

The Royal Highnesses

Members of the National Executive Committee

Distinguish Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is a great day in the history of BACDA USA as we celebrate our 25 years of existence. It is more delightful than ever to see all of you dressed in beautiful colors to celebrate this day. But first, I wish to welcome all of you to Washington DC, host of our 25th anniversary convention. I am filled with joy seeing most of you after one year when we met in Delaware. Your coming back this year despite the financial hardship is a true testimony of your love for this association. I pray the very Good Lord that brought all of you here safely, will take you back safely to your various destinations.

I want to express my thanks to the men and women of Washington DC Chapter who have worked hard to put together this extraordinary convention. Your loyalty and commitment to this union is most appreciated. On behalf of BACDA USA I wish to extend my thanks to the Washington DC Chapter President Mr. Abel Ajebe whose leadership contributed to the success we see here today. Please join me in giving a round of applause to the President and his members. I appreciate your spirit of hospitality demonstrated to your brothers and sisters who are here this weekend for this great celebration.

Brothers and Sisters, I am short of words on how I can express my appreciation to a gentleman of fine Ngomboku, Walter Ngome whom I challenged 10 months ago to Chair the 25th anniversary preparations. He has worked so hard pushing out all necessary information in order to have a

hitch free celebration. He has been very remarkable in delivering his services to BACDA USA. His hard work deserves a standing ovation and a round of applause.

Now to the group of people I have worked with for the past four years. I was very privileged to have a very dedicated NEC Members who went above and beyond to lend their talents and time to this association. You did your best to serve this group even in times when you could give up because of unruly behaviors from some of ours who have resorted to become the in-house wolves. I cannot thank you enough and it is very hard for me to tell you goodbye. We debated very hard in many meetings; we disagreed very strongly on many issues; but the end result is very clear, we never stopped working together because of these disagreements. You all did an amazing job. Ladies and gentlemen, let us for the last time show our last respect to this great men and women who served us this past four years.

You all know I was blessed to have effective officers who managed various offices in our association. The extra time spent doing all these is part of the sacrifice that this association will always need in order to propel to the next level; Mr. Vice President, thank you for all your support and for being there whenever I needed you. I am most grateful to my Secretary General, my Financial Secretary who stepped in as interim but never got relieved. I also extend a big thank you to the Treasurer who has been a workaholic to this administration. A penny will never roll under the table without her stretching to pick it up. I enjoyed your honesty in your service. Money as you all know is the undercover devil that can split the group within a second. To all my Committee Chairs; Education, Fundraising, Health, Special Purpose, Communication, Road Project, Legal Affairs and Culture, you all did incredible job.

As you all know, chapter Presidents are the fuel that runs this association. Their hard work is what BACDA USA counts on in order to succeed. You all did amazing job and the results of your hard work is very evident through the successes of the drives that BACDA USA embarked on the last four years. Thank you all and I hope you keep up the good work. Your chapters are going to be more effective and stronger if you continue to carry the right message to your members.

My dear brothers and sisters, 25 years when this association began, no one could imagine that it will grow to where it is today. But it took the hard work of few people to put their hearts and souls together when they began this movement. If you are one of the few people who started this journey 25 years ago, please rise for a second. Ladies and gentlemen, let us by show of respect give a huge round of applause to these men and women. In the same token, I want to thank all the past leaders who served this association. Their hard work laid a true foundation of continuity that generations will come to see and know that once upon a time there lived some great men and women who started all these. Let all the past National Presidents and Chapter Presidents stand for recognition of their dedicated service to BACDA USA.

It is remarkable that the journey that started 25 years ago has seen several generations in terms of age and years we got into this country, but it has taken one man to stand out when it comes to convention attendance. My brothers and sisters, it is hard to believe but it's true that the gentleman from New Jersey Mr. Moses Alobwede attended all the 25 conventions, and not that he just attended the conventions, he paid all his dues for these 25 years. This is the true membership spirit that BACDA USA needs. He did it; all of us here can as well do it. It's a

matter of choice and commitment. I call upon all of you to follow his example and give him a good round of applause.

