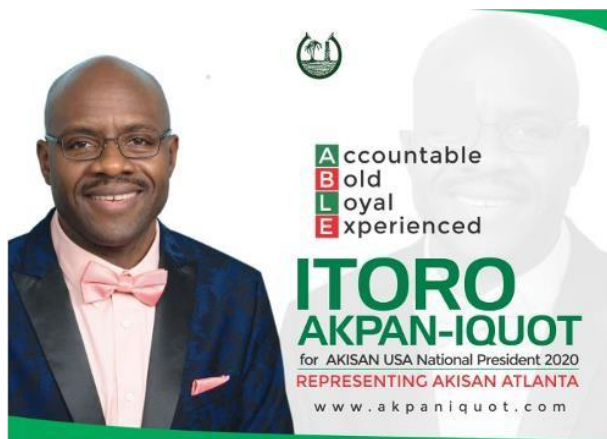




Manifesto

For the Candidacy of the National President (2020 – 2022)

Akwa Ibom State Association of Nigeria (USA), Inc.
(AKISAN USA)



By

Itoro Akpan-Iquot
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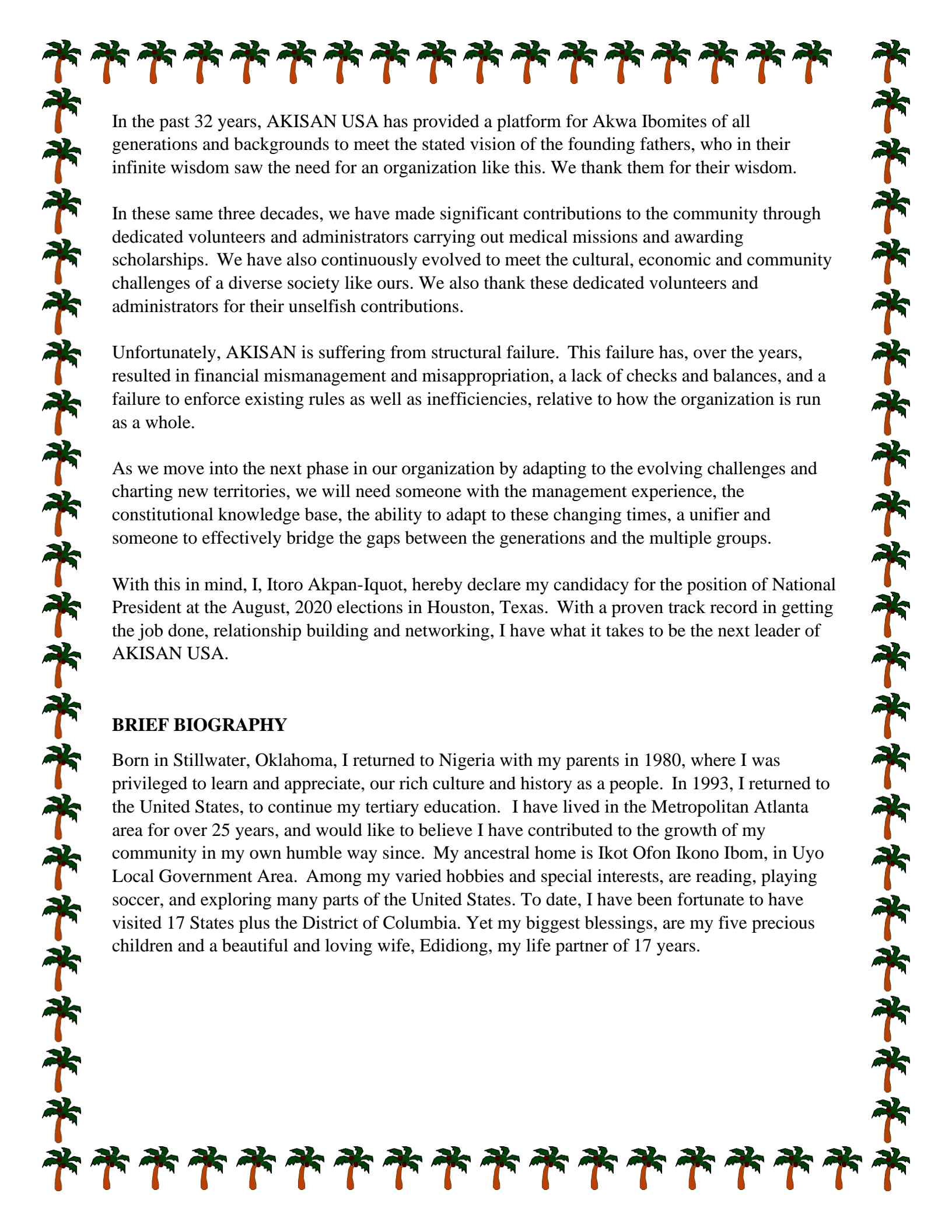
“Equity, Transparency, Accountability”

