

## **AKWA IBOM STATE YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW**

### **TEXT OF**

#### **DISTINGUISHED LECTURE PRESENTED BY THE DEAN OF IBIBIO ACADEMICS ROUNDTABLE, DR OTOABASI AKPAN, ON THURSDAY NOVEMBER 8, 2012 TO MARK THE SILVER JUBILEE ANNIVERSARY OF AKWA IBOM STATE**

#### **PROTOCOL**

It gives me a great pleasure to present the Second Distinguished Lecture of the Ibibio Academics Roundtable to mark the Silver Jubilee of the creation of Akwa Ibom State. The State was created on September 23, 1987 and celebrated its Silver Jubilee on September 23, 2012. Last year the Public Lecture was presented by Monsignor Professor Sylvanus Udoidem on the topic ***The Ibom Phenomenon in the Evolution and Development of Akwa Ibom State***. The focus of the Lecture was on the significance of Ibom as the cradle of Ibibio civilization and as a unifying force among Akwa Ibom people who consider Ibom as a source of their origin and the supreme Ibom; that is, Akwa Ibom as their land and location today.

The topic for this year's Lecture was supposed to be ***The Afaha Factor in the Settlement and Development of Akwa Ibom State***. The focus of the topic was on Afaha as a mechanism of inter-group relations in Akwa Ibom State. Afaha families also exist in every Local Government Area in the state; just as Ibiaku families exist in every Local Government Area of the State. Therefore, Afaha and Ibiaku are potent instruments of unity, solidarity and development in the state. In other words, regardless of the names of villages in Akwa Ibom State today, they are either of the Afaha or Ibiaku groups. For these reasons, Ikot Nya in Etim Ekpo in Annangland is related with Ikot Nya in Ibibioland, Obongntak people in Etim Ekpo are from Obong Itam in Itu; Ikot Uso Akpan Village in Itam are peopled by Uruk Uso people in Annangland; the

people of Ikot Akpan Ndua in Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Area are from Mbiatok Itam in Itu Local Government Area; Okon in Ikot Abasi relate directly with Okon in Eket, Oku in Abak in Annangland relate with Oku in Uyo, Oku in Ibesikpo Asutan and Oku Iboku in Itu and Nkwot Ikono in Annangland are the Nkwot people in Ibibioland. Ibesikpo people in Ibesikpo-Asutan Local Government Area are the same Ibesikpo people in Ikono and Ini Local Government Areas. The Offot Ukwa Nkasi in Uyo relate with the people of Ukwa Nkasi in Cross River State, Obotim people in Nsit Ibom are from Ita Uruan; Ndon Utin and Ikot Abasi in Etinan are from Obotim; Nna Enin people in Annangland (Abak) are the same Nna Enin people in Ibibioland (Uruan;Ikono) and Edemaya people in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area are from Mbiaya Uruan in Uyo Senatorial District. These are few examples of our mixed heritage and the explanation is that centuries before the nineteenth century, there were waves of migration and settlement of people across Africa and in the Akwa Ibom Area, across the Lower Cross River Region.

As a research group, we have given ourselves the mandate to document these important facts about Akwa Ibom State and use them for our unity and development. It is therefore necessary to emphasize that the Ibibio Academics Roundtable is a non-profit, non-partisan research-based Academic Society that is devoted to research in all aspects of the Ibibio history and society, including the impact of external influences on Ibibioland. The focus of its research is not limited to the past of Ibibioland but also to the present. However, as the past is a continuous dialogue with the present and the future, we are also interested in the future of Ibibioland.

On account of these reasons, we decided to use this Jubilee Year to appraise the past of Akwa Ibom State in form of our YESTERDAY, the PRESENT in form of TODAY and on the basis of the knowledge of yesterday and today, present the picture of TOMORROW and its expectations.

To do this meaningfully, I have deemed it necessary to divide the topic into four broad areas; all variations of the same theme as none is mutually exclusive. The first part treats the past and present as the future of Akwa Ibom State, the second part discusses the present as the past and future of Akwa Ibom State, the third part examines the future as the past and present of Akwa Ibom State and the last part is Summary and Conclusion.

## **PART I**

### **The Past and Present as the Future of Akwa Ibom State**

Akwa Ibom State as a constituent political unit of Nigeria was created only in 1987 but the people who later were indigenes of the state had existed in the area from time immemorial and they were conscious of who they were since the pre-colonial period. The people who later were constituted into Akwa Ibom State were the earliest occupants of the area that later became Nigeria who had settled in the forest belt and specifically in the Niger Delta. They were of the Bantu stock who migrated from Central Africa. The present Akwa Ibom Area was occupied sparsely by the Pygmies but because the Akwa Ibom people had had a good knowledge of the iron culture, they used it effectively to displace the Pygmies and occupy the land. The Pygmies were driven southwards towards Central and Southern Africa, where they live today.

Since the first set arrived through the Ibom corridor across Southern Cameroon, Upper Cross River and Arochukwu down to Ikono Etefia and Ikono Ibom, there had been constant migration to fan out and to displace the Pygmies the more. Others from the same Bantu source came through the sea path to live in the same Akwa Ibom environment with their kith and kin.

For centuries the people worshipped the same supreme God, who went by various names of ***Abasi, Abasi Enyong, Akwa Abasi, Akwa Abasi Enyong, Abasi Ibom Enyong*** and ***Abasi Ibom***; had variations of same traditional names like Effiong, Edet, Okon, Akpan, Udo, Etukudo, Udofia,

Udosen, Ibanga, Akpabio, Etim, Edem, Arit, Ikwo, Nkoyo, Atim, Akon, Adiaha, Ekaette, Ukpanah, Akan, Akaninyene, Nse, Nseabasi, Otobong, Otoabasi, Mbang and Affiong; ate same types of food; drank the same kind of traditional alcoholic drinks; engaged in same occupational duties; had same traditional games like **Ayo, Ikara** and **Mbok**; had same festivals like **mbopo, usoro abasi, ebop abasi, usoro usuk udia** and **usoro ndok**; same secret code like **nsibidi** sign language; had same masquerades of **Ekpo, Akata, Ekong** and **Ekpe**; had same divinal paraphenelia like **Idiong, Obon, Ukang** and **Nnwommo**, and above all inter-married and were in the tradition of giving out a portion of their **Ekpene**, that is, land kept for fallow, to new migrants who today feel that they are too separate to stand alone; not even as linguistic groups but as ethnic groups.

Be that as it may, it was during the colonial period that the Akwa Ibom people rose as one man and contributed to the evolution and political economy of Nigeria and in the process, had an image which should not be allowed to dim by political and social miscalculations. Today, these historical facts and the accompanying landmarks constitute the enduring heritage of the people. These heritage and landmarks are documented elsewhere (see Noah, 2002; Akpan, 2003) in details. Nonetheless, in this Essay, highlights and outlines of the living heritage are being penned down.

Mr Chairman, the Akwa Ibom people were pioneers in social mobilization in Nigeria. They established in 1928 a powerful and formidable Union, the Ibibio Union to mobilize the people for higher goals. The Union embraced everybody in the Akwa Ibom area. The foundation members of the Union were Chief Nyong Essien, Chief Sampson Udo Etuk, Chief J.U. Eka, Inyang Ekpot, Robert Umoinyang, Chief John Esin, Ibanga Udo Akpabio, Sampson Udo Idiong, Chief J.S.B. Ikpe, Ekukinam Basse, Obong Ephraim Arthur and Obong Japheth Akpan Udo. These people came from every region part which now constitutes Akwa Ibom State. Today, some of these regions feel that they

are too distinct from the Ibibio nation. But were their leaders and forebears misleading themselves? The answer is in the negative.

Be that as it may, the Ibibio Union opened the floodgate to the establishment of similar Unions across Nigeria like the Ibo State Union in 1944 (thirteen years later); ***Egbe Omo Oduduwa*** (seventeen years later) and the ***Mutena Arewa*** (twenty three years later) in the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa areas respectively. Writing on the domino effect of the Ibibio Union in Nigeria, Okwudiba Nnoli (1978:104) states:

*Although no accurate count was made, it is clear that between 1928 and 1948 the number of such associations had grown about six fold and the number of Nigerians who were members had increased more than tenfold... during the period under consideration, the Ibibio Welfare Union (later Ibibio State Union) was formed in Ikot Ekpene in 1928, the Urhobo Brotherly Society (later Urhobo Progress Union) was set up in Warri in 1931, and the Ibo Union (Later Ibo Federal Union, and much later Ibo State Union) was established in Lagos in 1936. Later this formation of all-inclusive ethnic Unions spread to previously inarticulate groups such as the Idoma, Tiv and Bakweri.*

Generally speaking, the Ibibio State Union bequeathed to Nigeria a new concept of nation-state; how it should be shaped and operated. In a recent publication, the authors gave glorious tribute to the Union thus:

*The Ibibio State Union was the first organized indigenous body in Nigeria to initiate the concept that Nigeria should be constituted into a federation of States, based on linguistic and ethnological considerations and to work stoically towards its realization. Its activities and display of incredible ethnic cohesiveness and collective determination inspired the rise of a national movement of the minority groups towards the establishment of their own identity as distinctive Nigerian communities. (see Akpan, 2004:29).*

This is an apt comment on the role of Ibibio Union in National development. Today, Nigeria of its dream is unfolding gradually thus attesting to the quality of vision and mission of the founding fathers of the Union.

A year after the Ibibio Union was established, Ibibio women throughout Ibibioland engaged the British Colonial administration in a war that shaped Nigeria and quickened the process of its political independence. As a result of the war, which started in Ikot Abasi and was led by Madam Adiaha Edem, the mother of Udo Udoma, the legal sage, the British government changed all its colonial officers. These included the District Officer for Opobo, A. R. Whitman, the Resident of Calabar Province, E.M. Falk and the Governor of Nigeria, Sir G. Thompson. In addition, to these changes, the concept of clan was introduced in the administration of the people of Nigeria and the Village Councils, which were original Ibibio mechanism of governance since the pre-colonial period, was made to become the units of government. May I add that in the aftermath of the women's war, Nigerians were made to take part in the administration of their people; a gesture that was resisted by the British in the pre-women's war years.

The Akwa Ibom people, as an integrated and organised ethnic group, were the pathfinders in the history of higher education in Nigeria. Under the auspices of Ibibio Union, they sent six sons of Ibibioland to the United Kingdom and the United States of America for the golden fleece. The pioneer beneficiaries were Asuquo U. Idiong from Abak (for medicine in Canada). When he died prematurely, he was replaced by Effiong U. Ekpo from Abak. Other beneficiaries were James L. Nsima from Eket (for Education), Egbert U. Udoma from Ikot Abasi (for Law in Dublin) Ibanga U. Akpabio from Ikot Ekpene (for Education in America), Obot E. Anita-Obong from Itu (for Medicine in Edinburg) and Bassey Attah from Uyo (for Agriculture in the West Indies). The boys, who were later men, left Ibibioland on August 1, 1938 for overseas enroute Lagos. Female folks were later supported into the Nursing profession.

The products of this selfless endeavour later had phenomenal influence on the socio-political climate and development of Akwa Ibom State. May I

record here that Governors Victor Attah and Godswill Akpabio are scions of the families that benefitted from the Ibibio Scholarship Scheme who later made the Akwa Ibom area proud. Egbert Udo Udoma became a Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and the Chief Judge of the Republic of Uganda. Others made great contributions to the development of Akwa Ibom society.

Mr Chairman, Ikot Ekpene where the Ibibio State College was, and is still, located was the site of the first experiment in Local Government Administration in Africa. It was inaugurated on Tuesday, April 11 1951 in the Council Hall in Ikot Ekpene. The County Council comprised 40 members and the seats were distributed thus (NAE, CADIST 13/1/97 No E. 97):

Otoro District Council Area	-	12
Central Annang District Council Area	-	12
Eastern Ibibio Ikono	-	12
Ikot Ekpene Urban	-	4
		<u>40</u>

After the inauguration, Robert Umo Inyang, the Vice President of Ibibio Union was elected the first Chairman. He, as a confirmed Ibibio leader from Annangland, sat over the County Council in which one area was called "Central Annang District Council Area". Could it have been possible for him as Annang son to be a leader of the Ibibio Union, which never embraced the whole of Ibibioland? This is one of the puzzles that indigenes of Akwa Ibom State today have to puzzle out. The second puzzle is: could the Uyo area have allowed itself to be administered from Ikot Ekpene until 1914 if the area was not considered to be in Ibibioland? Without much ado, the oneness of Annang as part of Ibibio was established since time immemorial.

Be that as it may, other *dramatis personae* in the inauguration of Ikot Ekpene were Colonel E. C. Alderton, the District Officer, Mr Bassey Okoro, the First County Secretary, Mr Moses Inyang, the First County Treasurer and His Excellency, Commander. J. C. Pykennot, the Chief Commissioner.

Mr Chairman, the Akwa Ibom People were the pageants of the creation of state in Nigeria. After regionalism was introduced in Nigeria with the Richards's constitution of 1946, which created three regions – the Eastern, Western and Northern Regions – the Ibibio people felt uncomfortable with that arrangement. As a first step, the name and particulars of Ibibio Union was changed. It was now called the IBIBIO STATE UNION. At its Annual Conference held from 7-13 September 1948, the Constitution of the Ibibio State Union was ratified. From this time, the Ibibio people never relented efforts in getting their own state. By 1957, the Union had co-opted all minority groups in the olden Eastern region into its orbit for purposes of state creation in Nigeria. Thus, on December 19, 1953, IBIBIO STATE UNION inaugurated the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers (COR) State Movement at the Mission School Afaha Oku (today's Primary School, Afaha Oku), which is, strictly speaking, the cradle of state creation in Nigeria.

The Conference was convened by Sir Udo Udoma, the President of Ibibio State Union. At the meeting the following were elected as officers of the Movement:

- Dr. Alvan Ikoku (Arochukwu) – President General
- Chief Bishop Davies Manuel (Degema ) – Vice President
- Dr. Udo Udoma (Opobo Division) – Secretary General
- Dr. Okoi Arikpo(Ogoja) – Assistant General Secretary
- Barrister O. O. Ita (Uyo Division) – Treasurer

Thereafter the Conference unanimously agreed to submit a Memorandum to the resuming 1954 Constitutional Conference in Lagos, demanding for the creation of COR States for the minorities of the Eastern Region.

