



# IBOM PEOPLES CONGRESS USA, INC.

9438 Magnolia Avenue, Riverside, California 92503

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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*

## **BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF 2006 IPC SUMMIT AT UYO**

The second IPC Summit took place on September 6-8, 2006 at Uyo, a little over two years after the first summit in Houston, Texas. It was an event unparalleled in nature. Staging event of this magnitude and having to coordinate it from three different continents (North America, Europe, and Africa) was daunting at best.

The success of that event rested on the shoulders of a few individuals whose sacrifice we would never be able to quantify. These were Dr. Edemma Udoh, IPC European Coordinator at the time who became the summit coordinator. In addition to being on the ground from her base in London, she spearheaded the economic portion of the summit by traveling to Turkey to meet with the Turkish Chamber of Commerce and the array of Turkish businessmen. Others who spent long days and nights, meeting groups and individuals were Prof. Richard King, Mr. Victor Akpan, Dr. Peter Umanah, Mr. Enobong Uwah, Ms. Rebecca Odungide, and members of Iwaad Isong Ibibio.

Many traveled thousands of miles from United States and Europe to participate in that unique event. They were: Prof. Hilary Inyang – Chairman IPC BOT, Mr. Emmanuel Umoh, former National President Akwa Ibom State Association (AKISAN), Hope Umanah, Esq., the immediate past IPC Communication Director, Dr. Daniel Umoh, Mike Essien, Esq; Mr. Emmanuel Ubom, Dr. Cosmas Etim, Mr. Tom Umoh, Ms. Linda Umoh, Mr. Eugene Okon, Mrs. Victoria Udoh, Mr. Gabriel Rumould, Mr. Eric Okon, Mr. Udobong Obong, Mr. Sam Etuk, Mr. Edem Edet (Norway), Barr. Uduak Ukpoh (London), Dr. Brimmy Olaghere and Carl Greene both from Washington DC, the Turkish industrialists, and others. Mr. Sam Etuk of Keay Consult, a Los Angeles based international agency, graced the summit with the *First IPC Under-17 International Soccer Tournament*.

The IPC summit essentially created a platform for interaction and deliberation on economic, political and social issues. It gave me a rare opportunity to meet the late Mrs. Emma Brown, the octogenarian and a front-line activist from Akwa Ibom who took time to lecture the audience on our history. Mrs. Brown's presentation was on the Ikot Abasi women massacre which became known as Aba Women Riot of 1929. Mrs. Brown informed the delighted audience of how she was able to convince the wife of one of the Nigerian presidents to build memorial at Ikot Abasi to immortalize those Ibibio women who were slaughtered by the British colonial police as they

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protested against the unfair British taxation of their husbands. Contributing to the seemingly endless deliberation was Prof. I. I. Ukpong, a former deputy to the VC University of Uyo and Prof. Ikiddeh who also presented a paper on Ibibio language revival.

On the first day of the summit, Mr. Iroigak Ikann, the then Commissioner for Commerce and Industry represented the Governor, who was in Abuja for his presidential declaration, and Mr. Godswill Akpabio, the then Commissioner for Lands and Housing actively participated in the deliberation. Representing the government on the second day were: Dr. Linus Asuquo - Commissioner for Science and Technology and Mr. Parchi Umoh, Commissioner for Information. The two actively participated in the Town Hall meeting which was another first and a hallmark of the summit in the promotion of democracy.

## **Promotion of Democracy through Gubernatorial Debate**

The third day of the summit, Friday Sept. 8, which was billed for the Great Gubernatorial Debate nearly saw Ibom Hall being overrun by citizens who were there to witness the first of its kind debate. Unfortunately, we had the most agonizing task of having to postpone the epoch event due to the fact that most of the aspirants were in Abuja to attend Gov. Attah's presidential declaration on Saturday, September 9, 2006. Although the debate was finally held on Tuesday, Sept. 12, we could not get the NTA to cover it live as originally scheduled and paid for. But that did not dampen the spirits of the prospective voters who nearly filled Ibom Hall to full capacity.

The major reason for the live debate was to promote democracy in Nigeria, starting in Akwa Ibom. At the same time, we also wanted to expose our young men, the aspirants, to others at the national level outside Akwa Ibom state.

On Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2006 at exactly 5:30 p.m., twelve gubernatorial candidates were already seated. There was no "African Time". The debate moderators were Dr. Ubong Nda, Prof. Richard King and Dr. Edemma Udoh. Our timekeepers were Prof. Godwin T. Umoette and Mr. Enobong Uwah.