VISION STATEMENT

Lead Nigerian non-profit organizations with distinction by harnessing the power of the people and our communities in the United States, to the benefit our people, both at home and abroad.

MISSION STATEMENT

Inspire AKISAN USA's progress through the power of collaboration, partnerships and the people.

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In the past 32 years, AKISAN USA has provided a platform for Akwa Ibomites of all generations and backgrounds to meet the stated vision of the founding fathers, who in their infinite wisdom saw the need for an organization like this. We thank them for their wisdom.

In these same three decades, we have made significant contributions to the community through dedicated volunteers and administrators carrying out medical missions and awarding scholarships. We have also continuously evolved to meet the cultural, economic and community challenges of a diverse society like ours. We also thank these dedicated volunteers and administrators for their unselfish contributions.

Unfortunately, AKISAN is suffering from structural failure. This failure has, over the years, resulted in financial mismanagement and misappropriation, a lack of checks and balances, and a failure to enforce existing rules as well as inefficiencies, relative to how the organization is run as a whole.

As we move into the next phase in our organization by adapting to the evolving challenges and charting new territories, we will need someone with the management experience, the constitutional knowledge base, the ability to adapt to these changing times, a unifier and someone to effectively bridge the gaps between the generations and the multiple groups.

With this in mind, I, Itoro Akpan-Iquot, hereby declare my candidacy for the position of National President at the August, 2020 elections in Houston, Texas. With a proven track record in getting the job done, relationship building and networking, I have what it takes to be the next leader of AKISAN USA.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Born in Stillwater, Oklahoma, I returned to Nigeria with my parents in 1980, where I was privileged to learn and appreciate, our rich culture and history as a people. In 1993, I returned to the United States, to continue my tertiary education. I have lived in the Metropolitan Atlanta area for over 25 years, and would like to believe I have contributed to the growth of my community in my own humble way since. My ancestral home is Ikot Ofon Ikono Ibom, in Uyo Local Government Area. Among my varied hobbies and special interests, are reading, playing soccer, and exploring many parts of the United States. To date, I have been fortunate to have visited 17 States plus the District of Columbia. Yet my biggest blessings, are my five precious children and a beautiful and loving wife, Edidiong, my life partner of 17 years.



EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- **Nigeria**
 - University of Calabar (Agricultural Economics), Cross-River State (1991 to 1993)
 - **Served as President, Year 1 and Year 2 Faculty of Agriculture Students**
- **United States**
 - Dekalb College (Pre-Comp. Sc.), Clarkston, Georgia (1994 to 1997)
 - Georgia Institute of Tech. (B.Sc., Comp. Sc.), Atlanta, Georgia (1997 to 1999)

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Over 30 years of combined professional experience:

- Senior Web Developer at Fiserv, AT&T, Delta Airlines, & AutoTrader, among other top companies
- Owner, The Ace Media Group (Website Design, Event Photography & DJ Services)

