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**N ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-
IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, HIS EXCELLENCY, ALHAJI
UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA, GCFR AT THE IGBO 2009
CONFERENCE ON EXTINCTION OF IGBO LANGUAGE
HELD AT THE ALVAN IKOKWU FEDERAL COLLEGE
OF EDUCATION AUDITORIUM, OVERRI-IMO STATE
ON 17TH JULY, 2009**

Protocol Observed

It is my utmost pleasure to be here at this most distinguished assemblage of people of distinction. It is even more heartwarming when the reason why we are gathered here became known to me. It is for this reason that this singular act of organizing this conference has struck a positive chord in me. The enterprise of safeguarding our cultural heritage needs to be at the forefront of our national

endeavours. Having said that, I greet you all, "Igbo Kwreenu".

Distinguished members of this conference, I salute you all, because this conference shall/serve as a stimulus for other Nigerian people who would like to emulate and come out with similar projects. It is my ardent belief that other groups in Nigeria would respond to this stimulus which you have initiated for the sustenance of this clarion call for the preservation of our foremost cultural heritage "language".

I would like to particularly state here that "language" is the foremost cultural heritage because it is the first of all other cultural traits or

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identities. It is in view of the importance of language that UNESCO rightly deemed it necessary to declare 21st February every year as the "International Mother Tongue Day" to acknowledge the fact that "Languages Matter".

Although UNESCO promotes multilingual education, which is an important factor, the Nigerian Education Policy also recognizes and supports the teaching with the Mother Tongue in the initial years of school. By this action, it has contributed positively to the teaching and learning process and its outcome, which is also a positive trend to the sustenance and preservation of the "Mother Tongue".

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As I stand here before you today, the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, as part of its action plan for the year 2009, has begun the Mapping and Documentation of our Endangered Nigerian Languages and Cultures in order to give them adequate attention. This is to apprise you of the importance the Federal Government attaches to this all important call for the promotion and preservation of our indigenous languages.

I wish to equally acknowledge that human knowledge must have provided the impetus for this projection that is by 2025, the Igbo Language would have been subsumed by other stronger languages.

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By way of strong conviction, we should encourage ourselves by industry on speaking our indigenous languages to mostly our siblings, for no one would safeguard any other's language other than its own native speakers. I would be much interested in the outcome of this conference and Mapping/Documentation of Nigerian Languages by the Ministry responsible for culture.

In view of the above development, I would wish to call on every Ethnic Nationality in Nigeria to emulate "Ndi-Igbo" in demonstrating the urgent need to preserve and safeguard her language. We must therefore, not let our languages die.

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Once again, I wish to humbly thank the organizers of this conference under the able leadership of Professor Innocent A. Eleazu for having the vision and energy to see to the actualization of the conference I also mostly sincerely wish to thank the Governor and Government of Imo State for creating the enabling environment for this event.

Finally, I would also extend my profound gratitude to you for extending your kind invitation to me. I wish you eventful deliberations.

Thank you.

IGBO CONFERENCE ON EXTINCTION OF IGBO LANGUAGE

A COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A TWO-DAY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EXTINCTION OF IGBO LANGUAGE HELD AT ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ON JULY 17 AND 18, 2009.

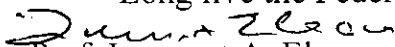
The following communiqué was released after a careful review of all the deliberations on extinction of Igbo Language.