As the debate commenced following the reading of the guidelines, tension was high up in the ceiling. In Nigeria, this is a norm, and IPC officials were ill at ease; still expecting the unexpected. By the middle of the debate, tension had suddenly subsided. Even the aspirants started to crack jokes among themselves. One could see broad smiles across their faces as pleasantries were being exchanged. Perhaps the loudest laughter and applause came when an aspirant was asked what he would do to appease all other aspirants should he become the next governor. He turned around looking at other aspirants, and said, "I will make them all members of my "Think tank" group." The hall erupted in applause! At about 9:30 p.m., we breathed a sigh of relief as the Great Debate came to an end without any ugly incident.

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## List of candidates invited to the great debate:

1. Aniekan Etiebet, a barrister and nephew to Don Etiebet
2. Don Etiebet, former Petroleum Resources Minister and former National Chairman of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP).
3. Chris Ekpenyong, former Deputy Governor to Governor Attah.
4. Samuel Jonah Akpan, a businessman and transporter, and a relation of Don Etiebet
5. Joe Ukpong, a barrister, who hails from Abak local government area, and had earlier served as a Commissioner for Environment under Governor Attah's first term.
6. Inibehe Okorie, from Etim Ekpo local government area, an Abuja based estate developer.
7. Ime Umanah, from Abak local government, a businessman who had in 2003 contested on the platform of the ANPP.
8. Udoma Bob Ekarika, Attah's son in law from Oruk Anam local government area, who was also the Commissioner for Works and Transport. He had earlier served as Commissioner for Health during Attah's first term in office. .
9. Eno-Abasi Solomon Etim, the son of Fidelis Etim, the chairman of the state Universal Basic Education Board. He is from Ikot Ekpene local government area.
10. Emmanuel Ibok Essien, former Chief Whip of the Senate and businessman, from Ikot Ekpene local government area. Ibok Essien was a Senator between 1999 and 2003.
11. Itak Bob Ekarika, a Senator, who hails from Oruk Anam local government area, is also Udoma Bob Ekarika's uncle.
12. Godswill Akpabio, a serving Commissioner for Lands and Housing, from Essien Udim local government area.
13. Nsikak Ekure, a barrister and businessman from Ikot Ekpene local government area.
14. Akaninyene Ukpanah, a one-time senator from Ukanafun local government area.
15. Isong Akpabio, a retired employee of Exxon-Mobil, and brother to Godswill Akpabio.
16. Inibehe Otoho, an IT expert and businessman, from Ikot Ekpene LGA.
17. Arch. Ezekiel Nya-Etok, an architect and businessman, from Ikot Ekpene LGA.
18. Samuel Udonsak, a medical doctor and politician from Eket LGA. He had in 2003 teamed up with Ime Umana to run for the governorship post on the ticket of ANPP. .
19. Basse Inuaeyen, a businessman from Ini local government area.
20. Sam Ewang, a retired group captain of the Nigerian Air Force, from Nsit Ibom.
21. Antigha Eyo Basse, former journalist and a special assistant to Governor Victor Attah on special projects, from Oron local government area.
22. Moses Essien, one time Commissioner for Education during the military era, from Ikono local government area.
23. Okon Inwang, an architect, was once a general manager of Akwa Ibom State owned Property and Investment Company (APICO), from Uyo local government area.
24. Ubokutom Nyah, an architect and businessman, who is also the publisher of an Uyo based newspaper "The Sensor," from Ikot Ekpene senatorial district.

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Ladies and gentlemen, IPC blazed the trail. The debate was delayed-telecast by NTA since we missed the opportunity for live coverage on Sept. 8, 2006. Following NTA broadcast, IPC received commendations from all over Nigeria including National Assembly. We did not set out to create a record, rather, our aim was to contribute in building a true and credible democracy in Nigeria so that basic services and living conditions can be improved. Our thinking still remains that, with our wealth of experience over the years in our various fields, we can collectively effect positive change. One of the ways of bringing about such change is through deliberations and debates.

The hope of conducting a similar debate in every election cycle is all but dashed as we witness democracy in the state being slaughtered before our very eyes! Nonetheless, everyone will agree that over the years IPC has made an in-road. The journey ahead is still far down the rugged terrain and the labor calls for a few more honest men and women with desire and passion to sacrifice selflessly.

Dr. Tom Mbeke-Ekanem  
President  
April 20, 2012

ndugu Imeh Inyang  
Secretary