After the 1954 constitutional development failed to create more states in Nigeria, the Ibibio State Union threatened to secede from Nigeria and the colonial government was given just two years to implement the demands for

a state for the Ibibio nation. In the text of its resolution in August 1954, the Union stated thus:

*WHEREAS the Ibibio State Union at its Seventh Annual Conference held at Ibesit –Ibekwe County on Tuesday, 24th August, 1954, had had its attention seriously drawn to the new Constitutional Arrangements for a Federal Government for Nigeria:*

*AND Whereas the new dispensation divides up Nigeria into three autonomous and independent tribes with autonomous tribal governments having separate and distinct Civil Service, Marketing Board and the Judiciary, etc, which division has vested residual powers in the three 'governments' and leaves the fate of the minority groups entirely in the hands of the three major tribes with no safeguards for protection of the rights of the minorities:*

*AND whereas the Ibibio people at this conference assembled considered that in such a set-up there is no room for the progress, development and respect for the democratic and traditional rights, customs and institutions of the minorities:*

*BE it resolved, and it is hereby solemnly resolved that the British Government of Nigeria be requested to grant a separate State for the Ibibio people and their kith and kin of Calabar Province in association with the peoples of Ogoja and Rivers Provinces in or before 1956, failing which the Ibibio people shall declare themselves a sovereign State by 1956 when Nigeria attains independence:*

*AND that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to the Government of Nigeria through the Senior Resident, Calabar Province, The Lieutenant Governor, Eastern Region, the Governor of Nigeria, the Nigeria Press, all the major political parties in Nigeria and the Districts and Branches of the Ibibio State Union (see Akpan, 2004:70).*

With bold statements and resolutions after the threat of secession, the Ibibio State Union confronted the British administration on the question of state creation effectively. On account of its pressure on the British government, the

government mandated the British Secretary for Colonies, Lennox Boyd, to constitute a Commission to look into the fears of the people who constituted the COR regions. Thus, on September 25, 1957, the Willink Commission was constituted with the following members:

Sir Henry Willink	-	Chairman
Sir Godon Hadow	-	Member
Philip Mason	-	Member
J. B. Shearer	-	Member

Although the Commission did not recommend the creation of state, it made insightful recommendations that guaranteed fundamental rights that were written into the Independence Constitution; it also sought for the creation of Minority Areas and Development Boards.

When the recommendations of the Willink Commission did not favour the Ibibio State Union, it met and rejected it in its entirety. The resolution was moved by Chief E. O. Eyo (Eyo Uyo) and Seconded by Robert Umo Inyang, the pioneer Chairman of Ikot Ekpene County Council and the First National Vice President of the Ibibio State Union. The text of the Resolution read:

*That the Ibibio State Union Annual Conference, assembled here, at Ikot Akan in Ibekwe District, this day 1st day of September, 1958, having studied and discussed fully the Recommendation with its full implications for the Minorities Commission Report totally rejects the same, and, in particular, the proposals for the Council for Calabar Province with no legislative or executive powers and hereby urges the Action Group and the U.N.I.P. delegates from Calabar Province to the Resumed Conference on the Nigerian Constitution to be held in London from 29th September, 1958 to press unrelentingly for the creation of the COR State before there can be any question of independence for Nigeria in 1960 (see Akpan, 2004:74).*

Other personalities associated with the COR State Movement were Professor Eyo Ita, Chief Nkang Abang, Dr S. J. Una, Prince R. N. Takon, Chief I. I.

Murphy, Chief S. J.A Amarchree, Mr D. D. Tom George, Mr Koripamo, Mr. H.D. Echikwa, Chief M.W Ubani, Hon N.G. Yellowe and Madam Jenny Ekiko.<sup>1</sup>

Even though states were not created before and immediately after independence, the Ibibio State Union indeed succeeded in entrenching the principles of respect of the fundamental Human Rights into the independence constitution. Besides, it is to the credit of the Ibibio State Union that her activities resulted in the establishment of the Niger Delta Board by the Willink Commission. No doubt, this was the precursor of the 1990 Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) and the latest, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) of the 2000 AD.

Nonetheless, it should be recorded that when Nigeria was faced with the dismemberment challenges, it revisited the state creation issue and ended the war right away when the South Eastern and Rivers States were excised from the Eastern Region. The 30 months that the war lasted were periods of test of nerves; victory and defeat were recorded the very day states were created.

Mr Chairman, oil and gas that drive the political economy of Nigeria today were first discovered in Ibibioland in the whole of Africa. They were discovered by Shell Petroleum Company in 1953 at Ikot Akata and Ikot Akpa Ekop in today's Mkpato Enin Local Government Area. The difference between these communities and Oloibiri in Bayelsa State is that oil and gas found there were not in commercial quantities but those found three years later in Oloibiri in 1956 were in commercial quantities. The Akata find, however, gave Shell the lead that oil and gas could be found in the region of the Niger Delta. In any case, today, Akwa Ibom State, in which oil and gas were first discovered, collects from the Federation Account the largest chunk of revenue from oil and gas. This implies that it produces oil and gas in quantity higher than its peers.

The last of the selected heritage of Akwa Ibom State in the national scheme of things to be considered in this Essay is military leadership in which General Wellington Bassey in whose honour Ibagwa Barracks at Abak and the old Barracks Road in Uyo are named after was popularly called NA I; that is, the first Nigerian officer to be enrolled into the Nigerian Army after it shed its colonial tag as the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). This man is the father of the Nigerian Army. He trained countless number of the officer corps of the Nigerian Army and prepared them for the Congo experience and the Nigerian Civil War. During the War, he played strategic roles and at the end of the war, he was made Nigerian Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea.

No less a personality in military leadership was General Philip Effiong who equally trained many Nigerian, and later Biafran, soldiers. During the Nigerian Civil War he played many prominent roles. As the Second-in-Command to the Biafran leadership, he stopped the horrors of the war in 1970 and terminated the aspirations for guerrilla warfare, which may have continued till today. By presenting the surrender instrument of Biafra to the Nigerian Government, he ended the war and brought peace to Nigeria.

## **REMARKS**

Mr Chairman, when we look back as at the past, we are very proud of our forebears and our pedigree. They were the architects of modern Nigeria and indeed modern Akwa Ibom State. How can we in Akwa Ibom State celebrate these achievements today?

In the first place, we demand that new but strategic roads or streets constructed in the Local Government Areas of their origin (of our forebears) and the State capital be named after the individuals who were champions of the Ibibio State Union and the COR State Movement.

As a memorabilia for the women's war, we are of the view that the Akwa Ibom State Government in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of

Women Affairs should construct African Museum of Women History in Ikot Abasi. The museum should house materials relating to the struggle of women for liberation throughout the world. In addition, December 16 should be declared as Women's Day and celebrated in Akwa Ibom State. On this day, the ***Mbopo Akwa Ibom*** Pageant show should take place.

For the Ikot Ekpene feat, we are of the view that the State government in collaboration with the Association of Local Government of Nigeria (ALGON), Akwa Ibom State Branch, should construct African Museum of Local Government Affairs in Ikot Ekpene. The building should equally house the secretariat of ALGON in the State. The State Government should internationalize the image of Ikot Ekpene<sup>2</sup> by establishing in the region between Ikot Ekpene Urban and Ikot Umoessien an International market which should be called ***Ikot Ekpene International Market***. The market can be built through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) scheme which would involve the Akwa Ibom State Government and consortia of Banks. The state could also go to the STOCK MARKET to source for fund for the project, which has immense capacity to pay back such debt within the shortest possible time. In addition, April 11 should be declared as Ikot Ekpene Day and celebrated at Ikot Ekpene.

The Local Government missed the opportunities to celebrate its ten year Anniversary in 1961, Silver Jubilee in 1976, Golden Jubilee in 2001 and Diamond Jubilee in 2011, even when I proposed to it the need to celebrate the last two Anniversaries. Never again should it refuse to celebrate this eventful achievement. Declaration of April 11 as Ikot Ekpene Day is therefore well thought out. Every year of this day, it should host National Local Government Cultural and Trade Fairs in Ikot Ekpene and organize Miss Ikot Ekpene Pageant Show.

In the case of Ikot Akata and Ikot Akpa Ekop where oil was first found in Africa, the State Government in collaboration with Shell Petroleum

Company, which found oil in the region and Exxon-Mobil, which is the biggest investor in oil business in Akwa Ibom State should construct ***Oil and Gas Museum*** across the two villages. In-built into its architectural profile should be OIL AND GAS HOUSE; a 31-story building where each floor should be named after each Local Government in the state. In addition, the state Government should initiate the establishment of a Modular Refinery in the region. All in all, these projects could be embarked upon through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Scheme which would involve the Akwa Ibom State Government, Shell Petroleum Company, Exxon-Mobil, and Nigerian and International investors. Through these projects, the two villages should be turned into GROWTH POLE.

Overall, the museum and the refinery would both act as excellent memorabilia to keep the memories of the discoveries alive.

## **PART II**

### **The Present as the Past and Future**

With the benefit of hindsight we can appreciate Akwa Ibom State more in the present period. The spirit of the past is at work in the present and, therefore, the present arrangement of things and even political calculations are but adaptation of the living past.

The present could conveniently be said to have begun in 1987 when the state was created. Since then, efforts have been made to realize the dreams of those men and women of Akwa Ibom origin and their sympathizers who dreamt of wonderful achievements that would attend the environment of a separate state. Today, Akwa Ibom State has 31 Local Government Areas, about 25 units more than the 6 divisions that the Ibibio Union had divided Akwa Ibom. Beyond this, there are several facilities and infrastructure to support the dreams of the creation of the State. Some of these are: the State Secretariat, the Federal Secretariat, Ibom Unity Hall, Ibom Unity Museum,

Federal University, State University, Private University, International Airport, Five Star Hotel and arrays of Urban facilities like hundreds of kilometres of dualized highways and accompanying roundabouts and fly-overs.

These facilities were developed by the Governors who headed the state since 1987. Non-indigenes also had the opportunity to govern the state, especially during the years of military administration. Altogether, throughout the period of 25 years since its creation, Akwa Ibom State has been administered more by indigenous leaders. These leaders have been Group Captain Idongesit Nkanga (25/9/90-2/1/92), Obong Akpan Isemin (2/1/92-17/11/93), Obong Victor Attah (29/5/99-29/5/2007) and Obong Godswill Akpabio (29/5/2007 –).

Over the years, Akwa Ibom has experienced lots of challenges in its developmental aspirations. These include the Bakassi imbroglio, the on-shore/off-shore dichotomy episode, border conflicts with Abia and Cross River States, and the struggle for the state's oil wells by neighbouring states. In spite of these challenges, we note, with a sense of satisfaction, the level of responses of the leadership of the state over time to confront the problems. Through their efforts, the dreams of the present inhabitants of the state have not been turned into nightmare. We salute their spartan courage in the face of stress and pressure.

### **Remarks**

Out of the 4 indigenes of the state who have had the opportunity of directing the affairs of the state, only one has died; the rest are still alive. We in the state should have a culture of celebrating our past Governors who have shown enormous capacity in governance and who are led by the vision of the architects of the creation of the state.

Of these 4 Governors, only Group Captain Idongesit Nkanga has been honoured. The State Secretariat that he had started, which is now an edifice to behold, is named after him. It is called ***Idongesit Nkanga Secretariat***.

Obong Akpan Isemin had a short-lived administration, which was terminated by the military coup of 1993, but during his administration, he laid the economic foundation of the state through the struggle for the abrogation of the on-shore/off-shore dichotomy. We are of the view that Akpan Isemin should be celebrated within the Silver Jubilee Year of the State. Until a dualized ring road in Uyo is named after him, ***Ibom Plaza*** in Uyo should be re-named ***Akpan Isemin Square***.

Obong Victor Attah has been a champion of champions. Even before he became a Governor in 1999, he designed the Masterplan of Uyo Capital City in 1988. During his administration, he was the greatest apostle of Resource Control in the Niger Delta and he fought many battles to serve the needs of his people. Perhaps, the most developed and enduring facilities of his administration are the Akwa Ibom International Airport, Akwa Ibom State University and the Le Meridien Hotel and Resort.

In terms of honour, we are of the view that the Ibom International Airport, which he conceptualized and started, should be re-named ***Victor Attah International Airport***.

Mr Chairman, we are always confronted with the argument that edifices and or streets should not be named after sitting administrators. I agree and disagree. If the administrator is a non-performing official, there is no need to consider him for such an honour, but if contrary is the case, we can bend backwards to confront tradition in his behalf.

Obong Godswill Akpabio is the sitting Governor of our state and by the special Grace of God the Silver Jubilee Governor of the State. ***Isua Jubilee*** is no mean year and this is the first Jubilee celebration in the state. A jubilee is a special anniversary of an event.

As the report of his administration has spoken goldenly of his exploit in governance and as the official to mark the first Jubilee of the state, he deserves this exceptional honour for a sitting administrator. Even at that, the conventional ethic that states that it is dishonourable to honour oneself should hold in his case. However, within the Silver Jubilee Year, the Governor should start a bridge project to link Ifiayong at the Nwaniba Road end with Tinapa in Calabar and the bridge should in future be named ***Godswill Akpabio Bridge***.

Aside from the fact that with the bridge, the distance between Uyo and Calabar would be less than 15 minutes drive, the sheer goodwill of accepting to dualize ***Aba-Ikot Ekpene-Itu-Odukpani-Calabar Road***, which would pass through three states, makes the sitting Governor a bridge builder. Where the roads involved may not be named after him because they already have traditional names like Aba-Ikot Ekpene Road and Calabar-Itu Road, the Ifiayong-Tinapa Bridge should symbolize this bridge-building goodwill and should be named after him by his immediate successor. Meanwhile, five major bridges along the Aba-Calabar Highway should be named after the former Governors of Old South Eastern State and Old Cross River State from the Akwa-Cross States. They are General U. J. Esuene, Dr Clement Isong, Otuekong Donald Etiebiet, Navy Captain Edet Akpan Archibong and General Dan Archibong.

