

**14th National Convention of Nnewi USA (NUSA)
Hosted By**

Nnewi Union Atlanta Chapter

**Date: Thursday July 2-July 5th 2009
Venue: Comfort Inn & Suites Atlanta Airport
1914 Virginia Avenue, Atlanta GA, 30337**

Minutes of this Convention was taken by

**Dr. Susan Odunukwe
NUSA Assistant General Secretary**

DAY ONE: Thursday, July 2, 2009

Arrival and registration began at approximately 5:30pm followed by dinner for all the members and their families. Thereafter, Ms. Ruby Nnadi, the Atlanta chapter president welcomed the Nnewi people present for this convention noting that the Atlanta chapter is promising members a good time, economic hardship notwithstanding. Following Ruby's welcome remarks, Mr. Nathan Momah, NUSA's current president addressed Ndi Nnewi. During his brief address he highlighted the following areas:

Library Project

The issue of Nkwo Triangle being an appropriate venue for the construction of the proposed library by NUSA was raised. Nathan explained that Ik Mbelu had informed him about the release of a master plan for any construction to be embarked on in Anambra State. This master plan is a plan intended to cover the development for Nnewi, Awka and Onitsha. Nathan suggested that Nkwo Triangle project be undertaken with the government's involvement. The library committee and NUSA executives will consult with Igwe Kenneth Orizu III and all the appropriate personnel on how this library project ought to be undertaken.

Safety Concerns at Nnewi

The President expressed concerns about safety in Nnewi noting that there is increasing reports of deaths through robbery and kidnapping in Nnewi and Nigeria as a whole. He mentioned that the alarming increase of safety incidents ought to be of concern to all present. He then called on Leo Okoli to deliver a message that was given by the Consulate General of Nigeria to Ndi Nnewi. Leo stated that the Consulate General is urging Nnewi indigenes to reclaim Nnewi as there is concerns about Nnewi being abandoned to outsiders.

Acknowledgements

The President announced that due to Mrs. Arunne Momah's relentless service to the NUSA organization; she has been selected to be recognized as NUSA's life-time matron. He stated that she will be openly recognized and presented with an award during the 2010 convention ceremony. Those present at this time of this announcement cheered and heartily congratulated Arunne on this announcement, noting that it is a well deserved recognition. On behalf of NUSA, the President also offered condolences to Dr. Chris Ulasi, Dr. IK Ofomata and Chidi Metu.

Chidi Metu, the Vice President of NUSA cautioned about late arrival to the meetings. He expects that for the subsequent days that all members should arrive on time and participate actively in the discussion to be held during this convention. He discouraged people from loitering in the hallways during the scheduled sessions.

Ossy Okeke inquired into whether the minutes of this evening session was being taken. The President responded stating that since Madu Azubogu's resignation as the Secretary of NUSA, he has asked Susan Odunukwe as the Assistant Secretary to take the minutes of all NUSA meetings going forward. Susan informed Ossy that she has been taking the minutes of this evening session. Announcements were made and the meeting adjourned for the next day beginning at 9:00am.

DAY TWO: FRIDAY, JULY 3, 2009

This morning's session was called to order by Dr. Chris Ulasi, the chairperson of the 2009 National Convention Committee. He welcomed those present stating that it is a pleasure to return to Atlanta where this convention all began fourteen years ago. Ulasi observed that the theme of this convention reflects the spirit of those gathered here today who are willing to engage in the exploration and discussion of how to further develop Nnewi. He announced the theme for this convention as "Unity, Cooperation & Understanding for the Development." When translated into Igbo language reads as "Idinotu, Nghota na Nkwelokita maka O ga-n'iru Nnewi."

Following the opening of the convention, Dr. Ulasi called on Rev. Dr. Oramasionwu to say the opening prayers. Thereafter, Dr. Ulasi acknowledged and thanked the NUSA president, Mr. Nathan Momah and his executive for the job that they are doing. In discussing the convention preview, Dr. Ulasi pointed out that although the convention agenda notes him as the chairman for this National Convention, he could not take the credit for overseeing the planning of the convention. He explained that he had to make an unexpected trip to Nigeria for his father's funeral. He informed members present that they ought to thank Mrs. Chinwe Enemchukwu, the co-chair of the Convention in conjunction with the Atlanta local convention committee for their all their efforts in putting forth this convention. He further states that he will be deferring the convention details to Mrs. Enemchukwu to explain upon her arrival. Ruby Nnadi, the Atlanta local chapter president welcomed Ndi Nnewi and presented them with kola-nut.

During her welcome address, she openly acknowledged and thanked Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Obi for the X-ray equipment donated toward our next medical mission to Nnewi. She states that Atlanta has planned for participants in this convention to have fun, economic hard times and budget constraints notwithstanding. She informs convention participants to refer to the brochure for her complete welcome address. After Ruby's address, the breaking of the kola-nut was officiated by Mr. Nnabuenyi Momah. It was announced at this juncture that copies of the minutes for the 2008 convention is being copied and therefore will be read the next day by the former NUSA General Secretary, Mr. Achebe Anosike.

