

THE CONSTITUTION AND BY- LAWS OF THE IGBERE PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL, INC.

ARTICLE I

NAME, PURPOSE, AND PRINCIPLES

The Association shall be known and addressed as **IGBERE PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL, INC. (IPAI)**

PURPOSE

The purpose for which the Association is formed is as follows:

- A. To promote charitable, educational and scientific activities, and to develop and operate community-based services for Igbere people. The Association will use methods consistent with the organization's non-profit, charitable, educational and scientific purpose as the directors may advise from time to time, all for the purpose of securing for the people the same basic rights as all other citizens of the world.
- B. The Association pursues the stated purpose in compliance with the following statements of philosophy:
 - 1. To promote unity and solidarity among all members.
 - 2. To encourage and support development and progress of the community.
 - 3. To work towards better quality of life in Igbere and the community or residence by providing such amenities like healthcare, potable water, electricity, roads, scholarship and sports, etc.
 - 4. To promote mutual cooperation and respect amongst members of the Association.
 - 5. To promote the welfare of the members and support each other when conditions and events call for such support.

All members of the Association, in pursuit of the purpose stated in Article I, solemnly affirm and declare their adherence to the following principles:

- 1. The equality of all members.
- 2. The right of each member to lawfully express himself/herself freely without fear of reprisal.
- 3. Respect for the rule of law and for the universally accepted democratic principles in the discourse relating to the affairs of the Association.
- 4. Peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiations, mediation and reconciliation.
- 5. Respect for the decisions of the Association and of its properly constituted governing authority.
- 6. Affirmation of basic objectivity in all deliberations of the Association.
- 7. The chapter organizations (including prospective new chapters) are the backbones of IPA International. These chapters will continue to function as independent entities within state laws (nation) in which they are incorporated, and they will inclusively and exhaustively support the efforts and activities of IPAI.

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

- A. All Igbere sons, daughters, and wives who are domiciled overseas shall be entitled to nominal membership of the Association. Such membership is a privilege automatically accruable to all indigenous Igbere persons by virtue of birth or marriage.
- B. All members who are current with their annual membership dues within their IPAI Local Chapters and who have paid their one time enrollment fee of \$50.00 (subject to change) to the IPAI shall be considered active members. To be current with dues, each member must not owe more than three months dues. Irrespective of the one time enrollment fee to IPAI, members may still be considered non-active if they owe three months past dues to their Local Chapter. A member may also be classified as inactive based on his/her Local Chapter's WRITTEN by-laws provided that such aspects of the by-laws do not conflict with provisions of the Association's constitution and by-laws. In the event of such conflict, the Association's provision shall supersede that of the local chapter.
- C. Honorary membership may be conferred to non-indigenous Igbere persons who have taken special interest in the affairs of the Association and have made substantial contributions in the advancement of the causes of the Association and Igbere people.

ARTICLE III

Section 1: Admission of new members

Admission to the membership of the Association is open to all indigenous Igbere persons who are 18 years and above as stated in ARTICLE II-A. Membership enrollment shall be accomplished when prospective members or other members familiar with their desire to enroll request that they be enrolled in their local chapters and proceeded to pay their one time \$50.00 (subject to change) registration fee to IPAI of any chapter organization of their choice. The virtue of distance or location of residence may grant admission to a prospective person who by situation beyond his/her control has no access to a local chapter.

Section 2: Registration and Dues

There shall be an initial registration fee of \$50.00 (subject to change) by all members of IPAI, payable upon admission. Other financial contributions for the maintenance of IPAI shall come from the members in form of annual dues of \$120 per member. The \$120 dues should be payable via the member's local chapter. The local chapter shall in turn remit the annual dues from its members to the International Organization (IPAI) in not more than two yearly installments. The Executive Committee from time to time may recommend increase or decrease of members' annual dues and registration fees subject to approval by a simple majority of the general members.

ARTICLE IV

RIGHTS, DUTIES, AND DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

Section 1: Rights/Duties of members

- a) All active members of the Association shall enjoy equal rights and duties.
- b) All active members of IPAI shall have the privilege of making motions, voting, seeking or holding office, serving on the committees and participating in the business activities of IPAI.
- c) An honorary member is not eligible to vote, hold office or serve in committees. Honorary member shall not be required to pay membership fees.

