

**CONSTITUTION OF THE  
OKPE UNION OF NORTH AMERICA**

**(As Revised at the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Okpe Union of North  
America,  
in Ontario, CA, October 08, 2005)**

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1.0 **NAME AND HEAD OFFICE**

- 1.1 The name of the organization shall be *Okpe Union of North America* hereinafter referred to and known as “The Union.”
- 1:2 The head office of the Union shall be the city of residence of the incumbent General Secretary.
- 1.3 The Okpe Union of North America shall be an affiliate of the Okpe Union of Nigeria.
- 1.4 The Union shall be a not for profit charitable organization.
- 1.5 The period during which the Okpe Union of North America shall continue is perpetual.
- 1.6 This document is the Okpe Union Constitution and By-Laws.

2.0 **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Union shall include, but not be restricted to, the following: -

- 2.1 To develop, promote and defend the interests of Okpe in North America.
- 2.2 To provide and sustain a forum for Okpe in North America to deliberate on Okpe affairs.
- 2.3 To collaborate with other Okpe organizations toward the enhancement and promotion of Okpe interests globally
- 2.4 To promote Okpe History, Language and Culture.
- 2.5 To facilitate the socio-economic and industrial development of the Okpe Kingdom in Nigeria.
- 2.6 To facilitate health, environmental and educational development in Okpeland.
- 2.7 To promote and safeguard peace in Okpeland.
- 2.8 To work closely with the Okpe Union of Nigeria for the betterment of all Okpe, and for the promotion of Okpe interests in Nigeria..
- 2.9 To promote and maintain a policy of peaceful coexistence with our neighbours in Delta State of Nigeria.

- 2.10 To collaborate with non-Okpe ethnic organizations in Delta State and in Nigeria toward the building of a society that recognizes the social and economic rights, justice and freedoms of all ethnic groups in Delta State and in Nigeria.

### 3.0 **ACTIVITIES**

The Union shall undertake, *inter alia*, the following activities: -

- 3.1 Contribute to the formulation of strategic policies as they relate to the development of Okpe Kingdom.
- 3.2 Provide strategic advice to the Orodje and the Udogun Okpe on national and international policies impacting on the Okpe.
- 3.3 Establish a support network and information exchange mechanism for Okpe in North America.
- 3.4 Facilitate the influx of North American foreign investment in Okpe Kingdom.
- 3.5 Assist in the development of enduring infrastructure in Okpe Kingdom.
- 3:6 Contribute to the development of environmental and health care delivery system in Okpe Kingdom.
- 3:7 Promote the growth and development of education in Okpe Kingdom.
- 3.8 Commission research studies on Okpe History, Language and Culture.
- 3.9 Ensure the primacy of Okpe interests in all activities of the Union.
- 3.10 Highlight and celebrate significant Historical events of the Okpe Kingdom.

### 4.0 **MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1 The Okpe Union of North America is the umbrella organization of all Okpe associations and clubs in North America, where such associations and clubs exist.
- 4.2 Membership shall be open to individual Okpe sons and daughters, irrespective of their membership in Okpe associations and clubs referred to in sub-section 4.1 above.

4.3 An Okpe son or daughter is a person whose father or mother is an Okpe.

4.4 The Union shall have two categories of membership: -

(i) **Full membership** with voting rights shall be open to all Okpe, 18 years of age and older.

(ii) **Associate membership**, with no voting rights, shall be open to non-Okpe who accept to work toward the realization of the objectives of the Okpe Union as articulated in this Constitution.

(iii) Honorary membership may be conferred on a non-Okpe in recognition of her/his support or services toward the activities of the Union.

## 5.0 **BRANCHES/CHAPTERS**

5:1 Branches or Chapters of the Okpe Union shall be established in any part of North America, provided the following conditions are satisfied: -

(i) That there are at least ten (10) members of the Union in good standing residing within the jurisdiction of a municipality or state or province.

(ii) The members referred to in the above sub-section apply to the Executive Committee of the Okpe Union, and receive the approval of the latter for the establishment of the said branch or chapter.

(iii) The Executive Committee of the branch or chapter shall not exceed five (5) persons.

(iv) The branch or chapter shall function under the terms of the Constitution of the Okpe Union.

(v) Each branch or chapter shall pay an annual fee of \$200.00 to the Union by July 31 of each year.