1. That from henceforth, the International Conference on Extinction of Igbo Language shall be an annual event until the threat of extinction of Igbo language disappears. The venue of the International conference will be rotated amongst the Igbo Speaking States chosen in alphabetical order.
2. That there is now the technology to recreate an event that happened millions of years ago, ipso facto: in 2012, there will be organized an Igbo festival of Arts and Culture. It will take advantage of this new technology. The committee to organize the 2012 Igbo festival of Arts and Culture has been constituted. The Chairman of the committee is HRH Dr. M.N. Eze, Eze of Igboukwu, Anambra State.
3. That a website to be known and called "Oluigbo" and Igbo national newspaper to be known and called "Oluigbo too" be established simultaneously. The Oluigbo website and Oluigbo-Newspaper will teach and propagate Igbo philosophy, Core values and Igbo life style as well as protect and preserve Igbo Language.
4. That a Registry of Igbo Organizations be maintained forthwith. The registration of all Igbo organizations worldwide will help to facilitate free flow of ideas and information amongst the different Igbo organizations. It may be an effective tool for resolution of conflicts.
5. That a place for research and preservation of Igbo relics, documentation of Igbo culture and study of notable Igbo's past and present who help to shape Igbo culture, life style and core value be established.
6. That Igbo radio station be established to teach Igbo Language, Igbo Culture and life style and contemporary issues.

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7. That every parent of Igbo extraction must from henceforth, irrespective of place of abode, teach the siblings, Igbo language, speak and learn to write Igbo Language. Above all, endeavor to speak Igbo language in all Igbo events and gatherings without adding English words in between just as the Hausas and Yorubas do.
8. That all the State Government in Igbo Speaking States must enact laws which will help to stop Igbo language for bleeding to death and finally settle the problem of extinction of Igbo language once for all.
9. That the Federal Government has no alternative than to declare Igbo language as an endangered Nigerian language. As a result, increase the salaries of Igbo teachers and grant full scholarship to any student studying Igbo language to any Federal College of Education. Similarly State Governors should also grant full scholarship to Igbo students in their State Universities.
10. The Conference commends President Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua for initiating the first policy - mapping and documentation of Nigerian endangered languages and culture – a comprehensive policy that will ensure a multilingual Nigerian should be vigorously pursued. The conference extends sincere gratitude to Senator Jibrin Gada, Hon. Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation for finding the time to declare the conference open. There could have been no better choice than Senator Jibrin.
11. Finally the conference pledged to partner with the Federal Government and the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation in its efforts to map out and document Nigeria endanger languages with a view to giving it adequate attention.

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.


Prof. Innocent A. Eleazu

For and on Behalf of the Organizing Committee.



OTU SUWAKWA IGBO

Ka Asusu Igbo burukwa ihe e ji eme onu

MOTO: ASUSU BU NDU MBA

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c/o Road 13, House 7
Udoka Housing Estate,
Awka .

OZI EKELE SI N'AKA ONYEISI OTU SUWAKWA IGBO, NAIJIRIA, OKAMMUTA PITA EJIOFOR, N'UBOCHI OGBAKO ONODU ASUSU IGBO E NWERE NA KOLEJI MMUTA ALVAN IKOKU DI N'OWERRI UBOCHI FRAIDEE, ORIE, ONWA JULAI, 17, 2009.

Okammuta Eleazu,

Ana m ezitere gi ozia n'aha Otu Suwakwa Igbo, Naijiria, iji kele gi na ndi nke gi, maka ogbako I na-achikoba maka onodu asusu Igbo. I kporo m ka m kwue okwu, ma enweghi m ike ibia n'ih i agba ndi ozo m nweburu. Jisienu ike.

Echetara m na I biara ubochi m duru ndi Otu Suwakwa Igbo ga-hu ndi Nzuko Omebeiwu Anambra Stet, n'onwa Ogostu 6, afo 2008. O nyekwara m anuri igwa gi na ogbako ahu mitara nnukwu mmimi. Ndi nzuko ahu etiela iwu ga-abu na o buru na e mewe ya emewe, na asusu Igbo ga-adiri. Anyi nwekwara nnukwu ogbako ozo di mkpa maka ndi isi oru bekee niile no n'Anambra Steeti Ubochi Tozdee, Afo, Julai 2, 2009, nke onye na-esota m n'otu anyi bu Sir Oliver Akpaonye biara. Mazi Akpaonye ga-agwazi gi ihe o buru. Chineke nye aka, ogbako ahu ga-agbanwo onodu asusu Igbo na Naijiria.