Feasibility studies of the Nwaniba-Tinapa Bridge Project show that with 2 toll gates at its entrance and exit points which could cost N1000 per vehicle, the investors would earn about N2 billion each year. This also means that about N50 billion would be realized in 25 years' time. This implies that if constructed through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) scheme, the investors would reap bounteous benefits from the project. Therefore, the Akwa Ibom State Government should initiate its construction within the Jubilee Year.

In addition to the selective projects either already named or to be named after the Governors of the State between the inception of the State and the Silver Jubilee Year, all the Ring Roads, when completed should be named after former Governors of the State (and their Deputies). Included in the list should be the Governors of the old South Eastern State and old Cross River State, who were from Akwa Ibom State. These were General Jacob Esuene, Dr Clement Isong, Otuekong Donald Etiebiet, and Navy Captain Edet Akpan Archibong. Eminent indigenes of the state with remarkable achievements also deserve such honours as well. A typical example is General Philip Effiong.

Additionally, to celebrate the Silver Jubilee Year further, we are of the opinion that the dualized highway between Idoro and Oron Road across Ikot Ekpe and Ibesikpo villages, that is still under construction, should be named ***Silver Jubilee Drive***. The stadium along that road that is still under construction should similarly be called ***Silver Jubilee Stadium***. Furthermore, ***Jubilee Housing Estates*** should be built in Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial Districts. In Uyo Senatorial Districts, it should be built in Itu or Etinan or both; in Eket Senatorial District, it should be built in Ikot Abasi or Okobo or both; and in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District, it should be built in Abak or Ikono or both.

In the establishment of these Estates, all that is necessary to do is for the Local Government Areas concerned to provide land and the State Government to landscape the areas; provide them with tarred roads and streets, water and energy facilities and sell the plots to individuals and property developers. At the end of the day, money generated from sales of the land would be more than the cost of providing the lands, landscaping them and providing amenities in them. Streets in these Estates should be named after historical and legendary figures of the State.

Mr Chairman, many States in the Nigerian federation like Kano, Lagos and Bayelsa have instituted and exhibited their separate Coat of Arms and Flags. These are typical examples of display of opportunities afforded them by federalism. They are commendable. However, Akwa Ibom should braze a trail in other related areas; namely: Award of State titles of honours, decorations and similar dignities. We should institute State honours for our eminent indigenes who have done the state proud in business, academics, arts, science, politics and different professions. Item 4 of the Exclusive Legislative List in the Second Schedule of the 1999 Constitution only prevents states from "Awards of national titles of honour, decorations and other dignities" (see the 1999 Constitution), but does not prevent them from having State Awards of titles of honour, decorations and other dignities. We propose that in this Jubilee Year of Akwa Ibom State, the State should institute State Awards for its indigenes. These should be the Grand Commander of the Order of Ibom (GCOI), Commander of the Order of Ibom (COI), Grand Commander of the Lower Cross (GCLC), Commander of the Lower Cross (CLC), Knight of the Lower Cross (KLC), Lady of the Lower Cross (LLC), and Medal of the Lower Cross (MLC). GCOI should be reserved for Governors; GCLC for Deputy Governors, Speaker of the House of Assembly and extra-eminent Akwa Ibomites. Other State titles of honour should be for eminent indigenes of the state, except that LLC should be exclusively reserved for women.

Non-indigenes of the state should be presented with **KEYS** to Akwa Ibom cities, which should be made up of **GOLD** and issued by the following Local Government Areas: Abak, Eket, Ikot Abasi, Ikot Ekpene, Itu, Oron and Uyo.

The attachment of the titles of honour to **Ibom** is because it is a phenomenon that is exclusive to all groups in the state and the attachment of the titles of honour to the **Lower Cross River Region** is that Akwa Ibom State is located completely in the Lower Cross River Region. Other areas of

the Lower Cross River Region include the Cross River South Senatorial District (Calabar and its environs) and parts of Abia and Ebonyi States. Akwa Ibom occupies the largest portion of the Region and, indeed, is completely situated in the region. Upper Cross River Region is the Upper Cross River in which Cross River State's Central and Northern Senatorial Districts are located.

### **PART III**

#### **The Future as the Past and Present of Akwa Ibom State**

Whenever we think of the future of the state we think of the state of Singapore and wish that Akwa Ibom State would borrow a lot from the development plans of Singapore. Singapore is one of the Asian Dragons and apparently a steamy success story of how political will, human and financial capital and high productivity can be combined appropriately to transform a mere colonial Police Station into a splendid modern-day city state. Singapore has a population of 5 million people and a size of 581 square kilometres, the average size of one Local Government Council in southern Nigeria and half in the north. Out of the population figure of 5 million, 3 million are citizens, while 2 million are investors and agents of economic production. Theoretically speaking, Nigeria would contain a total of 1,590 Singapores and Akwa Ibom State would contain tens of Singapores. The country does not possess oil and gas but its annual budget is in excess of \$100 billion as against Nigeria's \$30 billion for 150 million people with oil and gas.

Other shining examples of Singapore include the following particulars: even though it does not have oil and gas, it is the world's third largest oil refining centre, the world's fourth leading financial centre and the world's fourth largest foreign trading centre after London, New York and Tokyo. Singapore is easily the easiest place in the world to do business and at the same time is the freest and most-developed market economy in the world. The country's port is one of the five busiest ports in the world and is definitely

the busiest transshipment port in the international system. Its aviation industry is the second best in the world generating more than \$10 billion annually. Singapore is the world's largest oil-rig producer and it possesses world-class ship building and repairing centres.

As a result of its corruption-free environment, Singapore attracts a lot of foreign direct investment. It possesses the world's tenth largest foreign reserves. The value of that country's Sovereign Wealth Fund is \$395 billion as against Nigeria's \$1 billion with oil and gas. Even though it does measure up to the size of any Local Government Council in Nigeria, Singapore has more than 15,000 multi-national companies from the US, Japan, Europe and Asian countries, notably China and India. With about a dozen world-class Universities and polytechnics, Singapore is a star in the world's educational firmament and 20 per cent of all students in the country are foreign students.

Singapore is today a medical tourism hub that attracts 1 million patients each year and earning through the feat about \$3 billion annually. In general tourism, the country attracts 10 million visitors annually and earns in excess \$10 billion yearly. Singapore is the world's second biggest casino gambling and is home to more US dollars millionaire household per capita than any country on earth; about 16 per cent of all households in the country own a minimum of 1 million US dollars. The Singaporean environment is a splendour to behold; more than 50 per cent of the country is covered with greenery. This makes it to be known also as the Garden City. Singapore as a garden city mocks Nigeria's Port Harcourt environment with oil and gas which is also called the Garden City but which in real terms is neither a garden nor a city. The Singapore skyline unlike Port Harcourt is simply heavenly and the state of infrastructure is quintessential.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the examination of the economic development of Singapore: (1) A determined people do not need oil and gas

to develop (2) Those who possess oil and gas should surpass the giant strides of Singapore.

How can Akwa Ibom State surpass the giant strides of Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan with oil and gas? The answer to this pertinent question is the focus of the next section of the analysis and we shall treat it under three important headings; namely: Economic development, social development and political development.

### **Economic Development**

In the modern world, state capitalism is a concept with deficit principles and particulars; same with *laissez faire* concept. While the former is about state directed enterprises, the latter is about liberalization, privatization and non-intervention in commercial ventures. Over the years, both concepts have been tried in Nigeria and in Akwa Ibom State, too, with sorrows. The new game in town, which produced the Asian dragons like Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore is state-backed capitalism. State-backed capitalism is about the empowering of entrepreneurs through capital to become the pillars of industrialization in any system. Without industrialization in any society, that society cannot ever develop. It is not for nothing that K. M. Barbour asserts that "The factory chimney has mythical values; it expresses a people's success on earth, their ability to cope with the modern world" (Barbour, 1972:359).

Modernity of the state, therefore, is heavily hinged on industrialization. So far, a few sites of medium-range industries can be sighted. These are Quality Ceramics (Itu), Science Park (Itu), Plasto Crown (Uyo), Champion Breweries (Uyo), Pamil Industires (Abak), Asbestonit (Oron), Qua Steel (Eket), International Biscuits (Ikot Ekpene), Sunshine Batteries (Essien Udim), Peacock Paints (Etinan), Seafood Ltd (Oron), AKRUBEL (Itu), Akwa Palm Ltd (Uyo) and Akwa Feeds Ltd (Uyo). These were State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). The Federal establishments in the state are the Nigerian Newsprint

Manufacturing Company at Oku Iboku in Itu, the Ebughi Fishing Terminal at Mbo and the Aluminium Smelting Plant at Ikot Abasi. The only active Multi-National Company is Exxon-Mobil at Eket.

Apart from Exxon-Mobil that is functioning at full capacity, the rest are ailing industries. To be sure, attempts were made to privatize them but none is functioning years after the privatization programmes. Yet, the starting point of the industrialization of the State is to re-visit these ventures and reactivate them. As it is, their common challenge is finance; that is, capital. In Akwa Ibom State, lack of capital is the cause of the perennial ***Etok-Etok Syndrome***, which is bewitching the people and their businesses at all times.

Indeed, there are a number of challenges for industrialists and members of the Organized Private Sector (OPS) in Nigeria. It is even doubtful if OPS exists in the country except contractors are categorized as OPS. Nigerians are very industrious and many are highly skilled but the major challenge is lack of access to capital for investment and economic production. Where few have access to bank loans, the loans are always on short-term basis. This is because of the epileptic nature of the banking system in the country. The short-term loans are mere romance with risks, both for the banks and investors. Therefore, Nigerian banks do not have capacities to drive economic growth and development in the country. Many budding entrepreneurs in Akwa Ibom State have died prematurely because of the risk of short-term loans and the associated challenges of the auctioning of their collaterals and diseases of hypertension and stroke.

Given this state of affairs, Akwa Ibom State should adopt a part of the Taiwanese model where credit was carefully allocated to selected businesses that triggered positive development in the entire economy.

Therefore, the strategic pathway to the reactivation of these industries is for the state government to establish a Consulting Firm to bail them out. The firm may be called the ***Ibom Consulting Group***, which should be

provided with sufficient capital of not less than N10 billion. The Firm should negotiate with the current management of these industries, turn them around for optimum production, and manage them for a decade before handing them over to their owners who should also agree to sell out 45 per cent shares to members of the public.

Once these industries are reactivated, the journey to industrialization of the state would commence. Similarly, the Ibom Consulting Group should be interested in the Federal industries and commercial concerns in the state. To this extent, the state government should position it to play active role in the management of the Newsprint Manufacturing Company, Oku Iboku and the Aluminium Smelting Plant, Ikot Abasi, once the tenure of the current reactivation team expires.

The Firm should strive to partake in all de-regulated projects in Nigeria, including oil and electricity businesses. Though financed by the state, it should be independent and autonomous in operation, management and decision-making.

Apart from the reactivation of the ailing industries, there is need to establish new ones. Again, the strategic pathway of industrializing the state should be through state-backed capitalism. In concrete terms, this means that the Akwa Ibom Industrial and Investment Promotion Council (AKIIPOC) should be reformed and repositioned to champion a new industrial and investment climate in Akwa Ibom State.

The State government should grant AKIIPOC the sum of N10 billion annually to enable it to carry out the mandate of stimulating industrial parks in the state.

Operationally, Investors that deposit 25 percent of the LOAN SUM with AKIIPOC should be entitled to loan. Twenty-five percent of the loan collected from AKIIPOC should be used to build a property in the choice area of the state, say in the Business District of the State or Business Square that should

be established in the Federal Constituencies of the state.<sup>3</sup> This (the property) should partly act as collateral for the LOAN. The tenor of the loan should be 25 years and the interest on it should be 5 percent. This way, an investor can engage in long-term planning to achieve strategic results as against short-termism associated with the current loan policy of banks. Take for example, an investor engaging in plantation farming (say oil palm or coconut) would need years to achieve Return on Investment (ROI). Short - term loans cannot ever turn around fortunes in the agricultural sector, for instance, and create jobs; only long - term loans can.

It is interesting to note that with the strategic package, ever before the business gets started, the Fund Managers; that is AKIIPOC, would have been in custody of 50 percent of the loan value from the 25 percent access fund from an investor and the 25 percent value of the cost of property which in any case should be in the name of AKIIPOC. When the 25 percent access fund is invested in the money market for 25 years, which approximates the tenor of the loan, there would be at least five sources of pay-back mechanisms namely: (a) 25 percent access fund (b) 25 percent value of property which would appreciate over the years (c) interest for 25 years on the access fund (d) monies from rental of property and (e) the value of the business itself. Therefore, even though access to AKIIPOC's money is not supported by collateral, an investor cannot default because monies accruable from the five sources would be more than enough to take care of the loan.

In concrete terms, if an investor requires ₦1billion for agricultural project, he has to access the money with ₦250 million which is 25 percent of the loan sum. AKIIPOC should then invest the ₦250 million in the money market for 25 years on behalf of the investor; it should release ₦250 million to the investor to erect a property in the choice area of the state to the tune of the amount. Thereafter, ₦750 million should be released to the investor for the business proper.

The property should be managed by AKI IPOC until the debt is fully paid and the rentage accruable should be part of the loan re-payment package of the investor. This way, it can be seen that even where the investor does not re-pay the loan from profits from his business, the 25 percent access fund plus the investor's building (of 25 percent of loan sum) plus interests and rents on these sources for 25 years would take care of the principal loan and interests. Even in a situation where the investor completely defaults, the value of his business assets that would be put for receivership plus other sources; namely (a) access fund (b) building (c) interest on access fund from money market and (d) rent on the investor's property managed by the Fund will fully re-pay the loan in 25 years' time.

Stringent conditions should be put in place to access the Fund. Firstly, in order not to make it an all-comers' affair, only six drivers of the economy with trickle-down effects should be sponsored by AKI IPOC and these are:

1. Agriculture
2. Education
3. Health
4. Tourism
5. Industrialization
6. Technology Material Sciences

Secondly, the least amount for investment should be ₦100 million and the highest should be ₦5 billion. Thirdly, the investor's business should be audited by the Financial Intelligence and Monitoring Unit of AKI IPOC yearly until loans are fully re-paid. Fourthly, only corporate bodies or Foundations and not individuals should access the Fund. Fifthly, only Foundations should access the Fund in the areas of education and health. Sixthly, the corporate bodies should sell at least 45 percent of their shares to members of the public after 10 years of operations and by that year too, they should be listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE).

