



# **EGBÉ OMO YORÙBÁ**

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YORUBA DESCENDANTS IN NORTH AMERICA  
USA AND CANADA**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **THE 17TH ANNUAL CONVENTION REPORT WITH A COMMUNIQUE ON THE STATE OF THE YORUBA NATION**

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**ST. LOUIS, Missouri, August 10, 2009...** The 17<sup>th</sup> National Convention of the Egbé Omo Yoruba, National Association of Yoruba Descendants in North America was held at the Grand Sheraton Westport Chalet, St. Louis, Missouri from August 6 to August 9, 2009. This year's convention, which recorded one of the largest numbers of delegates in the Conventions history, was kicked off with a business meeting on Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup> where some lingering issues were addressed. At the end of the business meeting, members resolved to go into the convention strong, unified and affirmed their unwavering support for the outgoing executive team lead by Otunba Adeola Odusanya, its national President.

The Convention was officially kicked off with a symposium on the convention theme, *"The Quest for Change in Healthcare Awareness and its Effect on the Global Economic Meltdown."* Panelist which were made up of six of the top notch health practitioners in the world, included Prof. Funmi Olapade an Oncologist from the University of Chicago, Dr. Kemi Odedina an expert researcher on prostate cancer from Tampa Florida, Dr. Yemi Badero an international renowned and congressional honoree Cardiologist from New York and Prof. Femi Ajayi of the Nigeriaworld fame, a former residence of Atlanta, Georgia who is now the Chairman Board of Directors of a Teaching Hospital in Nigeria. The keynote address was delivered by Hon. (Dr.) Abiodun Oduwole the Commissioner for Health from Ogun State, Nigeria who gave an accounting of what her boss; His Excellency Otunba Gbenga Daniel was doing for the people of Ogun State regarding health matters. Hon. Oduwole also made an open call to all the medical practitioners present and absent to make a commitment to volunteer their services to the people of Ogun State.

Friday night event was concluded with the cultural night where top Ifa Priest Dr. Kola Abimbola from the United Kingdom and Chief Dayo Ologundudu from New York made presentations to the delegates on culture and traditional healing practices while Prof. Moses Mabayoje also from New York made a presentation on the forbidden..

This convention being an election year, a new team of National Executive Officers were elected. Engineer Ola Oduwole from Jacksonville was elected as the Egbe's National President, Ogbeni Olaniyi Oladapo from Atlanta was elected its Vice President, Iya Afin Ayo Idowu-Samson from St. Louis, the host chapter was elected its new National General Secretary replacing Ogbeni R. Oladapo Odunlami the co-architect along with Otunba Adeola Odusanya of the strides made by the Egbe over the last four years who had termed out after serving for two terms. Mr. Odunlami is now the Egbe's new Secretary

of Public Affairs while Philadelphia power attorney Ayo Turton is its new Legal Counsel. Ademola Oloko from Baton Rouge is the Egbe's Treasurer, Iya Afin Sherri Rasaan-Thiers from Delaware Valley remains its Secretary of Women Affairs and Otunba Adeola Odusanya the former National President is now the Ex-Officio Officer an advisory role to the new executive.

The General Assembly on Saturday was followed by the Excellence Award Banquet where three Universities in North America were honored for extraordinary strides in promotion of the Yoruba language and Culture. Speakers on Saturday were Hon. Oduwole who delivered a keynote address for Gov. Daniel of Ogun State, Rev. Tunji Adebisi representing Chief Babatunde Fashola, SAN, Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Kayode Sumola the Director General of Budgets for Ogun State, Ms. Tomi Soboyejo, General Manager of Gateway Tourism Board and Chief Alao Adedayo Group General Manager Alaroye Group of Newspapers. Mr. Olawale Oladuntoy, President of Egbe Omo Yoruba Vancouver, Canada also made a rousing presentation on his chapters recently launched Yoruba House project.

During the three day event the delegates exhaustively deliberated upon the Unity of the Yoruba people and the protection of their interests within the Nigerian Federation. At the end of the convention, delegates made the following observations:

- (1) Delegates observed with great concern, the increased marginalization of the Yoruba in the scheme of things in Nigeria under the present administration. It was noted that most of the Yoruba who are in the Federal Executive Council today are junior ministers.
- (2) Delegates observed with distress, the alarming rate of poverty in Yoruba land today continues to raise concern for all. As a zone that used to be the industrial hub of Nigeria, the collapse of power and its attendant effect on industries has seen more of our people thrown into penury. The latest fact from the Federal office of statistics is that the South West is the most afflicted zone in Southern Nigeria in terms of poverty after the three zones in the North. The marginalization of our people has been in the full swing to the point that beggars of Yoruba extraction now litter our major cities.
- (3) Delegates further noted with grave worry, the quality of representation of the Yoruba in the National Assembly which is the only place we can influence decisions in government is also a major concern. But for a few exceptions, the quality of our representations in both chambers of the National Assembly gives much concern.
- (4) With consternation and misgivings, delegates observed with concern, the recent attack on Atlas Cove Jetty by the Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) has shown how vulnerable the Yoruba have become in Nigeria today. Though we were not the primary target of the attack, that it happened on our land is however a signal that dangers might be lurking around the concern; and
- (5) With impudence, delegates discussed the July 14<sup>th</sup> letter from President Umaru Yar'Adua to Governor Fashola and the people of Lagos State asking that the 37 Local Government areas created by Governor Bola Tinubu be scrapped or risk facing the wrath of the Federal Government.

In view of the foregoing, the Egbe hereby strongly urges the following:

- (1) That for Nigeria to develop, it has to make the maximum use of its resources strategically placing its best in positions of power to effect the change needed for the country's transformation. Purposely relegating smarter citizens to lower ministers and second class citizens is self defeating and regressive. How we navigate our way out of this mess in the scheme of things should seriously concern all Nigerians;

- (2) Given the recent transformation of Lagos State into a formidable mega city, after years of neglect by previous state administrators, the Egbe urges President Yar'Adua to take a lesson from Governor Fashola's book of commitment to excellence and delivery of service to his constituents and find a way to work the action Governor rather than be a stumbling block;
- (3) That our Governors ensure that while we continue the struggle for a restructured Nigeria where the Federating units would take away many of the functions the Federal Government is currently holding incompetently, we must be creative enough to initiate projects that would create alternative sources of energy to help our people engage in small scale businesses to reduce unemployment in our states facilitating economic recovery in Yoruba land;
- (4) That all thinking caps be in place and all hands on deck, as we approach the 2011 electoral season. As Yoruba. We are urged to raise the stake and put our best feet forward for effective representation in the National Assemble. Mediocre representation is not acceptable.
- (5) That the resulting disappointing un-strategic response by some of our leaders to the Atlas Jetty bombing is very disheartening. The Yoruba used to be more sophisticated in thinking to be daring repeat attack of such incident for the insurgents to see what we can do. America with all its might did not dare the 9-11 perpetrators to do a repeat to show its might. Where is our quite diplomacy which should have seen us fortify ourselves without any blabbing? We need to be more strategic without getting into emotive response that makes us more vulnerable. We should also be careful to ensure that individual interests are not sold as Yoruba interests to goad our people into a war we are not prepared for. However, MEND and other South South interests are warned publicly not to repeat such a dastardly act anywhere in Yoruba land.

Signed:

*G. O. Oduwole*

Engr. O. Oduwole  
National President

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National Sec. of Public Affairs