- d) All members pledge themselves to observe the principles outlined in Article I.

Section 2: Discipline of members

- a) Any unruly behavior (fighting, disrespect of the president/each other) by members will attract a fine of \$50.00.
- b) Any members, who say, write, disseminate or cause to disseminate articles or words in order to defame, damage or falsely accuse another member, shall pay a fine of \$500.00. The affected member shall file a complaint against the offender before the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall take a swift action to investigate and establish that the alleged offensive act (s) had occurred. The offender must be given an opportunity to defend himself/herself. If the offender is found guilty, he/she shall pay the stipulated fine within seven days. Failure to do so shall result in suspension of the offender from IPAI for a period of six months and subsequently expelled if he/she has not paid the fine after the six-month suspension.
- c) No local chapter of IPAI shall hold meeting, party, convention or any other type of event and/or activity at the same period that the IPAI is holding its biennial convention. Any local chapter that violates this rule shall pay a fine of \$5,000 to IPAI. All the officers of the offending local chapter shall pay fines of \$500 each. Should the local chapter or its officers fail to pay the said fine within 30 days, the local chapter and/or officers shall be suspended from IPAI until such a time as they pay the fine.

ARTICLE V

DEATH OF A MEMBER

In the event of death of an active member of the Association:

- a) The President shall notify all members.
- b) The Association shall be actively involved in helping family members and friends of the deceased to arrange for the burial overseas or transporting the remains of the deceased member to Igbere.
- c) If an active member dies, the organization shall donate \$1,000 to the bereaved family.
- d) If an immediate family member (child, mother or father) of an active member dies, the organization shall donate \$300 to the bereaved family.
- e) The President shall also appoint a committee from the deceased member's Local Chapter to visit with the family to express condolences on behalf of IPAI.
- f) In the event of death of non-member or inactive member, the President shall appoint members or a committee (see b) to visit with the bereaved family, NO ASSOCIATION FUNDS SHALL BE EXTENDED TO THE FAMILY OF NON-ACTIVE MEMBER.

ARTICLE VI

STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1: Names of Standing Committees

The Association shall accomplish its purposes through the following standing committees:

- A. Executive Committee

- B. Finance and Fund-Raising Committee
- C. Project Planning Committee
- D. Membership and Outreach Committee
- E. Cultural and Social Committee

Section 2: Provisional Committee

In the event that the need arises, the President of the Association shall appoint active members of the Association to serve on special provisional committees whose objective shall be to deal with issues that are not covered by the standing committees indicated in Article VI, Section 1. Any provisional committee shall function for a specified period after which it shall be dissolved.

Section 3: Appointment of Members of the Provisional Committees

It shall be the responsibility of the President of the Association to solicit for volunteers to serve on the provisional committees after giving due consideration to the expressed preference of active members to serve on the committee of their choice. However, the President shall appoint all or the rest of the committee members when the number of volunteers is not enough to constitute a provisional committee.

ARTICLE VII

FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF COMMITTEES

All committees shall function for a maximum of two terms of two years each.

Section 1: Executive Committee

- A. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Publicity Secretary, the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, the Provost, and the Local Chapter Presidents.
- B. The Executive Committee shall be the principal administrative organ of the Association.
- C. It shall be the chief legislative and policy-making branch of the Association.
- D. The President or members of the Executive Committee, however, shall pass no laws or by-laws governing the IPAI unless such laws, by-laws or rules are approved by a simple majority of the chapter organizations or by at least a simple majority of members at the general meeting or convention.
- E. The Executive Committee shall subject to the provisions of this charter, discuss matters of common interest to the IPAI with a view of harmonizing the general policy of the Association. It may, in addition, review the structure, functions and acts of all the committees.
- F. The Executive Committee shall approve the annual budget by at least a simple majority vote of its members.
- G. The Executive Committee shall administer the Association's budget and appropriate its funds.

Section 2: Finance and Fund-Raising Committee

- A. The Finance and Fund-Raising Committee shall act as the principal budgeting organ of the Association.
- B. It shall investigate and prepare the budget for the following year.
- C. It shall identify means and ways of enhancing revenues for the Association.
- D. The Financial Secretary and the Treasurer shall be ex-officio members of this committee.
- E. The Finance and Fund-Raising Committee shall have not more than five members.

