

KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY H.R.M. OBA OLATUNDE DAVID OLUSOLA, THE ONIKUN OF IKUN-EKITI AT THE 2017 CONVENTION OF THE FEDERATION OF IKUN DESCENDANTS UNION OVERSEAS (FIDUO) HELD BETWEEN 28TH-30TH JULY, 2017 AT GARDEEN INN, 3400 FORT MEADE RD; LAUREL, MARYLAND, USA.

PROTOCOL

I greet you all in the name of the Almighty God, the Alpha and Omega. Thank you so much for this unique opportunity to physically interact with you as a whole body for the first time after our virtual interaction by teleconference on Wednesday 10th February, 2016. I am particularly grateful to El-Shadai for His goodness and mercy over all of you in the diaspora and our people at home. I am also very grateful to the entire FIDUO organization under its able, dynamic and visionary leader, Dr. Gabriel S. Bomide, for giving me this opportunity to address you today. I feel delighted and honored to be part of this historic meeting. This convention is unique because it is the first of its kind to bring together representatives of Ikun community from across the globe to dialogue on the future of our dear community in an atmosphere of peace, unity and love.

INTRODUCTION

I'm glad to inform that it is well with Ikun and God's abundance on her is immeasurable. Ikun people feel proud and grateful to you for the precious honour you bestowed on my person as their representative at this historic event. "Mo gbadura fun yin pe gbegbe kii gbe soko iwaje, gbogbo yin le maa pada wale pelu ibukun l'oruko Jesu. Amin." Since I last interacted with you, so much have happened in our community, some good, and some on the other side. There have been challenges, many of the challenges I consider as healthy because they are not only for our good but surmountable. Home is cool, calm, and rewarding, everyone is doing his/her normal business without molestation of any kind; this is as a result of God's hand in the town as a project. My relationship with the people and my entire chiefs is enviable. More so, no decision is taken by me without adequate consultation with my chiefs, opinion leaders in the community, including our youths and elites. I am proud to tell you that this has been the secret of our successes so far and I do believe we shall continue this way in the years ahead. More importantly, I must use this rare opportunity provided by you to express my heartfelt solidarity with you all, because it is not easy to be so far away from home if not for economic and other sundry reasons, you have all decided to sacrifice the comfort and beauty of Ikun-Amure for the uncertain conditions inherent in making

both ends meet in Europe and America. It is for this reason that I pray once again that God in his infinite mercy will continue to guide, provide and expand your coast. “N ke ni gbe sajo o, n e kore oko dele lagbara Edumare. Amin.”

INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

DIARY FARM PROJECT:

You will recall during our last teleconference meeting that I intimated you with promising development at the Diary Farm but sadly today, things have not really taken the shape of our dream. This is not unconnected with the unpleasant economic down turn of the country and the apparently weak investment capacity of the major investor, FEG Agro-Allied Company. It is evidently clear that we must join hands to start to look around for a more promising and credible investor who could inject the much needed capital to resuscitate the industry as agreed upon at a meeting held with the Ekiti state Commissioner of Commerce, Industry and Co-operative on 11th May, 2017 in his office at Ado Ekiti.

ERO BRIDGE/DAM:

To the glory of God and concerted efforts of our community leaders and relentless pressure of our representative in the House of Assembly, Hon Ade Anifowose, I am delighted to report to you that the new Ero Bridge has been completed and now in use. A well-structured and improved bridge has now replaced the old tiny dilapidated one. As reported to you during our teleconference meeting last year, a group of experts came for the water survey of Ero River. I must keep you aware that we are keeping tap with the follow up and reports. Some other investors are also showing interests in generating Electricity from the river as the largest flowing river in Ekiti state. I am also looking to you to come in here to use your good connections to get a credible company that can venture into power generation. We shall use our good relationship with the government to push your interest to fruition. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development as part of his working visit to Ekiti is scheduled to visit Ero Dam on 15th July, 2017 to explore the possibility of using the large pool of water for irrigation and agricultural extension activities. In addition, the only surviving National Skill Acquisition Center in Ekiti-state at Ikun remains intact. A building of the complexes has been completed and painted. In addition, the Standard Hotel being built by one of our illustrious sons, Prince Ajibola Olajide is near completion. We pray that God will continue to strengthen him the more. Irewolu- Ikun Co-operative Society has been formerly inaugurated and services are running. As promised, Prince Ajibola Olajide has also made available two million Naira as a capital base fund to be used as revolving loans to members and also to facilitate other functions of the co-operative society. The membership strength of the co-operative is now over seventy people. The first batch of loan taking shall mature at the end of the first week of August. The purpose is to develop a new generation of entrepreneurs and business tycoons that can make remarkable impact on the life and time of Ikun Amure within a short period of time. The Society will extend to other economic areas and agro-allied capacity development to making our town the economic centre point of Ekiti State. To this end, you are hereby challenged to make practical contributions and develop poverty chain breaker plan that can liberate our motherland. Without mincing words, Prince Ajibola Olajide is a classical example of a liberator, committed patriot and pragmatic actor. I pray that God will raise other patriots with a large heart to make meaningful and lasting contributions to the overall development of Ikun. On 9th July, 2017 Prince Jibola Olajide celebrated his 60th birthday. On behalf of all Ikun sons and daughters, I once again say congratulations sir.