Operationally, investors should pass through five phases as follows:

1. 1 - 5 years: Foundation Phase
2. 6 - 10 years: Consolidation Phase
3. 11 - 15 years: Expansion Phase
4. 16 - 25 years: Re-Payment Phase
5. 26 and above: Ownership Phase

The foundation phase should be the take-off stage which will include the building of property to the value of 25 percent of the loan sum. The consolidation phase will be a period that the success of the business will begin to thrive. The expansion phase will be a period that the business will plough back its profits to improve itself and expand in scope. The re-payment phase will be a period that the business should re-pay its debts. Thereafter, the next phase will be the everlasting period of ownership where the business would thrive unencumbered. At this stage, the property which partly acted as collateral will be handed over to the investors.

Each stage should be well monitored by AKIPOC and the entrepreneurs should not be limited to Akwa Ibomites and Nigerians only.

## **Case Studies**

### **Case Study I: Establishment of a University and Specialist Hospital**

With the AKIPOC Fund, a Foundation may wish to establish a University. With ₦1 billion access fund, it would be entitled to ₦ 4billion. The access fund would be managed by AKIPOC which will release ₦ 1billion to the Foundation for a property. Thereafter, the Foundation would be given ₦ 3billion to establish a University. By the 26th year of its operation, it would get back its property. The same goes for a specialist hospital.

**Case Study II: Airline Business**

Investors in airline business with ₦ 1billion would undergo the same process as the investors in the University/Specialist Hospital Project. If they started with two new aircrafts at the expansion phase they would double the number and at the ownership phase, they would have series of aircrafts plus their property.

**Case Study III: Taxi Schemes/Bus Services**

Five citizens can contribute the sum of ₦ 5 million each to make up the access fund of ₦ 25 million which can be used to start up a Taxi Scheme or Bus Services. Within a period of 25 years, the company which might have started with 10 cars/busses will grow up to 200 cars/buses and employ many citizens in the process.

**Case study IV: Establishment of Oil Palm Plantation**

A registered company could contribute N25 million access fund to get N25 million for property in a choice area of the State and then N75 million for its oil plantation.

**Case Study V: Establishment of Small Scale Business**

About 25 people could register a company and contribute N1 million each to have access to the AKIIPOC Fund for a Small-Scale Business outfit. The company would be entitled to N25 million for a property in a choice area, and then N75 million for his business proper.

**Case Study VI: Hotels/Conference Centres**

Two individuals could partner, register a company and contribute N25 million access fund to be able to get N25 million for a property in a choice area and N75 million for a medium-scale Hotel or Conference Centre, which could be upgraded within one decade to become a Three or Five Star Hotel and or International Conference Centre.

## Strategic Benefits

There are many benefits that Nigeria will achieve through the creation of Development Funds for the states to be accessed by private organizations.

Twelve of such benefits are:

1. Job creation
2. Boost in revenue for the States
3. Reversal of capital flight
4. Creation of the Organized Private Sector (OPS)
5. Development
6. Benefit of Diaspora expertise from the Diaspora
7. Establishment of business districts
8. Creation of wealth
9. Creation of Sustainable Strategic Fund
10. Benefits of Long - Termism
11. Creation and Consolidation of Growth Poles
12. Security and Active Peace

1. **Job Creation:** The strategy will create about 500 (business) concerns, 500 CEOs, GMs and MDs in Akwa Ibom State, stimulate hundreds of thousands of jobs across the state, especially in the service sector. A minimum of 500,000 jobs will be created per year. Without the creation of jobs in the state, all efforts at development will come to nought.
2. **Boost in Revenue for the State:** The creation of jobs will automatically boost the revenue of the state through taxation and this would empower the state to increase the provisions of the public good for the citizens. Indeed, the creation of jobs through AKIIPOC would make the state to be worth more than ₦500 billion in tax each year from the fifth year of the operation of the Fund.

3. **Reversal of Capital Flight:** Nigerians have in excess of \$100 billion in foreign banks and the strategy will be one big opportunity for the money to be brought back for investment in the country through access fund to the Fund. Besides, large amounts of money in Nigeria that would otherwise have been laundered would be used as access funds for investment. That is why access to the Fund should not be limited to Akwa Ibom people only.
4. **Creation of the OPS:** The strategy will create real OPS in Akwa Ibom State which would drive the more the economy in partnership with the state. The greatest beneficiaries would be small - scale entrepreneurs. With just ₦5 million each, five individuals can contribute access fund and float a business and with just N1 million each, 25 individuals can partner and achieve much commercially.
5. **Development:** Job creation and opportunity to expand the state's economy with endless opportunities would result in economic growth and development and higher standard of living for the indigenes. The most strategic benefit would be observed in the all-important area of agriculture, especially plantation farming, which has enormous capacity to employ millions of indigenes of the State. It is possible to use the Fund re-create the magic of the past oil palm economy of Akwa Ibom through the Indonesian example. Malaysia took oil palm fruits from Abak for its oil palm economy and Indonesia later took the fruits from Malaysia; but today Indonesia nets \$13 billion (about N2 trillion) annually from oil palm, which also employs 6 million people. Therefore, the most strategic pathway to the economic development of the State is through its oil palm heritage. And the good news that the Australian variety matures in eleven months and oil palm products are still of strategic value to mankind, especially people in the Western world.

6. **Benefits of Expertise from the Diaspora:** Most Nigerians in the Diaspora are experts in all areas of economic endeavours especially in science and technology. But they have no place in the civil service economy that Nigeria runs and on account of this they are busy assisting other countries in technology material sciences. With strategic Fund to assist them, Nigeria will begin to export vehicles and electronic pieces within a decade of the creation of the Fund.

China is bright example of a country whose technology is pioneered, re-configured and dominated by Chinese who have lived in the Diaspora and returned. China gives them pre-eminent positions even in its command political space because of their resourcefulness. Nigeria's technological advancement lies with its, and in the, Diaspora(s), who also have the capacity to bring companies in their host countries to operate in the country.

Immigrants make up an eighth of US population and they are the ones who founded a quarter of America's technology and engineering firms. Nigerians form a sizeable part of this successful story and that is why they have to be lured through a deliberately-designed financial framework to get the country to soar technologically. The Special Fund from AKIIPOC would empower them financially to replicate technology material sciences in Nigeria. Akwa Ibom should, therefore, take a lead in directing Nigeria to discover itself. That explains why the proposed AKIIPOC Fund should not be limited to Akwa Ibom Indigenes and Nigerians.

7. **Establishment of Business Districts:** The strategic package requires the establishment of Business Districts in each Federal Constituency with investors' property (valued at 25 percent of loan sum). The constituencies would further boost commerce in Akwa Ibom State and create more jobs.

8. **Creation of Wealth:** As the businesses are structured to become Public Liabilities Companies (PLCs) from their tenth year of existence, a lot of wealth would be created through acquisition of shares by the indigenes of the state.
9. **Creation of Sustainable Strategic Fund:** The strategy will create all time *Sustainable Strategic Fund* which would be re - cycled for the present and future entrepreneurs. Even the pool of the access fund in Banks can be used for self-generating and profit-proven projects like the Ikot Ekpene International Market, Jubilee Estates, etc.
10. **Benefit of Long - Termism:** The bane of development in Nigeria is short - termism. Yet short - termism is tantamount to economic wastage and is, in fact, the development of underdevelopment. Without long - term strategic planning which spans a minimum period of 25 years, a quarter of a century, Nigeria cannot develop meaningfully. That is why all concerted efforts at development since independence have not yielded the needed quantum results, but disappointing stories.

Development needs long - term planning and does not respond to the fantasies, foibles and, perhaps, inanities of tenured political officers, especially in a democracy. Where benign and development - oriented despots, like in the Asian Dragons, could use long years in power to embark on successful development projects, in a democracy long - term strategic plans that outlive even the promoters in office, are used effectively. The strategic path to the sustenance of such plans is the creation of institutions to implement the policies and plans. Japan, a developed economy, already has a 50 year strategic plan for industrial and technological giantism.

Akwa Ibom people should not be deluded into thinking that annual budgets, manifestoes of politicians and short term plans would work magic for their state; only long - term plans together with the creation of

effective institutions to drive the plans are the talisman needed for economic prosperity in Nigeria. Therefore, the reformed AKIIPOC path, which is structured to operate for a minimum of 25 years, is the key to overcoming immediate economic challenges in the state.

11. **Creation and Consolidation of Growth Poles:** The strategy will boost the capacities of the Federal Constituencies across the state as they would be direct recipients of the largesse of the State's Strategic Fund through massive investment. Ultimately, they would be turned into growth poles.
12. **Security and Active Peace:** Taken together, Akwa Ibom State will enjoy active peace and security and these would ensure for the country a destination of Foreign Direct Investment to further consolidate the gains of development.

Overall, we want the State Government to step up efforts towards the completion of the ***Ibaka Seaport Project***. It is one project that can change the face of the economy of Akwa Ibom State for better. The next maritime project of the State should be the development and modernization of Ikot Abasi Port "which used to be the second and third leading sea port in Nigeria"(Udo-Inyang, 1985:14).

### **Infrastructure of the Future**

The people of Akwa Ibom State should appreciate the policies of the Attah and Akpabio administrations in creating conurbation around Uyo through the fanning out doctrine. The concrete manifestations of these policies could be seen in the dualization of Uyo – Nwaniba Road, Uyo – Airport Road, Uyo – Ekim Itam Junction Road, Uyo – Ikot Oku Ikono Junction Road, Uyo-Nung Udoe Highway, Uyo – Abak Road, and Abak – Ikot Ekpene Road.

These policies should be encouraged and the following roads should henceforth be given attention in the dualization drive: Uyo – Oron Road (to

the East – West Road End), Nung Udoe – Ubium Road (to the East-West Road End), Ikot Oku Ikono – Etinan – Eket Road with a projection from that Highway (by Afaha Nsit) to Nung Udoe, Abak-Ikot Abasi Road, Ikpa-Road (from Ikot Ekpene Road End) to NNMC Round about at Oku Iboku and Nwaniba through Mbiakong to Calabar – Itu Highway.

The mega projects which should be tagged the ***Golden Jubilee Projects*** should involve the following:

- (1) A four-lane coastal/Circular Road between Ikot Ekpene and Ikot Ekpene. (see note 4).
- (2) Modern Rail Project between Ibaka and Ikot Ekpene (through the Airport) and between Ibaka and Eket. The third line should be between Eket and Ikot Ekpene through Ikot Abasi.

### **Social Development**

Already, the state has instituted free education scheme in Primary and Secondary Schools. This has increased school enrolment in the state. The future implication of the scheme is that within a decade, these pupils and students would be mature for tertiary education. Yet, institutions for tertiary education are few and far between. This being the case, there is need to deliberately plan for the future of these children.

It is proposed here that the state should promote the establishment of more Universities in the state. In the first place, the state should set up seven Foundations to establish and manage the Universities with once-and-for-all grant of N2 billion each. The following Foundations should be set up with the following mandates:

#### **(1) Robert Umo-Inyang Foundation**

This foundation should turn the Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic at Ikot Osurua into a Polytechnic University, which should be called EASTERN DELTA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY. It should be a multi-campus

institution, where the present School of Art and Science at Nung Ukim in Ikono Local Government Area should become a campus of the Polytechnic University. The Polytechnic University should be modelled after the Polytechnic University of Singapore; a University that combines the characteristics of Polytechnics.

The facilities in the two institutions as presently constituted; that is, Ikot Osurua and Nung Ukim, are qualitative and quantitative enough for the University Project. In fact, right now the land and facilities of the two institutions constitute economic wastage.

With N2 billion, the Umo-Inyang Foundation can turn the two institutions into world class universities.

Robert Umo-Inyang, in whose name the Foundation should be instituted, was the First Chairman of Ikot Ekpene Local Government Council and the National Vice Chairman of Ibibio State Union.

## (2) **Mary Slessor Foundation**

The Foundation should use the facilities of the old Secretariat of old Itu Local Government Area at Ntiat Itam and its expanse of land and those of the Mary Slessor Hospital in the neighbourhood of the Secretariat for the establishment of MARY SLESSOR UNIVERSITY, Itu. The Facilities of the defunct Technical College at Ikot Ada Idem should be used as a campus of the proposed University.

Facilities at these three centres – the old Secretariat, the Mary Slessor Hospital and the defunct Technical College – lay waste at the moment. In terms of quality and quantity, their value would be in excess of N1 billion, yet they are not put into productive use. The sum of 2 billion Naira would be enough to renovate them and start a University Project in the centres.

Mary Slessor, in whose name the Foundation should be instituted, was a foremost Christian Missionary from Scotland who quickened the

transition of the Lower Cross River Region from evil epochs into modernity through Christianity and Western Education. She is best remembered as the person who ended the evil practices of the killing of twins and their mothers.

(3) **General Udoakaha Jacob Esuene Foundation**

This Foundation should establish the UNIVERSITY OF EKET at the site of the Government College, Afaha Eket and choose a site at Esit Eket for its Annex Campus.

The unwritten history of the University of Calabar shows that the University, which was modelled after the University of Nigeria (UNN) at Nsukka with a campus at Enugu, ought to have been located in Ogoja and Okobo respectively. The site for the Okobo campus is the area of the Akwa Ibom Airport. But on account of Esuene's love for Calabar, he influenced the University for the South Eastern-State to be established in Calabar, yet the initial site did not have sufficient landmass and therefore needed Annex campus. The site of the Government College at Afaha Eket was chosen for the campus of the University of Calabar but politics did not allow a multi-campus system for the University of Calabar. Instead, overnight enough hectares of land were donated by the Efik Kingdom for the extension of the campus. Therefore, in the political equation, Afaha Eket lost out. Today, the facilities at Afaha Eket could be upgraded to a site for a University and N2 billion for the Foundation will do the magic.