Echetara m na I gooro otu vcd na otu akwukwo m dere a na-akpo. *Ibeku Ndi Igbo Maka Asusu Igbo.* N'akwukwo I detaara m, I gwara m na vcd ahu nyeere gi nnukwu aka n'igbasa ozi suwakwa Igbo n'Amerika. E bunyere m Rev Sista vcd na akwukwo ahu. Unu choo, unu nwere ike tinyere ya ndi biara ogbako ka ha kirie. Ekwuchara m ihe niile m choro ikwu maka onodu asusu Igbo na vcd ahu. O nwebeghi onye kiriri ya mmuo ya agbanweghi maka asusu Igbo. N'ih i na o nwebeghi nkwardo anyi nwetara n'aka Gooment, anyi adighi anye vcd na akwukwo ahu n'efu ka o kwesiri. Anyi na-ere otu N200. O nwee ndi choro ya, Sista ga-eresi ha.

Na mmechi, ana m ekelekw a gi ozo, kelee osota m bu Mazi Akpaonye, kelee ndi na-enyere gi aka ichikoba ogbako, kelekw a ndi biara ogbako. O ga-adiri asusu Igbo mma. Ndeewomu.

Ndi Igbo...Suwakwanu Igbo. Ndi Igbo ...Suwakwanu Igbo. N'ih i Gini? Asusu Bu Ndu Mba. Ndewonu

Abu M

OKAMMUTA PITA EJIOFOR (npom)

A VIEW POINT ON EXTINCTION OF IGBO LANGUAGE

BEING PAPER PRESENTED AT THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON EXTINCTION OF IGBO LANGUAGE HELD
AT ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
OWERRI, JULY 17TH AND 18TH 2009.

BY PROF. INNOCENT A. ELEAZU

*Department of Economics
Roxbury Community College
Massachusetts*

ABSTRACT

The paper will examine the origin of all languages – how the sounds uttered by human beings became words and eventually a language of an ethnic group. It will contend that a language is a powerful communication tool and that without it, cooperation and development of any type would have been virtually an impossible task.

The paper will show how igbo people themselves by choice destroyed the very language that is the symbol of their identity. The paper will endeavour to proffer solutions which will specifically state what should be done immediately to prevent igbo language from bleeding to death. Finally, the paper will make suggestions on how to end once for all the problem of extinction of igbo language.

Prior to igbo 2009 International Conference on Extinction of Igbo Language, the efforts of Otu Suwakwa Igbo to protect, promote and

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preserve igbo language was predominantly in two states – Anambra and Imo States. Unfortunately, the approach of Otu Suwakwa Igbo to promote and preserve Igbo language has remained essentially adhoc. The organization lacked coherent policy on how to address and/or end the extinction of Igbo Language. Although Otu Suwakwa Igbo is a formidable and effective igbo organization, it still has a local image.

What the International Conference on Extinction of Igbo Language has done for the Otu Suwakwa igbo in particular, other igbo organization and the generality of ndi igbo is to put the problem of extinction of igbo language on National and International scene. In order to consolidate the gains made at the conference, it is of utmost importance to make the international conference an annual event. The venue may be rotated amongst the igbo speaking states and structures set to attain perpetuity of igbo language. I delighted to inform the conference that Ozuruigbo the 5th of Owerri, H.R.H. Eze Emmanuel Njemanze and H.R.H. Eze M.N. Eze, the Eze of Igboukwu have agreed to support the efforts of Suwakwa igbo morally and financially.

It is not unlikely that some people may choose to question the authenticity and/or the theoretical assumptions behind this 1st International Conference on Extinction of Igbo Language. Others may even contend that the International Conference is an over-reaction.

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Perhaps, a thorough examination of the immeasurable power of language may prove the contrary. Education scholars agree that language can be instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols, and sounds. N.O. Okonkwo (1980) writing on Language as a means of communication in the Nigeria Language Teacher stated: "Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates. In other words, put simply, a language is a communication tool. A renowned management scholar Keith Davis defined communication as the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another person. In fact, civilization is based on human cooperation without communication and/or language no meaningful or effective cooperation can develop. The foregoing, established without iota of doubts the immeasurable power of language.

