

STATE OF THE UNION

The Behons

NEC Members

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to seize this opportunity, on behalf of the National Executive Committee (NEC), to welcome you all to Boston, home of the 2011 BACDA USA annual convention. We are grateful to God Almighty for His many blessings bestowed on us and our loved ones. As we proceed with our deliberations, kindly remember in your prayers those members who are sick or have lost loved ones over the past year. As many of us do recall, on May 12 2011, the very foundation of BACDA USA was rocked beyond belief with the passing to eternity of one of the pillars of this great association. Our beloved brother Mr. Edie Felix Nkwelle who never missed a convention and who certainly would've been with us here today is no more. Brother Edie's contributions to BACDA USA cannot be over emphasized. We thank him for his selfless commitment and service to this association that he loved so dearly. Physically we miss him but spiritually, he will always be amongst us. In his memory, as well as that of all fallen members and their loved ones, may we please rise for a moment of silence, May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Please be seated.

In 2009 in Atlanta Georgia, you elected us to continue the job of seeking solutions to the problems that face us as a tribe. The challenges that we face are enormous, but ultimately our ability to accomplish our goals has always rested in the immense dynamism of few our dedicated members. Our service to BACDA USA is on a volunteer basis. It is deeply rooted in the love that we have for Ekosse and the willingness and desperate urge to make a difference in a tribe that may seem to be forgotten. Only few members are willing to volunteer their time in service to BACDA USA. I am appealing to you all, my brothers and sisters, to endeavor to squeeze some time from your busy schedules to volunteer in moving BACDA USA one step forward. I also want to point out that volunteering to serve BACDA USA comes along with an immense sacrifice. There is room for all of us to put our talents into use in BACDA USA. I frown upon the arm chair criticism syndrome that plagues this association. Our contribution is much appreciated if it adds value to our association.

The past two years have been very challenging for us as we sought to make a head way with some of the projects that we had to tackle. (WHAT WERE THE PROJECTS AND CHALLENGES?) On a positive note, we are proud to say that together with the collaboration of ABC Ekosse, we have a feasibility study that was conducted by Mr. Marcus Ndumbe. Ekosse is deeply honored to have such an illustrious son in him.

The Health Committee, under the leadership of Nhon Mbide, handed over blood sugar and blood pressure monitors to clinics in the Bakossi region. We thank Nhon Mbide for his service to BACDA USA,

The BACDA USA website was revamped and adapted to suit our needs.

Even though this administration was hard hit by the resignation of the entire Education Committee, the NEC was able to obtain the services of Pa Ejedepang Koge who picked up the slack in that domain. The funds that were allocated to that committee have been channeled to him and he is getting ready to compile the list of scholarship beneficiaries as soon as the 2011 GCE results are published. We are grateful to him for his readiness to assist us whenever we need his help.

BACDA USA in its mission to get all Ekosse sons and daughters involved in the development of the tribe helped to facilitate the creation of BACDA UK and BACDA Germany by being as resourceful as possible. BACDA USA is the role model for these new groups that are springing up. They are looking up to us for guidance and direction as they get ready to partner with us in fostering Ekosse development. Let us not let them down. We thank them for the opportunity they gave us to help them get started. We wish them well and we look forward to working in collaboration with them in the achievement of our goals. On another positive note, BACDA USA donated some computers to GHS Nyassoso as an expansion of the computer project.

With the help of the general assembly we put in place a strategy to have every BACDA USA member raise the sum of \$500 for the next 2 years towards the Ekosse Road Project. It is our hope that with the money raised, we will be able to keep Ekosse roads graded and maintained all year round. By so doing, we would be ensuring that farmers can profitably market their produce, the children's commute to schools would be facilitated and travelling within Ekosse as a whole would be less burdensome.

CHALLENGES OF BACDA USA

One of the recent challenges facing BACDA USA is the emergence of several clan meetings. This in itself has a lot of positive outcomes for the Bakossi tribe. I want to underscore the fact that BACDA USA does not frown at these clan meetings. Instead our expectation is that the clan leaderships will mobilize their members to recognize and support that which BACDA USA stands for. The biggest goal of BACDA USA is the development of Ekosse not the development of one clan. We recognize the fact that there are some clans that are not represented here in the diaspora. Would you want those clans to remain undeveloped simply because they are not privileged to have representation here in the diaspora? My answer to that is a BIG NO and I believe that you all will agree with me in this regard. We must not be selfish to our less privileged brothers and sisters. We want to dialogue with clan leadership as a means of finding common ground in our quest for the development of the tribe that we love so dearly.

Another challenge that BACDA USA continues to face is that of non-compliance by the chapter members. To maintain the status of active members of an association such as ours, we have to fully understand and accept our responsibilities as team players. BACDA USA is only as strong as the chapter within its makeup. I truly believe that the best days of BACDA USA are still ahead. We have a tribe that needs us, a tribe that is looking up to us for answers to questions like "why are we still this underdeveloped in this 21st century?" I am appealing to all chapter leaders to do everything in their power to keep their members informed of the indispensable role that

BACDA USA plays in Ekosse development. We are the torch bearers of Ekosse development. We need strong chapters to keep BACDA USA strong and focused on its objectives. Everyone else seems to have failed the Bakossi people. Let us stand up and stand together for what we believe, namely that the Bakossi tribe deserves to be developed. We can do it. The process is on and there is no turning back now.

FOLLOW UPS FOR 2011/2012

1. Help the ABC plan the upcoming ABC in Tombel in Nov 2011.
2. Follow through with the Ekosse road project fund raising initiative \$500/year and also collaborate with other BACDA meetings in the UK and the rest of Europe in the road project effort
3. Continue discussions with the ABC and other BACDA meetings on how best to address Bakossi roads.
4. Follow through with the execution of the education committee project of issuing and collaborating with Pa S.N. Ejedepang Koge in the execution of the educational committee's scholarship awards to deserving Bakossi students as soon as the GCE A/Level results are published.
5. Engage clan leadership in discussions to identify the best way forward for clan/BACDA USA collaboration for Ekosse development.

Long Live BACDA USA
Long Live Ekosse
Thank You