



IBOM PEOPLES CONGRESS USA, INC.

9438 Magnolia Avenue, Riverside, California 92503

P. O. Box 1231, Riverside, CA 92502

Phone: (951) 640-0737 • E-mail: ipc_usa@yahoo.com

www.ibompeoplescongress.org

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Abuja

Bar. Uduak Ukpeh
London

Prof. Des Wilson
Chairman, IPC - Uyo

“To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required, not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich”. John F. Kennedy

IPC – Ibom Peoples Congress USA Inc. was established on July 2, 1995 in California. IPC was formed to serve as a responsible advocate for the advancement of equity, social justice and fair-play for the people of Akwa Ibom State. IPC is also committed to promoting credible democracy through education, and promoting economic empowerment and cooperation between Akwa Ibomites, among others.

IPC Milestones and Accomplishments:

Among its outstanding accomplishments since the inception are the following in chronological order:

- 1) IPC has been a major player in the fight for socioeconomic justice. In pursuit of this goal, IPC had on July 9, 1999, sent an Open Letter on Revenue Allocation and Environmental Degradation to President Obasanjo and the Speaker of the National Assembly.
- 2) On April 24, 2000, IPC sent another letter to President Obasanjo on the issues of onshore-offshore dichotomy and the ceding of Bakassi peninsula to Cross River State.
- 3) On July 9, 2001, IPC launched a mass protest with letters sent to the United States President and members of the Congress in Washington, D.C., following the arrest and humiliation of Akwa Ibom dignitaries at Los Angeles International Airport by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service officials.

The IPC protest of this cruel and racially motivated action led to the extraction of a rare letter of apology dated August 21, 2001, from the United States Department of Justice (USINS).

- 4) At the San Francisco Akwa Ibom National Convention in August 2001, IPC organized a workshop with presentation by various Akwa Ibom sons and daughters on issues of importance to average Akwa Ibomite.
- 5) In appreciation of the fact-finding mission of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) to Akwa Ibom State to assess ExxonMobil lopsided treatment of Akwa Ibomites, IPC on November 20, 2001 sent a letter of appreciation to the Caucus in Washington D.C. In that letter, IPC called on the CBC to exert

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more pressure on ExxonMobil to have Akwa Ibomites assume high-level management and Board of Trustees' positions, as well as pressure ExxonMobil to relocate its operational headquarters from Lagos to Akwa Ibom State.

- 6) On May 5, 2002, IPC sent a letter with nearly 1000 signatures to President Obasanjo and the National Assembly in response to the Supreme Court ruling on the onshore-offshore dichotomy.
- 7) On September 30, 2002, IPC protested with a letter of rejection to members of the National Assembly on the introduction by President Obasanjo of contiguous zone into the bill that was meant to abolish the onshore-offshore dichotomy
- 8) IPC on January 15, 2003, reacted with strongly worded letter to members of the National Assembly when President Obasanjo refused to sign into law the onshore-offshore bill as amended by the National Assembly to include the Continental Shelf.
- 9) On May 8, 2004, IPC organized the First World Ibom Peoples Political and Economic Summit in Houston, Texas in USA. Delegates representing various interests came from the United Kingdom & Ireland, Sweden, Canada, Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, and the United States of America. The Akwa Ibom State government was represented by Prof. Akpan Ekpo, then Chairman of AKIPOC and Vice Chancellor of UNIUYO; Hon. Commissioner Umanah Umanah, then Commissioner of Finance; Gen. E. Akpan, a member of the kitchen cabinet, and others.
- 10)** On September 8-12, 2006, IPC organized a Second Economic and Political Summit at Uyo in Akwa Ibom State in collaboration with the United Nation International Committee on Infrastructure Development and the Environment (UN-ICIDEN). Summit participants included Turkish industrialists and other Akwa Ibomites around the world. Summit opened up opportunities for analysis of the challenges, formation of partnerships and construction of implementation framework for statewide sustainable economic development.
- 11) In an attempt to promote democracy in Nigeria, IPC on September 12, 2006 organized the first ever gubernatorial debate that was later televised throughout Nigeria. Twelve gubernatorial candidates participated in what was seen as the trail blazer in Nigerian politics.
- 12) December 31, 2006: IPC issues a PRESS RELEASE on Gov. Obong (Arc.) Victor Attah. Subject: PDP Gubernatorial Primary in Akwa Ibom State on the increasing public outrage regarding the outcome of the People Democratic Party (PDP) primary election in Akwa Ibom State. Apparently, the belief was