AKISAN/COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

- **AKISAN Atlanta PRO (2009 to 2011)**
 - Created an email distribution list that currently contains 350+ email addresses
 - Created, developed and maintained AKISAN Atlanta's website
- **Vice President (2011 to 2013)**
 - Created a calling post phone bank that currently contains 350+ phone numbers
- **President (2013 to 2015)**
 - Ensured the chapter met all her obligations and success factors
 - Increased meeting attendance 50% over 2 years
 - Developed a template for our monthly and annual financial reports
 - Provided itemized reports for all project expenses
 - Increased participation in our life insurance program 50% over 2 years
 - Raised a record \$39,000.00 over 2 years
 - Renovated Akwa Ibom House, a \$30,000.00 project
 - Increased rental receipts of Akwa Ibom House by 22% over 2 years
 - Hosted an AKISAN USA national council meeting
 - Attended all National Council Meetings and Conventions
 - Started the July 4th family-and-friends picnic, which is now an annual tradition at Akwa Ibom House



AKISAN/COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

- Worked with the youth to create an end-of-year party for the entire community, another ongoing tradition
- As President, AKISAN Atlanta won the, “Most Improved Chapter” award by AKISAN USA (2014)
- **Secretary (2017 to 2018)**
 - Set up an online payment system for the chapter, for the convenient paying of registration fees, dues and donations.
 - Created WhatsApp chat rooms for the Atlanta ExCo and for the House Project Committee, for efficient communication and dissemination of information
- **Ex-Officio Member (2018 to Present)**
 - Served as Secretary, Constitutional Amendment Committee (2019)
 - Offering general advice on the running of the chapter and filling in for chapter executives on an as-needed basis
- **Webmaster, AKISAN USA (2009 to Present) - <http://www.akisan.org>**
 - Website has **always** been up-to-date
 - Managing AKISAN USA’s email distribution list of 1,600+ email addresses