Also, a fishery processing industry is in the making at home; the project is to cover every aspect of fish production that includes fish culture, smoking and freezing in large scale for export. About seven investors are on this project that is estimated to employ no less than two thousand personnel when fully operational. I should add also that I was actually one of the two traditional Obas from the south west zone of Nigeria to be part of the project. The only one to be located in the whole of Ekiti state shall be sited in Ikun-Ekiti. The site inspection had been done in April this year while I was part of the South West team that met the investor in a Federal Government organized interactive session in June 2017. Work should commence immediately after all issues concerning M.O.U and policy matters are cleared with all the stakeholders.

SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

This year's Annual Aged Mothers' celebration will hold as usual. In fact, preparation on this has reached a top gear according to the organizer, Olori, Omotayo Olatunde. She is very passionate about the programme and grateful to all the supporters of this Godly project. This edition will feature dance competition where the five quarters of Ikun-Amure Ekiti will display their dancing dexterity.

It is also on record that our son, Idowu Ogunbiyi with his young team of Ikun drummers came first in a very keen drumming and dancing cultural competition in Ekiti State sponsored by Goldergerg Nigeria. They are to represent Ekiti state at the Regional Competition at Ibadan on 20th July, 2017.

We have decided that more of our cultural values that are almost disappearing need to be researched into and documented to determine the possibility of upgrading some of them (e.g. Egungun, Okotorojo, Agere, Epa, Ero etc)for commercial purposes, akin to Osun Osogbo or Ojude Oba festival in Ijebu. You may not believe it, this year Egungun festival was adjudged as one of the best in recent time, it witnessed large spectators from far and near. The costume of our big Egungun were upgraded to an exciting level. Before the next Egungun festival, a far reaching improvement would have been attained. I am committed to the cultural contents rather than the fading traditional practices around it. My vision for Ikun is to make the community an economic centre of Ekiti State and Nigeria. It is possible by the grace of God!

BATTLE WON: The longstanding issue of “Oore of Moba” has been put to a permanent rest, and this was not without a fierce battle within the Moba Council of Obas. The battle went on for over four months from the day one I initiated it as a contextual issue of self-determination. To God be the glory, Ikun-Ekiti again liberated our land and other Moba communities from decades of silent servitude. Today, we lead while others follow, in remembrance of our demand for freedom in the time past. We thank God that the feat of correcting the erroneous designation of “Oore of Moba” was achieved and all other communities bowed in salute to our gallantry. Effective May, 2017, the tittle now is “**The Oore of Otun-Ekiti.**”

POLITICS: Our political class most especially those who are presently in office, particularly our counselors, appear to lack proper understanding of the functions of their office. This unfortunate situation led the community to decide at a town hall meeting that henceforth those who may signal to represent us in any political positions shall be subjected to proper scrutiny by the community before an endorsement of such candidate(s). This shall also be our negotiating instrument with the apex flag bearers of the respective parties. It is sad to hear that, despite the huge financial commitments of the community to the town’s vigilante services, none of the councilors has contributed meaningfully from the capacity of their offices. Our appreciation goes to one of you here, Elder Adesola Dada who assisted the vigilante with some materials at the take-off time. God bless you sir. We hereby appeal to you individually and collectively to come to our aid on security devices. I can state without fear that I have enjoyed a robust co-operation of Hon Ade Anifowose on so many matters concerning our community. However, the impact of our political representatives in general has not been felt to an appreciable degree, may be due to the harsh economic situation of the country.