## 6.0 **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 The day-to-day operations of The Union shall be carried out by an Executive Committee, which shall be accountable to the membership.
- 6.2 The executive committee of the Okpe Union shall consist of the following elected members:
1. President
  2. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (Socio-Economic Development)
  3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President (Education & Health Development)
  4. Secretary
  5. Treasurer
  6. Financial Secretary
  7. Director of Research
  8. Director of Publicity.
  9. Uno Okpe
  10. Immediate Past President
- 6.2 Each officer of the Union shall hold office for three (3) years at the pleasure of the membership, provided that no officer shall hold the same portfolio for more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- 6.3 Upon the election of a new officer, the outgoing holder of that office shall hand over all Union property and documents in her/his possession to the successor within fourteen (14) days of the election of the new officer.
- 6.4 In the event that an officer is removed from office as provided for elsewhere in this constitution, he/she shall hand over all Union property and documents in his/her possession to the Immediate Past President who shall turn them over to the replacement officer within seven (7) days of the of the replacement.
- 6.5 An officer replacing an ousted officer shall serve the remainder of the term of that officer, but such time shall not count against such replacement officer as in sub-section 6.2 above.

## 7.0 **DUTIES OF OFFICERS.**

- (a) (i) **The President** shall provide leadership and strategic directions for the Okpe Union
- (b) preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee and the Annual General

## Meeting (AGM) of the Okpe Union

- (b) be the chief spokesperson of the Okpe Union;
  - (c) liaise with the Okpe Union in Nigeria
  - (d) represent the Okpe Union at all approved functions impacting on the Okpe. and
  - (e) be a signatory to the bank accounts of the Okpe Union.
- (ii) **The 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (Socio-Economic Development)**, shall
- (a) in the absence of the President, preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee and of the AGM of the Union, and perform all duties of the President;
  - (b) be responsible for the design and implementation of the socio-economic and industrial development strategies of the Union;
  - (c) be responsible for the sourcing of North American foreign direct investment in Okpeland.
  - (d) liaise with Okpe organizations, in the formulation of advice and strategic directions for the development of the Okpe Kingdom; and
  - (e) advise the Union on all socio-economic matters impacting on Okpe interests.
- (iii) **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President (Education & Health Development)** shall
- (a) in the absence of the President and the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee and of the AGM of the Okpe Union.
  - (b) be responsible for the design and implementation of education and health development strategies of the Union;
  - (c) liaise with Okpe organizations, in the formulation of education and health development of the Okpe Kingdom;
  - (d) be responsible for the sourcing of North American assistance and expertise in education and health development for Okpeland; and
  - (e) advise the Union on all education and health matters impacting on Okpe interests

- (iv) **The Secretary** shall
  - (a) notify members of the Executive Committee of meetings of the Executive Committee;
  - (b) notify all members of all meetings of the general membership.
  - © keep all non financial records and membership list of the Union;
  - (d) maintain an up-to-date minutes of all meetings of the Union and record decisions; and
  - (e) conduct all correspondence of the Union and maintain copies of same.
- (v) **The Treasurer** shall
  - (a) keep all financial records of the Okpe Union;
  - (b) deposit all Union funds collected into the Union's bank account within five (5) working days of collection; and
  - (b) be a signatory to the bank accounts of the Union.
- (vi) **The Financial Secretary** shall
  - (a) collect dues, fees and all monies from members and charitable donors;
  - (b) pay such dues, fees and monies to the Treasurer within five (5) working days;
  - © keep records of all funds and transactions of the Union; and
  - (d) be a signatory tot he bank account of the Union.
- (vii) **Director of Research** shall
  - (a) facilitate the conduct of historical and socio-cultural research on Okpe; and
  - (b) liaise with research institutions to promote Okpe History, Language and Culture.
  - (c) Publish and disseminate research and other materials utilizing all available media.
- (viii) **Director of Publicity** shall
  - (a) be responsible for the release of all official statements and communiques of The Union;

- (b) provide strategic advice to the President and the Executive Committee on how best to position the Union in the public; and
- ©) liaise with the media houses to promote the image of the Union.
- (ix) **Unu Okpe**, shall
  - (a) be the Speaker at all events of the Union.
- (xi) **The Immediate Past President** shall
  - (a) function as an Advisor to the Executive Committee and as protector of the membership and constitution of The Union.
  - (b) chair the Election Committee of the Union; and
  - ©) undertake any tasks assigned by the President.

#### 8.0 **SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Union shall establish sub-committees as required.

- (i) The following sub-committees are hereby established:
  - (a) Socio-Economic Development Sub-Committee; and
  - (b) Education and Health Development Sub-Committee
- (ii) The Executive Committee shall appoint members of these sub-committees from amongst Okpe worldwide.
- (iii) The 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President shall chair the Socio-Economic Development Sub-Committee, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President shall chair the Education and Health Development Sub-Committee.
- (iv) The chairs of the respective sub-committees shall provide quarterly progress reports to the Executive Committee.

