall, where necessary, be audited by the Legal Affairs Committee. The resigning officer shall hand over all official documents, files, records and all other BACDA-USA property to the Chairperson of the Legal Affairs Committee.

ARTICLE XI: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

A. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

1. The financial sources of BACDA-USA shall be as follows:
 - i. Annual membership dues as shall be specified by the General Assembly
 - ii. Levies ear-marked for specific programs
 - iii. Tax deductible donations.
 - iv. Investment ventures
 - v. Net proceeds from social and fund-raising events.
2. Seventy-five (75) percent of the funds generated from conventions shall be allocated to NEC and twenty-five (25) percent to the host chapter.
3. A Convention financial report shall be issued by the financial secretaries of both the host Chapter and the NEC not later than two (2) months after the Convention. Shares of the proceeds shall be distributed at that time.

B. FUNDING OF THE PRESIDENCY

The President shall be entitled to a petty cash account in the annual amount of \$2,000.00 for purposes of running the Presidency. Such cash shall be spent on items such as personal thank you notes, emergency meeting refreshments, travel, communication bills, and reports.

C. BANKING

1. The Association shall maintain two bank accounts: savings and checking accounts.
2. The President and the Treasurer shall be joint signatories to the Association accounts.
3. Withdrawal of funds from any Association account shall require the immediate notification of the financial Secretary.

D. ACCOUNTING

1. All financial transactions and contracts entered into for and on behalf of BACDA-USA shall bear the signatures of both the President and Treasurer.
2. All expenditures in excess of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) charged to the Association shall require the prior approval of the President.
3. Any planned expenditure in excess of cash on hand shall require the prior approval of the NEC, which shall present a report of such expenditure to the General Assembly.
4. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall present financial reports to the General Assembly during the General assembly.
5. An audit of the treasury shall be conducted on an annual basis by an Adhoc Audit Committee.
6. All Committee Chairpersons shall be audited on an annual basis by an Adhoc Audit Committee.
7. Financial impropriety shall be pursued legally and otherwise.
8. The President's petty cash account shall be reviewed annually by the NEC.

ARTICLE XII: RESOLUTIONS, AMENDMENTS, AND RATIFICATIONS

A. RESOLUTIONS

Any resolution adopted by the General Assembly shall become law. Amendments to such laws shall be ratified by the General Assembly.

B. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

1. Any proposal to amend this constitution shall be submitted to the Chairman of the Legal affairs Committee who shall circulate it to full and independent members of BACDA-USA.
2. All proposals shall be presented on the floor for debate and voted on by the General Assembly. No absentee ballots shall be accepted.

C. RATIFICATION

This Constitution shall be presented to the General Assembly where it shall be debated. It shall require the vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those present at the General Assembly for adoption.

ARTICLE XIII: BYLAWS

A. BYLAWS

1. Details on the management of this Organization shall be laid down in Bylaws.
2. The rules, policies and procedures approved by the General Assembly for inclusion into the Bylaws shall be written-up by the Secretary-General and submitted to the Legal Affairs Committee.

ARTICLE XIV: MISCELLANEOUS

A. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

1. This Constitution shall be the property of BACDA-USA
2. The BACDA-USA postal address shall be accessible to the President and or his/her designee.

ARTICLE XV: DISSOLUTION

A. DISSOLUTION

1. BACDA-USA shall be dissolved by a petition signed by seventy-five (75) percent of all members and submitted to the Legal Affairs Committee, which shall present the proposal to the General Assembly for a vote. A ninety (90) percent approval vote shall be required for dissolution.
2. Upon dissolution, the Association shall settle all BACDA-USA outstanding financial obligations.
3. The Legal Affairs Committee shall be required to follow the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules for dissolving BACDA- USA.
4. The Association shall dispose of all its assets by donating them to other organizations that are subject to IRS rules as stipulated under 501(c)(3) of the Rules governing IRS Foundations. Any such assets not disposed of shall be handled by the court of jurisdiction (State) in which the Association was incorporate.

ARTICLE XVI: AUTHENICATION AND AMMENDMENTS

The above text having been adopted upon due deliberation and endorsement of at least two-thirds (2/3) majority of recognized General Assembly members in fulfillment of provisions of the previous Constitution of BACDA USA allowing for Constitutional changes as verified by the National Executive Committee this _____ day of _____, Two thousand and ____;

We the undersigned, having been duly delegated by the provisions of the previous BACDA USA Constitution, do hereby solemnly append our signatures, as a mark of testimony to the said act and of authenticity of the present document which replaces the previous Constitution done on the

_____ in _____. From this day henceforth, all shall honor this document as the Constitution of the BACDA-USA

National President

Legal Affair Chair