

BACDA USA 28TH CONVENTION 2018

Duluth, GA

THE STATE OF THE UNION

Dr. Martin Akwensioge
President,
BACDA-USA

3750 Venture Dr Duluth GA 30096

Your Royal Highnesses

Members of the National Executive Committee

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the National Executive Committee and the National Organizing Committee, I am very humbled and proud to welcome you all here today to the city of Duluth; of the great state of Georgia. I would like to give my heartfelt appreciation to the hard working members of the Atlanta Chapter who have worked tremendously to make this 28th BACDA USA Convention successful and memorable. It should be noted that it has been almost a decade since we last met in this chapter, nine years to be exact and this would not be happening without the strong leadership of Mrs. Mfortow and her team. Hosting this convention is a testament of its members will to rekindle their chapter and establish goals of staying true to the mission and vision of BACDA USA.

My fellow delegates, because of the love for Ekose, we have left our jobs, families and friends to strategies on the issues facing the development of our region and also to better the lives of the inhabitants of this great tribe. I am very pleased to see many of you again after our celebrations in the Houston metro area last year. Your continued commitment is a statement to all and testimony to your love for this great association.

Thanks to Dedicated Members

Now permit me to indulge for a few minutes to once more thank some in leadership as well members of our host chapter for their countless years of continued commitment, they continue to believe in the mission and vision of BACDA USA, these members continue to serve tirelessly on the National executive committee, and have set a personal record of continued attendance at NEC meetings and BACDA USA conventions. Please join me to give a warm thank you to Mrs. Emade Mfortow and Ms Mpey Besong. Over the past years these two ladies have become the face of BACDA USA Atlanta chapter and continue to believe in the mission and vision of BACDA USA. Thank you.

Also permit me to use this opportunity to also recognize the dedicated members of my executive who, for the past three years, have worked tirelessly to help our beloved union to move forward. (Introduce the members). Our union will continue to grow when members of this caliber continue to sacrificing time and personal resources for the greater good of the Bakossi people at home and our families right here in the USA.

A moment of Silence

This year just like other years in our history has seen the untimely departure of loved ones. At this time i would like us to stand up for a minute of silence for our dearly departed here and at home; particularly for the sudden departure of one of our daughter and sister- Liana Atanga. They will be missed and never forgotten.

May their Souls rest in peace.

My dear members, our year started very slow following the convention and many of our planned activities had been put on hold due to the instability in Cameroon particularly in the english speaking regions. Nevertheless, there is always information to share with this great body.

The ABC and the Road Project

It should be no news by now to this body of the ABC (All Bakossi Conference) and its role in the Road project. If it is your first time to a convention I will inform you that the ABC is an organization that was created to better manage and execute the development in Ekose primarily with reference to the roads. I will plead that you see my state of the union from last year and the past road project reports listed on our website and then reach out to me or one of the executives for more explanation if needed. Suffice to say that the ABC is to be the central player in bringing the Bangem and Tombel councils together and help assist in maintaining the roads in Ekose.

I would like to once more acknowledge the leadership of the following for their continued willingness in seeing progress in the Bakossi region ; Dr. Paul Ndue, Mr. Philip Ngwese, and Chief Colonel Ngwese to name a few. I am also pleased to report to this body of one of our relocated members who has stepped up to the plate to work and facilitate the implementation of our projects. Please join me in thanking Mr. Walter Ngome Alobwede for his continued love and dedication to the great Bakossi tribe.

Following our last convention, a road project committee was authorized by this body to **sustain the equipments**. The committee met and the following were action items tabled;

1. Inform the ABC of the New Road Project Committee.
2. Communicate to the NEC the recommendation by the committee to proceed with funding the creation of a contracting company.
3. Develop a memorandum of understanding between the ABC and BACDA USA.
4. Research on the cost to bring the equipments fully operational.
5. Follow up on Mr. Chrispo Ajangs contact for a second opinion.
6. Follow up with Dr. Ngalle on vendor that can assist with locating tires for purchase

I am pleased to report that three of the six items have been completed, two are currently underway and the last item (6) will be completed once the second opinion report is completed.

With the mandate of seeing that the equipments are sustained, we proceeded with facilitating the creation of the contracting company. Again there was a delay in completing this task due to the fragmentation of information sharing. However, am pleased to also report that this company has been created. The sum of \$2,000 (1,035,000 frs CFA) was wired to accomplish the registration of this company. Dr. Ndue is currently working on paperwork to register the company as an NGO to minimize taxes and we are hopeful that this will be completed by the end of 2018.

We also have a team of new mechanics that are accessing the repairs of the equipments and with the help of Mr. Ngome Alobwede as our eyes and ears we are further assured of the process. A detail report of the cost to bring the equipment functional is being developed and will be made available as soon as it's received.

I know the state of this project looked gloomy but we can have reversed this course. I want to thank the members of the committees (the road project and the national executive) for their various counsel on this subject.

501 (C) Update

Our IRS status is up to date and we have filed our taxes for the last filing year. So dear members, you are reminded that you can continue to deduct convention expenses, national and chapter dues, per IRS regulations. As always please contact your tax preparer for advice.

