

May We Make Some Suggestions?

Your Excellency Governor (DEACON) Udom Emmanuel we at IPU are very appreciative of the fact that you honored our request and accepted to come to our 2018 Congress in Ohio. Here is why we would like to make some suggestions to you.

The theme for the 2018 Congress is “Confronting today’s Challenges with Innovative Solutions and Re-positioning for the future”. We have taken a look at the myriad challenges that face Ibibio people and have chosen to highlight a few and proffer possible solutions to them for your consideration.

The issues are:

- Security – present and future security of Ibibio people
- Ibibio Food Self Reliance
- Re-kindling love for World class education
- Lessons from past failures
- Lack of public awareness – involvement of the populace

We could have daylong seminars on each of these but for this occasion, brevity will prevail and we will distill these down to our recommendations.

We begin with the present security situation of Ibibio people. We commend Your Excellency on the fact that since coming into office, the murders with impunity, kidnappings, cultism and the general atmosphere of fear in the population that was the norm before your ascent to power has ceased or decreased. Thank you. This notwithstanding, we see a grave danger for the independence of Ibibio people looming in the not distant future due to the prevailing situation in Nigeria. Pretending not see the handwriting on the wall is a sure prescription for the possible taking over of Ibibio land by domestic colonizers.

The herdsmen menace is slowly creeping to our State. Akwa Ibom State does not have a large land mass. We see NO reason therefore why AKS should appropriate ANY land free of charge to foreign cattle ranchers that pay zero taxes to local, state or federal coffers. Last year we proposed that our state should commence the breeding and protection of Enang Ibibio, our indigenous cattle. The same goes for Okopusem eboto, which our people prefer, to the imported goats from other parts of Nigeria. We will appreciate if you take a look at this idea.

We must begin to do our own research on the resources God has given to us. It is a shame that today Afia Owo has taken our Etidot and put it in pill /tablet form for sale worldwide. The medicinal values of our other vegetables, fruits etc. are unknown to us. We must therefore as a matter of urgency task and demand answers to these types of questions from our school of Agriculture and Universities.

In the time of our grandfathers, Ibibio people led and taught Nigeria on the value of higher world-class education. To the best of my knowledge, we built the first state college in Ikot Ekpene and also sent our children abroad to study disciplines that were expected to benefit our people. Our state is known as a Civil Service state, which generates meager internal revenue. As result IPU instituted a program to train Ibibio orphans in the trades like plumbing, welding, carpentry, fashion design and sewing, electrician, etc., aiming at producing entrepreneurs that would choose self employment over working in government. This will lead to the generation of greater internal revenue, concomitantly curbing youth unemployment and miscreant behavior. Our first student has graduated. For this reason IPU/IPPU plans on building a **Secondary Vocational Skill Acquisition School in Uyo**. It is modeled after a school here in Ohio and your schedule permitting, we will be glad to arrange a tour of the campus for you. We hereby solicit the support of Your Excellency in the timely actualization of this project.

When we take a critical look at the past, a couple of lessons stand out. First, no government enterprise has lasted through the different administrations that followed their inception. The inescapable conclusion is that our government MUST stay out of the business of running for profit enterprises. The more lofty but attainable goal is for government to create an enticing business climate for private companies to want to risk their capital and see to the continuity of the enterprises. The lack of a maintenance culture/consciousness also contributes to this. Our government should provide policies to safeguard and empower productions in our private industries as it is done here in the United States.

Finally, our people seem detached from whatever effort the government is making to improve the lives of the people. This is clearly seen in the vandalism that occurs on government installations. The lighting on the road out of the Uyo airport is a good example. The government should task the Commissioner for information to create a radio/TV campaign to educate the people that government property belongs to them and deserves protection.

In summary

- 1) Establish, maintain and protect ranches and programs to breed Enang Ibibio and Okopusem eboto so we can be independent of imported meat. **Lands in Akwa Ibom should not** be given to non-tax paying foreigners for cattle ranching.
- 2) Embrace modern agricultural methods to compensate for our lack of land.
- 3) Finance research on our agricultural products to maximize the benefits we derive from them.
- 4) Assist IPU/IPPU in building a Secondary Vocational Skills Acquisition School in Uyo.
- 5) Educate the public to feel ownership of government installations