In the early stages of human development, little was known of extinction in nature. It was strongly believed then that language of an ethnic group can never die or go into extinction. The proponents of perpetuity of languages argued that as long as the ethnic group that speak the language are alive and breathing, their language will endure for ever. The only circumstance they contend a language can die or be extinct is when all the members of the ethnic group die body and soul. The perpetuity of language hypothesis has since been debunked because it lacked merit and historical evidence to support

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it. We now know that the language of an ethnic group can die or be extinct for ever. In the course of human history, there are abundant evidence to support the extinction of language theory. In fact, the extinction of anything that has been in existence in any shape or form does not happen over night. It is usually a gradual process. Unfortunately, the extinction process of anything in nature, most of the time, is invisible to the human eyes until it reaches a certain proportion.

It is interesting to note that the United Nations' Organization recent research supports the extinction of language theory when the world body announced few years ago that its research findings indicates that Igbo language is one of the African Languages most likely to go into extinction. There are other credible sources that state emphatically that Igbo Language will be extinct by the year 2025 if no stringent measures are taken to stop Igbo language from bleeding to death. It is important to note that the United Nations research and the independent research of some Igbo scholars both reached the same conclusion. Consequently, there is no doubt in my mind that Igbo Language is at the first stage of extinction. I strongly believe if natural law of extinction is anything to go by, that extinction of Igbo Language started unnoticed many years ago. Yet, the overwhelming majority of ndi Igbo worldwide expressed surprise, some fought back tears when the world body publicly announced the probability of extinction of Igbo Language. Ndi igbo, stop shedding crocodile's

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tears you destroyed Igbo Language by choice. Listen to how you destroyed it: 9 (nine) out of every 10 (ten) Igbo household in diaspora cannot write or read Igbo language. Similarly, 8 (eight) out of every 10 igbo household in diaspora cannot speak Igbo language at all. Surprisingly, the situation is no different in Igbo land itself. Above all, of the entire Igbo population worldwide, only about 2% can speak Igbo language without adding English words in between - most of the time, the number of English words are more than the number of Igbo words in a sentence made in Igbo language. Although these statistics have not been verified, it is not far from the truth. I am very much afraid that this generation of Igbo extraction may be incapable of passing on the Igbo Language baton they received from their ancestors to the next generation of ndi Igbo. It is strongly believed that language is synonymous with the identity of a people. Are the Igbos approaching the end of their identity? God forbid!

In times of difficulty, it is human nature to look for someone to blame. There are people who believe to this day that Igbo teachers are largely to blame for the problem of extinction of Igbo Language. They contend that the Igbo Language that is taught in the classroom is not the type of Igbo Language that is spoken in an Igbo household. This sends a mixed message and makes learning of Igbo Language difficult, uninteresting and disgusting they argued. The good news is that we have requested all Commissioners of Education of Igbo Speaking States to please release Igbo teachers for the conference.

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The fight against extinction of Igbo Language is not yet lost – certain things can still be done to stop Igbo Language from bleeding to death. For example, bringing Igbos in diaspora and those in Igbo land together to brainstorm for solution. Therefore, the 1st International Conference on extinction of Igbo Language is the first step and of course a step in the right direction. Most importantly, every Igbo household worldwide must resolve and/or take an ancestors oath to speak Igbo Language all the time and in all Igbo gatherings just as the Yorubas and Hausas do.

In order to sustain the resolution a strong foundation must be laid. For example the immediate establishment of Igbo National Newspaper and Igbo website; the dedication of a place to preserve Igbo tradition and culture and learn about the contributions of Igbos past and present that shaped Igbo culture and Igbo core values. Fortunately, we now have the technology to re-create any past event that happened millions of years ago. This technology can be used. It will enable the younger generation of Igbo extraction to appreciate Igbo culture, life style and core values. Hopefully end the get rich quick attitude of this generation. Therefore, an Igbo festival of arts and culture that recreates past Igbo culture, core values and life style need to be organized. The Igbo festival of Arts and Culture has the potential to attract our kiths and kins in the United States whose parents unfortunately were sold into slavery. It will be another source of foreign exchange and new investment for Nigeria.