It is also important for me to underscore the significant relationship BACDA USA and the All Bakossi Conference established for the past eight years. We have accomplished a lot together and I am confident we will accomplish more if we continue to work with mutual respect from one another. I personally want to thank Professor Paul Ntungwe Ndue, President of the All Bakossi Conference (ABC) whom I had the privilege to work with. I also want to thank the Honorary President of the ABC; Minister Philip Ngole Ngwese who has been very instrumental in the road issues namely the equipment purchase and clearance from the ports. I also want to thank the Minister for hosting the past fundraising in Yaoundé where he bore the cost of entertainment. We were able to raise 4.2 million francs that evening despite the timid attendance. I strongly believe if the new administration continues to make use of these great relationships more can be accomplished together.

It will be flattering if I fail to mention the lack of corporation from many elites back home when it comes to partnering with us in the development of our tribe. Some of them who are blessed to have the means have chosen to put a blind eye to the road project. The councils, the members of parliament representing us has been so silent to all the road project endeavors despite several attempts to bring them on board. If our elected officials can turn their back on the development projects in our tribe, then it's a huge concern that must be looked into. I am not too sure if our councils are that too poor or our members of parliament are exempted from micro project money to the extent that they do not have the money to support the equipment drive BACDA USA has been running? I am deeply flabbergasted by their actions. Some wise heads need to come

together to find out what the problem is and what we can do to bring them on the development table.

You all will recall that some myopic individuals filled with egoistic tendencies decided to become the in-house wolves and for the past two months they threaten to tear down this house. The good news I have for them is this, *the state of our union is strong and indivisible*. This association has a constitution, and I have always reminded all the members to grab a copy and read. The National President has the responsibility to report back to the General Assembly on all projects executed within a particular year. For you to hide behind the computers with fraudulent names and request reports on internet from the National President is enough testimony to prove that the real person behind that name is evil and has no good intentions for this association. We cannot let cynics dictate the rhythm of the musical tune in BACDA USA. Never should that be allowed to happen. Members should take the responsibility to attend conventions, listen to the reports and ask questions appropriately and where necessary. If you are unable to attend, BACDA USA convention reports are always made public after the convention. You will know who prepared what report and take that advantage to call that person and in a civil tone raise your concerns. This is how a civilized society operates. This is how a society that is built on strong democratic principles operates. This is how those who love their tribe operate. Anything short of that, you are on your own.

The culture of not wanting to serve but spend time to slate others who serve is growing rapidly in this association. If care is not taken, such behaviors will plant seeds of discord that can discourage others from serving and ultimately crash this group. Rather than seat back and criticize other people who serve, why can't you step forward to lead? The one time U.S.

Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice challenged her fellow Republicans at a 2012 National Convention in Tampa, Florida. She said inter-alia “My fellow Americans, we cannot be reluctant to lead, and we cannot lead from behind”. This challenge also goes to all of us. If you fall in a category of people who feel very adamant and obdurate to serve, it serves you right to give credit to those who serve you. At least treat them with some respect. Not wanting to do it, and chopping down the spirit of those who dare to do it, make more harm to this association than good. I know these great thinkers we have amongst us have always argued that not everybody is meant to lead. From what I see, their philosophical worldview also holds that not everybody is meant to pay dues; not everybody is meant to appreciate others.....come on people; give me a break!! Tell these guys their ideologies and school of thoughts has no place on this planet earth. **Let the purported philosophers who hide themselves out there get this message very clear today; you cannot question the records of BACDA USA or dare to criticize its activities when you chose not to be a registered member.** Like the saying goes, “put your mouth where your money is”. However, let me use the words of former U.S. President Richard Nixon who once said, “Those who hate you don’t win unless you hate them”. In essence those who spend time to fraud names and use the computer to criticize and label the good work others do cannot win if we chose not to write back the hate language they write to us. In spirit and quintessence we will always win!!

My dear Brothers and Sisters, four years have come and gone fast, but the number of projects accomplished by my administration is surmountable. We made record achievements when it comes to health projects, education projects and road projects. All these were intended to alleviate our people from the present predicaments that if nothing was done, the fallout would be wide and disastrous.

