

CONVENTION 2013, DALLAS, TEXAS STATE OF THE UNION

Members of the National Executive Committee
Distinguished Guests
Fellow BACDA-USA Members

Permit me to seize this opportunity once more to welcome all of you here today in Dallas, Texas, host city of our 2013 National Convention. I am grateful for the sacrifice many of you make every year to attend our annual conventions. Your sacrifice does not only take you away from your personal commitments, but it also places a substantial burden on your finances. I believe that this sacrifice is predicated on your love for your tribe and on your belief in the course of this association. I encourage you to keep up this good spirit, and rest assured that you will be rewarded in abundance.

About a year ago, when I visited the BACDA-Dallas Chapter, one of my goals was to assess how we could work together to strengthen their position in our union and also to explore the possibilities of this chapter hosting this convention. The fruits of that visit and the determination of our brothers and sisters in Dallas to host this year's convention are obvious to everyone who is here today. Madam President, your hard work has not gone unnoticed. Your leadership here in Dallas is worth emulation. Kindly join me in giving a well-deserved round of applause to these great men and women of Dallas for their hard work and dedication in organizing this convention. Your warm reception of all the delegates is heartily appreciated.

I also want to thank the National Executive Committee members for their continuous sacrifice in serving this association. You have shown proof of dedication by attending several executive meetings this past year, and doing so at the expense of your family commitments. I urge you not to relent anytime soon. The work we all do on behalf of our people is noble and laudable. The people back home count on us. We cannot afford to disappoint them or dash their hopes.

During our convention last year, I pledged to all of you that I would continue to reach out to all the chapters in pursuit of my goal to bring back all the groups into the union. To this end, I paid a visit to the Atlanta chapter. Our interaction was cordial and promising. We spent the evening examining some issues and ways we could forge ahead. In the same vein, I had several conversations with both the President and the Vice President of Minnesota. The conversations were lengthy but also quite promising. Leadership assured me of their willingness to come back to the BACDA-USA family in full swing. I trusted their words and strongly believe that they meant what they told me.

I am convinced that these visits and interactions have sparked some enthusiasm in the chapters that seemed to be lagging behind. My endeavors to reach out to these groups will continue. I wish to seize this opportunity to recognize Mr. Joel Kalle whose efforts were instrumental in

bringing back Minnesota Chapter to the fold. I also benefitted from his generous advice on many issues. Thank you for this spirit of patriotism and I look forward to working with you on many other issues.

As you all know, this is an election year in BACDA-USA. Our constitution permits all registered members to run for any office they feel comfortable to handle. I want to emphasize the fact that we ought to look at this as an opportunity to volunteer and serve our people. If we all become nonchalant and watch from the sidelines, how do we expect our association to function? We all should consider stepping into positions of responsibilities and avoid having the same people hold these positions all the time. We need volunteers to manage this non-profit organization. During my visits to chapters, several people complained that the same people serve all the time. Here we are at an election convention, yet members have not expressed interest in any office other than those of the President and the Vice President. Folks, we all can do better if we step up the plate to serve or even commend those who sacrifice time to work on behalf of all of us.

In an effort to pursue the goal of supporting dilapidating schools in the Bakossi area, the Fundraising Committee Chair, Dr Roland Mesue, sent out several letters of appeal to some of our members. I am delighted to report that a good number of you responded positively again. Your kindness has rekindled the desire to learn among the students of these institutions. It has renewed their hope in a brighter future and trust in us. Bringing hope to people during desperate times is priceless and will be treasured forever. I would like to seize this opportunity to express heartfelt gratitude to the Chairperson of this Committee for his relentless sacrifice and commitment to our brothers and sisters back home.

This past year BACDA-USA initiated several projects that were successfully executed. You must have read several reports from various Committee Chairs and from our representatives in Cameroon. During the 2012 convention, my administration presented a budget of five thousand dollars earmarked for projects to be carried out in five different schools in the Bakossi area. The following schools received various materials commiserate with their pressing needs in the amount of five hundred thousand francs each.

- Government Secondary School Etam received office furniture for the Principal's office, the Vice principal's office and the Staff room.
- Government Secondary School Bouba received twenty eight benches.
- Government Secondary School Muabi received ninety eight bags of cement
- Government Secondary School Ekanjoh Bajoh received one hundred and five sheets of zinc
- Government Secondary School Bermin received two computers, a printer and a generator.

The new Education Committee representative in Cameroon, Mr. Etube Fidelis, deserves a lot of credit for diligently executing these projects on our behalf. His high sense of integrity,

accountability and commitment gives me confidence that the funds we sent home were used in accordance with our instructions. I also wish to thank the selfless and indefatigable gentleman who mans that Committee, Mr. Ernest Ebwelle.

Fellow BACDA USA members, I mentioned a few minutes ago that we have a new Education representative in Cameroon. This is because our long time veteran, Mr. Samuel Ejedepang-koge requested a well-deserved break. As you all know, he has served this group right from its inception, and his much-appreciated services have been outstanding. He carried out the assignments entrusted to him with selflessness and utter transparency. Today, we are privileged to have him among us and I ask everyone to show our gratitude, respect and appreciation to him with a round of applause.

As you all know, BACDA USA investment in health projects has always taken the lion share of the expenses we incur during the year. This speaks to the value we attach to the health of our people back home in Cameroon. This year we organized three successful campaigns where patients were consulted and provided with medications free of charge. The first of these campaigns took place in Nyandong and Bakolle areas for two straight days. Over four hundred patients were consulted and given free medications. The second campaign was organized in Ndom, Muasundem, for a single day and over three hundred patients were consulted and provided with free medications.

