



IBOM PEOPLES CONGRESS USA, INC.

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"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

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IPC Summit and Turkey's OSTIM – The Middle East Industry Trade Center

There is no way the history of IPC would be written without mentioning of Dr. Abel U. Udoh in Turkey. There are some people in the Diaspora who would choose to buy bigger shovels and join those at home to dig bigger pit toilets even in 2012. On the contrary, there are those in the Diaspora who want to replace the pit toilets with modern, if possible, electronic toilet system. Dr. Udoh belongs to the latter group – the modern water system.

Dr. Abel U. Udoh in Turkey is among the few in the Diaspora who is passionate about improving the lives of our people back home. As soon as IPC announced the 2006 Uyo summit, Dr. Udoh got in touch with us and introduced OSTIM project – a conglomeration of over 5,000 industries in one city to us. From that moment on, he became IPC "ambassador" in Turkey. He was able to establish contacts with the Turkey Chamber of Commerce and OSTIM businesses and they all expressed desire to attend the summit at Uyo.



Dr. Abel U. Udoh and Dr. Edemma Udo with Niger Delta Ministry officials and OSTIM officials in Turkey

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“Tens of thousands of diverse products are manufactured in a hundred different branches in OSTIM, which combines flexibility in production that is the most outstanding feature of small and medium size enterprises together with the advantages of large machine park. Those products are taking place in large range of production from CNC tool bench through stationary goods.”

As seen from the above paragraphs, this was a huge proposition which should have been grapped instantly by our government. The Turkish businessmen requested a meeting with officials of the government first in Turkey to be sure of who they were going to deal with on their arrival at Uyo. As we know, in many countries of the world, business is done differently. In Nigeria, the criminal elements have made it necessary for countries of the world to deal with us with different sets of rules. The message from Turkey was passed onto the AKS government through Ministry of Economic Development and AKIPOC. As expected, it became nobody’s business. No one in the government wanted to address it. Every official was preoccupied with the election fever and Gov. Attah’s presidential bid.

However, with barely two months left, in order to salvage the situation, the government decided to issue official memo authorizing Dr. Edemma Udo on behalf of the AKS government to fly to Turkey and meet with the Turkey Chamber of Commerce and industrialists. In Turkey, Dr. Edemma Udo was received by Dr. Abel Udoh and introduced to the Nigerian Ambassador to Turkey. Many meetings were arranged and these attracted local media coverage, including TVs. Obviously, this was a big deal to Turkey government and their industries.

IPC’s plan was for the trip to last no more than two or three days. But owed to the dimension and importance it assumed, to the extent that the Nigerian Ambassador got involved, it was a big deal, especially when one realized the potential of turning the entire AKS state into industrial center with hundreds of thousands of jobs on the line. Consequently, the trip lasted several days longer.

The Big Disappointment

A couple of days prior to the summit commencement, the first two members of the Turkish delegate arrived in the company of Dr. Abel Udoh. There was basically no AKS government official in town to receive them. It fell back on IPC to arrange accommodation and transportation. Dr. Abel Udoh was on hand to serve as the interpreter. Their worse fear was realized as nearly all the government officials had relocated to Abuja owed to Gov. Attah’s presidential declaration on Saturday, September 9, 2006. The Turkish delegates had no one to discuss the issue that brought them to Akwa Ibom. The two immediately put a call through to the remaining sixteen industrialists, who were probably on their way to the airport in Turkey, not to bother coming to Nigeria. Nonetheless, the two remained behind in Uyo to attend the summit.

Perhaps, as damage control or a change of heart, a delegation led by the then Chairman of AKIPOC, Mr. Nsima Ekere, the present Deputy Governor, along with Dr. Edemma Udo

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visited Turkey under the program arranged by NIPC (*Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission*). At that meeting, arrangement was concluded for Gov. Akpabio to visit Turkey and sign the MOU. The Governor never showed up despite numerous attempts to reach him and his officials. That became the end of the AKS government involvement in OSTIM.

Following this colossal disappointment, contact was established with the Ministry of the Niger Delta Affairs under Chief Uffot Ekaete as the Minister. It wasn't long after this, the leadership of the Ministry of Niger Delta was changed. Contact was reestablished with the new cabinet who in lightening speed agreed to the proposal. Soon after the initial meeting at Abuja, the representatives of the Ministry made two visits in August 2010 and May 2011 to the industrial zone in Turkey. Being satisfied with their findings and desirous that the Industrial Park in Turkey be replicated in the Niger Delta region signed MOU with OSTIM in late 2011.



Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, our effort in IPC, as far as economic development is concerned is to augment those of the government. Unfortunately, as one can see from the above, we do not have a government deserving of its name where interests of the citizens are placed above that of the officials. We saw this playing out in AMAKPE refinery where it was blatantly killed. What is the priority of this government? Shouldn't it be the improvement in the lives of the citizens? As long as these people do not understand or refuse to understand the basic tenets of democracy, AKS, nay Nigeria, will continue to be a place

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where dogs eat dogs in the name of governance. Regardless of these setbacks, IPC will continue to play its role in fulfilling its aims and objectives for the interest of the citizens of Akwa Ibom State.

Dr. Tom Mbeke-Ekanem
President
April 20, 2012

ndugu Imeh Inyang
Secretary