During my tenure of office, we carried out health campaigns in Tombel, Nyandong, Bakolle, Ndom, Ebonji and Bangem. Our loved ones back home were consulted for free and medication given to them for free as well. Records show that more than four thousand patients benefitted from these campaigns. It is also important to recall that BACDA USA championed the distribution of free medication to several individuals in the neighborhood of Bulutu-Tombel where crisis of epilepsy outbreak occurred. The feedback from the patients indicated that the rate of crisis drastically reduced and some never witnessed seizure again. Their smiles and sense of belonging in their community was gotten back. This is what BACDA USA is all about.....putting smiles on the faces of the less privileged ones in our tribe. It is important to note that the Health Committee Chair Nhon James Mbide and I were in part present to all of these campaigns. This is the kind of commitment that BACDA USA need. Mr. Chair, I am most grateful for your services and know that the good work you did may not be appreciated here, but the poor people back home whom you met face to face at these campaigns will never forget anytime soon the kindness you showed to them. Please join me and give Mr. Mbide a round of applause.

In the same vein, we made great strides in education. We dished out material donations to several Secondary and High schools for the past four years. Each school received materials worth five hundred thousand francs each. The beneficiary schools includes; Government High School Muambong, Government Secondary School Muebah, Government Secondary School Muabi, Government Secondary School Ekanjoh Bajoh, Government Secondary School Bermin, Government Technical High School Tombel, Unity Comprehensive High School Tombel, Government High School Ngusi, Government Secondary School Etam and Government Secondary School Buba. These assignments took a great deal of time from the gentleman of

Delaware who chaired this Committee for the past four years. Ladies and gentlemen, I implore you to give a round of applause to Mr. Ebwelle Ernest. The protégé on the ground in Cameroon whom Mr. Ebwelle worked with was honest and diligent in all assignments that were entrusted in his hands. Mr. Etube Fidelis himself as an educationist never took these assignments for granted. On behalf of BACDA USA, I want to extend my deep appreciation to him for the services rendered on our behalf.

Dear convention delegates, the things we do back home can only make more sense if you lived the same experience or have witnessed others go through the same hard times. Like President Richard Nixon once said, “you cannot see the sweetness of being at the top of the mountain, if you have not been down in the valleys”.

All these accomplishments did not hold us back or avert our attention to the road project that we have invested a lot of money and time. Ladies and gentlemen, who amongst us here doubts the power of good roads to a community? Not only will the good roads provide easy access to medical care irrespective of the season, but the economic empowerment that it brings cannot be overemphasized. BACDA USA partnered with the All Bakossi Conference and purchased a backhoe. BACDA USA took initiative with donations from some groups within our tribe and BACDA USA members who raised money and bought a dump truck. The famous “Operation Save a Life” that was launched last year in Delaware, has yielded fruits as BACDA USA last week bought a grader that is presently scheduled for shipment next week July 31, 2015.

These are astounding results that should coerce all of us to be part of a community that truly serve as one another’s keeper. I know most of you will ask, if the equipment purchase is complete what next? The effort to maintain our roads will never end. It has to be a continual

cycle that requires us to carry the torch until we hand it to the next generation. It is also important to note that the road project is not the only problem our tribe faces. The problems are enormous and require our attention but we will take a look at each one of them, one at a time as our means permit. It will be a disfavor if I fail to mention the extra effort exerted by Mr. Jerry Nnoko in the equipment purchase process. He was instrumental and worked so hard to ensure these purchases were successful. Please let's give a round of applause to Mr. Nnoko.

Fellow convention delegates, my administration was able to accomplish these many projects because revenue collection in BACDA USA was at a record high. For four years this administration raised close to \$250,000. This is a remarkable achievement that we ought to pat ourselves on our back. Turn to your closest neighbor and tell them...congratulations!!!

You can see for yourself the amazing job we did for the past four years. If all of us do our part and join the trail more will be accomplished. Will you be flabbergasted if I say that the good job you see from BACDA USA does not get support of fifty percent from the bakossi sons and daughters who live in the USA? This is time for you to question your patriotism. A good number of you have enjoyed undeserved hi-fives from our loved ones back home who rush into thanking you because you live in the US not knowing that you are one of those who talk the talk but fail to walk the walk. I recall last year during my visit to Cameroon a friend of mine's father in Bangem was congratulating me and his son for all the fine work we do for our tribe. He told me his son called him and said he should not miss the health campaign in Bangem; that their association is sending a team of Doctors and free medication. I just did not know how to tell the old man that his son is not a member of BACDA USA and does not contribute any money to it. To my

opinion taking empty credits on what you did not do has no place in human conscience and is delusional and shameful for you to do that.

