



PRESIDENT'S WELCOME ADDRESS

**3RD ESAN NATIONAL CONGRESS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
DALLAS, TEXAS USA – MAY 28TH – 31ST 2010**

DR. SYLVESTER OMOSUN FADAL – ENC EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT

ESAN & EDO STATE DEVELOPMENT, VALUE DRIVEN METRICS AND PEOPLE CHALLENGES

General and Executive Members, Association Presidents, Board of Trustee, Royal Highnesses, Chiefs, His Excellency, Senators, Members of Edo State House of Assembly, Executive Local Government Chairmen, Distinguished Guests, Esan members, ladies and gentlemen, Welcome.

I commend the Esan Progressive Association of Dallas, Texas for hosting us. I also commend the dedicated members of the ENC and affiliate chapters for making this event possible. Your presence is the driving force behind our success. Your support and collective wisdom over the past year is commendable. On behalf of our supporters across the globe, I say thank you.

Our History and Journey

20 years ago, I co-founded the Esan Union of Northern California in Oakland with other great men and women. It was a forum for Esan indigenes and affiliated families to meet and discuss collaborative ways of working as a team in efforts support ourselves and to impact Esanland through programs of value. About the same time, people of Esan natives across the United States were establishing similar associations borne out of great sincerity and passion to help each other. 17 years later, after a metamorphosis of efforts and numerous associations the Esan National Congress was formed in Chicago, Illinois by a team of dedicated Esan men and women. Today in Dallas, Texas, we join forces at our 3rd annual international convention to deliver one of the most promising conventions till date. This is the time to begin to build on ways to impact the next generations of our youths and our people through programs essential in driving long-term growth and development in Esanland, delivered by vision, insights, and actionable plans.

This is a great and exciting time. In a world where people do things because they have to, the ENC must separate itself from the norm by doing things because we care. We must be the extraordinary kind that does things because we want to. This approach will bring the fulfillment and joy that most people seek and never find. It won't be easy. Infact it will be highly complicated unless we are open to working with each other. The ENC does not have a constitutional monarchy on how to develop Esanland. We all must play a role. Effective leadership is often measured best by the actions and performance of the leader and his team. While we have been quick to criticize our government in Nigeria for its failure to respect the constitution and the independent arms of government which check and balance one another, we have sometimes failed to practice that belief.

We as a people have peculiar and personal experiences that are excruciatingly deep. These experiences sometimes lead to propensities. How we shape those propensities influences our actions, credibility and future. We must make those personal experiences positive. So today, I challenge my members, our supporters and every one that is here with us to embrace a mindset that is more trusting and empowering. We must find our individual ways to support and grow the Esan Congress. We must not kill great dreams

and opportunities. We must learn to be trusting both in our thinking and actions. That is our best approach to moving forward. Every man and woman must find a way to bring a positive revelation and strength to the ENC. It's through our positive thoughts and actions that we can make good things happen.

Early this year some members of the ENC asked why we are overly focused on helping the poor when in reality we are barely making a dent as it relates to the issues faced by our people in Esanland. I responded by sharing a story by Joe Stowell about a young boy walking on a beach.

"He encountered hundreds of starfish dying under the heat of the burning sun and threw them back into the sea. A passerby asked, "What are you doing?" "Saving their lives," the boy replied. "Forget it," the man said. "You can't possibly save all these starfish," "Right," replied the boy, "but it makes a big difference to each one I do save."

My question to you today is, **"Do you believe in making a difference?"** We can't save the whole of Esanland, Edo State or Nigeria but those whose lives we do impact will forever feel the difference. Every difference we make is most definitely better than nothing.

Our Successes and Challenges

In 2009 we achieved what was referred to as one of the best non-profit ventures in Esanland when we delivered medical equipment worth \$320,000.00 to the Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital. That ladies and gentlemen is what making a difference is about.

To continue to impact Esanland and other critical projects, ENC needs your talent and support. We seek your continuous dedication and loyalty. We must remain persistent in efforts to accomplish the goals we outlined in Boston in January 2009.

Moving forward, we must begin to identify how we can thoughtfully and strategically leverage the broad repository of knowledge our members can bring to Esanland development. The distinction between great and ordinary people is infinite and everlasting. Great people encourage change through action.

Giraffes have the shortest sleep rotation of any mammal. They sleep only between 10 minutes and 2 hours in a 24-hour period and average just 1.9 hours of sleep per day. Ostensibly always awake, the giraffe has nothing much in common with you and me. If we had so little sleep, it probably means we have some form of insomnia. But for giraffes, it's not a sleep disorder that keeps them awake. It's just the way God made them.

