

BACDA-USA VIRTUAL CONVENTION

SATURDAY JULY 17, 2021

ADDRESS/STATE OF THE UNION

Your Royal Highnesses

Behons

Beloved NEC members

Fellow BACDA-USA members

I would like to use this opportunity, on behalf of the National Executive Committee (NEC) to warmly welcome you all to this special event. I want to first and foremost thank and praise GOD, ALMIGHTY for enabling us survive covid-19, the global pandemic that almost wrecked the world. I want us to also remember and to commit to God the souls of our loved ones who departed this world in the past two chaotic years. I am indebted to my NEC members who have shown loyalty and steadfastness in order to make BACDA-USA better and more impactful. I am also grateful to members who continue to be generous with their time, wisdom and resources to help our association make a difference in our lives, but especially the lives of our needy people and our underserved land, EKOSSE.

In July 2019, in Dallas, TX you gave us the mandate to continue the task of finding ways to abate the challenges facing our beloved land and its people. The challenges are enormous and urgent, as our land is lagging in all spheres of life. Inherently, much is expected from us who are the more blessed, prosperous and enlightened. The wisdom of God in 2 Corinthians 8:7-15 reprimands us to follow the example of our Lord and use our abundance at the present time to supply the needs of the needy, so that their abundance may also supply our needs in due time. This command is enshrined in article 2 of our BACDA-USA constitution.

It is in the light of the above command that our beloved association sponsored some projects in the last two years.

Most, if not all of us in 2019 saw a viral video on social media of the shamefully dilapidated state of the Tombel District Hospital. This raised a lot of questions and concerns. We could not be indifferent. This challenged us to brainstorm and finally allocated the sum of \$8600.00 for the renovation of the said hospital. Thanks to the sacrifice and personal coordination of our illustrious brother, HRH Jerry Mbong, BACDA-USA was able to accomplish the following: built three new septic tanks, two suckaway pits, rehabilitated three water system bathrooms, two external toilets, the broad entrance staircase, tiled the floor of the maternity ward and some corridors, painted some wards; among others. Inspired by our example, more projects by other associations and individuals followed. Permit me recognize the personal initiative of Dr. Constance Eneme who synergized the efforts of Bakossi women in the USA. They raised over \$5000.00, and used it to buy two oxygen cylinders for the hospital. HRH Jerry Mbong is currently providing forty-five mosquito nets and cleaning supplies (modern mops, brooms and gallons of chemicals). There exists a certain WhatsApp forum dubbed "Tombel Hospital Project", currently helping to rehabilitate the hospital. It has raised over \$5000.00, thanks to the donation and solicitation endeavors of chief Jerry Mbong, Mr. Joel kalle, Mrs. Noella Ekane, Mrs. Gracian Mbome Sone, in collaboration with some Bakossi non-BACDA-USA sons and daughters. Others are encouraged to follow these laudable examples.

BACDA-USA also sponsored a humanitarian assistance program to the amount of \$9000.00; its target being the Bakossi victims of the ongoing Anglophone crisis who took refuge in the neighboring Francophone towns of Melong, Nkongsamba, Loum, Njombe, Penja, Mbanga and Souza. This program carried out on Saturday, March 14, 2020, distributed foodstuff to the IDPs under the coordination of Dr. Mercy Abwe Ngone and chief Walters Ngome. Over 800 persons, each gratefully received a package, composed of 10kg of rice, a bottle of vegetable oil and 10 sachets of tomato paste; accompanied by comforting and reassuring words from the BACDA-USA president. Their joy and gratitude were unbounded.

In an effort to make BACDA-USA more financially viable and impactful, Dr. Constance Eneme, in her enthusiasm and optimism to do more for our people and land, proposed a crowdfunding business initiative in March 2020. Extraordinary virtual NEC and general assembly meetings were held to brainstorm, deliberate and draw up modalities. She shared her experiences how this is working in some

groups and associations. Messrs Edwin Ewane and Crispo Ajang gave economic, financial and taxation advice on how the venture can be successful. Many who attended these meetings realized its workability and bought the idea. A base was laid on how funds would be raised in the next few years, within and out of BACDA-USA network. Members agreed that investing in a banquet hall in the MDV environ would be more manageable, sustainable and productive. The hall would serve as a BACDA-USA function hall, but could be hired out for other functions to raise funds for more charity. However, some in depth concerns about aspects like the hall's competitiveness, management, inadequacy in fundraising, profit sharing and plough back, dampened the earlier hope and optimism. This was compounded by the pandemic's ravaging effects on activities and the economy. The initiative's task force is making more findings so as to satisfy the above concerns.

We were all excitedly looking forward to converge from July 16-19, 2020 for the Delaware Convention. Unfortunately, the pandemic became uncontrollable by March 2020. With great disappointment, we were obliged in a NEC meeting held in April 2020 to cancel the said convention, in compliance with various administrative regulations and medical recommendations, but above all personal safety. My administration was however still on the guard on how BACDA-USA could impact lives.

