



3RD OKPE WORLD CONFERENCE DECEMBER 18-21, 2008

CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE

The 3rd Okpe World Conference held at Okpe Hall, Sapele, from December 18-21, 2008. The theme of the conference was '**Economic Empowerment in Okpe Land**'. The conference recorded success in attendance and participation. ITV news crew and pressmen representing nine local and national newspapers were present to cover the events. Prof. Sam Oyovbaire, Dr Igho Natufe, Dr Ovaborhene Idamoyibo, Rev. Robinson Ikpen, Kenneth Eni, Alhaji (Major) Jarikre (Rtd), Dickson Aemurerhimen Ogodo and Rosemary Ovwufeti presented papers at the conference. The Ekugbokpe Cultural Troupe presented a dance performance. Participants adopted the following resolutions.

- Conference participants observed that the Okpe musical culture and other art forms have suffered neglect in recent times. Participants resolved that talented Okpe sons and daughters should innovatively recreate some traditional forms into popular genres, to enhance global participation and patronage in the world of arts.
- That Okpe sons and daughters should patronize Okpe musicians, orators and other performing artistes, during private and corporate events like marriages, burials, special visitation, etc.
- That Okpe should organize regular Okpe Cultural festivals and invite all Okpe Districts to present performances of different cultural arts like music, dance, drama, etc, to showcase Okpe cultural heritage.

- Participants observed that small-scale businesses in Okpe have not been thriving significantly. It was further observed that prominent Okpe people have not invested in micro-finance banks and cooperative societies to enhance small-scale businesses in the Okpe nation. Okpe are encouraged to form and take part in cooperative societies and invest in micro-finance banks.
- Participants also observed that the activities of local business and market unions hinder business operations in Sapele in specific and in Okpe land in general. This development has diverted some economic opportunities from Okpeland with attendant effects on availability and cost of goods and services in the area. Participants therefore call on Udogu Okpe, in collaboration with the law enforcement agents and local government councils to call these unions to order, to enhance business growth in Okpeland.
- Participants observed that education is a major gateway to economic empowerment and that enrolment figures in schools within Okpe are very low. Participants therefore request Udogu Okpe to call on parents to send their children and wards to school, even to University level and those who are unable to cope with formal education to be encouraged to acquire skills.
- Participants observed further that the Institute for Okpe Studies is relevant to the enhancement of educational development with particular reference to research, documentation and publication on Okpe cultural heritage. Participants therefore request the Udogu Okpe to call on all Okpe sons and daughters to embrace and contribute towards the funding of the Institute.
- Okpe sons and daughters are also encouraged to take advantage of the available scholarship funds and bursaries in pursuit of their educational aspirations.

- Participants observed that Okpe has very large amount of gas deposit and require gas industry. Participants call on the Federal and State Government of Nigeria and their agencies such as NDDC and DESOPADEC, etc, to establish Liquified Natural Gas Plant and resuscitate the Sea Port in Sapele.
- Participants observed that overused oil pipe line have caused spillages, explosion and fire outbreak in some Okpe communities, posing danger to lives, farm lands, economic trees and aquatic life. Participants call on the authorities concerned to take immediate steps in replacing the aged pipeline running through the length and breath of Okpe land.

Dr Ovaborhene Idamoyibo
Secretary, NOC

Chief Margaret Unukegwo
Chairperson, NOC