Clan/ Village and BACDA USA relations.

The positive relationship between BACDA USA and the clan and village associations continues to thrive. Although a meeting has not been called to gain stock of the various groups, am honored to have members of some of these groups serving in the administration and in turn relying information of the wellbeing of the groups. Therefore, I can say with confidence that most if not all our clans and villages associations are doing well. It was an honor to also receive invitations to fundraisers to complete the many projects that impact lives in the Bakossi area. I will make it a top priority to dedicate more time to meet with the leadership of the clan and village associations before my end of term.

State of Membership

My fellow members, despite our best efforts as a family union and our constant communication from our national level, it saddens me that we still face challenges within some chapters when it comes to compliance with national endeavors which include membership and financial obligations. From the beginning of my first term I have reminded us all, that any organization will have a hard time to survive with dwindling membership and funds. It is very important for all to remember that for our umbrella organization, BACDA USA , to thrive, the chapters must be strong.

For BACDA-USA to be able to carry out large projects, like those we carried out the past couple of years, we must be united on our mutual goals and aspirations. It is also generally understood that the vision and alignment of chapter members is equally incumbent on the vision and alignment of its leaders. I will say it again boldly that when leadership is not engaged on national priorities, the members are not engaged. My fellow members, you will agree this is a recipe for disunity and creates a hostile environment with rumors, backstabbing, just to name a few, and that it unacceptable.

Last year we praised the efforts and dedication of two of our chapters; BACDA USA- New England and BACDA USA - DFW, today I am pleased to inform this august body that after a few years of instability the BACDA USA - Delaware Valley is back and stronger with a new chapter leader and renewed dedicated members. Please help me in congratulating **Mr. Elvis Edinge** for his leadership.

There is no better time to say thank you to a leader that left a big shoe to fill, a leader that has and continues to be a rock for the chapter, please help me in recognizing the gentleman from Bear, Delaware- **Mr. Jerry Nnoko**. Thank you sir for all you have done and continue to do.

This year we are also glad to welcome to the union a chapter that has long been missing but never forgotten. I would like us to give a warm welcome to the BACDA USA -Minnesota chapter. Many thanks to their leadership lead by **Mr. Joel Kalle** and all the wonderful members. We look forward to seeing you all at our next convention.

We should also take note of our new leadership in our various chapters, please welcome Mr. **Divine Ebwelle** as the new chapter leader of BACDA USA- Houston Metro area and Mr. **Andrew Amate** as the new chapter leader of BACDA USA- New England. We thank you and also thank our current leaders Mr. Derrick Njoh of BACDA USA- Washington D.C and Mrs. Adeline Ekaney of BACDA USA- DFW. as well as our able host Mrs. Emade Mfortow of BACDA USA- Atlanta Metro.

At this time I would like to report to this august body of the request from our brothers and sisters for the creation of a new chapter south of the Mason Dixon line. Over the past two years I have been in constant communication with leadership of that community and am pleased to report that on October 20th 2018 our Bakossi brothers and sister of Oklahoma would like to join our union as BACDA USA- OKC. I would like to thank Mr. Stanley Nzoukwelle for his continued line of of communication and making this a reality.

Community Service

Following the face to face NEC meeting last October in Washington DC, I challenged all chapters of the need to give back to our immediate community. The call was heard loud and clear and i believe for the first time in BACDA USA we had multiple chapters carrying out various local activities. Most of our chapters in our union completed the task by donating items to the less privileged and volunteering at local charities. For all you have done I say thank you. It is another proud accomplishment for BACDA USA.

Dear delegates, it is my humble opinion and I am sure you all will share my optimism that the state of our union is **Strong** with our best days of BACDA USA are still ahead. Many thanks to our wonderful members who continue to believe in the mission and vision of BACDA USA.

We have been working behind the scenes to recraft new ideas and bring in new programs that can cater to the needs of members especially with the instability in Cameroon. It is my hope that next year when we meet we all will be proud to say our Union is stronger than ever.

Legal Affairs Committee

The past year has been a quiet one for the committee but the committee continues to work to see that all chapter general secretaries will join this committee to make sure that chapter bylaws are not in direct conflict with national bylaws and constitution and also serve as a forum where ideas can be shared. It is my hope that with the flow of information from chapter to chapter and to and from the National executive a day will come when we won't hear "Na national get for ..."

Health Committee

BACDA USA continues to make a strides in making a difference in the lives of the bakossi region and its inhabitants. Of course the execution of this campaign would not be a success without the dedication and commitment of **Mrs. Mercy Ngone**. Please give her a round of applause for her selfless dedication in seeing a better Bakossi area. However, with the current instability in Bakossi area and the South West Region of Cameroon we have not been able to carry out any project due to security reasons. We hope and pray that the current issues to be resolved or situation ameliorates for more humanitarian campaigns to be fulfilled.

