



URHOBOPROGRESS UNION (UPU)

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Message from the President-General, Olorogun Senator Felix Ovuodoroye Ibru to the Annual Convention of the Urhobo Progress Union UPU (U.K.) Branch, August 23rd - 25th, 2008.

President and Officers of the U.K. Branch
Olorogun r' Urhobo
ladies and Gentlemen
Compatriots

On behalf of the entire Urhobo people, I am most pleased to send these words of fraternal greetings to this gathering of an important segment of the Urhobo people in the Diaspora under the auspices of the U.K. branch of Urhobo Progress Union. I wish to express my gratitude to the officers of the branch for inviting me to your annual gathering and I very much regret that I am not able to be present in person to participate in your deliberations. However, I want to assure you that as your President -General, I take most seriously the affairs of the branches of the Union. I wish you serious and fruitful deliberations that will bear important results for the Urhobo community in London.

I take this opportunity to express my condolences for the loss of two of your important leaders. Chief Julius Sobotie and Chief Edward Awaitefe served Urhobo interests and causes throughout their lives. Their sad demise is a great loss to the Urhobo people. In the last one year, the Urhobo community in the U.K. also suffered the loss of Mrs. Ade Buraimoh, a dedicated member of the Urhobo community. I grieve with your branch for the loss of these great Urhobo leaders. May their souls rest in peace.

Olorogun Senator Felix O. Ibru
President General

Chief Maj. General. Patrick Aziza (rtd.)
First Deputy President General

Chief Arc.. Charles Majoroh
Second Deputy President General

Dr. S. U. Odjio
OepL.J

Chief Barrister Victor Otomiewo Chief Meshack Oroye Barr. (Mrs.) Beauty Alloh Sir Chiet Young Abenabe. Mr William Ondkpoma

National Secretary

National Treasurer

National Legal Adviser

National Publicity Secretary

Chief of Staff

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Chief Luman Gbemre Elder John Onoriode Onojakpor
National Financial Secretary

Assistant National Secretary

Chief James Akpowan
Assistant National Financial Secretary

Mr. Francis Ugbejevan
Assistant National Publicity Secretary

Chief Barrister Emmanuel Omovle
Assistant National Secretary

Importance of Branches in the Affairs of the Urhobo Progress Union

Since its initial inauguration as Urhobo Brotherly Society in 1931, the Urhobo Progress Union has consistently encouraged the formation of branches in the diverse Urhobo Diaspora. These branches have played important roles in mapping out the direction of the Union and in the execution of important projects, such as Urhobo College. For these patriotic acts, various Presidents-General have expressed gratitude for the contributions of the Urhobo Diaspora to the progress of Urhoboland. Some branches have been especially notable for their immense contributions. For example, the Lagos, Kano and Jos branches have historically played leadership roles among the branches of the union.

As the Urhobo Diaspora expands in Europe, I expect London, the largest of the Urhobo communities in Europe to play the sort of constructive role that Lagos played in the past. Of course, I am pleased with the obvious enthusiasm for Urhobo causes that is so abundant in the London Urhobo community. Apart from the branch of the union that has functioned here for a long time, I am aware that Clan Unions have also played important roles in the lives of Urhobo people in London. These unions and several other Urhobo organisations have contributed to the welfare of our people in difficult times. The Urhobo Progress Union salutes the entire Urhobo community in the U.K.

Unfortunately, I am also aware that the U.K. branch of the Urhobo Progress Union has been troubled by quarrels and disputes which have often disrupted its overall mission. In the 1960s, there was a protracted factional dispute that necessitated the intervention of the Executive Committee from the Headquarters. As your President-General, I am sad to receive reports of a new outbreak of factional disputes in the affairs of the branch. I appeal to all sides of such disputes to put the future of the Urhobo nation above factional interests. I sincerely hope that the Urhobo community in the U.K. will not wait for another intervention from the Headquarters before resolving any disagreement among you.

I am extremely pleased that the Urhobo community in the U.K. is eager to receive me as your President -General, and I want to assure you that I will be delighted to visit any Urhobo community that is united for the single purpose of advancing the fortunes of the Urhobo people.

The Need for Urhobo Unity

The Urhobo Progress Union was founded to fight challenges that faced the Urhobo people in the 1930s. Earlier generations of our leaders, such as Omorohwovo Okoro, Chief Mukoro Mowoe and Chief T.E.A. Salubi were largely successful in meeting those challenges because the Urhobo people were united behind them.

The Urhobo Progress Union has been widely acknowledged as a success story. However, the success of the Urhobo Progress Union has made it attractive for many people who seek to control its affairs by all means. This situation poses a new type of challenge and I wish to stress that the success of our leadership today will depend on greater unity , patriotism and commitment among the Urhobo people.

Once again, I thank you for your invitation and I wish you a very successful convention.

God bless you all.

God bless Urhobo



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