Section 3: Project Planning Committee

- A. The Project Planning Committee shall have the responsibility for developing plans for the projects of the Association.
- B. It shall assess and prioritize IPAI projects.
- C. In cooperation with Finance and Fund-Raising Committee, it shall develop strategies for implementing the projects.
- D. The Project Planning Committee shall have not more than five members.

Section 4: Membership and Outreach Committee

- A. The Membership and Outreach Committee shall have the responsibility for recruitment of new members and shall compile a directory of all Igbere people overseas.
- B. It shall have additional responsibility of encouraging participation of members in all affairs of the Association.
- C. The Membership and Outreach Committee shall have a minimum of five members.

Section 5: Cultural and Social Committee

- A. The Cultural and Social Committee shall promote Igbere culture.
- B. The Cultural and Social Committee shall be actively involved in organizing IPAI conventions, end of year parties and general meetings.
- C. The Cultural and Social Committee shall have a minimum of five members.

ARTICLE VIII**OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

(Note: The pronoun "He" used in this document is inclusive and gender neutral)

- a) The officers of the Association shall comprise of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Publicity Secretary, the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, the Parliamentarian (Provost), and the Local Chapter Presidents. In addition to other specific requirements stated in the following articles, all elected officers of the association shall be permanently domiciled outside Nigeria for at least six months of the year.

- b) The candidates for the Executive Committee namely the President, Vice President, Secretary, Financial Secretary, Publicity Secretary, Treasurer and the Provost shall be sponsored by the candidates' local chapters through simple majority votes of the local chapter members present at a meeting. The local chapters shall be as recognized by IPAI and these candidates shall be nominated and presented by the local chapter presidents or their representatives for election at the IPAI biennial convention. In the event of a candidate without a local chapter, the nearest local chapter to candidate's residency shall adopt the candidate. Candidate shall not be adopted by a local chapter that is not the candidate's local chapter if already a member of a local chapter or suspended by his or her local chapter.

Section 1: **PRESIDENT**

- a) The President shall be the Chief Executive of the Association and an ex- officio member of all committees.
- b) He shall be regarded as the leader of and the spokesperson for the Association.
- c) He shall summon and preside over all general, special, or emergency meetings of the Association. The President shall also be the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.
- d) He shall create such Ad Hoc Committees as may be necessary to carry out non-policy matters. He shall be accountable to the Board of Directors.
- e) He shall be of good moral character by law and must be a financial active member of the Association.
- f) The President shall not be a member of the Board of Directors and will not be responsible or influence the selection of its Chairperson. He shall recommend the award of honorary membership to the Board of Directors.

Section 2: **VICE PRESIDENT**

- a) The Vice President shall be the chief assistant of the President and is next in line of succession and authority to the President.
- b) In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall assume the role and power of the President.
- c) He shall be of good moral character and must be a financial active member of the Association.

Section 3: **SECRETARY**

- a) The Secretary shall be the recording officer of the Association and the custodian of its records and property, except those specifically assigned to others, such as the Treasurer's book.
- b) Specific duties of the Secretary include taking minutes of all meetings of the Executive Committee, as well as all minutes of the general meetings of IPAI.
- c) The Secretary shall prepare/handle all correspondences as directed by the President, the Board of Directors or the general assembly.

Section 4: PUBLICITY SECRETARY

- a) The Publicity Secretary shall be responsible for disseminating information about the Association and shall be the publisher and editor of the newsletter.
- b) He shall have the responsibility of informing members of any scheduled meetings.
- c) He shall be involved actively in organizing the Association's convention and general meetings.
- d) In the absence of the Secretary, he shall assume the role of the Secretary.

Section 5: FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- a) The Financial Secretary shall be the finance and fiscal officer of the Association and ex-officio member of the Finance and Fundraising Committee.
- b) In these capacities, he shall be responsible for budget planning and shall have a good working knowledge of book keeping and financial reporting.
- c) He shall be required to prepare and publish regularly the financial statement of the Association's newsletter.
- d) He shall be responsible for receiving and disbursing funds on behalf of the IPAI. To this extent, he shall be responsible for the Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable and shall transfer all funds to the Treasurer for deposit within 48 hours of collecting such funds.
- e) In the absence of the Secretary and Publicity Secretary, he shall take minutes of meetings.