#### 9.0 **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

9.1 Election of officers shall be at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) as follows: -

- (i) President
- (ii) 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (Socio-Economic Development)
- (iii) 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President (Education & Health Development)
- (iv) Secretary
- (v) Treasurer

- (vi) Financial Secretary
- (vii) Director of Research
- (viii) Director of Publicity
- (ix) Unu Okpe

9.2 The Immediate Past President shall preside over the election.

9.3 Election procedure shall include the following: -

- (i) Duly signed nomination paper by two members of the Union in good standing and by the nominee indicating his/her acceptance of the nomination.
- (ii) Brief introduction of a nominee by one of the nominators.
- (iii) Where a position is contested by two or more candidates, the winner will be determined by a simple majority vote

9:4 Only full members are eligible to participate at the election session of the AGM.

## 10.0 **POWERS**

10.1 Between Annual General Meetings, the Executive Committee shall be the authority of the Union, but shall be accountable to the membership.

10.2 If a member of the Union is dissatisfied with the performance of the Executive Committee, or of any member of the Executive Committee, or any of the sub-committees or a member of any of the sub-committees of the Union, such a member shall have the right to request a Special General Meeting solely to discuss a *Vote of No Confidence*, provided that his/her request is signed by 20% of the members in good standing of the Union. Only full members are eligible to participate at a Special General Meeting of the Union.

10.3 If, at a Special General Meeting, attended by at least 50% of members, a Vote of No Confidence is passed on any of the bodies or persons identified in section 6.0 (6.1) above, a Special General Meeting shall be convened to elect new bodies or members for the affected positions.

## 11.0 **FINANCE**

- 11:1 The fiscal year of the Union shall commence on January 1 and terminate on December 31.
- 11.2 All Full and Associate members of the Union shall pay dues of US\$100.00 (one hundred US dollars) to the Financial Secretary, by March 31.
- 11:3 University and College students pay dues of US\$25.00 (twenty-five US dollars) to the Financial Secretary, by March 31.
- 11.4 Each member shall pay a non-refundable registration fee of US\$100.00 (one hundred US dollars) to the Financial Secretary. University and College students shall pay a non-refundable fee of US\$25.00 (twenty-five US dollars).
- 11.5 Only a fully paid member shall be considered to be a member in good standing, and is eligible to vote or stand for election for any office.
- 11.6 Each branch or chapter shall pay a one time registration fee of US\$100.00.
- 11.6 No part of the net earnings of the Union shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Union shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered to help it achieve the aims and objectives of the Okpe Union of North America.

## 12.0 **MEETINGS**

### 12.1 **Annual General Meeting**

- (i) The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Union shall be held at a venue determined by the membership, on the Labour Weekend in North America.
- (ii) The venue of an AGM shall be determined by members at the end of a preceding AGM.
- (iii) Quorum at the AGM shall be made up of 60% of members of the Executive Committee and at least 30% of the general membership.
- (iv) The General Secretary shall notify members sixty (60) days before the AGM, indicating the agenda, time and location of the AGM.

- (v) Other meetings of the general membership as needs demand, at instance of the Executive Committee or the membership.
- (vi) Meetings as in sub-section 11 (v) may be by teleconference or in camera if need be.
- (vii) At all meetings of the Union, voting shall be by open ballot, except in the case of the election of officers which shall be by secret ballot. The president shall only vote to cast the deciding vote at all meetings of the Union, except in the case of the election of officers where he/she exercises the same voting right as other members of the Union. Decisions shall be reached by the recording of a simple majority, except otherwise requested by a majority of members present.

#### 12.2 Executive Committee

- (i) The Executive Committee shall meet once a month by teleconference or in camera, if need be..
- (ii) Sixty (60%) percent of members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum at all meetings.
- (iii) Decisions at all Executive Committee meetings shall be by a simple majority vote.

### 13.0 **RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

- 13.1 The Union shall seek and maintain friendly relations with organizations whose interests and objectives are not incongruous to this Constitution.

### 14.0 **AMENDMENTS**

- 14.1 Any sections of this Constitution may be amended by a two-third majority vote of at least 50% of the membership in good standing, present and voting at the Annual General Meeting.
- 14.2 Proposed changes to the Constitution shall be submitted to the General Secretary in writing, no later than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting.
- 14.3 The General Secretary shall send copies of the proposed amendments to the Constitution, to all members of the Union no less than twenty-one (21) days prior to the Annual General Meeting.

14.4 Amendments to the Constitution shall be by a simple majority vote of the members at an Annual General Meeting.

15.0 **DISSOLUTION**

15.1 Upon the dissolution of the Okpe Union of North America, its assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 ©) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.