HONORS/AWARDS

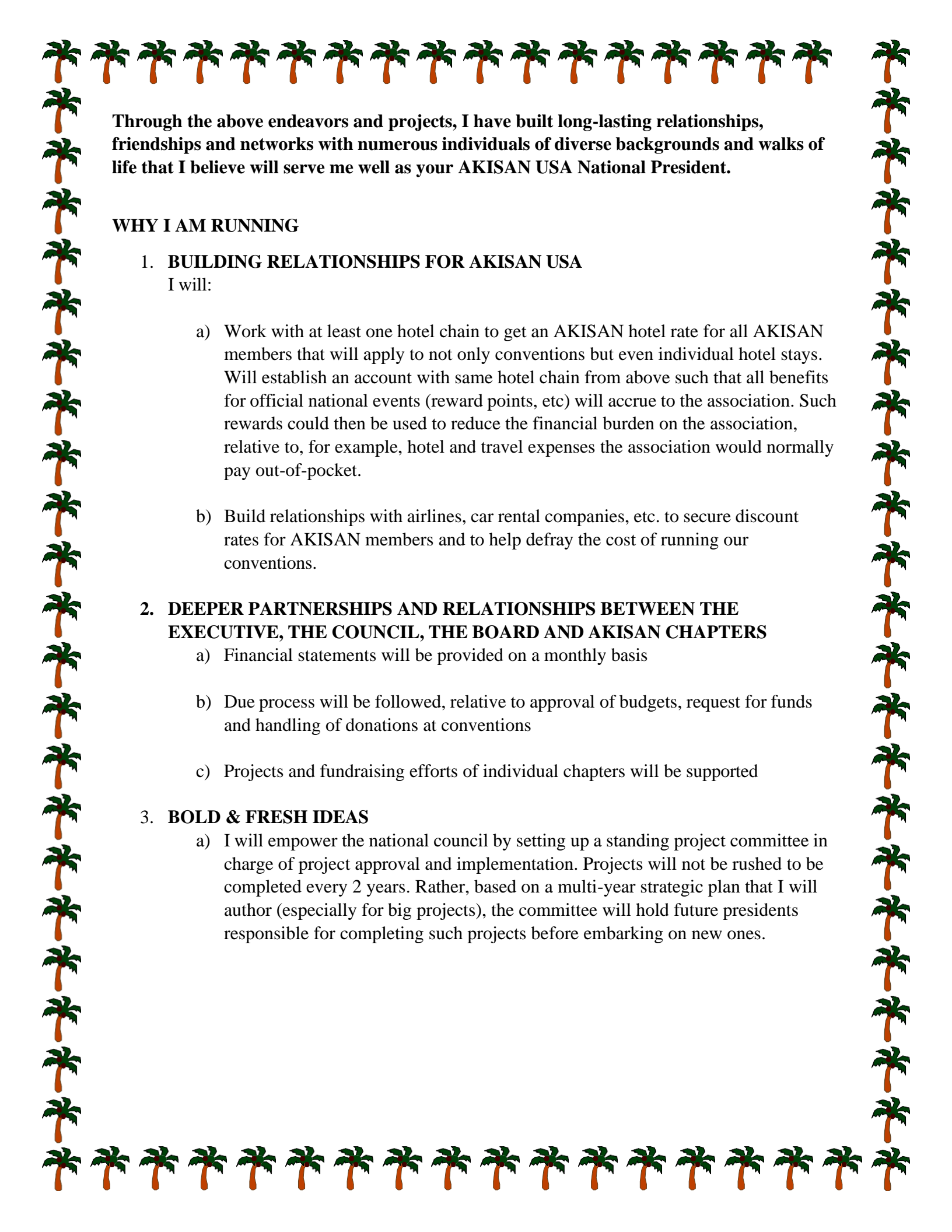
- Akwa Ibom Reconciles Legendary Award (2024)
- AKISAN USA’s Executive Committee’s Outstanding Leadership Award (2024)
- Award North’s Special Achievement Award (2024)
- Nka Ikemesit Nditto Nsit of Atlanta’s Honor Award (2023)
- Law Students Association of Nigeria (UNIUYO Chapter)’s Award of Excellence (2023)
- Start Innovation Hub’s Award of Recognition (2022)
- AKISAN Washington, DC Chapter’s Leadership Award (2022)
- Eket Development Association, USA’s Community Service Award (2021)
- AKISAN Nashville Chapter's Outstanding Leadership Award (2021)
- National Association of Akwa Ibom Students (University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus Chapter)’s Award of Excellence (2021)
- Duke Town Old Students Association’s Founder's Day Award (2021)
- AKISAN Atlanta's Appreciation Award (2019)

- Offot Ukwá Association's Appreciation Award (2017)
- AKISAN USA's Appreciation Award (2016)
- Akwa Ibom Women Initiative of Atlanta's Appreciation Award (2015)
- Nka Ikemesit Nditó Nsit of Atlanta's Community Service Award (2014)
- AKISAN USA's President's Award (2010)

OTHER NOTEWORTHY MENTIONS

- President-General, Association of Akwa Ibom Communities Presidents Worldwide (2021 - Present)
- Vice President & Treasurer, Mboho Nditó Ibíbio USA (Atlanta Chapter: 2017 - Present)
- Webmaster for the following Akwa Ibom-related associations, among others: Ibom Peoples Congress, Ibom Global Healthcare Initiative, Oron Development Union, Dallas, Texas Chapter, Young Professionals Development (for Miss AKISAN USA 2017 - 2018), Ati Annang USA, Eket Development Congress USA, Ibíbio People's Union, Mboho Nditó Ibíbio USA, Onna USA, and Ubium Development Association
- Webmaster for the following AKISAN Chapters: Atlanta, Los Angeles Community, and New York





Through the above endeavors and projects, I have built long-lasting relationships, friendships and networks with numerous individuals of diverse backgrounds and walks of life that I believe will serve me well as your AKISAN USA National President.

WHY I AM RUNNING

1. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR AKISAN USA

I will:

- a) Work with at least one hotel chain to get an AKISAN hotel rate for all AKISAN members that will apply to not only conventions but even individual hotel stays. Will establish an account with same hotel chain from above such that all benefits for official national events (reward points, etc) will accrue to the association. Such rewards could then be used to reduce the financial burden on the association, relative to, for example, hotel and travel expenses the association would normally pay out-of-pocket.
- b) Build relationships with airlines, car rental companies, etc. to secure discount rates for AKISAN members and to help defray the cost of running our conventions.