Section 6: TREASURER

- a) The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of, and be responsible for all funds of IPAI and deposit all such funds in the name of IPAI in such banks or depositories as shall be selected by IPAI.
- b) He shall receive and provide receipts for monies due and payable to IPAI from the Financial Secretary; disburse or cause to be disbursed the fund of IPAI as approved by the Executive Committee and directed by the President.
- c) He shall keep and maintain adequate records of accounts and business transactions, including IPAI assets, liabilities, receipts, and disbursements. In conjunction with the President and the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer shall be a signatory to all IPAI financial instruments including checks, and shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance and Fundraising Committee.

Section 7: PARLIAMENTARIAN or PROVOST

Shall maintain proper decorum and ensure applications of the rule of order adopted by the Organization during all meetings.

Section 8: LOCAL CHAPTER PRESIDENTS/ COORDINATORS

- a) Local Chapter Presidents shall act as liaison officers between the Executive Committee and the general local chapter membership.

- b) They shall maintain contact with members in their chapters ensuring that they are current with the deliberations and activities of the Executive Committee.

Note: IPAI Chapter Organizations may select as many officers as they see fit to manage the affairs of the Local Chapters.

ARTICLE IX REMOVAL OF OFFICERS

- a) An Officer may be removed from office (for cause) by the affirmative vote of a simple majority of the members in good standing.
- b) Initiative for such removal may be either by a Motion of the Board of Directors or a Petition signed by at least one third (1/3) of members in good standing. The petition shall be submitted to the Board of Directors. A motion of the Petition formally presented at one general meeting is necessary for the purpose of debating, arguing, and voting on such Motion of Petition.

ARTICLE X BOARD OF DIRECTORS (PATRONS)

Section 1

- a) The Board of Directors shall consist of seven (7) IPAI members.
- b) Five of the members of the Board shall be elected by a simple majority of members of IPAI by a secret ballot.
- c) The National President of IPAI shall appoint two members of the Board.
- d) Each of the appointments shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the National Executive Committee.

Section 2

- a) The Board of Directors shall elect its own Chairperson and Secretary.
- b) The Executive Committee of IPAI shall have no say or interest in picking the Board Chairperson or the Board Secretary.
- c) The Board shall establish, consistent with the by-laws of IPAI, all such rules and procedures as required to conduct its business.

Section 3

- a) Board members shall serve for three years term.
- b) Their term shall begin at the close of the annual general meeting at which they were elected or appointed.
- c) They may run again after two years of the end of tenure.

Section 4

- a) The President of IPAI is answerable to the Board of Directors.
- b) The Board shall initiate the removal or temporary suspension of the President from the office for cause pending affirmative vote by at least two-third majority of members in good standing at the general meeting or convention.

- c) The Board shall mediate between local chapter members and their elected officials. The Board's interpretation of any disputed section of the IPAI constitution is final.
- d) The Board shall uphold or decline the IPAI President's request for suspension or removal of any member of the Executive Committee, pending affirmative vote of the general members for the action at the general meeting.

ARTICLE XI GOVERNMENT

An Executive Committee whose membership composition shall be as set forth in Article VII shall govern the Association.

ARTICLE XII COVENTIONS

- A. Convention of all the members of the Association shall be held biennially during the month of July, and at a place to be determined by the Executive Committee.
- B. Such National Convention shall be financially sponsored by IPAI and not by the Local Chapters.
- C. All proceeds from such convention, including donations will belong to IPAI less 20 percent to be given to the Local Chapter for hosting the convention.