General Udoakaha Jacob Esuene, in whose name the Foundation should be instituted, was the First Governor of South Eastern State which today is made up of Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. He quickened the urbanization and modernization of Calabar, the First Capital of Nigeria and the capital of the then South Eastern State through provision of important amenities like Five Star Hotel

(Metropolitan Hotel), Calabar Stadium, University of Calabar and the Calabar Polytechnic, to mention a few.

(4) **Senator Victor Akan Foundation**

This Foundation should establish **SOUTH-SOUTH UNIVERSITY** at Oron with Annex Campus at Okobo. Even though, unlike the cases of the rest of the proposed Universities, it does not have facilities to inherit from, the sum of 2 billion Naira would be enough to start the two campuses in virgin lands.

Senator Victor Akan, in whose name the Foundation should be instituted, was a mercurial and cerebral industrialist, philanthropist and Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria who made the people of the then Cross River State proud through his personal and public actions and inactions.

(5) **Sir Udo Udoma Foundation**

This Foundation should establish ***Gulf of Guinea University*** at Ikot Abasi with Annex campus at Okorete in Eastern Obolo. The University can start at the site of Sir Udoma's Secondary Commercial School at Ibekwe, which was established in 1956 or on virgin land. The sum of N2 billion would be enough to initiate the University projects.

Sir Udo Udoma, in whose name the Foundation should be instituted, was the arrow-head of the creation of states in Nigeria and easily the father of Akwa Ibom State.

(6) **Niger Delta Foundation**

This Foundation should be instituted to turn the College of Education, Afaha Nsit, into the NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION. It should be a multi-campus institution with Annex campus at Ukanafun.

The University of Education should be modelled after Universities of Education in Nigeria such as Tai Solarin University of Education in

Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State Ignatus Ajuru University of Education in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The Site of the College of Education, Afaha Nsit, has qualitative and quantitative facilities which could be upgraded and strengthened with N2 billion Grant for the Foundation.

(7) **Ibom Foundation**

This Foundation should establish IBOM UNIVERSITY at Ibom in Ikono.

Ibom means many things to the people of Akwa Ibom State. It refers to the legendary figure who led the people from Western Cameroon to Nigeria and at the same time it symbolizes the Mightiest Universe of the people. In a sentence, Akwa Ibom State is of Ibom provenance.

Unlike other Foundations, Ibom Foundation should be instituted with the sum of N5 billion with a view to establishing a model University in Nigeria for Akwa Ibom people.

**Expectations**

It is envisaged that by the time that Akwa Ibom celebrates Golden Jubilee in 2037, all the campuses, including that of the State University at Obio Akpa, in Oruk Anam Local Government Area, would become full-fledged Universities.

Aside from the seven Foundations for Universities in the three Senatorial District, Churches with good facilities for University locations should be inspired to establish Universities in these sites. The state Government should give them a once-and-for-all grant of N1 billion each for this purpose. The Churches and the sites are (a) Lutheran Church with Lutheran High School at Obot Idim Ibesikpo which could establish **MARTIN LUTHER UNIVERSITY**, Qua Iboe Church with Etinan Institute at Etinan, which could host **QUA IBOE UNIVERSITY**; Methodist Church at the site of the Methodist Boys High School Oron, which could start **OIL COAST UNIVERSITY** with

Methodist General Hospital at Ituk Mbang as its University College Hospital; the Catholic Church, which could use its Queen of Apostle Seminary Afaha Obong, Abak to host **CARDINAL EKANEM UNIVERSITY** and the General Hospital at Anua for its University College Hospital and the Anglican Church, which could use its Secondary School at Ntit Oton for its **ATLANTIC COAST UNIVERSITY**.

Grants should not be donated to any Church except Foundations established by the Churches. Such could be the Lutheran Educational Foundation, the Qua Iboe Educational Foundation, Methodist Educational Foundation, Catholic Educational Foundation and Anglican Educational Foundation. As a rule, these Foundations should provide a quarter of 1 billion Naira to be able to access the grant. The access fee should be lodge on behalf of the Foundations, but should be released to them on the day of Matriculation of their first set of students. All such capable Institutions, which have evidently contributed to the social development of the state, should be those that existed in colonial Nigeria in the Akwa Ibom region and had taken firm root by 1987, when Akwa Ibom was created.

Three other Churches in the same category include the African Church which could be empowered to establish **AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY** in Uruan Local Government Area. The Presbyterian Church which could establish **PRESBYTERIAN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA** in the Ikpanya peninsula in Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area and The Apostolic Church which could establish **AKWA IMA UNIVERSITY** at Ikot Oku Nsit at the site of the Apostolic Church Secondary School and Seminary.

Across Cross River State, the State government there should similarly turn the Hope Waddel Training Institute into **HOPE WADDEL UNIVERSITY**; just as it should turn the site of the old School of Basic Studies, Akamkpa into the **NIGER COAST UNIVERSITY**. The site at Mary Knoll College at Abakpa

in Ogoja should be turned into Mary Knoll University; just as it should inspire the establishment of ***BROTHERHOOD UNIVERSITY*** at Biakpan.

With regards to private efforts at establishing Universities and Polytechnics; we are of the opinion that the State Government should have a policy of giving a once-and-for-all grant of N1 Billion to the first private University in any Federal Constituency and half the sum to the first Polytechnic in any Federal Constituency in the State. This implies that Obong University at Obong Ntak should be the first recipient of this gesture, while Uyo City Polytechnic at Uyo and Heritage Polytechnic at Eket should similarly be beneficiaries of the largesse. They are the first two private Polytechnics that are located in two separate Federal Constituencies.

Ideally, all private Universities in Nigeria should be subsidized by the Federal Government and the States in which they are located to the tune of N1 billion each, and half of that sum to private Polytechnics from the two tiers of Government. Such a policy would readily result in the establishment of at least 360 Universities and Polytechnics in Nigeria within a decade of the commencement of the policy.

### **Justification**

In colonial Nigeria, proceeds from palm produce were used to send our sons abroad for University education. The project was justified in the sense that there were no Universities in Nigeria then and there was equally no capacity to establish one. As already noted, this development made the people of the state to be pioneers in attempts to mobilize their people for higher education. Regardless of that feat, Akwa Ibom State is still an educationally-disadvantaged State. This educational underdog image should be changed once and for all with petroleum proceeds.

In addition, there are many facilities in terms of lands and infrastructure to support all of the proposed Universities. As a country, Nigeria does not

have enough Universities for its population as shown in the table below and Akwa Ibom State with high population and high revenue from oil should start now to design a robust educational plan for its willing and capable teenagers and adults.

### **Populations of Selected Countries and Numbers Of Their Universities**

S/No	Country	Pop. (In Millions)	No of Universities
1.	India	1,000	8,047
2.	USA	300	5758
3.	Bangladesh	138	1258
4.	Argentina	38	1758
5.	Indonesia	238	1236
6.	Japan	127	1223
7.	Nigeria	140	117

**Source:** Mkpa A. M & R. A. Gurin. 2010. The Nigerian Educational System and National Development. In: Maduagwu, M. O, Akpuru-Aja, A., Jumaria, I. M. and O. J. Para-Mallam. Eds. **Nigeria's 50 years of Nation-Building: Stock-Taking and Looking Ahead.** Jos:NIPSS: 364

As the table shows, Bangladesh with almost the same population as Nigeria has as many as 1,258 Universities, while Argentina with just a population of 38 million – a quarter of Nigeria's population – has 1758 Universities. In concrete terms, Akwa Ibom with a population of about 4 million needs a minimum of 31 universities; one per Local Government Area, if it wishes to develop speedily more than its peers.

### **Funding**

In terms of funding and sustenance, all the proposed Universities should collect a minimum of N150,000 per Semester as fees. Statistics show that there are about 300,000 pupils and students of Akwa Ibom State origin in

Nursery/Primary, Secondary and Universities who pay a minimum of N100,000 per term in Nursery/Primary and Secondary Schools and N200,000 per Semester in private Universities. Therefore, there are parents and guardians who would be able and willing to pay such amounts as fees to send their children to these Universities. Those who cannot pay can be adequately accommodated by the University of Uyo, a Federal University in the State and the Akwa Ibom State University, a State university which all collect low school fees.

Now that oil revenue is still sumptuous, the Akwa Ibom State Government should empower **Foundations** and **Religious Bodies** with competence and facilities to establish at least twelve Universities in the state, while the deregulation policy on University ownership still lasts. A minimum of N2 billion for the Foundations and N1 billion for the Religious Bodies (with facilities already) would be enough to start the proposed Universities. After all, the 9 new Federal Universities established by the Jonathan administration in 2011 were given take-off Grants of N1.6 billion each. The amount could be released to the Foundations and Religious bodies in phases in the ratio of 50:30:20.

After their establishments, all first-generation General Hospitals should be attached to these Universities as Teaching Hospitals or University College Hospitals in order to attract National and international fundings. These Hospitals are St Luke's General Hospital, Anua, St Mary General Hospital, Urua Akpan, Methodist Hospital, Ituk Mbang, Mary Slessor Hospital, Itu, Immanuel Hospital, Eket, Iquita General Hospital, Oron, Ikot Ekpene General Hospital, General Hospital, Etinan and Mount Camel General Hospital, Akpa Utong. First-class facilities in these health institutions would turn Akwa Ibom State into a health destination. Put differently, first-class medical facilities in these first-generation General Hospitals will promote medical tourism in the state with promises of enhanced State revenue.

Generally, the University system should be used to change the socio-economic contour of Akwa Ibom State. A properly run University with first-class facilities can give the State more revenue than a large scale industry on account of monies from diverse sources such as fees and students' expenditure, especially those that would come from outside the state. Akwa Ibom State can emulate Melbourne, a Province in Australia, which partly depends on its University system for revenue. The Province, which is an equivalent of the State in Nigeria, earns \$5 billion annually from students who are not from the Province.

### **Strategic Benefits**

A University system is an international system where staff and students are seen as international citizens. By their training and operations, they should harbour and disseminate universal ideas and international best practices. The existence of many Universities would assist in the projecting of universal ideas, thereby, enhancing unity in the state.

Apart from the creation of jobs in hundreds of thousands where the workers would pay taxes to boost the revenue of the state, Akwa Ibom State Government would get back in few years into its treasury the amount it would spend through students' daily expenditure. With regards to students expenditure, on average, a University student spends ₦3,000 a week and this means that 20,000 student spend ₦2.88 billion in a year. Therefore, with 20,000, about N60 million would be injected into the economy of the State weekly. Once the figure rises to 100,000, they would inject the sum of about ₦15 billion yearly into the economy of the State. If half of the population of the student comes from outside the State, the situation would be better for the State.

Overall, first-class Universities that are not encumbered by administrative and bureaucratic bottlenecks always have a fair share of the

international mature education market which is worth about \$2.5 trillion. As Nigeria has refused to share in this Fund, Akwa Ibom State should show the way; not through ownership of Universities but by empowering independent Foundations to champion the cause of University education and getting enormous benefits from the endeavours.

One country that has tapped enormously from University education is Singapore. Singapore has about 100,000 foreign students from 120 countries and targets 150,000 foreign students by 2015. On account of its educational rating, about 10,000 Multi-National Corporations and 100 international organizations are based in the country offering students access (for internships and jobs) to the Asian economy. Additionally, there are about 50 world-class Universities from the US and Europe which are setting up collaborative programmes with Singaporean higher institutions. What is more, the Singaporean educational sector contributes about 3 percent to the country's GDP and the country hopes to raise the target to 5 percent by 2015. These are the positive benefits of higher education that Nigeria has been missing over the years.

The greatest strategic benefit would come through remittances from skilful manpower which would be needed outside the country. Diaspora should be a clear source of foreign exchange for Nigeria and a resourceful country should have a quarter of its population in the Diaspora. Akwa Ibom State should therefore use a number of its proposed higher educational institutions to build skill base for the world and as we write, the world economy is in need of millions of experts in various fields of human endeavours, especially in the physical and medical sciences, humanities, education and behavioural sciences. The caveat is that only the most skilful are required and Akwa Ibom State can train many if its educational system is robust and resourceful. Besides, if the Akwa Ibom Universities and Polytechnics turn out highly skilled and globally competitive Nigerians to take

over from the **foreign experts** on whom the country spends ₦ 2 trillion annually, the country would save much to tackle needy economic challenges. Therefore, Akwa Ibom should position its youths to take over from the foreign experts.

Mr Chairman, a University is the proper channel of Foreign Direct Investment. Put differently, a properly managed University is a generator of wealth; indeed, a source of revenue generation. For example, Mary Slessor University would attract funding from the Scottish Government, Martin Luther University from the German Government, Presbyterian University from the Presbyterians of Scotland and the United States of America and the Polytechnic University from the Singaporean government.<sup>5</sup> Akwa Ibom at 25 should take note of this.

For the State to embark on the higher educational projects successfully, it should establish a coordinating Ministry or Establishment to oversee their implementation. Therefore, the **Ministry of Higher Education**<sup>6</sup> should be created from the Ministry of Education or the **Akwa Ibom State Higher Education Commission** should be created and attached to the office of the State Governor. Apart from overseeing the implementation of higher education strategies of the state, the Establishment should constitute itself into the INTERNATIONAL LINKAGE CHANNEL for these institutions. There are several Foundations and Educational Organizations in America, Europe and Asia that exist to assist higher institutions in the developing countries through donations of Academic Buildings, Provisions of Exchange Programmes, Human Resources Development, Scholarship Schemes, Curriculum Development and cash for sundry projects. These monies run into trillions of Dollars and Akwa Ibom State as pathfinders in Nigeria should no longer miss out. Rather, it should first savour these international goodwill before teaching Nigeria, as usual, on how to savour them.

## **Political Development**

In future, Akwa Ibom State should have a political environment that is devoid of rancour, bitterness, hatred and opportunism. That means that there should be the Akwa Ibom State Charter. The idea of the Charter was introduced by Ambassador Professor Okon Edet Uya, an international activist-scholar from Oron. His major thesis is that Akwa Ibom State stands on a tripod of Ibibio, Annang and Oron and power should rotate among these three groups. Power here implies the office of the Governor. To stress further, Uya has persuasively argued that a consideration of this tripod made the Oron nation to wish to remain in Akwa Ibom State instead of opting to cross the Atlantic to be part of Cross River State, when Akwa Ibom was created.