2. DEEPER PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE, THE COUNCIL, THE BOARD AND AKISAN CHAPTERS

- a) Financial statements will be provided on a monthly basis
- b) Due process will be followed, relative to approval of budgets, request for funds and handling of donations at conventions
- c) Projects and fundraising efforts of individual chapters will be supported

3. BOLD & FRESH IDEAS

- a) I will empower the national council by setting up a standing project committee in charge of project approval and implementation. Projects will not be rushed to be completed every 2 years. Rather, based on a multi-year strategic plan that I will author (especially for big projects), the committee will hold future presidents responsible for completing such projects before embarking on new ones.



WHY I AM RUNNING (CONT'D)

Current projects like the medical mission and scholarships will be reviewed for efficiency and equity. For instance, medical missions should not always be held in the same local government areas. There are parts of the state that are yet to feel our presence. Residents of such areas end up spending what little money they have to travel to the big cities for medical assistance. We need to take the medical mission to the people, so to speak.

b)

All project expenses will be itemized. Wherever possible, electronic payments will be used, for better accountability.

c) AKISAN USA, in my humble opinion, would stand to benefit from ideas and projects that have already been proven to work by other Nigerian-related organizations in the United States. Such projects, often implemented in Nigeria, could be of benefit, relative to leaving a lasting legacy for the organization that generations to come will be able to point to, as something tangible that the organization has done in its 30+ years of existence. Such areas include integrated farming, hospitals, entrepreneurial programs, schools and other humanitarian projects.

4. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT & INVOLVEMENT

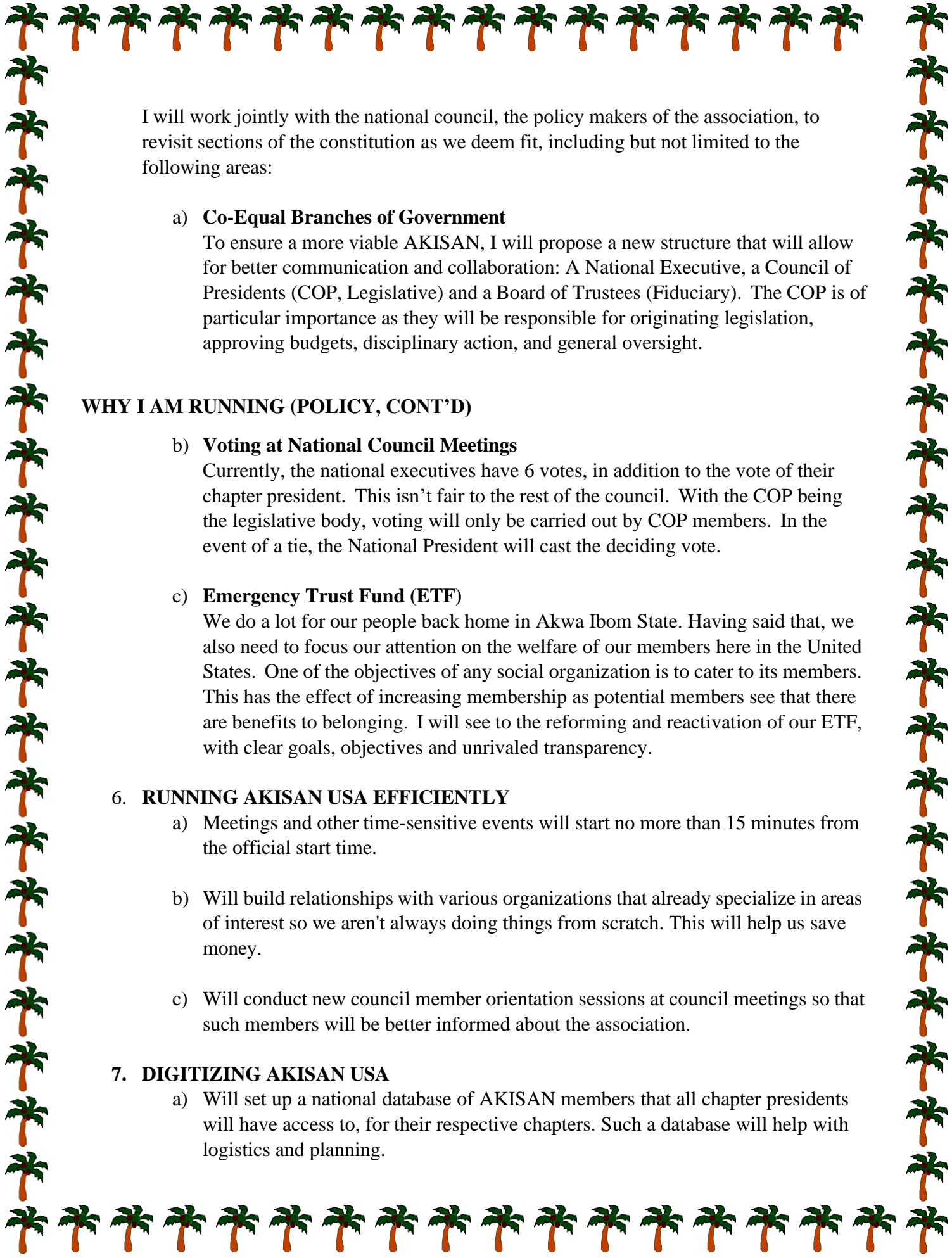
Our children of today will be the leaders of our association tomorrow. From my experience, the youth are willing to serve. However, they feel discouraged from doing so as they associate the “old folk” with bickering, in-fighting and not wanting to trust them with responsibilities. They are thus trapped in a catch-22 scenario of not being “included” as they have no “experience”. At the same time, without being given the opportunity, how do they get said experience?