On July 6, 2020, Richard Ekane and Caroline Ejenwi embarrassingly brought forth a set of female conjoined twins in a Yaounde hospital. They sounded so desperate; pleading with the whole wide world for support. Our association could not resist the urge to help. It agreed and organized a fund drive which ran from August 2020 to February 2021. We were able to raise \$15,435.00. The coordinator of the drive, Dr. Theo Alobwede; to whom we are indebted for the success of this drive transferred the entire sum to a bank account created by the parents of the conjoined twins. Similar efforts by Cameroon based sons and daughters of Kupe Muanenguba Division, coordinated by Mr. Herbert Ediage, yielded similar fruits. They on their part raised over 8,000.000frs CFA and handed over the envelope to the father of the conjoined twins a few before their departure to Turkey. They are currently undergoing the needed surgery and separation in the Acibadem Altunizade Hospital in Istanbul, Turkey; sponsored by the Cameroon government at the cost of \$107,000.00, through the intervention

of minister Paul Elung. I want to again thank all BACDA-USA chapters (HTX, OKC, NE, BANC), Bakossi clan, village, friend groups and foundations (Elung Women-USA, MUADAC-USA, Ekambeng-USA, Bangem Diaspora-USA, The Essungue Ejuma Foundation, The Ntube Global Foundation, CWA-Houston), families (the Akame Akwe family and friends, the Crispo Ajang family and CamMetro bros), and all individuals that donated generously. The Richard Ekane family express their gratitude.

Then arose another cry. In October 2020, most if not all of us again watched a viral video on social media of the pitiful and deplorable state of the Bangem District Hospital. This raised concerns and reactions. Instantly, a spontaneous group of Bakossi sons and daughters and sympathizers worldwide, but noticeably from the USA, Canada and Germany organized virtual meetings and ultimately initiated a fund drive to help renovate the hospital. They sought the partnership of BACDA-USA; to use its legal status, totally in conformity with its constitution, as well as help raise funds and jointly execute the renovation project. The main goal of this project is to provide direly needed modern medical equipment (a full blood count machine, echography machine, electrophoresis machine, x-ray machine, urinalysis reader, microscopes, among others); which the hospital has never had.

BACDA-USA again agreed, launched a fund drive and set up an ad hoc committee, comprised of president Amate Ngabe, vice president Abel Ajebe, health committee chair Gracian Mbome and resource person Theo Alobwede, to coordinate the partnership. The fund drive is ongoing. This is one of the reasons why we are here converged today. BACDA-USA has so far raised \$8500.00. I wish to appreciate the huge donations from the Elung Women-USA, BACDA-USA Houston chapter, BACDA-USA DC chapter and some of my EXCO members. We urge other chapters, groups and members to donate. I wish to also acknowledge the donations of those BACDA-USA members and other individuals which were earlier on channeled toward the global fund drive. The USA zone tops the global donation. Other commendable efforts were carried out by Mr. Prosper Nokwe of Germany, who organized and shipped a container of medical supplies including 40 beds, 40 mattresses, bedcovers, medical wears and surgical equipment. Also, the efforts of Mr. Ekome Same of Mutengene, Cameroon paid off. Through his intervention, a UK-based NGO (Jacob's Well Appeal, Beverly, East Yorks, UK) has donated medical supplies (mostly disposables and light instruments) worth

61,265,298frs CFA. The cargo ship carrying the container will leave this month. Unfortunately, heavy medical machines are not included.

Abanyang, the aforementioned achievements attest to the dynamism, sacrifice and above all love of just a minority of BACDA-USA members and worse still, just a few among the thousands of Bakossi sons and daughters in this prosperous country. This generous minority represents the light and hope of Ekosse. Our contribution is much more appreciated if it adds value and impact to our association, our people and our land. We urge all Bekosse to come join BACDA-USA which represents the balefire of Ekosse. This would help break down the major challenges of grudge, intolerance, exclusion and indifference, characteristic of many Bakossi sons and daughters who feel that BACDA-USA is just for a select few. Efforts are still being made to bring back New Jersey and Minnesota, and reach out to Ohio and North Carolina. I want to thank the dynamic chapters of ATL, DC, DE, DFW, HTX, NE and OKC, and those independent members whose commitment has been outstanding. BACDA-USA can only be as strong based on its chapters. I want to therefore discourage the non-compliance from certain chapters and or their members. The same goes to certain Bakossi clan, village and friend meetings and or members who misconceive BACDA-USA for a rival, instead of a partner in the empowerment of our tribe. Pay your national dues. It has been exceptionally dropped from \$150.00 to \$100.00 this year, considering the hardships brought about by the pandemic. National dues payment is the sole criterion to earn you a legitimate participation in BACDA-USA activities. Individually, we can do less; but together we can move the mountains facing our tribe. I have a strong belief that the future is bright for BACDA-USA and the best is yet to come.

We should recall that it has been difficult in the last few years to establish a roadmap or development plan for our land and people. This is due to the ongoing Anglophone crisis which started in 2017 and the outbreak of covid-19 in 2019. Our expectations are we should be able to return to a structured development plan as life returns to normalcy, boosted by the ability to raise more funds.

I would like again to express my indebtedness to my wife and kids, my EXCO, NEC and some BACDA-USA members who stand by me, irrespective of the odds. On behalf of NEC, I thank you all for this opportunity to serve our great association

and land. Our actions and reactions were driven by the zeal and urgency to help develop Ekosse. We apologize for any misunderstandings and mistakes which arose in course of executing our duties. We remain loyal to the goals of BACDA-USA.

May God bless you all with great peace, permanent healings, good health and prosperity.

Long Live BACDA-USA

Long Live Ekosse

Long Live the United States of America

A A NGABE

PRESIDENT

BACDA-USA