Mr Chairman, this is a very serious thesis that borders on a cry for justice, equity and equality. My response to the thesis is that Akwa Ibom State is constituted by a three-layered tripod; (1) Ibibio, Annang and Oron groups in the main, (2) three Senatorial Districts and (3) three Ibibio-Ibibio groups spread into the three Senatorial Districts. It is possible for the Ibibio-Ibibio groups in the three Senatorial Districts to rotate Governorship among themselves on account of voting strength, but would that make for justice? It is possible to rotate the office among Ibibio in Uyo, Annang in Ikot Ekpene and Oron in Eket Senatorial Districts, and again would that mean justice? Where Ibibio-Ibibio in Eket and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial Districts cannot ever aspire to the highest post in the state on account of special considerations for the Annang and Oron, would that mean justice?

This complex arrangement of the state forces on us the need to look for a framework that would satisfy all. This can only be arranged based on natural attributes and not artificial constructs like the Local government Area of origin of the candidates, Senatorial District or Linguistic groups.

Akwa Ibom State is made up of two families of Afaha and Ibiaku. One must come from one of the two, whether in Annangland or Oron; in fact, almost the whole of Oron families come from the Afaha group. This being the case, the pattern of Akwa Ibom Charter should be that power should rotate between Afaha and Ibiaku. Put differently, once an Afaha is the Governor, the Deputy should be an Ibiaku and vice versa. The same arrangement should involve the offices of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

In all of these arrangements, regards should be given to the particulars of Senatorial Districts and dialectal elements of the state. This is the only way that natural justice, equity and good conscience would be guaranteed.

Ordinarily, Akwa Ibom people should not concern themselves with the **who** question, but with the **what, where, why, when** and **how** questions. The **who** question concerns who is the Governor?; but the other questions concern **what** is the Governor doing with power?; **where** is he deploying resources?; **why** are the policies made?; when does he make the policies and how are they carried out? The who question is meaningless because all the indigenes of the State are but dialectal cousins who come from the same source.

Already, since the time of Governor Attah, to be more contemporary, attempts have been made by the powers that be to spread development projects and infrastructure. Attah was not from Okobo where he located the Airport and never came from Uruan where he located a Five Star Hotel. The projects would not have refused to be located in Ibesikpo-Asutan Local Government Area where he comes from. In the similar vein, Godswill Akpabio is not from Itu which has international market, three flyovers and Specialist Hospital; he is not from Uyo, where the Tropicana is located. The fly-overs would not have collapsed if they were located at Essien Udim. After all, even a rural area like the pre-city nature of Abuja can be turned into modern cities with several fly-overs.

We in the Ibibio Academics Roundtable want unity and political stability in the State, but they should be rooted in justice, equity and equality.

### **Akwa Ibom and Her Neighbours**

Akwa Ibom State is not an Island entirely by itself. Therefore, it has to be interested in events in its neighbourhood. These events resolve around the fourth most largest group in Nigeria, the Bakassi impasse and the Aba-Odukpani Dualization Project.

From the first census through other census exercises, Ibibio people have always been recorded as the fourth ethnic group after Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. According to the Wellink Report of 1957, the population of the Niger Delta was recorded thus:

... The population of this area is 2,649,000 and the following would be the five largest tribes:

Ibibio	717,000
Annang	435,000
Ibo	428,000
Ijaw	257,000
Ogoni	156,000
Efik	71,000

The voting statistics of Akwa Ibom State for 2011 was 1.8 million as against Ijaw's 400,000 at the initial stage and then 600,000, when updated later. From these figures, the claim by Ijaw to be the fourth major group in Nigeria is highly misplaced. Even by the census figure of 1953, Annang was more in number than they (Ijaw) were and it is not known that Ibibioland experienced epidemic which would have reduced its population considerably. But to say the least, the debate of the numbers game "owes much of its longevity to a lack of hard evidence, for conjecture thrives where refutation is impossible, and assertions, if repeated often enough, eventually assumes the dignity and title of facts" Hopkins, 1973:198). The conjecture that Ijaw is the fourth largest group in Nigeria is fallacious and good enough refutation is possible with

historical documents and hard facts of census and voters registration particulars. The overall census figure of 1953 for Nigeria was 31 million and Ibibio-Ibibio alone was 717,000. Annang was 435,000.

On the Bakassi issue, we lament the inability of the Federal Government to take decisive issue on the matter. The blunder of the country at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) should be compensated for by extra measures to protect the fundamental and economic rights of the people of Bakassi. Cross River State may lay claims to ownership of Bakassi but we know that majority of the indigenes of the place are of Ibibio extraction.

Today, three options are opened to Nigeria on the Bakassi issue. First, the Greentree Agreement must be re-visited and all the parties should comply with its provisions. Second, while the first option is pursued vigorously, Nigeria should approach the United Nations and demand plebiscite in the peninsula to give the inhabitants the opportunity to determine where to belong between Nigeria and Cameroon and what to do with their lives. Third, where the first two options fail, Nigeria should create in Bakassi a sovereign state that would be loyal to it. If this happens, Bakassi would not be the first example of such a state that would be excised from recalcitrant neighbours. History is replete with several cases of such states that are created as buffer states. The clearest example is the state of Bangladesh that was created by India out of Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the question of the resettlement of Bakassi indigenes out of Bakassi Peninsular should not arise at all. They should remain there in their traditional environment but be protected by Nigeria, Cameroon and the international community; failure to do that should inspire Nigeria to take to the third option. The conscious efforts to remove them from their ancestral land and resettle them in strange areas inside Nigeria is an attempt to destroy evidences that Nigeria could use to protect those who may not move out after all.

Overall, Nigeria should avoid creating Kashmir between her and Cameroun tomorrow by treating decisively the Bakassi challenge today. If it does not do this, decades down the line, Bakassi would prove a tough nut for the two countries to crack.

While Nigeria should be pressurized to do the needful, the Akwa Ibom State Government should establish the Akwa-Cross Fund to assist the indigenes of the Bakassi in Bakassi. Monies for the Fund should come from the hundreds of millions of Naira that Cross River State ought to have benefitted from Akwa Ibom State if it did not pursue again the case of the 76 oil wells.

Mr Chairman, it has come to our notice that the Akwa Ibom State Government has undertaken to dualize the Aba-Ikot Ekpene – Itu – Odukpani Calabar Road, which would benefit the three states of Abia, Akwa Ibom and Cross River. We are further informed that the Federal Government has given approval for its construction since they are all Federal Roads. It takes courage, love and vision to embark upon this mega project, which promises to open up Akwa Ibom State and enlarge its coast as a destination of choice.

Even though, the Federal Government would someday re-imburse the state, we commend the Governor of Akwa Ibom State and urge him to assign the project to several competent Civil Engineering Firms in order to deliver it on time.

### **Akwa Ibom State and National Politics**

Mr Chairman, it is very unacceptable that Ibibio can be the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria but are not very visible in national politics. In the Presidency, for instance, there is no name of note from Akwa Ibom, whereas there are unaccountable big names from the Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and several other ethnic groups. We now urge the Elders of Akwa Ibom State to have an audience with the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and underline this challenge.

Additionally, the leaders and Elders of the State should mobilize the indigenes of the state for higher goals at the national level. This should include national offices in the political parties and nationally elective and appointive offices. We should at all times be interested in the Presidency and Vice Presidency in all the political parties that have presence in Akwa Ibom State.

Essentially, if President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan who is from the Niger Delta is interested in re-election, Akwa Ibom State should support him whole heartedly, but if he is not, Akwa Ibom State should be interested in the Vice Presidency of his political party.<sup>7</sup> The contingency plan should start now. The plan should include the prospects of getting positions of note in the National Assembly. Only two Chairmanship positions chaired by Senator Ita Enang in the Senate and Hon Kenneth Archibong in the House of Representatives are not good enough for us. May I use this opportunity to urge our thirteen members of the National Assembly to double their efforts in representation and legislative performance.

### **Agitations for the Creation of More States in Nigeria**

It is noticed that in contemporary Nigeria, almost all ethnic groups are agitating for the creation of new States in their regions. I am of the view that more states have meant more woes for the country. The oil money is used for nothing other than to service multiple bureaucracies across the country at the expense of capital development. Besides, since the creation of state exercise began in 1967, the most feasible symbol of states is the modernization of state capitals in terms of dualized highways and street lights. Outside these areas, the states have no meaningful impact or feature of development to show for their existence.

On a more fundamental note, it should be registered that only 9 states in the Niger Delta produce 99 percent of the revenue of the country. This implies that 27 others produce less than 1 percent because the 9 states are

also part of the 1 percent. Paradoxically, the Niger Delta as a region is the least developed in the country. Therefore, if Nigeria desires more states and states are seen as agents of development, the country should first of all create a new state in each of the 9 Niger Delta states as of right before embarking on the exercise in the other 27 states.

It would amount to parasitism of the worst form if states are not created in all the Niger Delta states and are considered in other states that so far have no capacities for independent development and existence. Therefore, Nigeria should either create a state each in the existing states, or desist from creating any.

The leaders of thought in Akwa Ibom State should not be disinterested in this national charade in case it turns out to be real. In the same vein, the leaders of thought in Cross River State should not be disinterested in the charade as well. They should demand for the creation of Ogoja State. Since the COR State Movement in colonial Nigeria, Calabar Province has had two states; Cross River and Akwa Ibom States, Rivers Province has had Rivers and Bayelsa States, but Ogoja Province has not had any state. Nigeria's sense of justice, equity, and equality in any matter bordering on creation of more states should start in the Ogoja front.

In any case, demands for creation of more states from areas that do not contribute any dollar to the Federation account should be seen as national charade.

### **Calls for Secession and the Imperative of National Conference**

The outlandish nature of the political economy in Nigeria has made a number of prominent Nigerians and groups to openly call for, or wish for, secession. We, in Akwa Ibom, had travelled this road before as noted already in the first part of this Essay. But we pursued our grievances through normal political and legal channels until parts of our demands were granted; though not all,

because if more states are created in Nigeria we deserve another one and as a matter of right and justice, Ogoja State should be created in our neighbourhood.

Be that as it may, incessant calls for secession show how deep-seated is the sense of injustice in the Nigerian Federation, which should be tackled before 2014, the year that the Centenary Anniversary of the last amalgamation exercise shall be celebrated. However, I do not support the convocation of a Sovereign National Conference (SNC). Rather I want the NASS to be the main platform for a reformed Nigeria. Indeed, the sovereign National Conference approach is a recipe for confusion and anarchy because there would be no acceptable formula on how to get the representatives for the Conference. Since Nigeria has National Assembly (NASS) in place where every Nigerian is represented, the NASS should turn itself into ***Nigeria Reform Commission*** and the Nigeria Governor's Forum (NGF) and Chairmen of the Association of Local Government of Nigeria (ALGON) in each of the States of the federation should be co-opted into the Commission. This would be a kind of supper Commission (Supercom).

The Senate President and the Chairman of the Governor's Forum should be joint Chairmen of the Commission and the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the National President of ALGON should be joint Vice Chairman.

The Commission should give Nigeria a future with a strategic roadmap away from vulnerable systems that abound everywhere in the country. Politically, there is dire need for devolution of power and the need to streamline relations between the three tiers of government with the Local Government Areas being completely independent and autonomous.

Additionally, the issues of creation of more states and Local Government Areas which stick out like a sore thumb should be discussed and laid to rest. But it should be emphasized that Nigeria in its present size does

not need more states and certainly does not need more Local Government Areas.

Frankly speaking, no group in Nigeria should engage in political miscalculations that would cause the dismemberment of Nigeria. We reject such moves as they would bring untold hardship to Nigerians and at the same time embarrass Africa and the black race. Such an encounter only promises to make the living to envy the dead. That is not progress and development.

Therefore, to settle all unsettled issues, the Nigerian Reform Commission should be convoked by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria within the shortest possible time and it should be given six months to come up with a road map for justice, peace, security and development in Nigeria.

The current attempt to review the 1999 constitution is a good deed by the NASS, but regrettably it is not the right thing to do. Nigeria needs a new Constitution which should be a product of negotiation and consensus; outcomes that should ultimately be sealed by REFERENDUM.

In the history of constitutional development in Nigeria, no Constitution that was imposed on the people was ever reviewed; the Clifford Constitution of 1922 was not reviewed, but was replaced by the Richards Constitution of 1946; the Richards Constitution was not reviewed but was replaced by the Macpherson Constitution of 1957; the Macpherson Constitution was not reviewed but replaced by the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954, and the Lyttleton Constitution was not reviewed by the Constitution of 1958/1959, which formed the basis of the Independence Constitution of 1960. It is, indeed, the 1960 Constitution that can or should be reviewed or an entirely new one but certainly, not the 1999 Constitution. The best that one can do with the 1999 Constitution is amendment; not review. Amendment is a technical thing which does not need the showmanship exhibited so far by the NASS and the Presidency.

The 1999 Constitution was an imposition by the military and the current attempt by the NASS to amend it should be seen for what it is: a mere stop-gap measure. Matters arising from the measure will still continue to haunt Nigeria. Therefore, Nigeria should do the needful by empowering the NASS and adjunct political bodies to go for a new constitution; the Jonathan Constitution. The Jonathan Constitution should replace the Abubakar Constitution because the latter is an imposition in principles and in fact; in the manner of colonial Constitutions. Even the 1999 Constitution was not a review of the 1979 Constitution but a new Constitution altogether. Nigeria should honour its history and use same as a guide in whatever she does in order to be great.

Having said that, it should be noted that if groups, by their utterances and actions, allow the Nigerian history to crack, the people of Akwa Ibom will never be a part of their political scheming. But it should be emphasized here that those seeking for the dismemberment of Nigeria are still living in the past; the part that is highly unproductive and unrewarding. Nigeria is too amalgamated to be de-amalgamated now. All that is needed to exorcise from the country the ghost of threats of secession is a new political economy that is a product of negotiation and founded on justice, equity, equality and fair play.