I will work closely with the current youth leadership, encouraging their autonomy and programs, within the AKISAN USA framework. More importantly, I will encourage the youth to look beyond the youth wing of the organization and to play an active part in the running of the organization as a whole. With back-to-back younger administrations, our youth might just be encouraged to step up to the plate and eventually take over the reins.

My goal is to hand over power to an administration within my age range, or younger.

5. POLICY

Our constitution is sacrosanct. Our financial manual is of equal importance. Without them and without us sticking to their guidelines, we are nothing. That notwithstanding, our constitution, in particular, could use an amendment or two to ensure we are running more efficiently.



I will work jointly with the national council, the policy makers of the association, to revisit sections of the constitution as we deem fit, including but not limited to the following areas:

a) **Co-Equal Branches of Government**

To ensure a more viable AKISAN, I will propose a new structure that will allow for better communication and collaboration: A National Executive, a Council of Presidents (COP, Legislative) and a Board of Trustees (Fiduciary). The COP is of particular importance as they will be responsible for originating legislation, approving budgets, disciplinary action, and general oversight.

WHY I AM RUNNING (POLICY, CONT'D)

b) **Voting at National Council Meetings**

Currently, the national executives have 6 votes, in addition to the vote of their chapter president. This isn't fair to the rest of the council. With the COP being the legislative body, voting will only be carried out by COP members. In the event of a tie, the National President will cast the deciding vote.

c) **Emergency Trust Fund (ETF)**

We do a lot for our people back home in Akwa Ibom State. Having said that, we also need to focus our attention on the welfare of our members here in the United States. One of the objectives of any social organization is to cater to its members. This has the effect of increasing membership as potential members see that there are benefits to belonging. I will see to the reforming and reactivation of our ETF, with clear goals, objectives and unrivaled transparency.

