

Farewell Address by Outgoing FIDUO President –Dr. Gabriel S. Bomide*

Your Royal Majesty, the Onikun of Ikun-Ekiti, the Olori Onikun of Ikun-Ekiti, Members of the High Table, FIDUO Executive Council, Members of FIDUO, Distinguished Guests, Friends, Ladies, and Gentlemen.

It is with a deep sense of humility and gratitude to God Almighty that I address you tonight. Dear compatriots, about four years ago, you, the General Assembly of FIDUO, gave me an overwhelming constitutional mandate to lead this great organization. That trust, your trust, has been a burden ever since I embarked on this journey and what forms the fulcrum of my priority everyday on this job is how to strive more not to betray your trust .

I stand before you tonight to give my stewardship. It's a chance to say thank you for this amazing and rewarding journey, to celebrate the ways we've collectively changed this organization and Ikun community for the better, and to offer some thoughts on where we all go from here. I'm particularly indebted to my fellow executive members for their outstanding support and contribution to the overall development of FIDUO and Ikun community by extension. May God richly reward them for their labor of love.

The last three years have been eventful and exhilarating in our quest to break from the past and implement a change that would bring more meaningful and tangible results to our target population of Ikun-Ekiti and the FIDUO organization. Today, we've made tremendous progress in this direction, to the glory of God. Let's briefly examine the track record of my administration over the last three years to substantiate my point.

1. State of our Finance

We're relatively on a more stable path financially than we were when I took office over three years ago. Specifically, we inherited a balance of \$817.57 in FIDUO account from the administration we took over from but today, I'm proud to say that our current balance as of 8/24/17 was \$1,403.48, despite major expenditure in 2016 related to the building of the new Ultra-Modern Onikun Palace and the huge cost of hosting the 2017 Convention. We give God the glory for meeting our financial needs as an organization during my tenure.

2. Economic Empowerment

The mission of FIDUO is to empower the people of Ikun-Ekiti socially and economically. Pursuant to this, FIDUO sponsored the establishment of Ikun (Ekiti) Ifeloju Cooperative Multipurpose Society in 2013. The overarching goal of this economic empowerment initiative was to enable low-income participants at the grassroots to obtain revolving loans to establish and run their own small businesses within Ikun community. It's gratifying that within the first year of operation, two of the registered members of the society received N100,000 and N150,000 respectively, towards the establishment of their

own businesses. The cooperative has since been expanded and upgraded to better serve the community, under the leadership of His Royal Majesty Oba David Olusola Olatunde.

3. **Health Promotion**

Pursuant to our set goal of health promotion in 2014, FIDUO signed a strategic partnership agreement with Grace Project International (GPI). The aim of this partnership was to support GPI's medical mission of providing free healthcare to the needy in remote places in Africa, in general and Ikun-Ekiti, in particular. Under this agreement, GPI will provide a wide range of free health care services, including medical, dental, vision and preventive care to Ikun people in the comfort of their own homes. This partnership has brought increased quality care delivery to the needy people in our community.

4. **Political Education & Accountability**

In order for Ikun community to reap the dividends of democracy, FIDUO felt an urgent need to develop a general framework for holding all Ikun career politicians and political office holders accountable to the community that vote them into offices. The initiative led to the formal meeting held with two of our political candidates – Hon. Ade Anifowose and Mr. Adebayo Aborisade, and the financial support FIDUO gave them towards their campaigns. This initiative, in part was instrumental to the election of Hon. Ade Anifowose to the Ekiti State House of Assembly.

5. **Research on Youth Violence in Ikun Community**

In response to the reports of youth violence in Ikun, FIDUO planned and conducted a survey to identify the root cause of youth violence in Ikun, and to develop a comprehensive program aimed at reducing violence in the community. Based on the outcome of the survey, it was suggested that intervention methods to reduce the incidence of drug abuse and youth violence should be developed. Strategy to empower Ikun youths to acquire relevant independent living skills was also recommended.