SECURITY: Ikun- Ekiti is envied to have been the most peaceful community in the whole of Moba Local Government Area until the unfortunate incident of the Egungun and a few intolerant Muslims had a violent clash on the 30th May, 2017. The clash that was obviously sponsored by no less a person than Alhaji Aremu Kadri (Aromokeye). He did this in spite of all precautionary measures that were put in place by the Oba-in-Council. Though the violence was less than ten minutes before we put it under control, however it took weeks after the Egungun festival before the first phase of the peaceful resolution was adopted through the peace meetings that were conveyed by Mr. Abdullahi Chafe, the Ekiti State Police Commissioner on 14th and 15th June, 2017 in his office at Ado-Ekiti. We thank God that we survived this ordeal without allowing any of our citizens to be subjected to the usual reckless arrest and molestation. However, Alhaji Aremu Kadri (Aromokeye) remained a felon from whose direction this recent public disturbance could be viewed. His activities during the crisis confirmed that he was indeed the man behind the mask. And this is coming on the heels of a violent crisis at Igogo Ekiti that rocked the entire community to its foundation where an emergency situation and dusk-to-dawn curfew was declared on Igogo community by the state government. It was very clear from all the maneuvering of Alhaji Kadri that his intent was to paint the town bad so that similar sanction could be imposed on Ikun. But we thank God for our sagacity and the unbreakable co-operation and support of our people; his dream of shame turned to fame because at every stage, Ikun Ekiti triumphs! As stated earlier, the first phase of the peaceful settlement of the crisis has been achieved. We shall hasten to work out a panacea in order that such crisis does not re-occur in our community again.

It is on record that Ikun-Ekiti as represented by me and my council of chiefs was the first community in the whole of Moba that mediated in the Igogo crisis. I was there at Igogo together with a large number of my male chiefs on 31st May, 2017 even when the terrain was still in limbo. I am proud to inform you at this point that our intervention signalled a new dawn for Igogo people. Today, the Igogo traditional institution and people hold us in high esteem and treat us with utmost respect. This is the record a very few of our people who are yet to recover from the obaship bruises are trying hard to destroy despite our large overtures, appeals, policy of non-seclusion, spirit of integration and principle of “No Winner, No Vanguish”. Let us forget the past and join hands to rebuild our community to the consternation of our foes. Despite the efforts of the Commissioner of Police on the Egungun/Muslim crisis and follow-up on the 19th of June, 2017 by the Moba Local Govt Chairman, Hon Niyi Adebayo who had agreed to repair the two vehicles affected during the violence, a court bailiff still appeared in Ikun-Ekiti on 20th June, 2017 to distribute court summon from the Federal High Court, Ado Ekiti; which means that the peaceful resolution of the crisis was unacceptable to them using one National Council Of Muslim Youth Organisation (NACOMYO) to press a court action against me and the Egungun priests. This was contrary to the way and manner we departed the office of the Council Chairman a day before where Alhaji Busari and the Chief Imam of Ikosu offered the closing prayer and we departed in a friendly manner. On Sunday 9th June, 2017 when I was supposed to be in Lagos to celebrate the birthday of my Egbon, Ajibola, I had to lead a large delegation of over one hundred and twenty Ikun people to meet our God-sent Governor, Dr. Peter Ayodele Fayose at Ado where he listened to the two sides and lampooned the lawlessness and recklessness of the “Muslim fanatical sect” as represented by Alhaji Aremu Kadri (Aromokeye) and one Acting Imam (Alhaji Abdurasaq Ajewole). Among the less than ten of them that came to face Ikun people at the Government Pavillon Ground, Ado-Ekiti were: Nurudeen, Alhaji Busari, Jimoh Yussuf and their other four non-natives. We thank our amiable Governor for this intervention and forthrightness, he finally resolved the impasse called the fanatical muslims to order and saddled me with the sacrifices to do more to bring everybody to a common fold. We presented our letter of appreciation on our new bridge and boldness to resolve our obaship tussle. The Governor promised visiting ikun very soon. On 14th July, 2017, I in company of four male chiefs and two female chiefs were in the mosque to observe Jumat with the muslim community and thereafter held an extensive peace meeting with the congregation.

Our internal security mechanism remains a model both in Moba Local Government and Ekiti State as a whole. However, this is not without its challenges, including inadequate provision of necessary logistics such as Raincoats, boots, touch lights, head lamps, security devices and above all the monthly stipends to the security personnel. Today, I can assure you all that there is adequate security of lives and property in our community with our security vigilante taking control of the town from 10pm till dawn. This has reduced the crime rates significantly.

