

*July 1, 2007*

IPAI Caretaker Committee Meeting

Introduction

The Igbere Progressive Association International, Inc. Caretaker Committee second emergency meeting was on July 1, 2007. The meeting was scheduled to start at 1:00 PM Pacific Time, 3:00 PM Central Time, 4:00 PM Eastern Time (USA), and 9:00 PM London Time. This 2nd emergency meeting just like the other IPAI meetings was conducted by means of the free "telephone conference services." Mike Awa arranged the free telephone conference for the Caretaker Committee (CC).

Like always, Mike Awa dialed in promptly for the meeting, followed by Peter Imaa, Barry Kalu, Chuck Oko, Esse Esse, Udemgba Igu, Okorie Ezieme, Kalu Ogbureke, and Ugwa Ogbureke. Leon Ibeka joined the meeting around 1:40 PM Pacific Time.

The meeting was called to order around 1:18 PM Pacific Time by the Chairman, Ugwa Ogbureke, who also said the meeting's opening prayer.

Roll Call

A quick roll call was taken and the members present at the meeting were as follows:

1. Mike C. K. Awa - Texas
2. Peter Anyaogu Imaa - California
3. Barry Kalu - Texas
4. Chuck Oko - Texas
5. Esse N. Esse - Tennessee
6. Udemgba (Udy) Igu - California
7. Okorie Ezieme - California
8. Kalu Ogbureke - England (London)
9. Ugwa Ogbureke - Georgia
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10. Leon Ibeka - New York (joined the meeting around 1:40 PM Pacific Time)

Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman, Ugwa Ogbureke thanked the CC members who dialed-in to participate in the crucial and important 2nd emergency meeting. He stated that decisions to be made by the CC must be based on thorough and constructive deliberations because the "Caretaker Committee cannot disappoint the Igbere people." Also, the Chairman commented on the events of the past week regarding the memorandum of understanding (MOU) sent to California. The chairman indicated that the President of IPA California did not sign the MOU as requested by the CC. Therefore, CC ought to perform its duties on behalf of Igbere following the unfolding events with respect to the convention.

Further, Ugwa noted that the CC's emergency meeting of June 17, 2007 was remarkable, and of historical proportion. It was after the meeting that the MOU was sent to California for signing. The MOU sent to California by the Chairman on behalf of CC was ignored like the previous correspondences. Consequently, the "Plan B," which was voted and adopted by CC in that June 17, 2007 Meeting came into play. The CC had to decide in the current meeting if the convention will still hold this year (2007) and if so, decide on a new venue for the convention. He brought to the

attention of the committee the fallout regarding the convention and the successive emails that were being circulated or sent to many Igbereians in Diaspora. From the Chairman's perspective, the meeting was supposed to be a "one agenda" meeting. The CC would have to decide what to do, and the next CC's communiqué to Igbere must be clear, concrete, and straightforward.

#### June 17, 2007 Emergency Meeting Revisited

Udemgba Igu seized the opportunity to thank all the CC members for their important votes during the June 17, 2007 Emergency Meeting. He principally thanked Peter Imaa and Ugwa Ogbureke for their votes during that meeting. As a result of the votes of the above members, California was given another opportunity to work with the CC such that Igbere could have a peaceful convention in Los Angeles, California. However, the MOU was not signed but ignored. Udy stated that the CC must continue to move forward to do the Igbere people's business.

Ugwa wanted the committee to decide if the convention would still hold this year (2007), and whether it would still be the same time (Labor Day Weekend). Chukwu Oko suggested that the convention should take place this year and in Atlanta, Georgia.

#### Email from IPAC President to CC Chairman

Okorie Ezieme spoke about an email from Emma Ollawa (President, IPA California) to the Chairman of the Caretaker Committee. The email was to inform the Caretaker Committee of the changes in California and the election of Okorie Ezieme as the new Chairman of the California Convention Planning Committee. He (Okorie) narrated the events that took place in California that led to California not meeting the deadline with respect to the signing of the MOU. He said that California had no qualms regarding the legitimacy of CC. He equally talked about the meeting he had with Esse, which they (Okorie and Esse) agreed to invite Emma Ollawa to the July 1, 2007 Caretaker Committee's Emergency Meeting. Okorie read a letter supposedly written by Emma Ollawa to Okorie to excuse Emma from the CC's meeting.