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that Gov. Attah was bent on ignoring democratic principle that did not favor his candidate.

- 13) May 23, 2007: A CONGRATULATORY LETTER to Gov Obong Godswill Akpabio on his assumption of office as the third executive governor of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, and generally on the peaceful transfer of power from one civilian government to another in the State..
- 14) Dec. 30, 2007: Appeal to Gov. Godswill Akpabio to resolve the stalemate between the government of Akwa Ibom State and Amakpe Refinery.
- 15) February 1, 2008: A letter to Gov. Godswill Akpabio appealing for the release of Mr. Essien Ewoh and other journalists, who were unjustly detained and charged with treason.
- 16) June 19, 2008: A letter to Pres. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, appealing for Mr. President's kind intervention in the continued detention of Mr. Bassey Umoren, who was jailed for working on Henry Okah's car (Okah was a Niger Delta militant leader charged with treason).
- 17) August 13, 2008: A letter to Pres. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, maintaining that Bakassi should not be handed over to Cameroun.
- 18) July 16, 2008: A letter to Hon. Senator David Mark, President Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, protesting the premature retirement of Mrs. Faith Umoh from the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS).
- 19) December 17, 2008: A letter to Hon. Senator David Mark, Re: Unjust Dismissal of Mr. Sunday Etim Umoh from the Nigerian Customs Service.
- 20) November 29, 2008 A letter to Gov. (Obong) Godswill Akpabio on the matter of Abuse and Neglect of Children in Akwa Ibom State.
- 21) On June 29, 2009: A letter to Gov. Godswill Akpabio Re: A call to arrest the spate of kidnapping in Akwa Ibom State.
- 22) September 23, 2009: A letter of congratulations on the 22nd Anniversary of Akwa Ibom state and the Commissioning of Akwa Ibom Airport was sent to Governor Godswill Akpabio.
- 23) January 4, 2010: A PRESS RELEASE addressed to Senator David Mark calling for immediate action to address President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua absence from Abuja.
- 24) February 1, 2010: A PRESS RELEASE calling on Gov. Godswill Akpabio to initiate a thorough investigation of the kidnapping of Gen. Edet Akpan (retd) and the related killing of the innocents in the church.

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- 25) March 31, 2010: A letter to Gov. Godswill Akpabio demanding the release of Hon. Effiong Ononokpono, an 80-year old ex-politician for asking the Governor embarrassing questions.
- 26) March 10, 2010: Following a demand for resignation of Senator Udoma Udo Udoma as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission on alleged conflict of interests, IPC sent a letter to Senator Ganiyu Solomon, Chairman, Committee on Capital Markets, Abuja, supporting the continuing leadership of Senator Udoma Udo Udoma as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).
- 27) June 10, 2010: An Appeal to Pres. Goodluck Jonathan for intervention on the Abduction of Mrs. Philomena Udonwa, who was later murdered by her kidnapers.
- 28) February 9, 2011: A letter to Pres. Goodluck Jonathan, appealing for prompt police investigation on the assassination of Ibibio Monarch, HRH Edidem Robert James Obot, Oku Ibom Ibibio III.
- 29) March 30, 2011: A letter to Gov. Akpabio on the mayhem that occurred at Ikot Ekpene and Uyo on March 22, 2011.
- 30) July 12, 2011: A letter to Pres. Goodluck Jonathan, appealing for intervention on the harassment and intimidation of Prof. Des Wilson, an Electoral Returning Officer in Akwa Ibom State, for writing to Prof. Atahiru Jega, the Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) informing him that the results of the April 9, 2011 National Assembly elections in Ikot Ekpene were rigged and inflated.