Communication Committee:

Last year BACDA USA halted the production of its Glam Magazine. The reason for the pause was simple, we needed more content and to cut cost and am glad to see and say for the first time in BACDA USA history our Glam Magazine has been produced with very little funds from the national coffers. Give yourselves a round of applause but a special thank you to the committee for accepting the challenge. Kudos to our Communications Committee and its one

and only chair **Ms. Maggie Sone** for continuing to showcase our organization in a very colorful light for many years now. The BACDA USA Magazine continues to be the envy of other associations, many of whom are struggled to copy without success. I continue to hope that we equally will have a web version to this edition aligning us with organizations that promote a green environment.

BACDA USA is continuing its presences on the social media sphere; in addition to Twitter, a verified Facebook page and YouTube Channel, BACDA USA now has a CashApp account, paypal account, a brand new website. We continue to look for tools to further showcase our culture and stay tuned for the creation of a BACDA USA podcast. It is my continued hope, as we become more exposed through social media, and we can interact with more Bakossi of good will, attract more of the younger generation, have live feeds of our convention and share with them the need to belong with us.

Education Committee

Last year I reported of new ideas and rebranded ideas that the education committee was to embark on. For too long our children have not benefited from our collective expertise within our community. Our community continues to be blessed with a diverse group of professionals from different walks of life: teachers, nurses, doctors, pharmacist, physical therapist, social workers, bankers, professors, just to mention a few.

Dear members, the Education Committee (EduCom), is reintroducing its novel program, the Mentor-Mentee Program (MMP). The purpose of this program is to assist new Bakosians (Mentees) to our community make appropriate career choices with advice from BACDA USA professionals (Mentors). The mentees could also be members who may want advice on career change. The mentors will be available through a robust database accessed through the BACDA USA web portal. It's our hope that this program will be relaunched and help our members and children of Bakossi decent excel in all walks of life. Please see our able chair after this and sign up to be a mentor.

It is also worth noting here that the EduCom will be re-launching the scholarship program to recognize the achievement of Bakossi children. Please let's give **Chairman Dr. Alobwede Epie** and the Education Committee a round of applause

Cultural Committee

Our National Cultural Committee under the leadership of **Mr. Ernest Ajang** is the custodian of our culture and with his leadership the committee will continue to coordinate and showcase our annual cultural exhibitions. However, we will be reintroducing a collaboration of committees. The Cultural Committee will work with the Education Committee to develop an audio/video archive of Bakossi culture. This will include:

- a. Introduction to speaking Bakossi 101
- b. Introduction to word pronunciation 101
- c. Names of the Various clans
- d. Autobiography of prominent custodians of our culture.

The goal of this collaboration is that 25 years from now our children and grandchildren will take advantage to learn the culture, retain their cultural identity and never forget where they came from. They too will be able to build on this this success for posterity. We are very proud of the work that the Cultural Committee has done for many years to cast the spotlight on our culture.

Fundraising

For the first time in BACDA USA history, there has been a program in which BACDA USA can benefit without having to make great sacrifices. This program has been introduced to our community by one of our own Mr. Larry Sume. The program I am referring to is the Ambit Energy. If we take the time and energy to see what this program has to offer, BACDA USA can transcend our current fundraising strategies. I will end this segment simply stating that with one household, BACDA USA has received donations of about \$250 from Ambit Energy.

Closing

As you retire this weekend from this convention, I will like to implore you to engage a fellow brother or sister who has not yet registered or who has not paid their dues or whom you feel may be misinformed about our organization or who may not have heard of the great initiatives that we are currently implementing, and future initiative in the pipeline. There is no better time to join BACDA -USA than now.

I know, sometimes it feels like we are asking for too much from you and you feel drained and overwhelmed. Just think about the villager who has no options, they have crops that cannot be sold because of bad roads, the sick child who cannot afford a hospital trip, a father who cannot send their child to school because he has not been able to sell his crops, a child who is failing in school because they have no text book, and on and on and on. It is only through our collective efforts (all hands on deck) can we achieve greater objectives and make the lives of our people a whole lot better. Please join us in making this possible. Join in making the lives of our people better and more productive.

My fellow delegates, we have come this far as a result of your hard work and dedication. We have seen what the love for our people looks and feels like. We came together to create the ABC that is helping navigate our programs and projects in Cameroon. We came together when we created libraries and computer centers in Tombel and Bangem in 2007 and 2008. We came together when we launched several mobile healthcare clinics and health fairs including cataract surgeries in health centers in the Bakossi area 2008 through 2010. We came together when we launched the Road Maintenance Equipment drive in 2012 through 2016.

Dear brothers and sister, I am convinced without a shadow of a doubt that we can come together again if we are engaged and involved. Yes, we can. But we will need every hand on deck. We need your commitment once more. We need for you to come together in your chapters and commit to align with the national agenda. We need our chapter and committee leaders to align with our national programs and together we can impact change like we have never seen before. We need to recommit ourselves to pay our dues so that we can fund the programs and projects that will change lives of our people for years to come.

Thank you all and may our Almighty Father continue to bless you and your families for this sacrifice. May He grant you journey mercies as you travel back to your respective homes.

Long Live BACDA USA

Long Live our Bakossi Region

Long Live Cameroon

Long Live the United States of America