Furthermore, the compilation and registration of Igbo organizations worldwide is another means of laying a foundation which is most likely to facilitate free flow of ideas and information and resolve conflicts. Ohaneze take note!

The role of traditional rulers, Legislatures and Governors of Igbo Speaking States cannot be over-emphasized. The traditional rulers must resolve to receive visitors in Igbo language and conduct all their day to day business including cabinet meetings in Igbo language. The Igbo State legislatures like their counterpart in Anambra State must pass sweeping laws to reverse the extinction of Igbo language. Tomorrow July 17th 2009, Igbos will honour some of their illustrious sons and daughters past and present who shaped Igbo culture and Igbo core values - prominent among them is late Mazi Mbonu Ojike who will receive a post-humus award. Similarly, on July 17 and 18 2009, renowned scholars like - Prof. Pita Ejifor, Prof. Anisoba, Prof. Ernest Emenyeonu and Prof. I.A. Eleazu will deliver thought provoking papers at the 1st International Conference on the Extinction of Igbo Language. Mrs. Lucy Apakama and Mazi Oliver Akponye are expected to address the conference. The Rector, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education will deliver the keynote address. This conference is a clarion call on all Igbos who feel the pains of the extinction of their language to come en-mass to fight against the extinction of Igbo Language with their God-given wealth. Remember, the language of the people is their identity.

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WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE INTERIM PROVOST OF ALVAN IKOKU
FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, OWERRI, BARR. H.C. AMADI
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 2-DAY INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY KRINO ECONOMIC CONSULTANTS
INTERNATIONAL IN COLLABORATION WITH ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (THE DEPT. OF NIGERIAN LANGUAGES)
AND SUWARWA IGBO ON 17TH JULY, 2009 AT THE COLLEGE AUDITORIUM

- His Excellency, The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- The Hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism
- His Excellency, The Governor of Imo State
- Her Excellency, The Deputy Governor of Imo State
- The Hon. Commissioner of Culture/Tourism, Imo State.
- Other Distinguished Government Functionaries
- Ndi Eze, and Other Title Holders
- Principal Officers of the College
- Gentlemen of the Press
- Staff and Students of this great College
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

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It is with deep pleasure that I welcome you all to Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri on this significant event which affords academics, Igbo sons and daughters at home and in diaspora an opportunity to come together and brainstorm on the threat of Extinction of Igbo Language. It is expected that at the end of this conference, a communique containing sound resolutions on how to move the use of Igbo Language to greater heights will be published.

"The problem of Extinction of Igbo Language: real or imaginary" is timely and well chosen. We all know that the most important tool that man is endowed with for effective communication and exploitation of his environment is language. We are also

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extinct within the next twenty five years. Igbo Language, unfortunately, is one of those languages listed. What this implies is that if nothing is done immediately to reverse this ugly trend, the Igbo race will soon disappear from the face of the earth. This is so because language is the key element for which a people is known and identified.

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We have noticed the recent trend where our children no longer speak Igbo language. They and their parents would rather prefer speaking bastardized English to Igbo Language. Some parents even pride themselves by telling their visitors to "please speak English to them (their kids), they don't understand Igbo". This ugly trend, is observed even in the most interior parts of Igbo land.

The roles and functions of language cannot be over emphasized. Being a universal medium of instruction, mass communication and vehicle for peace and social change, language can therefore be employed as essential ingredient for development in all areas of human endeavour. It can be deployed to energize and motivate people, it can be used to reduce tension, remove misgivings, expel rumours and fears and encourage people to engage in productive ventures. Why won't the Igbo language survive considering all its usefulness?

We pray that this conference will bring solutions to the numerous challenges facing the Igbo language, culture and the generality of Igbo race. May I congratulate the organizers of this conference, the

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Krino Economic Consultants International, the Department of Nigerian Languages Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri and the Association of SUWAKWA IGBO.