EDUCATION: The standard of education both in primary and secondary schools has not shown the desired improvement. To this end, a five member panel was set up by me a few weeks ago to look into the allegation of mal-administration in Amure High School; this is aimed at putting the school management back on the right track. The outcome showed some financial misappropriation, exodus of students to the near by Etan Secondary School, and poor workers attitude to work. The first two problems were resolved while we need a general attention to the last one. We thank God the last WAEC/NECO showed a lot of improvement over the previous years. I hereby use this opportunity to thank the Ikun Progressive Club (IPC), for again footing the WAEC bills of all Ikun children at Amure High school 2016/17 academic year. I also thank our son at Ekiti State Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti, Mr Deji Dada who secured two free government JAMB forms for Ikun indigenes and the two names I forwarded as beneficiaries scored 297 and 226, respectively. I hereby put forward to request from anyone so moved to assist in sponsoring the boy with the higher score, Dada Ezekiel to pursue his ambition to study Medicine.

HEALTH: Our community continues to benefit from the partnership between FIDUO and Grace Project International that brings free medical, dental and vision care to Ikun people under the able leadership of Elder Adesola Dada. We are very grateful for this humanitarian gesture.

ENERGY: I should also inform you ladies and gentlemen that the town now has one additional transformer to complement the old one, courtesy of Senator Duro Faseyi who is representing our Senatorial District (Ekiti North) as part of his constituency project. We therefore have decided that the transformer should be made to serve from Araro roundabout to dairy farm project and ijesa road axis of the community.

REVIEW OF VOTERS' REGISTRATION EXERCISE: Review of voters' registration is ongoing in the country (Nigeria). On this, I convened stakeholders' meetings which included all political parties and leadership where for the first time in the history of Ikun, the political parties agreed to work jointly to ensure we improve our voters numerical strength to avoid losing any of the two wards existing in the community. On this, I am indeed worried that we must all pay the needed attention now. From the onset, I was deeply convinced that the project should not be left in the hands of our politicians and political class alone because, past experiences have shown that similar projects were always marred by political avarice and the community has always been the loser. For instance, we had about fifty-two (52) polling units at creation but has reduced to fifteen polling units due to unhealthy political back stabbing of our so called politicians. While we still maintain our two wards, (which our neighbouring towns are not happy with), needed action must be taken now to avoid the looming calamity. In order to guide against this danger, I therefore declare the exercise as an Ikun-Ekiti project where all hands must be on deck at making sure we do not only retain our two wards by increasing our voting strength and our polling units but also showing patriotism to our community than the selfish interest as latent in our local politicians. To this end, three committees whose members cut across all political parties in the community and non-politicians, elite and opinion moulders have been set up to help co-ordinate this exercise to make it a huge success. On this exercise, we thank both Hon Robinson Ajiboye and Hon Bayo Aborisade (Boyo) who have made their financial input of #300,000 and #100,000 respectively. This is still a far cry from what will be needed to meet the missing gaps as the exercise is capital intensive.

NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD: National Identity Management System. This is a project where a biometric data of Nigerian citizens from age 18 years and above is to be captured as requirement for developmental policies of the government. We took this project very seriously because it may actually serve as a prelude to the pending national head count (census) that will come up next year, since we don't want to be caught unaware, I consequently declare it as our communal project. We made special arrangement and brought the federal Government staff to Ikun with their gadgets. We fed and took care of their welfare logistics on daily basis for four full weeks. I hereby thank Hon M.A Atejiaye for providing us free accommodation for the four members of staff. Our people were well mobilized for the registration. Very importantly, I should use this opportunity to inform you that our community has some crucial programs before the end of this year that require significant support of all our sons and daughters either here in diaspora or back at home, namely: (1) The uncompleted palace project (2) The Utugbe ceremony (3) Annual Aged Mothers and (4) Ikun Quarters cultural competition , and (5) The IWUYE ceremony billed to come up between 21st-28th Oct, 2017. As we know, the palace still remains uncompleted and we need to complete it before the Iwuye ceremony. Therefore, I appeal you (our sons and daughters) to make sure that our target here is realized. May God Almighty continue to bless you In Jesus name Amen.

APPOINTMENT: It is very important to bring to your awareness that as at the time of my enthronement, I did not inherit any major file from the last Onikun, In fact, there was no document that may have suggested to me where to begin, run or walk or that even connected us to the outside world or persons and organizations. And for me, record keeping remains an important aspect of good governance, more so, records may lead to an authentic history of the community. Consequent upon this, the community decided to employ a Secretary that will serve both my office and that of my chiefs-in-council. He is Mallam Akinwumi Musa Jimoh. He will be responsible for among others all manners of record keeping including minutes of meeting of Onikun-in-Council and other important correspondence that may have to do with the community, manage the proposed library and archive. He has resumed duty since 1st of May, 2017. In addition, my brother Prince Ajibola Olajide has volunteered to pay his salary for the first three months and the three months will lapse at the close of this month (July 2017). Please, let this and others also form part of the matters arising at this convention.

