

BACDA USA 29TH CONVENTION 2019

Dallas, TX

THE STATE OF THE UNION

Dr. Martin Akwensioge
President,
BACDA-USA

7815B Lyndon B Johnson Fwy, Dallas, TX 75251

Your Royal Highnesses
Cultural Dignitaries
Members of the National Executive Committee
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the National Executive Committee and the Organizing Committee of this wonderful convention, I am very humbled and proud to welcome you all today to the great city of Dallas aka Big D; of the Lone Star State-Texas. It is my distinguished honor to give my heartfelt appreciation to the hard working women and men of the Dallas Chapter who have worked tremendously to make this 29th BACDA USA Convention one for the records. I recall this chapter hosting its last convention a year after I and a few other members relocated to the Big D and that convention was indeed one for the memory books, under the leadership of Dr. Joe Ngalle and its implementation of its novel approach of fundraising. This weekend the chapter stands together once more to achieve a higher bar and with open and warm hearts to receive its brothers and sisters as one of the "Flagship chapters" of this Union, a testament of its members dedication to the goals of staying true to the mission and vision of BACDA USA.

For some time in our history, the leadership of this union made home the Washington D.C chapter but today, the Big D is home of two Emiritus Presidents; Mr. Larry Ekaney and Ms. Evelyn Epie and I shall be joining them in retirement to the office at the end of this weekend; Dr. Ngalle our borders are still porous for you and your family, Dallas is becoming the Florida of National Presidents.

My dear delegates, I am very pleased to see many of you again after our celebrations in the Peach State of Georgia last year, you once more have left families, friends and places of employment to strategies on the issues facing the development of our region and also to better the lives of the inhabitants of this great tribe all because of the love for Ekose. I equally thank you all for coming as this is the time for us to take stock of what we have done and what we can do to improve our process. Your continued commitment is a statement to all and testimony to your love for this great association.

Thanks to Dedicated Members and chapter

At this moment please allow me to indulge for a few minutes to once more thank some in leadership as well as 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. Adeline Ekaney and the entire Dallas Chapter. *(Please stand up to be recognized.)* I am proud to call Dallas my home chapter and a flagship chapter, as you 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 four 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

A quote by Norman Cousins reads “*Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live*” As we continue on this journey of life lets always remember what and how our departed loved ones impacted our lives. To all the lives lost at home and here this past year we pray they Rest in Peace. At this time I would like us to stand up for a minute of silence for our dearly departed here and at home; They will be missed and never forgotten.

My dear members, our past year has been relatively quiet due to the instability in Cameroon, particularly in the english speaking regions. In any event we congregate to take stock of our achievements and find improvements where needed.

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. Nevertheless, every other year the committee gets busy with the election of our new leaders and this is one of those years. Mr. Chair thank you for your continued service.

501c, Incorporations and TradeMark

Our IRS status continues to be up to date and as required, we have filed our taxes for the last filing year. We are once again reminded that we can continue to deduct convention expenses, national and chapter dues, per IRS regulations. As always please contact your tax preparer for advice.

Last year we discovered we failed to file our renewal of Incorporations with the City of Washington D.C however, once it was brought to our attention this was resolved within a week and am happy to report that we are reinstated as Incorporated with the City of Washington D.C. Last year equally saw the discovery of another association bearing a similar name to ours. This prompted me to seek TradeMark Rights for BACDA USA for the association. Once approved no other association within the United States of America would be able to use the name BACDA.

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 dear members, it is easy to see this great union fade away with this lack of commitment.

Over the past year we have praised the efforts and dedication of the following chapters; BACDA USA- New England and BACDA USA - DFW, today I am pleased to inform this august body that

We should also take note of our new leadership in one of our chapters, please welcome Mr. **Benjamin Ntoko** as the new chapter leader of BACDA USA- Atlanta Metro area

At this time I would like to report to the general assembly of the successful launching of a new chapter south of the Mason Dixon line. On October 20th 2018 our Bakossi brothers and sister

of Oklahoma joined our union as BACDA USA- OKC. I would like to thank Mr. Stanley Nzoukwelle for his continued line of communication and making this a reality. I equally want to thank the following chapters in supporting with the launching; BACDA USA -DFW and BACDA USA- Houston Metro area, together with donations from members: Dr. Epie and family and Mr. Amate to name a few. Thank you and once more welcome to the members of BACDA USA-OKC

Community Service

Following the face to face NEC meeting last October in Bear, Delaware I reminded all chapters of the need to give back to our immediate community. The call was heard loud and clear and I believe the following chapters once more led our great union in these exercises. Please join me in thanking the Houston chapter, Washington D.C chapter and the Dallas chapter. For all you have done I say thank you. It is another proud accomplishment for BACDA USA.

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, 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 Chief Walter Ngome Alobwede for his continued love and dedication to the great Bakossi tribe.

Over the last six months the mechanic- Mr. Oliver Tchiche referred to us by Mr. Chrispo Ajang has been phenomenal in executing the needed repairs on the Motor Grader. With the oversight of our own Chief Ngome I am happy to report to this body that we did it. We fully restored the motor grader and it is ready for leasing. It is my hope the incoming administration will have no issues with repairs on the grader for sometime and the grader can generate needed funds to further carry out BACDA USA projects. A special thanks also to Mr. Tchiche for bearing with our standards and seeing this project to completion.

I know the state of this project looked gloomy but we can have reversed this course. I want to thank the members of the committee (the road project and the national executive) for their various counsel on this subject and most especially Mr. Caven Ebong and Dr. Theo Epie for assisting in the transfer of funds.

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 with the new administration, we all will be proud to say our Union is stronger than ever.

Health Committee

BACDA USA will continue to make strides in making a difference in the lives of the bakossi region and its inhabitants. 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. However, with the help of another organization with a robust network and efficient logistic support, we were able to assist in a health mission where some of our brothers and sisters were displaced to. The Prevent Blindness International received financial support from BACDA USA to assist its health mission in the Sancho area home of about 8,000 internal displaced Bakossi brothers and sisters.

Communication Committee:

Last year BACDA USA resumed 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. I continue to hope that we equally will have a web version to this

edition aligning us with organizations that promote a green environment. A special thanks goes to all our sponsors and patrons for all your donations.

BACDA USA is continuing its presence on the social media sphere; in addition to Twitter, a verified Facebook page and YouTube Channel, website. We continue to look for tools to further showcase our culture and stay tuned for the creation of a BACDA USA podcast and cellphone app. 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, pharmacists, physical therapists, social workers, bankers, professors, just to mention a few.

Dear members, the Education Committee, reintroduced its novel program, the Mentor-Mentee Program (MMP). The purpose of this program was 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 was our hope that this program will be relaunched and help our members and children of Bakossi decent excel in all walks of life.

The Committee also re-launched the scholarship program to recognize the achievement of Bakossi children. Please let's give **Chairman Dr. Alobwede Epie** the lone member of 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 continued to coordinate and showcase our annual cultural exhibitions. However, we hope the new team will form 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 success for posterity. We are very proud of the work that the Cultural Committee and Mr. Ernest Ajang has done for many years to cast the spotlight on our culture.

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. It was my wish to see all these groups take advantage of our web presence by having informational pages. My hope is that the next administration will consider this novel tool and work with the various groups.

Closing

As you retire this weekend from this convention, I would 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 initiatives in the pipeline. There is no better time to join BACDA -USA than now.

I know, sometimes its 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 sisters, 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 the lives of our people for years to come.

Thank you all and may our Almighty Father continue to bless you and your family 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