

A PRELUDE TO THE NATIONAL CONFAB

A PLENARY SESSION FOR ALL EDO STATE INDIGENES PRIOR TO THE CONFAB

By

SEO OGBONMWAN. *KSC*

The complete list of all those attending the National Confab on constitution review has been finally released by the office of the President. As we all acknowledge, it is impossible for all Nigerian to attend and those attending must be well prepared to represent our Edo State interest to the fullest and to this end I call on the Governor of Edo State Gov. Lucky Igbinedion to use his office to facilitate a plenary session for all Edos attending the National Confab so as to streamline their position before going to Abuja. This exercise should be carried out with the Blessing of His Royal Highness the Oba of Benin as the custodian our culture and tradition.

The National Confab is starting in earnest so all hands must be on deck to make this prelude meeting a success. Money spent in hosting this meeting will be money well spent as the contributions from all representatives can be resource material in articulating Edo view point in the future.

A critic may say these representatives were selected, some by the governor and the others by the Office of the President. That may be true; in spite of this glaring fact that they were not democratically elected, the three senatorial districts are well represented. Secondly they are the recognised representatives of Edo State.

Our duty as citizens is to ensure that they are adequately prepared for the confab so that they represent our interest fully.

The list released by the government of Edo State includes the following:-

Admiral Mike Akhigbe

Tom Ikimi

Eghobamien SAN

Dr Tunde Lakoju

Prof. Anao

Mr Sam Iredia

Chief Abebe

The list from the office of the president of invited Edos representing other interests include:-

Dr Sam. Ogbemudia

Chief Anthony Enahoro

Chief Mike Azekhomeh

Prof Christie Okogie

Chief Fidelis Oyakhilomhe

Those selected by the office of the president to represent other interests should remember that first and for most they are Edo and as such should talk like an Edo citizen should do in such a gathering, that is protect the greater Edo interest. It is so apparent that they were Edo before becoming party chieftain or labour leader, human rights activist or successful practitioner of their trade.

To be able to articulate Edo view point or what some of my colleagues call Edo Agenda at the confab, it is pertinent that all Edo attending the confab meet in Benin City as a matter of urgency facilitated by the Governor and the Oba of Benin.

This meeting should be a plenary session, a prelude to the Abuja Confab during which these nominated delegates will come to agree on what we can describe as Edo view points that will benefit all Edo people.

There are individuals who have been involved in the struggle for this conference for a long time under various guises; they too should be invited to give their opinions on pertinent issues and in doing so enrich our nominated delegates with more information to enable them perform more creditably for the good of Edo State.

Individuals like Dr Asemota SAN, Chief Nosakhare Isekhure, Chief Tony Momoh, Enogie Edun Akenzua, Dr Obayuwana, and those who have been in government and knows the way the machinery of government works like Admiral Aikhomu and Chief Odigie –Oyegun should all be invited to give their honest opinion on the agenda as released by the Office of the President of Nigeria.

Constitutional reform,

Political party reform,

Electoral reform

Judicial/Legal reform

Civil society reform

Constitution and consensus building

Police/Prison systems reform

Reform of the Structure of Governance.

It is true that what may be best for Nigeria may not be best for Edo State and the converse is also true that what may be best for Edo State may not be the best for Nigeria.

In such issues, Edo delegates going to the Confab will be guided by the decision taken at the plenary session and so will act in consonance with the best interest of Edo State in a united Nigeria.

It will also be stressed that our representatives should distance themselves from those clamouring for secession and balkanization of our dear nation Nigeria.

Instead Edo should forge ways and means of forging the links between the geographically and politically opposed major ethnic groups in the country. The work of our delegates should

be in addition to protecting Edo State interest, work to enhance Nigeria's unity. The size of Nigeria presently in spite of all the woes in the country is a source of pride and a deterrent to our neighbours whereas a balkanized Nigeria will produce weakened original components parts.

Edo Global Organization therefore calls on the governor of Edo State Gov. Nosakhare Igbinedion to facilitate this plenary session in Edo State before the Abuja conference.

Other States are embarking on such ventures and Edo State should not be left out. If successfully done, it may constitute a forum for resolving Edo State issues effectively in the future as it has full representation of all the senatorial districts although they may not have been democratically elected.

It will also create a forum for the Diaspora Edo to send their view points rather than the present situation where memoranda have been sent to individuals. The time may be short but with the machinery of government as we know it, it is possible to slate a 10 hours prelude conference spread over two days with ample time for informal discussions. The decisions produced will be the bedrock for future Edo unity and development.

Finally, this is not the time to discuss the selection process. This is the time to make the best use of the opportunity as presented.

Thank you

Signed

SEO OGBONMWAN KSC

President EDO GLOBAL ORGANIZATION