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Communique

Rivers State In The Diaspora: Advocating For Socio-Economic Transformation

(USA) - The Rivers State Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization of indigenes of Rivers State of Nigeria domiciled in North America and Europe, concluded its 2015 National Convention, hosted at the Holiday Inn, Atlanta/Roswell, in United States of America.



On behalf of the officers and members of the organization, the out-going President of the Foundation, Prof. Sylvanus N. Wosu, expressed his appreciation to both the National and Local organizing committees for their work in ensuring a successful convention. He emphasized that our individual presence at the convention was “not only a reflection of the shared commitment to the rebuilding of the Foundation towards its priorities but the beginning of the implementation of our strategic vision, presence, and giving-back to the Rivers communities at home.”

Speaking on behalf of the Executive Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Chief (Barr.) Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, Chief Ferdinand Alabraba delivered the keynote speech in which the governor expressed his profound gratitude to the Board of Directors, Executives, and members of the Foundation for inviting him to the convention and noted that the convention was the first gathering of Rivers people in Diaspora he has been invited to since the assumption of the position of Governor. He pledged to support the Foundation in achieving its objectives. The Governor was represented at the event by Chief Ferdinand Alabraba, JP, Chairman, Board of Directors, Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority, and Arc. Sam Agwor, an adviser to the



Governor. The Governor praised the Foundation for the theme of the convention and stated that it was evident that Rivers State before the advent of the new administration needed a total revamp in all the sectors of the State economy. He added that an Office of Diaspora Affairs has been proposed and will be created by his government.

In an address co-presented at the convention, two Rivers indigenes (Messrs. Augustine Kpuinen and Williamson Nwinee) called on the Foundation to “rise up to its expected role of being a watch dog for the people, an important pressure group to ensure that government does what is right for the people of the state” and to embark on healthcare initiatives similar to what was done in 2005 when a team of doctors led by Dr. Abio Sokari and Gbanador was sent to Rivers State. They also called on the State Government to develop cities like Bori, Ahoada, and Degema in addition to Port Harcourt, create of jobs for the youths, and address the problem of insecurity, kidnappings and violence.

Members of the Foundation:

1. Expressed profound appreciation to the Governor for honoring their invitation and for supporting the Foundation financially in the pursuit of its objectives;
2. Further praised the Governor for offering to establish the Office of Diaspora



Affairs in his administration.

3. Expressed appreciation to His Royal Majesty, King Dandeson Douglas Jaja, the Amanyano of Opobo Kingdom, the Consul-General at the Consulate General of Nigeria in Atlanta, Ambassador Geoffrey I. Teneilabe, Senator from the State of Georgia, Dr. Donzella James, and other notable dignitaries in attendance at the convention;
4. Condemned the spate of kidnappings and other criminal practices going on in the state and supports the Governor's efforts to ensure safety and security in all parts of the state;
5. Pledged to contribute to the development of the state in the areas of education, with emphasis on science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM), health care, youth and women empowerment, agriculture, and skills acquisition;
6. Expressed their preparedness to partner with the State Government in its efforts to develop the state and to this end requests the Governor to create an

opportunity for continuous dialogue with the Diaspora community in USA a few times every year;

7. Invited the Governor and senior State Government officials to its next convention scheduled to hold in the State of New Jersey in September 2 – 5, 2016.

The Rivers State Foundation, Inc., as part of its convention agenda, elected new officials to steer the leadership of the Foundation. At the end of the elections that was conducted by the organization's adhoc Election Committee which consisted of Prof. Kenoye Eke Snr. and Atty Chidi Ogolo, the following individuals were elected to serve a new two-year term in office:

Officers of the Foundation:

Dr. Suanu Bliss Wikina – President
Mr. Joseph Uranta – Vice President
Engr. Aagbara S. Kpea – Secretary-General
Mr. Eric Welle – Public Relations
Mrs. Glory Dogini – Financial Secretary
Mrs. Joy Nathans – Treasurer
Mrs. Dumo Ajuga - Parliamentarian
Dr (Mrs.) Enefaa Wosu – Auditor-General
Attorney Chidi Ogolo – Legal Adviser

Board of Directors:

Prof. Pius Egbelu – Chairman, Board of Directors
Prof. Andy Alali– Vice-chairman Board of Directors
Mr. George Komi – Secretary, Board of Directors
Dr. Joseph Mbadiwe Ogundu – Member At-Large
Mrs. Ngozi Welle - Member At-Large
Prof. Sylvanus Wosu – Member At-Large
Prof. Kenoye Eke Snr. – Member At-Large
Mr. George Anele – Regional Director, Region 3
Mr. Patrick Aggrey – Regional Director, Region 2
Mr. Turey Legbara – Regional Director, Region 5
Prof. Eric Dogini – Regional Director, Region 6

The newly-elected officers and board members were duly sworn in by the Governor through his representative, Chief Ferdinand Alabraba. This action is historic in that it marked the first time the State Governor as the Grand Patron of the Foundation would inaugurate the officials of the Foundation.

In his remarks, the new President, Dr. Suanu B. Wikina, pledged to continue with successful programs initiated by his predecessors and to explore new ways to contribute to the development of our dear state. Similarly, the new Chair, Board of Directors, Prof. Pius Egbelu, expressed his appreciation for a successful convention and stated that he is prepared to help lead the Foundation to a new height. The next convention will be held September 2 – 5, 2016 in the state of New Jersey, USA.

Signed:

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