HISTORY: History is very important in the life of a people, a people without the knowledge of their history are bound to go into extinction. In fact, they are a dead people. Therefore, I have taken some pains and time to put a committee in place that would research into our history, because I discovered that the present disjointed patches of our body of history are not well researched which give room to so much fluke facts, speculations and without adequate scientific research method. The committee work has reached an advanced stage. It is my firm belief that the book will be launched in a very impressive ceremony by the end of the year by God's grace. Amen. I cannot but thank the sponsor of the research work, who pleaded for anonymity, may the Lord continue to bless the work of his hand in Jesus name.

SOME CHALLENGES

Our challenges on almost all fronts remain the slowness of the grinding wheels of government institutions and agencies hinged on non-availability of funds. Therefore, it becomes very difficult for us, the community to develop its potentials in line with our desired speed, consequent upon which we have to move at the dictate of the government of the day. My beloved Omo Ikun, I am convinced beyond doubt that we have to look inward for a development agenda for our community that may not necessarily depend on government goodwill to flourish. For instance Prince Ajibola Olajide has started this via IREWOLU IKUN MULTI-PURPOSE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY and the standard hotel. We need more coalescing efforts, such as sachet water (pure water) outlet, Bread and confectionary production (e.g. biscuit making, Fufu making, gaari making, Lylon making cottage industries), and Agro-Allied product selling outlets. I strongly appeal to you to consider this suggestion as a blue print towards our development.

Ero dam project remains another avenue that can hasten our economic development but it will interest you to know that the first phase of Ero Water Scheme was commissioned in 1983 by General Muhammad Buhari (Rtd) as a military head of state then. Today after thirty five years the dam is yet to be put into maximum use, sadly enough, it however continues to function at the first phase level. It has not been developed further to meet the challenges of today. The master plan has not been realized by the government .The challenge here is that if we are able to reach out to private investors here that may be interested in its development to the level where it can generate electricity our community shall definitely be better off. I am aware that such private investors abound here both in Europe and America and since you are resident here, I appeal to you to do the needful.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION/SUPPORT: Having undergone a critical study of our history, in relation to our origin, where we came from and where we are as a people, we are immigrants from the ancient Ugbomokun, Ile-Ife, through Amure and to our present community Ikun-Ekiti. This is the truth about us as a people. However, a journey through history has also informed us that there is in existence other two communities that share similar name with us (e.g Ikun-Akoko Ondo State, Ikun-Temidire Ekiti, Ikun Oba Ekiti and our Ikun Amure Ekiti.) In order to guide against problems of confusion and other sundry matters, I have proposed that we inject “Amure” into our name so that we can henceforth be known, called and addressed as “Ikun-Amure Ekiti.” This will put to rest the age long argument about the meaning and contextual implication of the name “IKUN.” Though from our research, Ikun is formed from Ikun Omi of Otu and Ero that halted the crossing of our forefathers from the other side to our present settlement, it is my candid believe that this will add more value to our history; our story as a people written without incorporation of AMURE will not be complete. Details of this proposed name change shall be worked out in due course. Meanwhile, I implore everyone here to make a holistic consideration of this fundamental issue especially with open mind as decision arrived at now will have a tremendous impact on our socio- economic and political development particularly in Moba Local Government, Ekiti State and Nigeria in general. I shall indeed be excited if your mandate is as well secured on this historic subject today.

CONCLUSION

I have gone this whole length to intimate you of happenings back at home so that you may better appreciate our intent at moving Ikun Ekiti community forward. I thank you all for organizing today’s event. I also thank our chiefs at home both male and female who have continued to stand firm on all issues bothering on the advancement of our community. I must also assure you that all suggestions that may emerge from this meeting shall be deeply appreciated. I sincerely appreciate your noble gesture of sponsoring Olori and I to attend this important convention and for hosting other delegates from Nigeria as well. I thank all the Nigerian delegates who have generously committed a lot of resources to be here by so doing displaying their loyalty, patriotism and zeal to seeing Ikun Ekiti at the top. This is a challenge to many of you that find it difficult to visit home for many years.

Once again, while I thank you for this singular honour to physically interact with you, I look forward to more opportunities to collaborate with you individually and collectively to achieve the divine destiny of Ikun Ekiti. May the Lord Almighty keep you all, bless and fulfill the promises of Abraham, Jacob and Isaac on you and your households in Jesus name.

As the representative of God in Ikun-Ekiti, and as the servant of all Ikun sons and daughters across the globe, I thank you immeasurably and pray for your success in all your endeavours and wish this convention a resounding success.

H.R.M. Oba Olatunde David Olusola

The Akorewolu 1, Onikun of Ikun-Ekiti