The next follow-up campaign was the epilepsy outbreak in the Bulutu neighborhood. Last year when I reported this issue to you, I promised I was going to do a follow-up in order to address the situation. One of our volunteer Doctors in Cameroon, Dr. Pascal Forgang, wrote prescriptions that were paid for by BACDA USA. These medications were estimated to carry these patients through the next three months. Our health representative in Cameroon, Mrs. Mercy Abwe Ngone went to Bulutu to deliver these medications to the patients.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with much delight that I report to you today that information from the ground indicates that almost all the patients taking these medications have not had any signs of seizure since then. I would like to ask you to take a moment and imagine the smiles and joy beaming on the faces of these patients and their families. You would agree with me that we have made a difference in the lives of these people, giving us reason to do more.

Fellow convention delegates, I invite you to join me in thanking Dr. Pascal Forgang of Bakassi Health District, Dr. Bin of Tombel Health District and Dr. Nzume of Ejed Clinic Kumba who led the teams of Nurses who implemented the health initiative on our behalf. And what can I say about a self-less committed lady like Mrs. Mercy Abwe Ngone who has offered more than enough time to BACDA USA in putting together all these events. Her love for Ekosse and the welfare of our people is exemplary.

These events were blessed with the presence BACDA USA health professionals who took time off from their much loaded private schedules while on vacation in Cameroon to participate in

them. The Health Committee Chair, Nhon James Mbide, was in attendance at the Nyandong and Bakolle campaigns, while Ms. Gracian Oroch was at the Ndom campaign. Please join me in thanking these two individuals for their unparalleled commitment and dedication. I equally want to seize this moment to thank the Health Committee Chair, Nhon James Mbide, again for all the coordination he made with Mrs. Ngone in putting together these events. There is no doubt in my mind that your hard work and true commitment led to the success we recorded this year.

Fellow convention delegates, as you all know this afternoon marks the end of my administration's first term in office. I want to use this opportunity to tell you unequivocally that the State of our UNION is Strong, and this is attributable to our collective hard work. But I would like to give special recognition to the outstanding performance of our relentless Vice President, Dr. Martin Akwensioge, for his unalloyed dedication to his duties. He is not just a Vice President but a true partner in business. I would also like to thank our executive officers who also carried out their duties with exemplary commitment. I owe all of you a debt of gratitude.

And to the chapter leaders, I state unapologetically that you did exactly what was expected of you. The time officials need to get their chapters rolling in the right direction is considerable and I know this out of personal experience. We shall not relent in our efforts to serve with a view to making a difference in the lives of our people.

Considering the nature of my responsibilities as president of BACDA-USA, and my personal job which entail a lot of travel time, there is very little time left for me to attend to my children's school work. However, they are doing well because I have a partner who has assumed all these responsibilities. I want to give special thanks to my wife, especially as she has promised to support me to serve our association again for the next two years if you give me the mandate this afternoon.

As I have told you before, and I want to reiterate it again today, we owe no apology to any individual or group of persons who refuse to be part of this group but choose to criticize the manner in which we execute our projects or run this association. You either opt to be in and contribute constructively or you choose to be out and forever hold your peace.

We are all blessed with different talents and abilities, and it is my belief that God intends us to use these talents and abilities where we can to His honor and glory. There are so many people in Bakossi land today who, for whatever reason, are desperately crying for help, lost in a sea of worries and concerns, and have no other place to seek solace. They wallow in deep valleys and have steep mountains to climb. BACDA USA showed up at their door steps and gave them assurance and hope.

It is with this in mind that this afternoon, the message I want to share with all of you is that of HOPE. Hope is always the last thing a human being clings on when life takes a turn for the worse. We all know the desperate situation our people back home go through when it comes to

the deplorable nature of our roads, poor healthcare facilities, and the sorry state of our schools, to mention only these. For more than a decade, we have taught these people that BACDA USA can be their hope.

When the students of Government Secondary School Muabi wondered what classroom they would enter in next September, BACDA USA showed up and gave them hope.

When the students of Government Secondary School Ekanjoh Bajoh wondered who would roof their classroom before the beginning of this academic year, BACDA USA showed up and gave them hope.

When the Administration and Staff of Government Secondary School Etam wondered who would furnish their offices, BACDA USA showed up and gave them hope.

When the Students of Government Secondary School Bermin wondered if they would ever see a computer or study under light, BACDA USA showed up and gave them hope.

When the people of Nyandong, Bakolle, Bulutu, and Ndom-Muasumdem wondered if ever they would consult with a Medical Doctor free of charge and get free medication, BACDA USA showed up and gave them hope.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the stakes are high. The hope that we have stirred in our people back home needs to be sustained. I recall an old woman who was consulted at the health event in Ndom, Muasundem, where I was privileged to be in attendance. She met me in the medicine distribution room and said “my son I know as you give me this medicine, before it gets finished you will be back again”. I told her; “yes I will be back again”. Folks, we have raised the hope and anxiety of our people back home and there is no turning back. Let us do all we can to sustain the good work. Yes, we can do it, if we steer clear of pettiness, gossip, arrogance and above all undue criticisms.

My brothers and sisters, I do not know about you but my family and I have made our firm decision to stay the course at all times and our prayer is that no circumstance will cause us to vacillate in our commitment. We pledge to do our utmost best to serve all of you and all of our people back home. If you pledge to do your utmost best as we have; if you choose to stay the course as we have; if you chose not to dither in your commitment as we have; there is every reason to belief that the best days of BACDA USA are still ahead.

Thank you all, and may the Good Lord continue to guide you and be with you throughout this convention and beyond.

Long Live BACDA USA
Long Live Cameroon
Long Live the United States of America