6. RUNNING AKISAN USA EFFICIENTLY

- a) Meetings and other time-sensitive events will start no more than 15 minutes from the official start time.
- b) Will build relationships with various organizations that already specialize in areas of interest so we aren't always doing things from scratch. This will help us save money.
- c) Will conduct new council member orientation sessions at council meetings so that such members will be better informed about the association.

7. DIGITIZING AKISAN USA

- a) Will set up a national database of AKISAN members that all chapter presidents will have access to, for their respective chapters. Such a database will help with logistics and planning.



AKISAN/COMMUNITY SERVICE (CONTINUED)

- b) Will ensure that in my 2 years, at least 90% of payments to AKISAN USA are done online. This will help in the areas on transparency and accountability.
- c) Will diversify how we solicit for donations.

From the above, it is clear that there will be a lot on my plate and that of my administration. That notwithstanding, I am comforted in the following quote from Michelangelo, “The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.”

WHAT YOU WILL GET FROM ME AS YOUR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

1. A Dependable Leader

I will be trustworthy and reliable in all things. As an active member of AKISAN both locally and nationally, I have earned the credibility of the people and can be trusted to get the job done.

2. A Leader who is Prudent with the Association’s Money

- a. As your president, I will NEVER handle donations directly.
- b. ALL monies donated to the association, in line with the financial manual, will be deposited into the Board of Trustee's bank account.
- c. For any money needed by my administration for projects, I will ALWAYS get budgetary approval from council and submit a proposal to the Board of Trustees detailing how such money will be spent. Upon completion of such projects, a report will ALWAYS be rendered.
- d. International donors will be provided with the Board of Trustee's bank account information and asked to wire their donations into that account, in the event they are not comfortable with bringing such donations with them.
- e. In the event that as president, I have to travel anywhere for the purpose of collecting cash donations, I will ALWAYS be accompanied by the chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Consequently, I will ask that all cash donations be handed over directly to the chairperson. Pictures and/or videos will be taken as evidence and handed over to the council.



WHAT YOU WILL GET FROM ME AS YOUR NATIONAL

3. **Equity**

I promise to treat all AKISAN USA chapters and her respective members fairly and impartially. I will treat you with the dignity and respect that you truly and rightfully deserve.

4. **Radical Openness**

I promise to run a transparent administration. Everything (finances, contracts, bids, etc.) will be open to public scrutiny. Nothing will be spared.

5. **Accountability**

I will lead with integrity and promise to run a responsible and efficient administration, answerable to the people. To that effect, I will strongly encourage the people to hold my feet to the fire.

IN CONCLUSION

I hope and trust that I have laid out a solid claim as to why I am the best candidate for the position of National President of AKISAN USA. Having been born in the United States but raised in Nigeria, I am in the perfect position to know how to work with Akwa Ibom indigenes from both, “worlds”. Through my corporate and business experiences, I have accumulated a wealth of knowledge, as well as networking and relationship-building skills that can be put to good use for the association. Based on my diverse educational background, I have learned to adapt to whatever situation life throws at me. Given the industry I am in, I am always motivated to learn new things in order to be competitive and marketable. In raising 5 children, I have learned the art of balance, patience, perseverance and money-management skills. Finally, through my travels, I have come to appreciate and respect the world’s diversity, and understand how to work with peoples from a wide range of backgrounds in the pursuit of the common good.

To say that the job of National President is going to be easy would be an understatement. It is a volunteer position that takes more from an individual than they put into it. Over the years, I have served AKISAN, both locally and nationally, with all my heart, mind and soul...with pride, integrity and a can-do spirit. In all things, I neither sought personal gain nor favor. I have always placed AKISAN first. With your collective help and prayers however, I know that the burden will be a little lighter.

On that note, in August, 2020, I am calling on all well-meaning Akwa Ibomites, to vote for me as your next AKISAN USA National President. The field of candidates is a deep and talented one. Having said that, my wealth of knowledge and experience, as laid out above, should more than suffice to prove that **I am the best of the better candidates.**



Long Live AKISAN USA!

Yours Truly,



Itoro Akpan-Iquot
Candidate for National President
AKISAN USA (2020 to 2022)
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