Ugwa reminded Okorie that the email from Emma Ollawa, which he mentioned was more or less an acknowledgement for the receipt of the MOU and the accompanying letter from the CC. The email had nothing to do with the specific request from CC. The request from CC specified that the President of IPA California sign the MOU and fax it back to Ugwa before the deadline. The changes in California should not prevent Emma Ollawa (the President of IPA California) from signing the MOU. Moreover, if California needed more time to deal with the MOU, either Okorie or Emma Ollawa could have requested more time from the CC. Instead the MOU was ignored like the other correspondences sent in the past to the President of IPA California. Ugwa also pointed out that he was not aware of the invitation extended to Emma Ollawa by Esse and Okorie for Emma to participate in the committee's emergency meeting, which was going on at that time.

Esse explained that his discussions with Okorie were geared towards giving people second chances for peace. He thought that if IPA California President signed the MOU even as late as the time of the discussion with Okorie, there was a good chance for the members of the committee to listen to him (Emma) during the meeting. Nevertheless, the MOU or something in place of the MOU was not signed and sent to the committee for consideration. Esse made it clear that the invitation to Emma Ollawa to participate in the meeting was his idea, and the invitation was not from the CC.

Mike Awa at this time thought that the committee was "taking two steps forward and three steps backwards." In short, he wanted the CC to move forward by selecting a new venue for the Igbere Convention since that was the main purpose of the meeting. Barry Kalu made it clear that he was not happy with California because of the unsigned MOU by the deadline. He said that the CC would not be faulted for taking a firm decision to move the venue of the convention to a different location. However, Barry wanted the committee to consider salvaging the convention venue in California. If California could come up with something tangible and unequivocal to assure the CC of California's willingness to work with the CC, maybe the committee may reconsider California.

Chuck Oko concurs with Mike Awa's stand, and suggested that CC should decide on a new venue for the convention. He said that it could have taken about two (2) minutes to sign the MOU if California wanted to work with CC regarding the convention. Udemgba Igu thought also that the committee was digressing from its mission of that day, which was to select a new venue for the convention. He pointed out that California had been given all the chances to work with the CC but California ignored all those chances. Consequently, the CC should select a new venue for the convention.

Okorie Ezieme explained further that Emma Ollawa (the President of IPA California) said that his "counsel" advised him not to sign the MOU. Kalu Ogbureke from London, England thanked the committee for its work in his absence (Kalu was in Nigeria during the last emergency meeting). He then associated himself with the decisions of the CC to date. Kalu passionately stated that peace and harmony could return to Igbere by means of the "rule of law" based on the attainment of some benchmarks. Further, the President of IPA California failed in his duties towards his people according to Kalu. Judging from the email Emma Ollawa sent to the Igbere people, it did not appear that California was ready to host Igbere for the convention. He concluded by saying that the committee should select a new venue for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Igbere Convention.

#### Phone call from Emma Ollawa

Okorie Ezieme interrupted the discussion and announced that Emma Ollawa was on the phone and wanted to dial-in to "say hi to the Caretaker Committee." Esse wanted Emma Ollawa to be allowed to the meeting. Other members of the committee did not like the idea because of the serious debate going on then. There were back and forth among members regarding what the committee should do. The Chairman decided that it was not the right time for Emma Ollawa to be invited to the meeting. He referenced the efforts he (Ugwa) and others made two days (Friday) before the meeting. Chief Peter Agwu Uche of New York intervened and spoke to Emma Ollawa and also to Ugwa that Friday regarding the issues surrounding the convention. Also, Ugwa spoke with Emma Ollawa asking him to sign the MOU and send it back to the CC, which Emma said he would not sign because of the advice of his counsel. That notwithstanding, it did not appear that the intervention of Chief Uche and his talks with Emma Ollawa yielded any dividend. The committee continued with its deliberations.

Leon Ibeka was also of the opinion that the convention should be moved to a new location unless they were other people in California who could take over things from Emma Ollawa and host the convention as originally planned. Leon's current stand about the change of venue was based on all he heard during the meeting, especially the extra efforts and gestures made by Ugwa, the Chairman of the CC to Emma Ollawa in order to encourage him to work with the CC. All those efforts were either ignored or rebuffed, which pointed to the fact that Emma Ollawa did not want peace. Peter Imaa spoke passionately about the initial goodwill and sincere efforts of Californians regarding hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Igbere Convention. He pointed out that only a handful of the members of

IPA California decided not to work with the CC right from the start. Unfortunately, these members of IPA California imposed their will on others. If not, California would have worked with the CC right from the start to have a successful convention in Los Angeles. He recalled his efforts as the first Chairman of the Convention Planning Committee to get CC involved early in the planning, but Emma Ollawa and company rejected those efforts.

Motion No. 1 and committee vote

Chukwu Oko made the first motion, which the committee voted on eventually. The first motion was as follows: The IPAI 2<sup>nd</sup> Igbere Convention in Diaspora should take place this year's (2007) USA Labor Day Weekend. Esse Esse seconded the motion. There was no counter motion to the Chukwu Oko's motion. The Caretaker Committee voted on the motion made by Chukwu. The vote tally was 10 Yes votes to none in favor of the motion. As matter of fact, all the ten (10) committee members present at the meeting voted to have the convention this year during the US Labor Day Weekend (September 1 and 2, 2007).