On behalf of this Management, and the Governing Council of the Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, may I assure the conference organizers that we shall as a matter of priority provide the enabling environment, manpower, facilities and materials for such conferences in the near future. We thank you for choosing our school as your venue. We equally thank the United Nations Organization for alerting us on the imminent danger that is facing "Ndi Igbo".

Once again, let me welcome and thank the Chairman of this ceremony, the Hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism and National Orientation, Alhaji Bello Jibrin Gada, the keynote address presenter, Prof. Innocent Eleazu, the lead paper presenter, Mrs. Lucy Apakama of SUWAKWA IGBO, the discussants and other distinguished scholars, Ndi Eze and other title holders who are here to add colour to this occasion. I wish all conference participants fruitful presentations and deliberations.

Igbo ga-adi! Long live Nigeria.

Thank you and God bless.

BARR. H.C. AMADI
AG. PROVOST.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EXTINCTION OF IGBO
LANGUAGE

2010 2nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE
16 - 17 JULY, 2010

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Conference Theme

IGBO TEACHERS IN THE 21st CENTURY;
CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Objective

The objective is to explore the challenges and prospects of a 21st century Igbo teacher. Emphasis should focus on threat of extinction of igbo language; dwindling number of igbo teachers; rubrics of teaching and learning of igbo language; the future of igbo teaching profession – incentive and compensation

Sub Themes

- (a) A Generation of Igbo Extraction Without a Language:
Possibilities and Implications
- (b) Igbo Traditional Dress: Real or Imaginary
- (c) The Youth and Igbo Language: Problems & Challenges
- (d) A Multi-Lingual Nigerian in 21st Century: Prospects & Benefits

Venue: Abia State -----

Paper Presentation and Conference Proceedings

Authors are expected to submit two clear copies of their paper to reach the coordinator not later than April 15, 2010 - typed double space on quarto pages not exceeding 15 pages – references in the body of the paper must conform to Harvard style e.g. Eleazu (2000) and should be collected alphabetically at the end.

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Book of Proceedings

The only papers to appear in the conference proceedings are those that have been accepted. However, authors are strongly advised to first submit an abstract not exceeding one and half pages. The conference proceedings are expected to be available during the conference

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Registration

The Conference fee is: N4, 000.00 (four thousand naira) payable in advance or on arrival at the conference.

Program of Events

- (a) Opening Ceremony: Paper Presentation 16/7/2010
- (b) Conference of Igbo Scholars//Authors/communiqué & Dept 16/7/10

Replies to:

Conference Coordinator

Mrs. Lucy Apakama

Alvan Iko Federal College of Education

Dept. of Linguistics, Owerri, Imo State

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+ (781) 233-4261 profinnocenteleazu@verizon.net
08036530593; 08066647718

Up Coming Event

Igbo 2012 Festival of Arts and Culture

Tel: 08037074479

Igbo 2012 Festival of Arts & Culture

ANNOUNCEMENT
Call For Participation

His Royal Highnesses Eze Nzeribe, 44th Eze Igwe, Oguta Kingdom
And

Igwe Dr Martin Nwafor , Idu 11, Igboukwu, Anambra State
Co – Chair, Igbo 2012 Festival of Arts & Culture, Planning Committee,
announce with great delight the forthcoming Igbo Festival of Arts & Culture.

Objectives: to promote igbo language, and culture, core value, arts, relics, poetry,
drama, festivities etc

Goals to revive Igbo dying language and culture.

Wanted Local & Overseas Agents and Promoters

Date: December 8, 2012

All Correspondences to:

The Coordinator
Krino Consultants International
14/16 Mere Street, P. O Box . 755, Owerri
Imo State, Nigeria.

Contact: Tel *08037074479; * 08083043354; *08037734659; 08037268093;
*08036530593 E- Mail:; apakamalucy@yahoo.com; amartgodu@yahoo.com Overseas
Coordinator: Prof. I. A.. Eleazu Tel: 781 223 4261, profinnocenteleazu@verizon.net