The choice is bad and the direction is wrong. Let us all rise and do what is good and right for our tribe. Step up the plate and offer your widow's mite. If we do it as a team, if we do it as a family, if we do it with one love and one purpose, if we do it with a touch from our hearts, there is no doubt in my mind that the results will not be amazing.

BACDA USA is privileged to have in her midst today a great lady who dedicated herself to serve this association for the past decade. Her work to BACDA USA is immeasurable. She has demonstrated true servant leadership and carried out BACDA USA assignments with honesty and integrity. She has given all of herself to us and today it is our turn to show her how much we appreciate and recognize her work for us. Ladies and gentlemen, I beseech you to welcome Ms. Ngone Mercy once more with a standing ovation and a huge round of applause.

This afternoon, we will be exercising our simple duty to elect a new President and his team. The decision to run has never been easy because the load ahead is colossal. The President and his team cannot do it alone. They need our help and our support to accomplish their goals. Electing people and turning our backs on them do not make us look like family. We are all busy in this country, and the time to discharge these free services is becoming very daunting. If we fail to do our part and let the house take a twist; the blame will be ours. Any attempt to point fingers to the administration as it has always been in the past will never get us anywhere. Teamwork is the true path that will help this group survive no matter how strong the storm is. My administration will happily pass over to the new administration all valuable and important files we have in our keeping at the conclusion of this convention and in the presence of the legal Affairs Committee

Chair as our constitution mandates. Let me use this opportunity to wish the incoming administration the very best as they pick-up the wand to serve our tribe.

My Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is a great honor to me and my family to have the opportunity to serve you for the past four years. The accomplishments are enormous, but I must say this to you, the journey to get to the finish line was rough and bumpy in several occasions. I felt bewildered some nights after hard phone conversations that I disagreed on issues with some members or sometimes after reading annoying emails. I am not sure I would have made it to the finish line if my children and my wife were not there to calm me down most of the times. I know my kids always said this to me; daddy we cannot wait for you to leave BACDA President for this house to be quiet as it was before. I can assure them today that as we return home from this convention, the house will get back to its usual calmness with no one talking loud on the phone again; thank you Kelly, Jerry and Precious who most of the time did the private secretary job if I needed help especially during conventions preparations.

And most importantly, I want to thank my wife for being there and giving me the encouragement to move on. I know four years ago I refused to run for BACDA USA President because I thought I was not ready. It took some individuals who wanted me to run to get my wife involved; she started cheering me to step up and run, something previously she did not want me to do. I want to confess that knowing what I know today, I would have regretted a lot if I failed to listen to her advice.

I had the opportunity to visit some villages within the bakossi tribe where I met several people who desperately needed help. They lack medicine, they lack education and they lack clothes to wear, let alone to put good food on the table. When I looked at them into their eyes, the opposite

I saw how blessed I am. But yet, the troubling question I took home was; what can I do to help these people? The energy I worked with was motivated by my zeal to do something. The stories I heard which I still bore fresh in my heart today, broke my spirit, but molded my human thinking as to what generosity is to mankind.

I wish I had the means to take all of you to the field to see for yourselves how touching and life changing the things we do mean to these people. A woman told me in Ndum-Muasundem amongst other things; “my son I lost the two children God gave me, and I never knew someone will ever stretch a hand again to give me something”. She said this because I bought her medications that BACDA USA did not have in her pool.....tears rolled down her cheek, I gave her a hug. She whispered in my ears, if I die and meet my husband, I will tell him I hugged a ‘Whiteman’. She then smiled and her face was beamed with joy. This is what BACDA USA is all about. Doing all we can to put some smile on the faces of our people. This alone is more than medication you can give to somebody who live in desperation.

I am not too sure how you feel when you hear stories like these. If you cannot be enthused to make contributions after hearing this kind of a touching story, I can tell you right now you are living a life on your own. As for me and my family, we will continue to remain the foot soldiers for this association because we love the things that BACDA USA stands for.

If you love the things that BACDA USA does as we do; if you believe in touching other people’s lives; if you believe in putting smiles on other people’s faces; if you believe in teamwork to accomplish this goal; if you believe the problems we have in our tribe wait for nobody else but us; if you believe in making a difference in the land of birth we all proudly call our home; I urge

you today to consider to do your fraction and utmost best in ensuring the goals of this association are accomplished.

Thank you all and may the Good Lord bless all of us this day and beyond.

Long Live BACDA USA

Long Live Cameroon

Long Live the United States of America