### **Tenure of Political Executives**

Not all democracies are the same in form, style and operations. Even the presidential system of government is not practised in a uniform manner. For instance, whereas the Vice President of the US is the President of the US Senate, in Nigeria, there is the office of the Senate President which is not shared with the executive branch of government. Additionally, in the US, if the office of the Senate is vacant in most states, state Governors are constitutionally mandated to nominate somebody else for replacement; in Nigeria, replacement is effected through bye-elections. In tenure of office, some countries give their chief executives two maximum terms of 5 years

each while some give two maximum terms of 4 years each. Yet others give unlimited terms. In the legislative houses especially National Assemblies, some give their Senators 9 years while some give 5 years and yet some 4 years. In all of these fixtures, the nations were responding to their domestic challenges and political expediency.

In the light of the political experience in Nigeria on the practice of democracy for more than a decade without interruption by undemocratic elements, the country should begin to embark on reforms on the observable missing links and weak elements in the system. One of such areas concern tenure of executive and even members of the legislature. Where the President should retain a maximum of two terms of 4 years each, the tenure of the state Governors should be fused to a single tenure of 6 years and that of the Chairman of the LGCs should similarly be fused to a single term of 5 years. For the legislature, the present tenure should be retained except in the case of the Senator who should be elevated to a 5 year tenure in the first instance.

It is noticed that the ***second term palaver*** is a major cause of mis-governance in Nigeria and wrong policy choices. As soon as the President or Governor is sworn into office, he starts to set an agenda for the second term and these come with a lot of compromise and unnecessary coalition and consensus politics laced with rentier practices, patronage and clientilism. The central fear in being his own man on the part of a typical governor or LGC boss is that he cannot step on toes and expects to get a second term ticket, yet stepping on toes is a major part of decision-making which politics symbolizes. It is the character of Nigerian politics that dictates this pattern and what compounds the situation is poverty. To get over the problems and challenges especially at the state and local government levels, which are keys to national development, these two tiers of government should have a single term system.

The tenure of the President need not be fused into a single term. This is because the presidency is politically located in the sphere of *intermestic* - a combination of the international and domestic arenas - unlike the leadership of the other tiers of government. As a symbol of the nation in democratic practice, it should retain the conventional practice of two terms. Therefore, the President as both the international and domestic actor should not be equated with purely domestic actors which the Governors and Chairmen of LGCs symbolize.

There could be the fear of tyranny on the part of the electorate about Governors once they get elected. Besides, arguably a single tenure may not give the electorate the opportunity to punish and replace non-performing and weak Governors, but there are several other ways that the electorate can even up. For one, there is still the fear of impeachment where the electorate can urge their representatives in the States Houses of Assembly to embark upon and remove incompetent Governors. Secondly, the electorate should be constitutionally mandated to recall any incompetent elected political officer who is found to be weak or corrupt. Thirdly, and, indeed, the most credible means to check - mate any political officer in a democracy; not just the Governors, is to follow the American example and make the courts a central pillar in governance.

One exceptional feature of American democracy is the depth of conviction among the citizens that "they have certain basic rights and that the best way to make sure they get their rights is not to wait for executives, legislatures, and bureaucrats to do the right thing but to file lawsuits to force public officials - and other private individuals - to honour their rights". (Almond *et al*, 2008:724). Writing further on the matter, Gabriel Almond *et al* (2008:724) note:

*The litigiousness of Americans - that is, their tendency to file lawsuits against government officials and other private citizens for violating their rights - gives the court a central*

*role in America. American legal scholar Robert Kagan argues that litigation in the United States accomplishes (at a much higher cost) the same things that European nations accomplish through regulation. American has pursued this different path most likely because of the notion, espoused by populists like President Andrew Jackson, that the common man has enough wisdom to supervise everything, even his government.*

Once Nigerians begin to supervise the governments - the three tiers of governments - democracy would be deepened and no government official, whether President or Governor or even Chairman of LGCs, would take the people for a ride. But because they allow these officials to approach governance like Emperors, the fear is palpable about a single tenure for Governors, for instance.

As a developing country in which the centre of action in terms of development lies in the states and LGCs, there is need for a single term for Governors and Chairmen of LGCs in order to allow for proper planning and timely execution of projects.

Overall, second term policy is un-African as Village Heads, Paramount Rulers, Obong, Emir, Obi and Oba do not govern their traditional territories through **terms** but for life. If democracy requires tenure system, there is need for flexibility in Nigeria, especially in the lower tiers of governance. Afterall, the **letters** of the 1999 Constitution on tenure of Chief Executives of tiers of government in Nigeria underline two separate terms, but the **spirit** of the Constitution underlines two fused terms.

### **Akwa Ibom and National Security**

I am of the strong opinion that the contemporary security challenges in Nigeria require urgent decentralization of the Nigeria police and that specifically means that all three tiers of government should have their police establishments. In addition, all higher educational institutions in the country should have their police establishments. The same should apply to

international, national and regional banks that have branches in all states in the country plus the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

The conditions under which State, Local Government and Police for Establishment should exist are:

- (1) Only states that are willing and ready should establish police bodies. Even in the First Republic, only the Northern and Western regions established regional police bodies; in the Eastern region there were no police other than the Nigeria Police Force.
- (2) The maximum number of police personnel for the states should be 10,000 and for the Local Government Areas, 1000.
- (3) Tiers of government, other than the Federal, that are ready and willing to have police establishment should constitutionally be made to devote a minimum of 5 percent of the annual budgets for the establishments.
- (4) No Governor, whose state operates state police should be entitled to immunity, whether of civil or criminal nature in the constitution.
- (5) The new arrangement should start in May 2015 with new political players in State Houses.

### **Akwa Ibom State and the NDDC Arrangement**

As noted already, the NDDC is an offshoot of the Willink Commission Report. But it should be noted that the Willink Commission Report did not recommend the creation of a Development Board for the Niger Delta Region; an arrangement which later transformed into the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), the OMPADEC and lately the NDDC. The Willink Report specifically called for a Development Board for the Ijaw people. This was to be the first experiment. For other areas, it called for the Development of Special Areas.

The relevant parts (section 26, 27, 28 and 29) of the Report read:

*We were impressed, in both the Western and Eastern Regions, with the special position of the people, mainly Ijaw, in the swampy country along the coast between*

*Opobo and the mouth of the Benin River. We were confronted, first, with their own almost universal view that their difficulties were not understood at headquarters in the interior... (see Recommendation 26).*

*This is a matter which requires a special effort and the co-operation of the Federal, Eastern and Western Government; it does not concern one Region only. Not only because the area involves two Regions, but because it is poor, backward and neglected, the whole of Nigeria is concerned. **We suggest that there should be a Federal Board appointed to consider the problems of the area of the Niger Delta.** In this we would include the Rivers Province without Ahoda or Port Harcourt and would add the Western Ijaw Division (see Recommendation 27).*

*We suggest that there should be a Vice-Chairman appointed by the Federal Government, one representative of the Eastern Region Government and one of the Western Region Government, preferably Ijaws, together with four representatives of the people of the areas, who might conveniently be one from the Western Ijaws and three from the Eastern Ijaws, who would be chosen by local bodies... (see Recommendation 28).*

*We suggest that constitutionally it would be necessary to place on the concurrent list a new subject, which might be "The Development of Special Areas". It would be open to the Federal Government to announce in the Gazette that a certain area had been classified as "Special" and from that moment special plans for its development would become a Federal as well as Regional responsibility. The Board would be required to submit its annual reports to each of the three Governments, Federal, Western Region and Eastern Region, and it would be necessary to make provision of time in each House for discussion of the report of this Board (see Recommendation 29).*

The use of the indefinite article **the** should be noted in the excerpts in the second quotation. Equally, the composition of the proposed Board as suggested by the Commission's Report should be noted in the third quotation. Therefore, the Federal Board was to be restricted to the Ijaw country, but as

it turned out to be, the Balewa Government established a Pan-Niger Delta Development Board and that was the beginning of the problems of development in the Niger Delta. Subsequent governments in Nigeria followed the ill-fated Pan-Niger Delta approach to the development of the Niger Delta. This explains the basis of the Babangida OMPADEC and the Obasanjo NDDC.

To reverse the trend and begin to implement the recommendation of the Willink Commission Report, which we see as a strategic pathway to the development of the Niger Delta, we are of the opinion that all Federal Constituencies in the Niger Delta should be declared as ***Special Areas*** and as the Commission rightly recommended: ***from that moment special plans for their development would become a Federal as well as a Regional (STATE) responsibility.*** This approach would readily turn all these Federal Constituencies into GROWTH POLES within a decade.

For Akwa Ibom State, it means that, both the Federal and Akwa Ibom State governments would deliberately develop its 10 Federal Constituencies into 10 GROWTH POLES. In statistical terms, it may mean the contribution of ~~N~~2 or ~~N~~3 billion per government; that is, the Federal and State Governments. This means that each Federal Constituency would have a budget of ~~N~~4 billion or ~~N~~6 each year for developmental purposes. Would the Willink strategic pathway not be better than the current NDDC approach? I think it would and should be speedily considered as each Federal Constituency would prioritize its needs and chart its unique developmental course.

In practical terms, the annual value of the budgets of both the NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs is N300 billion. If the amount is shared among the 82 Federal Constituencies of the Niger Delta, each would have N3.7 billion yearly. If this amount was shared to the Federal Constituencies in the Niger Delta since 2000 AD that the NDDC was created, each would have spent approximately N45 billion by today. This implies that each Federal

Constituency in the Niger Delta would have been turned into a GROWTH POLE by 2010, a decade after the creation of the NDDC.

Therefore, the NASS should take a critical look at the aspirations of the Niger Delta and begin to call for the implementation of the Willink Commission Report which promises to develop the region socially and economically within a decade, away from the shenanigans of the current NDDC approach. At best, the NDDC should be turned into a **CLEARING HOUSE** to remit the amount meant for it to the Federal Constituencies and each Federal Constituency should have a Board (a kind of Local Administration; not Local Government) to administer the Fund and direct the pattern of development in the Constituency.

May I use this opportunity to state that the terminating point of the East-West Road across the Niger Delta States is Obudu in Cross River State and not Oron as understood by the Nigerian leadership. To this extent, we wish to see the Road extended to Obudu for at least two compelling reasons: (1) The East-West Road is meant to traverse all the States of the Niger Delta from End-to-end. For Cross River State, end-to-end means Calabar to Obudu. (2) The Concept of the Niger Delta as given by the Willink Commission Report starts from Obudu to the Ijaw Country. Willink (1958: 33) had in his Report on the fears of minorities in Nigeria prior to independence described the location of the Niger Delta thus:

*To the east of Ibo plateau lies the valley of Cross River, which is fed by streams from the Cameroons as well as from the plateau – this forms a broad vertical strip containing people who are not Ibos. Across the South of the Region, from the Niger in the West to the mountains in the East, stretches a broad horizontal belt of swamps, creeks and low-lying country. These two strips of the coastal belt and Cross River Valley together make a rather sprawling reversed 'L' which encloses the Ibo plateau. In the swamp and creek country of the South West there is*

*an area in which the predominant tribal group is that of the Ijaws, who in this Region number about a quarter of a million; we have already referred to the 80, 000 Ijaws of the Western Region. Towards the mouth of the Cross River are the Efiks, who number 71, 000, and the Ibibios of whom there are 747, 000. Further north on the Cross River are many tribes, intermingled in a confusing multitude which we shall not attempt to particularize. We heard of languages spoken by no more than 50, 000 people; there are 11 major languages and some 300 of lesser importance in the Region.*

From the Willink's description of the area, it can be deduced that the vertical strip runs westerly from the borders of Cross River state with Benue, Ebonyi, Abia, and including Akwa Ibom, states and the reversed "L" referred to in the Report runs from Obudu in the North of Cross River State near the Cameroun Mountain to Oron in Akwa Ibom State with the perpendicular base provided by Akwa Ibom, Rivers and Bayelsa States. The area "across the South of the Region from the Niger in the West" is the old Rivers state made up of today's Bayelsa and Rivers state.

Furthermore, the core Niger Delta is divided geographically into three zones; namely: The Eastern Delta, Central Delta and Western Delta. The Eastern Niger Delta is made up of Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, the Central Delta is made up of Bayelsa and Rivers States, while the Western Delta is made up of the Delta and Edo States. Other zones cannot benefit from the East-West Road from end-to-end and we in the Eastern Delta are marginalized. Justice should, therefore, be done by projecting the Road to Obudu. The leaders of thought in the two states should take note of the anomaly.

### **Akwa Ibom State and the Imperative of Alternative Resource Control Doctrine**

The State of Nigeria is partly a heritage of Akwa Ibom State. Once the area was colonized by the British, the resources for its development came from palm produce that were supplied by the Akwa Ibom Area. These resources inspired Nigeria's first Amalgamation exercise in 1897, when Benin Kingdom was annexed to the Niger Coast Protectorate. In 1906, the Lagos Colony and Protectorate, which until now was administered from Sierra Leone and later from the Gold Coast (Ghana) on account of lack of finance for administrative purposes, was annexed to the Niger Coast Protectorate and called the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. In 1914, the resources of Akwa Ibom State were needed to bail out the North which was in perennial financial distress. In contemporary times, the burden of the political economy of Nigeria is borne solely by the Niger Delta with Akwa Ibom State having the highest stake.

It would appear as if this history is not appreciated by Nigerians, hence the resurrection of the on-shore/off-shore dichotomy by a section of Nigeria; an issue which has since been resolved. The current argument on the on-shore/off-shore dichotomy is silly and does not need much response except that the people of Akwa Ibom State will not be disinterested in an attempt to implement it; it shall only be implemented when the indigenes of the State are completely annihilated by those who conceive the idea and initiate the process of such implementation.

However, as the forebears of Akwa Ibom State people laboured selflessly to create Nigeria in their own image in terms of today's federalism, creation of states and local government areas and the sharing of their resources, there is need for Akwa Ibom people of the present to design a new formular of resource control that would benefit them and Nigeria as well. This then is the concept of functional resource control which is equally an alternative resource control doctrine.