The moral of my story is to prompt a thought process in you. Our youths no longer sleep. They are desperate for actions. They need work and the only options in Esanland in terms of employment are (a) hospitals, (b) schools and colleges, (c) motorcycle (okada) driving, (4) retail services and (5) Internet café or 419 options. We need to start thinking of how to create opportunities for these youths, utilizing the vast space available to create businesses that can engage them 24/7. We must begin to brighten rather than sucking out the lights in our region. Successful capitalist countries have embraced visionary and engaging concepts of 24/7 businesses and it is time we begin to explore this window of reasoning.

Esanland has space, talent and opportunities. How do we tap into these resources and provide jobs to our growing people. We must begin to discuss ways of opening up new avenues for added value, and driving organizational development and career opportunities. If we explore our options we can create jobs in Esanland. Not everyone must own a hotel or an internet café. We can only do the same thing so many times before the industry becomes saturated, plateaus and declines. We have to broaden our scope of reasoning and prospect through collaborative efforts with responsible supporters to develop our land and people. There are items we can produce cheaper than China. We can process more transactions more

quickly, accurately, with reasonable oversight and (most importantly) increased employee self-service. But first, Edo State must be safe for anything to happen.

No leader can Sheppard his or her flock too long if the integrity of the leader is questionable. People can smell the truth a mile away regardless the words that comes out of the mouth of a leader. A leader whose integrity is suspect will face continuous instability and a system plague with failure. Sadly, there is often no self correcting mechanism to address such an issue.

Every day, as your president, I ask myself if I am making a difference. I have never failed to reassure myself and my dedicated team members that the ultimate measure of a man is reflected best, not only by his achievements or conquers but by his everlasting integrity. What do you want to be remembered for?

The ENC has done well. Despite the tough times we have had over the year, our stripes have been sharp, our focus have been direct, our actions have been in strict compliance with our constitution and our future goals continue to look brighter. Our great men and women of the leadership have contributed their wisdom in making strict and firm decisions and provided the support each and every time they were called upon. The applause goes to you all – my leadership team. As your president and leader, I thank you.

We live in a world of greed. We live in a world where people have mastered the act of un-actionable empathy and false sympathetic expressions. The ENC, its members, patrons and leaders must be different. Just like the world came together around 9/11, the tsunami, Katrina, Haiti Earthquake, and much more, I challenge every one of you here today to express your support through actions. One of the greatest moments in life is not when you gain the most wealth but when you truly transform lives. We must not wait for the “moments of sudden death” to take action. We must not seek a 21- gun salute or recognition for every action we take. The most rewarding act is one that is done in a thoughtful, hopeful, private, determined, and most important, in a tender way.

Are You Honorable?

We must be careful when we exert extraordinary pressure on a fragile system. When the mitigating factors for wanting to create change do not fit the prevailing conditions on ground, the outcome is easily predictable. The ENC must remain focused. We must continue to support each other. Our inspirational vision to impact the lives of our people in Esanland through efforts focused on saving humanity through medical support among other goals must remain strong. The question today is “has your personal agenda changed?”

Today you must ask yourself “why?” Why have you not been instrumental in creating good things? ‘Why’ do you find ways to avoid impacting the lives of others? Why do you avoid actions that bring honor?

As Professor Rodney D. Coates once said, *“Honor is something that requires diligence, responsibility, and a continual desire to exceed expectations. Honor is enjoyed by those who disdain mediocrity and consistently achieves excellence. Honor is what is shown and enjoyed by those who have gone the extra mile, have obtained extraordinary results, and who have earned the respect and admiration from both peers and observers. Honor is what you render and receive as a result of efforts, actions, and conduct that reflect distinction, recognition, and high praise. Honor is what everyone talks about and very few people rarely experience.”*

The question today is “Are you honorable?”

Our convention theme is “Modern Medical Assistance in Esanland - Lassa Fever Awareness.” Our success this weekend will be a direct reflection of your honor. How well you position the ENC towards meeting the theme goal, and our long range plans will reflect your honor. Every life that is saved because of ENC’s involvement in mitigating and addressing Lassa Fever in Esanland is a direct expression of the honor you

will earn. Today, I challenge you to make things happen, cause things to happen and join us as we target this deadly disease. Every support will make a big difference.

Our medical support goals when achieved will alleviate the preponderance of illnesses and pain amongst our people. It will be an achievement. One thing it won't change that I have observed is eradicate hunger. Our people are simply dying of hunger at a high level. Someday, sometimes in the future, I hope we will strategize on how to address this added concern once our current goals are met. I know we can't change the world but I truly believe we can impact the lives of our people one person at a time.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL. MA KHATO – MA KHALE, ISE.

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