IPC Standing Committees:

In order to play an active role in political, economic and social life of Akwa Ibom people, IPC established four standing committees to effectively explore ways and implement programs geared at having a positive impact on the lives of Akwa Ibom citizens. Consequently, following the 2006 summit at Uyo, it became necessary to restructure IPC into committees that would carry out myriad of functions per problems facing the people. The committees established were:

- A. Political Action Committee
- B. Education Committee
- C. Healthcare Committee
- D. Investment Committee

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Political Action Committee

The first committee to be set up was the Political Action Committee (PAC). Its function, among others, was to liaise with the schools and other social institutions to intensify political socialization and education of Akwa Ibomites, especially the youths – particularly in sharpening political consciousness, political mobilization and political tactics.

PAC under the Chairmanship of Mr. Tom Umoh took a decisive stand during the PDP gubernatorial primary in the last quarter of 2006. The stalemate of that exercise led to increasing public outrage regarding the outcome of the primary believed to have been poised for manipulation.

Education Committee:

In IPC's effort to unite and strengthen our people both at home and in the Diaspora through education, the Education Committee was established with its first Chairman as Dr. Augustine Ekwere. Made up of professionals from all works of life, including education, business, and medicine, the first project embarked upon by the Committee, as a commitment to the causes of education in Akwa Ibom State was, among other things, to help the state government furnish University, public and other institutional libraries with books.

In December 2007, two members of our Committee, ndugu Imeh Inyang, resident in Canada, and Professor Desmond Wilson of the University of Uyo, paid a visit to the Commissioner for Education and the Permanent Secretary, and put our request before them. The delegation also paid a fact finding visit to the heads of libraries of Uyo, Abak, Ikot Ekpene, Etinan, Eket and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Uyo to assess their needs.

At that moment, we had almost finalized arrangements for 50,000 books to be shipped by Book For Africa (BFA) Inc. for distribution to secured libraries in the State, including the University of Uyo library. Book For Africa (BFA) Inc. located at St. Paul, Minnesota pledged to donate these many books to us free. Plan was put in place for IPC representative to be in St. Paul, Minnesota to coordinate the packaging of the books for shipment. All our efforts in about two years to secure MOU from the Ministry of Education that was to take delivery of the books and oversee their distribution was nearly a failure.

To see this project through, rather than ask government to foot the bill, members of the committee decided to contribute money internally. Even Prof. Des Wilson sent in his contribution from Nigeria. By the time the MOU was finally obtained, U.S. economic took turn for the worse. Meanwhile, we were able to raise just about \$3000 of the \$10,000 (N1.4 million) needed for the shipment. While we were trying hard to tax ourselves to get the 50,000 books to Akwa Ibom, millions of naira in the state coffer was being recklessly squandered by the politicians. Note that these books were free. If they were to be purchased, the fair market value would've been probably be about \$1,000,000

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(N160,000,000)! By mid-2008, the enthusiasm for this project had waned with all the bad political news from home. May be in the future, we will re-visit the project again.

Healthcare Committee

Perhaps, no other committee was more vibrant than the Healthcare Committee with 26 members comprising medical doctors, pharmacists, nurses, etc. spanning the globe. Its primary function was to actively work for the improvement of healthcare in AKS, specifically in the areas of prevention, education, diagnoses and treatment of the medically disadvantaged population.

This committee was loaded with some of our best medical personnel who, with wealth of experience acquired over the years, were eager to change things in Akwa Ibom for the better. Its Chairmen were Dr. Tony Ekong, Ophthalmologist, based in Minnesota and Mr. Ed Akpaita, a Pharmacologist based in Utah. Others included Dr. Ndem Ndem, Mr. John Bassey, Dr. Tony Udombat, Mr. E. Samuel Essien, Dr. Ukeme Umana, Dr. Asuquo Inyang, Dr. Dominic Ukpong, Dr. Daniel Umoh, Prof. Uduak Archibong in London, Mr. Ini Akpabio, Dr. Chi Anucha (honorary member) and others.