Mr Chairman, the Federal Government should declare the country's Crude oil and Associated gas as ***national commons*** to be shared equally by

the constituent states. This implies that the 13 percent derivation for the oil producing states should be thrown into the dustbin of history. Of course, Crude oil and Associated gas should be declared as **national commons** based on the following conditions(Akpan, 2012):

1. 10 percent of Crude oil and Associated gas proceeds, in dollars, should be given to the Local Government Councils (LGCs) where these resources are produced. Host communities should be defined as the LGCs where oil and gas are mined. By law, the ten percent revenue should be used for capital projects only in the host communities. These LGCs should, through such funds, be turned into little Monacos. Monaco is an official sovereign state on the Cote d'Azur (French Riviera) with an area of 1.98 square kilometres, a population of 35,986 and a GDP of \$215,163 – the world's highest GDP nominal per capita. All oil producing LGCs in Nigeria should stand out as little Monacos, but within sovereign and independent Nigeria. By the way, Nigeria can contain 467,000 Monacos.
2. Whereas proceeds from Crude oil **alone** should be shared among the tiers of government and strategic institutions, proceeds from **Associated gas** should be saved at all times as the Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) after 10 percent in dollars are remitted to LGCs where gas is mined.
3. Whereas Crude oil and Associated gas should be declared as **national commons**, solid minerals, liquified gas and condensate should be owned exclusively by the states where the resources are located, not by Government of Nigeria (GoN) anymore, and 10 percent of proceeds of production should similarly be given to the LGCs where the minerals are located. If the states are allowed to own, regulate and exploit solid minerals, liquified gas and condensate, while the GoN collects tax on these sources, in addition to crude oil and Associated gas that it would

solely regulate, the states and by implication Nigeria would be paradise for investors and an average annual investment per state would be in excess of \$5 billion, which is in the region of N1 trillion.

4. The LGCs that host mineral sites should constitutionally be empowered to set environmental and green accounting standards for mining operations within their areas.
5. The percentage of derivation should be increased to a minimum of 50 percent in order to make the Nigerian economic environment competitive.
6. The 68 provisions in the Exclusive Legislative List in the 1999 Constitution should be reduced considerably and given to the constituent states and the LGCs.
7. The three arms of the GoN should be decentralized; each should be located in Central, Northern and Southern Nigeria. Indeed, Calabar, the first capital of Nigeria, should be made to host the Headquarters of the National Assembly (NASS).
8. Corporate Headquarters of oil firms operating in Nigeria should be re-located to the Niger Delta; Exxon-Mobil to Akwa Ibom State, Shell to Rivers State, Agip to Bayelsa State, Chevron to Delta State, etc.
9. VAT should be collected by individual States and shared with their LGCs; the GoN should not partake in it any longer.
10. All states should be entitled to \$1 billion from the foreign reserves for special developmental projects. The value of Nigeria's foreign reserve today is \$44 billion.
11. Proceeds from crude oil should statutorily be used for capital budgets of all the tiers of governments in Nigeria; recurrent expenditures of the tiers of governments should be based on non-oil proceeds and taxes.

12. Calabar and Lagos Island should be entitled to N1 trillion each from the GoN as compensation for hosting Nigerian Capital in both colonial and post-independence Nigeria.
13. A minimum of N1 trillion should be set aside by the GoN for search for oil and gas in the northern region of Nigeria.
14. Extra revenue from the declaration of Crude oil and Associated gas as national commons should be used by non-oil producing states in only three key areas of economic development, namely: Agriculture, Tourism and Solid Minerals.

It is worth noting that Nigeria has four oil basins with only one, the Niger Delta basin, being given serious attention at the moment. Three other basins are the Lake Chad basin which stretches from the Republic of Chad into Borno, Yobe and Bauchi States in Nigeria; the Benue Trough which covers states of Benue, Nassarawa, Kogi and Niger; and the Rima basin, which stretches from Niger Republic into Nigerian states of Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara.

The Republics of Chad and Niger which share these basins with Nigeria have since discovered oil and gas in commercial quantities in the own sides of the basins; Nigeria ought not to go empty-handed in its own sides of the basins.

With a grant of N1 trillion to search for oil in Northern Nigeria, the prospects of oil find in this region would become brighter and the Nigerian economy would be better for it.

### **Remarks**

The declaration would require constitutional amendments to accommodate conditions under which Crude oil and Associated gas become national commons. The Amendment of the relevant Sections of the Constitution can be done within 2012.

There is nothing in logic, historical experience (as the cases of the Niger and Chad Republics show) or even geological properties of some states in Northern Nigeria to assume that oil and gas cannot be found in Northern Nigeria. Niger and Chad (which have oil and gas) border Northern Nigeria and share same geological characteristics.

What could be the implication of the new regime for the Niger Delta States, the only region that provides economic life-line for Nigeria? Once these states control their Condensate, Liquefied gas, Solid Minerals and VAT solely and get additional resources from the other twenty seven states, which would now have some resources to bring to the centre for sharing, unlike the present situation that they bring zero figure, those in the big league like Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Delta and Bayelsa will have a minimum of ₦1 trillion for their budgets, while the rest will have a minimum of ₦500 billion. In the case of Rivers State, for example, the annual value of its LNG at Bonny is \$5 billion; which is about ₦800 billion; yet Rivers State has never had budget of ₦500 billion. Same with Bayelsa State whose LNG at Brass is worth \$5 billion annually. For Lagos state with large population, VAT alone means a minimum of ₦1 trillion for its annual budget.

The reality analysis of the new regime for the non-oil states is that they will have a minimum of ₦500 billion for their annual budgets. Therefore, a declaration of Crude oil and Associated gas as national commons would mean the unlocking of boundless economic opportunities for the states of Nigeria; in addition to oil-producing communities which would go the **Monaco** way. All of these are the embodiments of functional resource control; resource control with a human face. We should empower the non-oil states and begin to share in their resources as well; especially mineral resources that they have in abundance.

In practical terms, if Akwa Ibom State owns its Condensate, Liquefied Natural Gas, Solid Minerals; controls its Road taxes and VAT and share from

the proceeds of Solid Minerals of other states today, it would augur well for the State; more than the present regime. The overall value of these sources for the State is in excess of N1 trillion yearly as against the current capacity of N300 billion annually. Therefore, Crude Oil and Associated gas should be exchanged for the new economic regime.

## **PART IV**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Mr Chairman, I have attempted in this document to present factual and incontrovertible issues about Akwa Ibom State of yesterday and today. From these facts, Akwa Ibom and its immediate environs are Ibibioland because they are made up of two families of Afaha and Ibiaku, but over the years some groups from the same source of migration have distanced themselves from the Ibibio appellation. They are right in their actions but these actions have not eroded the past and specifically their history. The past is like a shadow; it cannot ever be divorced from the individual, the living individual. Again, attempts to separate themselves from the appellation of Ibibio does not make us not to be linguistic cousins anymore. We are from one source. Tradition, culture, names and language bear out this statement. The facts of oneness and sameness made Akwa Ibom to give Nigeria so much in the past. The particulars of these characteristics should continue in order to unite us to reap abundantly from the Nigerian Commonwealth. Those who still want to be called Ibibio should go by the designation of Ibibio-Ibibio; that is, core Ibibio group.

From the examination of the first two periods of our history, we have found out that our Governors are led by the spirit of the Ibibio State Union in terms of provisions of goods and services to the people. None is maniacally discriminatory. Therefore, all should endeavour to consign to the dustbin of history the rough edges of political instability. We should discountenance the

who question in governorship but increasingly be interested in the what, why, when, where and how questions as examined already. All of us in the state come from one source and speak mutually intelligible dialects. May be in this direction the State Government may help the people of the state to re-discover themselves by instituting either in the University of Uyo or Akwa Ibom State University a Centre for Akwa Ibom Studies. There is no doubt that these studies will point toward one conclusion: that most villages across the three Senatorial Districts of the state are mere replication of many villages in the State. Outside the State, the studies would reveal the fact that Afaha people who in the main are Ibibio people are found in Abia, Rivers, Cross River, Benue and Ebonyi States in Nigeria, and between Cameroon and South Africa, as indigenous populations.

Mr Chairman, the Ibibio Academics Roundtable has come to stay as a think tank in Akwa Ibom State. Our onerous task is to use our research findings to shape the state and the consciousness of its people in order to have peace, security and development. We are not political jobbers and cannot kow-tow to any individual or group; we can only kow-tow to research findings. For these reasons, we have presented our findings with regards to the future of the state and imperatives of higher goals in national politics, which if implemented would jumpstart development in the state. In national politics, we should root out for functional resource control that would put trillions of Naira in the hands of our government and people as against the current situation of only billions in order to savour quantum leap in our aspirations as a people. We should remember that oil is a wasting asset. While its value lasts, we should do all we can to get the best from it. This is the true meaning of alternative resource control doctrine which we should sell to, and negotiate with, other Nigerians. We do not want to see oil as the Coal of the Enugu environment which nobody is interested in today because it is no longer a revenue generator.

On the strategies for the quantum leap of the State into an orbit of development, we have directed the State to try the option of state-backed capitalism, where it would empower human drivers of economy to drive the economy of the state through the AKIIPPOC pathway. With a strategic plan of 25 years, backed by AKIIPPOC Funds, Akwa Ibom State would develop materially, create jobs and turn the ten Federal Constituencies into growth poles within a decade. On the social sector, strategies of its development have been advanced together with the end-state. These strategies will lead to the establishment of at least a dozen more Universities in the State. Universities are purveyors of new culture and channels of investment and economic development. Akwa Ibom State as the largest recipient of oil proceeds in the country should start a socio-economic revolution in Nigeria with strategic thoughts and plans that are backed by oil. It is only the products of this revolution that can sustain the State when oil no longer matters for Nigeria. And that period is fast approaching.

Mr Chairman, I cannot end this discourse and treatise without appreciating the time and resources of members that altogether have given us direction. It is my honour to institute Fellowship in the Roundtable to honour resourceful members and its supporters. This is the Fellow of the Ibibio Academics Roundtable (FIAR). May I have the honour to convey on Monsignor Professor Sylvanus Udoidem, Professor Enefiok Udoh, Professor Ekong Ekong, Dr Uduak Essiet, the Chancellor of the Roundtable, Dr Aniekan Brown, the Registrar and all pioneer members of the Roundtable the Fellowship of the Roundtable. Professor Udoidem presented the First Public Lecture which was chaired by Professor Ekong Ekong and Professor Enefiok Udoh was the Rapporteur-General. The Registrar will work out the details of their investiture.

May I also have the honour to institute the title of Emeritus Dean for Deans of the Roundtable who distinguish themselves to the extent of keeping the title as honour, even after they leave the office.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your audience. May God Bless Ibibioland, Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria.

## Notes

1. The COR Movement had **Wings** (branches) and their leaders who should be honoured by the present beneficiaries of Akwa Ibom State. Members of the **Chiefs' Conference** were Obong of Calabar, Edidem Ededem Archibong V, Chief Ntuen Ibok and Chief Akpan Akpan Udo of Ikot Abasi, Chief Udo Ekong and Chief Sampson Udo Idiong of Abak, Chief Ama of Eket, Chief Thompson Udo Nsuk of Itam-Itu, Chief Robert Umo-Inyang of Ikot Ekpene, Chief Ekpenyong Udo Ekong of Uyo and Chief J. D. Imeh of Etinan. Prominent members of the **Women's Wing** were Mrs Hannah Etudor of Calabar and Miss Brown of Port Harcourt. Prominent members of the **Youth Wing** were Chief Andrew Bassey of Calabar, Mr O. J. Eminue of Oron, Mr Inyang Akpan Brown of Etinan, Hon A. G. Umoh and P. E. Ekanem of Itu, Mr J. A. Etuk-Ube and Chief B. U. Ukpong of Ikot Ekpene, Chief E. E. Uquak, Mr E. U. Akpan and Mr. M. U. Udoh of Abak, Mr. C. A. Akpan and Mr. Timothy Ikpe Etukudo of Eket, Mr S.R. Okoko, Chief W. E. Ufot and Mr D. A. Udoh of Ikot Abasi. Most of these individuals were persecuted by the NCNC government in the old Eastern Region and many more were victims of Biafran mis-adventure.
2. It should be noted that Ikot Ekpene was a commercial centre in colonial Nigeria where raffia dolls, bags and piassava were exported to Britain, Ireland and South Africa. Piassava, for instance, were always needed as they were used in the manufacture of brushes and other household items. Therefore, even before the Local Government was created in 1951, the town had acquired international commercial image since the 1930s.
3. All Federal Constituencies in the state should earmark a large portion of landscaped land at their Headquarters for Business Districts.

4. The Highway, which is the main, should be coastal should pass through the following Federal Constituencies: (1) Ikot Ekpene through Obot Akara (2) Ini/Ikono, (3) Itu/Ibiono, (4) Uyo/Uruan Nsit Atai/Ibesikpo-Asutan (5) Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Udung Uko/Urue Offong-Oruku, (6) Eket/Onna/Esit Eket/Ibeno, (7) Ukanafun/ Oruk Anam (8) Abak/Etim Ekpo/Ika (10) Ikot Ekpene/ Essien Udim/Obot Akara. Etinan/Nsit Ibom/Nsit Ubium Federal Constituency is not located along the Coastal/Circular Route, but it should be compensated for through dualized highways across it to Eket, Oron and Ubium. If the roads in two Federal Constituencies are constructed within a term of a Governor, by the Golden Jubilee year in 2037, the entire length of the Golden Jubilee Road would be completed.
5. Even Councils of Christian Knights and Dames, Council of Elders, Mens' Fellowships, Womens' Fellowships and Youths' Fellowships in the Churches would tax themselves through the proverbial tithe system and donate Lecture Theatres, Academic Buildings and Hostels for the Universities. Wealthier Christian Fellows would WILL some of their property to the Universities.
6. Delta State has Ministry of Higher Education to oversee its 13 Tertiary Institutions.
7. Possible Personalities for the Post: From Eket Senatorial District are two individuals; a former Senator and current Ambassador, from Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District are sitting Governor and serving Member in the House of Representatives and from Uyo Senatorial District are a former Senator and serving Senator. Any of them and others who already have national clout can be thrown up for the post of Vice President.

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