



**COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED BY THE IGBO STUDIES ASSOCIATION (ISA) AT THE END OF ITS 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE HELD AT MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, USA**

Released: April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Igbo Studies Association (ISA) was held at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, from April 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, with the theme: *Oganihu Igbo: Strategies for Igbo Development*. The conference was attended by scholars from universities and tertiary institutions, youth leaders, leaders of community organizations, media personnel, clergy, and professionals from the United States, Canada, Nigeria and South Africa.

The conference opened with a special plenary roundtable session focussing on the 2015 elections in Nigeria and how the outcomes of the 2015 elections would affect the Igbo and development in Igbo land.

The papers presented at various panels during the conference covered several aspects of the Igbo experience, including history, language, culture, religion, politics, migration, leadership, economic development, gender and female empowerment.

At the end of the conference, the Igbo Studies Association resolves as follows:

- That Ndi Igbo should continue to participate actively in the political process in Nigeria and that, since the Igbo do not have a homogenous political ideology, it is impossible for Ndi Igbo to support a single political party.
- That the “Igbo consciousness,” which goes beyond political party affiliation, is inherent in every Igbo at home and in Diaspora. This consciousness must be encouraged and harnessed from Igbo people around the world to engender development in Igbo land.
- That although at face value the just-concluded presidential elections in Nigeria appear to place Ndi Igbo in a precarious political disadvantage, it may portend a source of strength if Ndi Igbo harness their new position insightfully and constructively.
- The association denounced the xenophobic and divisive statement credited to the Oba of Lagos that threatened Igbo people with death if they voted against his chosen candidate and insisted that such hateful outburst should not be tolerated in any civilized society.
- The association further condemned the statement credited to Oodua Foundation, a group that claims to consist of Yoruba intellectuals, professionals, business leaders,

government officials and military officers in Diaspora for supporting the Oba's comment and using such repugnant words as "foreigners" and "refugees" in referring to the Igbo in Lagos. The ISA warns that those who are heating up the polity and fanning the embers of ethnic hatred should desist from doing so.

- That the keynote address presented by a renowned scholar and author, Professor Okey Ndibe, titled "Rethinking Proverbs as Ethical Imperative," should provide a platform for the Igbo to challenge certain proverbs and adages that contribute to moral decadence, selfishness, and the noticeable valorisation of wealth, including ill-gotten wealth.
  
- The ISA reaffirmed its commitment to:
  - Gender equality and women empowerment;
  - Strengthening the Igbo language, which continues to be endangered due to a variety of sociolinguistic factors;
  - Abolishing the Osu caste system;
  - Encouraging a reading culture among Igbo children;
  - Water management and distribution in Ala Igbo;
  - Igbo entrepreneurialism.
  
- The association resolved to hold its 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference at Dominican University in Chicago with the theme "Ndi Igbo in the Global Context."

Signed, 2015 Conference Planning Committee:

- Dr. Chima Korieh, President
- Dr. Raph Njoku, Conference Chair
- Dr. Uchenna Nzewi, Member
- Dr. Ogechi Anyanwu, Member
- Dr. Chidi Igwe, Member
- Dr. Apollos Nwauwa, Member