One of the first duties the Committee took up was the assessment of the healthcare situation in Akwa Ibom. With that a sub-committee of other doctors and healthcare personnel headed by Dr. Dominic Ukpong of ExxonMobil was put in place in AKS. This team carried out one of the best of such assessments ever to be undertaken by non-governmental group in the state. The assessment was necessary to determine which areas needed the Committee's immediate attention. Series of meetings were arranged with then Commissioner for Health, Ms. Louisa Ukpeh.

About the same time, Mr. John Bassey, a Committee member took a private trip to AKS where he liaised with Dr. Dominic Ukpong at Lagos before a meeting with Dr. Charles Akpabio; Drs. Ifiok Ekaebe and Emmanuel Ekong from the Ministry of Health who provided useful information about the state of healthcare in AKS. During the meeting they were informed that the greatest need was in the area of managing opportunistic disease, such as, malaria, kidney disease and pneumonia in people living with AIDS.

Back in US, the committee identified some companies that could donate diabetes and blood pressure equipment, and plans were in place to contact some of the pharmaceutical companies for medication as well. For ease of operation, the Committee agreed to secure an office space in AKS that could serve as the AKS operational base as well as provide storage for the medical equipment. Unfortunately, in spite of all the efforts put in by this Committee, everything came to a halt.

Investment Committee

Investment Committee essentially grew out of Economic Committee whose function is among others to identify the development needs of Akwa Ibom State, and available resources within

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the state, with a view to exposing to potential foreign investors. Unlike Economic Committee, with Investment Committee, we were the investors.

This Committee, chaired by Dr. Tye Ukpong of Michigan, had 24 committed investors from all angles of the globe who were willing to put down their hard earned income. In this group were already successful entrepreneurs in Nigeria and in the Diaspora. We had plenty of experience to rely upon.

A decision was made to not test hot water with both legs by taking a gigantic project. Considerations were given to the following small businesses: Mobile A/C assembly plant, with at least 20% design and manufacturing in Akwa Ibom, Plastic bottle molding for juice and bottled water industries; Glass/Ceramic industry, International fish farming, Industrial Dry Cleaning Services; Pharmaceutical manufacturing and Student/Business center inside University of Uyo.

First project selected from the list was the industrial dry cleaning. Contacts were established with the equipment manufacturer in Atlanta while business proposal and feasibility study were handled at Uyo. As we were delving into the minute details and the next step, security situation in Akwa Ibom became worse by day. We knew for any business to be successful, at least, one investor would have to be physically present at all times at the site; and no one was willing to risk his life or investment under such uncertain atmosphere. With this understanding, the investment venture became a casualty of the insecurity in AKS. However, this plan and the team is not dead, rather hibernation might be the best characterization.

Concluding Remarks

The above summary shows that IPC has continually lived up to its advocacy responsibility. The objective of serving as a responsible advocate for the advancement of equity, social justice and fair play for the people of Akwa Ibom State, has meant that IPC is not always in the good books of politicians or their allies in their continuous raping and plundering of Akwa Ibom State in particular, and Nigeria in general. Such opposition against IPC should be seen as something that comes with the territory.

IPC has made some progress and has also faced some challenges. Some of the challenges have come about in the areas of seeking partnerships for the advancement of Akwa Ibom State, as evidenced in some of the incomplete committee projects or the Turkey initiative. The challenges notwithstanding, our spirits are not dampened, and hopefully in future, with the benefits of lessons learned from the challenges, IPC will be in a position to re-visit these projects and implement them successfully.

Dr. Tom Mbeke-Ekanem
President IPC

ndugu Imeh Inyang
Secretary

Date: April 20, 2012