Motion No.2 & No. 3 and the committee votes

At this juncture, Chukwu Oko made another motion to have the 2<sup>nd</sup> Igbere Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. Mike Awa seconded Chukwu Oko's 2<sup>nd</sup> motion.

Okorie Ezieme made a counter motion, which stipulated that the 2nd Igbere Convention should continue to be in Los Angeles, California. Barry Kalu seconded Okorie's motion. Ugwa read a letter sent to the Caretaker Committee from Emeka Ejieke, the Interim President of the IPAI Southeast Chapter regarding the intention of the SE Chapter to host the convention if California could not.

The committee was set to vote on the two motions made by Chukwu Oko and Okorie Ezieme respectively. Members were either to vote for Venue No. 1- Atlanta, Georgia or Venue No. 2 - Los Angeles, California. The vote tally was as follows:

Mike Awa, Chukwu Oko, Esse Esse, Udemgba Igu, Kalu Ogbureke, Ugwa Ogbureke, and Leon Ibeka all (7) voted for Venue No. 1 - Atlanta, Georgia.

Peter Imaa, Barry Kalu and Okorie Ezieme all (3) voted for Venue No. 2 - Los Angeles, California.

By a majority vote of 7 to 3, the Caretaker Committee decided that Atlanta, Georgia, USA would be the new venue for the 2007 2<sup>nd</sup> Igbere Convention in Diaspora.

MOU to be sent to Atlanta

The Caretaker Committee mandated the Secretary, Peter Imaa with the task of sending the same MOU that was sent to California to Atlanta Georgia for signing. If Atlanta signs the MOU, then other things (logistics) essential to the hosting of the Igbere Convention will then be in motion. Mike and Chuck promised that Texas would be willing to help Atlanta to plan, organize and host the convention. Kalu Ogbureke asked Atlanta to be in constant touch with the CC in order to work as a team to coordinate all efforts necessary to achieve a successful convention in Atlanta.

Ugwa stated that if and when the MOU was signed by Atlanta, then it would be scanned and circulated amongst all Igbere people. The Caretaker Committee must remain transparent in all its deliberations and actions. At this time, Kalu Ogbureke from London signed off from the meeting.

*Matters Arising*

Mike Awa thanked all the committee members for their efforts and participation in the meeting. He made it clear that there was nothing personal against California regarding the convention, but that CC must do the right thing for Igbere. He reminded people everywhere to be mindful of whom they elect as their leader because that leader would be the one to represent their interests at all times. Barry Kalu also thanked the members of the committee for the meeting. Barry especially thanked the Chairman, Ugwa Ogbureke for his professionalism throughout the tough times and during the emergency meetings. Following the nasty emails that were being circulated, Chukwu Oko suggested that the voting records of all members of the committee be posted online for all Igbere people to see. Udemgba Igu thanked members of the CC for their hard work. He noted that spouses of Igberians from other places would appreciate that "this is Igbere at its finest."

Esse said that he believed in second chances and in peace. He equally reminded members that the decisions made by the committee would require sacrifices. Leon Ibeka thanked the CC for its resoluteness. More especially, he thanked the Chairman, Ugwa Ogbureke for his strong leadership. Peter Imaa thanked members of the CC for their sincere contributions to the work of the CC.

Okorie Ezieme stated that the Caretaker Committee had spoken. No matter his own personal views, Igbere had spoken and that he would abide by the decisions of the CC. He went further to stress that "we should always let consensus guide all our decisions. It has to be majority rule and never to allow one or two people to decide for us." His prayers were that "we should be democrat in all that we do, and then let the majority rule."

Ugwa Ogbureke concluded the meeting by thanking the committee members for their dedication to do Igbere's business. He particularly appealed to Okorie Ezieme, Peter Imaa, and Udemgba Igu, all from California to support the Atlanta convention despite the missed opportunity by California. However, he regretted the personal attack emails being circulated, which insinuated that Ugwa was after the money California was supposed to realize from the convention. There was nothing personal against California, but the CC had to leave a legacy that Igbere people would be proud of.

Mike Awa moved for adjournment of the meeting, seconded by Chuck Oko. The meeting came to a close around 4:20 PM Pacific Time.

*Members Absent From the Meeting*

The following members were absent from the Emergency Meeting of July 1, 2007:

Elijah Kalu - Maryland

Juliet Erinma Mbonu (nee Ogwo) - Washington D.C./Maryland

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