ARTICLE XIII ELECTIONS

- A. The election of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Publicity Secretary, the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Parliamentarian (Provost) shall be held biennially at the convention of the general members.
- B. Voting shall be by secret ballot, and plurality of the votes shall be necessary for the election of all officers.
- C. All elected officers except Board members shall serve for a two-year term.
- D. No elected officer shall serve in the same office for more than two consecutive terms.
- E. To be eligible for election and to hold office, a member must be in good standing with respect to membership dues, must be of good moral character, and a law abiding citizen.
- F. Members of the Board of Directors shall serve a three-year term.
- G. In case of a tie, another election shall be held between the tied candidates immediately after the first election until a winner emerges.
- H. The term of office of newly elected officers shall commence immediately upon election and shall terminate after two years of service in the office.
- I. An election ad-hoc committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors to conduct all elections at the national convention of IPAI. Any contest resulting from the election shall be referred to the Board of Directors for resolution. The Board's decision shall be presented to the general house for approval and adoption. The Caretaker Committee shall appoint the first election ad-hoc committee, and any contest resulting from this first election shall be referred to the Caretaker Committee for resolution and its decision

presented to the general house for approval and adoption. The ad-hoc committee shall consist of five members.

ARTICLE XIV
BANK ACCOUNT

- A. IPAI shall establish a Bank Account in a reputable financial institution with wider national branches.
- B. Whenever a new Treasurer is elected and in the event that such new Treasurer resides in a different locality from his/her predecessor, the Association's bank account should remain with the same reputable financial institution due to its wider national branches.

ARTICLE XV
SIGNATORIES TO BANK ACCOUNT

- A. The President, the Financial Secretary, and the Treasurer shall be signatories to the bank account(s) of the Association.
- B. However, for the purpose of withdrawal of funds from the Association's bank account(s) for the Association's use or business, the President and any one other officer of the three signatories shall be required.
- C. The President and his/her cabinet are authorized to spend up to \$2,000.00 a year as an operating expenditure. Anything beyond the above amount will require the authorization of the Board of Directors and a detailed explanation of the proposed expenditure to the members of IPAI.
- D. Receipts are required for all expenditures.
- E. The Board of Directors shall approve all travels and expenses by the President.

ARTICLE XVI
RETIREMENT FROM THE IGBERE AGE-GRADE SYSTEM

Any IPAI member retiring from the Igbere Age-Grade System (Uke), in the next Igbere Welfare Union's (IWU) traditional retirement ceremony "Igbotonma", shall be honored by IPAI with a gift of \$300 or its equivalent provided that:

- a) Such member notifies the Secretary of his/her IPAI Local Chapter no earlier than six months and no later than three months to the "Igbotonma" in the particular year of retirement.
- b) The member's Local Chapter Secretary indicates in a letter to the IPAI Executive Committee that the retiring member is in good standing, including having met all financial obligations to the branch.
- c) IPAI Secretary determines that the retiring member is in good standing, including having met all financial obligations to IPAI, Inc.
- d) IPAI Secretary determines that the retiring member is in good standing with the member's Age-Grade/IWU at home and has met all the requirements for a formal retirement.

ARTICLE XVII
SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION

This charter (CONSTITUTION) shall take effect immediately upon ratification and adoption by at least two-third of the general members present.

ARTICLE XVIII
INTERPRETATION

Any question, which may arise concerning the interpretation of this charter, shall be decided by a vote of a simple majority of the Board of Directors. Such interpretation shall be deemed final.

ARTICLE XIX
AMENDMENT

This Constitution may be amended or revised if any member makes a written request to the President/Board of Directors to that effect, provided that the proposed amendment shall not be effective unless approved by at least a simple majority of members present at the general meeting or convention.

MEMBERS OF THE CARETAKER COMMITTEE

Dr. Ugwa Kalu Ogbureke (Chairman)
Mr. Udemgba Anyaegbu Igu (Vice Chairman)
Engr. Peter Anyaogu Imaa (Secretary)
Engr. Mike C. K. Awa
Atty. Chukwu Oko
Mr. Barry U. Kalu
Mr. Esse N. Esse
Mr. Elijah Kalu
Mr. Leonard Ibeka
Mr. Okorie Ezieme
Dr. Kalu Ogbureke

SIGNED:



Dr. Ugwa Kalu Ogbureke
Chairman, IPAI Caretaker Committee

DATE: 13th September, 2007



Engr. Peter Anyaogu Imaa
Secretary, IPAI Caretaker Committee

DATE: 13th September, 2007