6. **Role of FIDUO in Fostering Communal Peace, Harmony & Stability**

FIDUO played a pivotal role in the last Onikun selection process, culminating in the installation of Oba David Olusola Olatunde as the new Onikun of Ikun-Ekiti by Ekiti State Government on December 23, 2015. The specific roles played by FIDUO included (a) collaboration with Egbe Omo Ikun in formulating the minimum eligibility criteria a candidate for the office of Onikun must meet, including educational qualifications,

character and leadership traits, as well as record of contribution to community development (b) Concerted efforts to arbitrate the conflict that arose among the three contestants for the royal seat - Prince M. S. Aborisade, Prince Rotimi Omowumi and Prince David Olusola Olatunde, following the first unsuccessful selection process (c) Issued a clarion call for peace to Iloin Ruling House following a reported crisis that developed in Iloin Compound over the Onikun selection process (d) Diligent efforts to broker a peace accord among the King makers (e) Developed a comprehensive community reconciliation and peace plan following the confirmation of Prince David Olusola Olatunde as the sole candidate for the vacant stool of the Onikun of Ikun by the Iloin Ruling House.

7. Youth Violence Prevention & Intervention

In January 2016, FIDUO signed a strategic partnership agreement with Youth Saving Lifestyle Creation Initiative (YSLCI), a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to promote awareness on the dangers of youth violence and drug abuse in Ikun community through preventive education. Pursuant to this agreement, a Community Sensitization Workshop was held on January 14, 2016 at Ikun-Ekiti, under the auspices of FIDUO/YSLCI, in collaboration with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Police and other Security Agencies. The primary goal of this workshop was to sensitize the community to the campaign against drug abuse, crime and violence in Ikun-Ekiti and to develop preventive education strategies. The strategic partnership agreement between FIDUO and YSLCI was perhaps the most significant achievement of FIDUO in 2016. This initiative was a huge success as it helped to contain the scourge of youth violence and drug abuse in Ikun-Ekiti, while promoting the overall peace, safety, stability and development of our community, under the able leadership of His Royal Majesty, Oba David Olusola Olatunde. It is gratifying that His Royal Majesty also received a prestigious award from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLA) for fighting illicit drug use in Ikun-Ekiti.

8. FIDUO –Bowie State University Partnership

FIDUO had begun the process of establishing strategic partnership with Bowie State University, a historically Black College in the State of Maryland, USA. The overarching

goal is for both organizations to establish mutually beneficial programs that will benefit the educational goals of youths in the Ikun-Ekiti community, with special focus on those interested in studying abroad.

9. Spiritual and Social Development

FIDUO organized an intercessory prayer program for Mr. Samuel Omotoye and Ikun community, following the destruction of his town house at Ikun by an unknown fire source. FIDUO also sponsored the Kabiesi and Olori to attend the historic 2017 convention in Maryland, that brought together Ikun people at home and abroad to dialog on the future of our community.

10. Philanthropy & Goodwill

During my tenure (2013-2017), FIDUO gave generous monetary donations and message of goodwill to the annual Ikun Day. This gesture was intended to identify with and support the effort of Ikun community towards achieving its community development goals. FIDUO made a donation in the amount of \$1,000 toward organizing a befitting installation ceremony for the new Onikun, His Royal Majesty, Oba David Olusola Olatunde. FIDUO also launched the Ikun Ultra-Modern Palace Fund in which a total of \$3,985.87 was raised and donated to the project.

Future Direction of FIDUO

Going forward, I encourage the incoming FIDUO administration to explore the following aspects. This will help FIDUO better serve Ikun community:

- Renew the FIDUO 501c(3) status and put it into a more productive use to raise funds for community development projects and the welfare of members.
- Explore forming strategic partnerships with international organizations to deliver educational, social and economic benefits to Ikun. Such partnerships could help improve the Ikun educational systems –Preschool, Elementary and High School.
- Sponsor the creation of cottage industries as well as a youth employment center in Ikun to provide a range of services (e.g. job training and placement, interview skills, vocational counseling, etc).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I want to appeal to us to please exercise genuine love for one another. This is crucial to take FIDUO to the next level to better serve Ikun community. As the scripture says, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). May God give us the grace to exercise this

kind of love for one another. Thank you all for your attention. Remain blessed!

***Revised Farewell Address based on new financial data obtained on 8/24/17.**