

# Igbo Studies Association

## 9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON IGBO STUDIES

*(Dedicated to the Memory of Professor Emmanuel Obiechina)*

Howard University  
April 8-9, 2011

### COMMUNIQUE

The 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Igbo Studies Association on the theme: “*NKEIRUKA: Shaping the Future of the Igbo Nation*” was held at Howard University Washington DC, USA, from the 8 to 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 2011. This Conference attracted the largest number of participants in the history of Association, including scholars from universities and tertiary institutions and leaders from community organizations, media personnel, clergy/religious, and professionals from the United States, Canada, Nigeria, and Europe. Various aspects of Igbo studies – politics, history, culture, language, law, philosophy, health, belief system, economic development, youth, sports, education, civil society, diaspora, etc. – were addressed within the context of the conference theme.

#### **The Conference noted:**

- That the future of Ndi-Igbo is indeed greater than its past but Ndi-Igbo must take due ownership of their past by creating modern institutional mechanisms for accessing, archiving, and disseminating the Igbo story to ensure that the lessons of Igbo history and civilization are not lost to Igbo youth and future generations tasked with the responsibility of shaping the future of the Igbo nation.
- That the creation of Centers for Excellence in Igbo Studies at key Universities in the United States and Nigeria, starting with the creation and endowment of the first ever Center for Igbo Studies at Howard University in 2012, will be the most viable mechanism for shaping and sustaining the future of Igbo studies.
- That the thought provoking keynote address by Professor Ihechukwu Madubuike aptly reflected the ideal of the conference theme, Nkeiruka, and that the paper should be widely disseminated and also posted on ISA website for easy access.
- The need to maintain greater collaboration with institutions, groups, and research centers within and outside the United States committed to the study and propagation of Igbo history, culture, and civilization and to that end recognize and appreciate a large contingent of Igbo Scholars from many Nigerian Universities and Colleges at this year’s conference.

*In the light of the above, the conference called for:*

- The establishment of an endowment fund to establish a Center for Igbo Studies at major Nigerian universities, which shall engage in the development and advancement of Igbo studies in all its ramifications.
- The formulation of a Strategic Igbo Agenda and the formation of action committees for Re-Orientation, Re-Awakening, and Youth Leadership.
- The establishment of closer links among scholars of Igbo Studies in different parts of the world.
- The encouragement of efforts by Igbo scholars to publish Igbo-related studies and research and disseminate same world-wide.
- The repudiation of the obnoxious cultural practice of *osu* and all caste systems still prevalent in some parts of Ala-Igbo.
- The fostering of greater linkage with the African American community many of whom are of Igbo heritage
- The condemnation of any form of violence directed at Igbo religious artifacts, material culture, and traditional people.
- The repudiation by Ndi-Igbo of all social and political vices plaguing the Igbo in our homeland.

***The Conference also:***

- Congratulate the ISA on its 12<sup>th</sup> Anniversary having been founded in 1999.
- Recognize the contributions of the immediate past executives of the Igbo Studies Association—Prof Ernest Uwazie (President), Prof Chima Korieh (Secretary), and Prof Phanuel Egejuru (Treasurer) -- and express our profound gratitude for their selfless service and leadership of the ISA
- Congratulate the new ISA Advisory Board: Prof. JAK Njoku (Chairman), Prof Catherine Acholonu, Mr. Jorge A. Ekwueme, Rev. Sr Dr. Carol Mbonu, and Dr Sabine Jell-Bahlsen, who were elected and sworn in at the ISA Annual General Meeting on April 8, for a three-year term.
- Congratulate the new ISA Executive Officers: Prof Apollos Nwauwa (President), Prof. Akachi T. Ezeigbo (Vice President), Mr. Augustine Duru (Secretary), Prof Ada Azodo (Treasurer) and Dr. Kanayo K. Odeluga (Public Relations Officer) who were elected for a two-year term during the ISA business meeting on April 9, 2011 and sworn in during the post-Conference Dinner Reception organized by “Nwannedinamba” Igbo Leadership Council of Washington DC at the Nigerian Embassy on April 9, 2011.

- Resolved to continue to identify with the vision and goals of the Igbo Farm Village exhibit of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia and congratulate all those responsible for the planning, execution and funding of this project.
- Expressed our gratitude to Igbo Community in the Washington DC area organized under “Nwannedinamba” Igbo Leadership Council for their continued support of the conference.
- Acknowledge and appreciate the lecture by Dr. Michael Gomez during the Post Conference Dinner Reception and his call for the proposed Center for Igbo Studies to serve as a “base of networking among scholars of Igbo Studies”.
- Appreciate the assistance of the Embassy of Nigeria, Washington, DC and support of the Ambassador Adebowale Ibidapo Adefuye, who was represented by Mrs. Vivian Okeke (Minister in Economic Section) at the Post Conference Dinner reception.
- Remembered and paid tribute to our fallen giant Professor Emmanuel Obiechina who joined our ancestors while recognizing and appreciating his immense contributions to the Igbo Nation as a mentor of many scholars, active supporter of the Igbo Studies Association, and particularly for his outstanding and enduring scholarship in Igbo Studies.
- Expressed appreciation to Howard University School of Social Work for providing office space for the Center For Igbo Studies at Howard University which the project and home of Igbo Studies Association.
- Expressed gratitude to all the *100 Igbos, Inc.* and *Igbo League, USA*, for coordinating and providing free health screening for over 50 participants during the conference. We are very proud of our Igbo physicians for this service.
- Resolved that the theme for our 2012 International Conference will be “*Uwa-Ndigbo: The Place of Ndigbo in a Globalized World,*” with Prof Chima Korieh as Conference Chair.

Finally, the participants express their gratitude to Howard University, Washington, DC, for its continued support of Igbo Studies Association and generosity in providing the Igbo Studies Association with institutional support and facilities for hosting this Conference over the years including hosting the 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Igbo Studies Association.

SIGNED: 2011 Conference Planning Committee:

- Prof Apollos Nwauwa, Chair

- Dr Kanayo K. Odeluga
- Prof Michael Mbanaso
- Prof Chima Korieh
- Prof Emeka Obiozor
- Prof Douglas Chambers
- Prof Ernest Uwazie
- Mrs. Lucy Apakama
- Dr. Victor Ukaogo
- Dr. Chris Aniedobe