President's Speech Nathan Momah, the current NUSA president, began his speech by thanking the Atlanta chapter for the efforts made in hosting this convention. He also thanked his executives for their support. He then proceeded to discuss topics he considered to be of utmost importance to him when he took office. According to the president, "peace making mission" and unity were top on his priority list of what he intended to accomplish during his term. He thanked God for guiding him with the NUSA reconciliation mission noting that it takes time after squabbles have been settled, for "complete peace to return". He further states that it is his desire to increase NUSA's membership but cannot accomplish this goal if the NUSA organization is divided. He pleaded with Ndi Nnewi to work toward the goal of unification ensuring that his effort at reconciliation not be in vain.

Nathan pointed out that if we intend to partner with those at Nnewi in the completion any project, they would be eager to join if they know that NUSA is a unified and strong organization as opposed to an organization on the verge of collapse. As part of his proposed effort to increase NUSA membership, the president said that he is going to contact each chapter to obtain the addresses of Nnewi people who are not members of NUSA. He will personally contact them and ask that they join together with NUSA in fostering and promoting development at Nnewi. He revisited the issue of security stating that he is going to confer with the delegates and his executives to determine how best to approach the safety concerns at Nnewi. He recommends that a letter of concern be written to Nzuko-Ora Nnewi pertaining to this issue.

In discussing the library project, the president indicated that he is waiting to hear from Ike Mbelu as to whether the proposed master plan for Nnewi includes the construction of a library. If it does, then NUSA will have to rethink the library project and consider diverting funds to other needed projects such as water/plumbing project. He thanked Mr. Vincent Obi for the donation of medical equipment to NUSA. He urged us to begin now to make preparation for our next medical mission. Part of that preparation, should be the solicitation and collection of medical

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Nathan also expressed the need to have life insurance coverage for all NUSA members. He feels that each chapter ought to explore coverage for their members and that a portion of the chapter dues should be ear-marked for the payment of the group coverage premium. He argues that other Nnewi citizens living in the US might be willing to join a local chapter if they know that the membership offers some additional benefits to its members. States he brought up this idea in his chapter and Ossy Okeke, the current New York Tri-State president thought that it was a worthwhile proposal requiring further exploration. Nathan has also spoken to Dr. Ebby Odunukwe who has expressed the willingness to provide useful insights on how this can be accomplished based on the Washington DC/Maryland chapter's experience.

NUSA president stated that he recently redesigned the NUSA website. He however, noted that for the last two years, the Tri-state chapter has been responsible for the maintenance fees for the website. He expresses the desire to have NUSA take over the payment of the maintenance fees which he explains ought to be their sole responsibility. He encouraged each chapter to develop a chapter website to be linked to the national organization's (NUSA) website. The linkage of the local chapters' website to the national website gives people visiting the site a comprehensive view of NUSA as an organization, not to mention the added benefit of having NUSA pay just one maintenance fee. The Chapters will only be responsible for paying the fees for their respective domain name.

The president in his speech also expressed disappointment about the exchange taking place on the Nnewi forum, noting that the disregard and disrespect shown on the forum is despicable. He suggests that we rethink and redefine what constitutes appropriate etiquette for members using the forum. Respect for elders must be upheld and we as adults must be willing to demonstrate exemplary behavior for our children to emulate.

Dr. Ulasi thanked NUSA President Momah for his speech noting that as much as he shares his concern about the degree of disregard taking place on the forum, he would encourage people to use this forum as a way to engage in meaningful discussion that would promote freedom of speech. He also echoed the president's concerns about the condition of security at Nnewi. Dr. Ulasi shared his experiences during a recent visit to Nnewi for his father's burial. He reports that he was alarmed when he witnessed the police officers who were supposed to be keeping peace and order drinking and getting intoxicated with the very citizens they were there to protect and by so doing were compromising the safety of everyone in their midst. He too felt that this is an area of increasing concern deserving immediate attention.

Dr. Ulasi called on Mrs. Chinwe Enemchukwu to give report on the convention planning. Chinwe thanked and acknowledged Ruby and Isaac Emefo as well as other Atlanta chapter convention committee members for their diligence in putting together a successful convention. Roll call was handled by Eddie Ukatu who commended the Chicago chapter for their ability to put aside their

differences and stand together as a chapter electing to be represented in this convention. He called on chapters with outstanding dues to come and settle their dues and for chapters in good standing to come forth and give their chapter reports beginning with the Chicago chapter

Roll Call

Chicago.....Selina Ileka representing Emeka Ukachukwu
Houston..... Dr. Chris Ulasi representing Raymond Azubogu
LA..... Chi Uba
NY/NJ TriState..... Ossy Okeke
North Carolina.....On the way
Atlanta.....Ruby Nnadi
Washington/Maryland.....Dr. Ebby Odunukwe
Dallas.....Dr. Ike Ofomata
Mississippi.....Mr. Leo Okoli
Florida.....Mrs. Chinwe Enemchukwu
Minnesota.....Eddie Ukatu
Oklahoma.....Dr. Chukwukadibia Odunukwe & Susan Odunukwe
Ohio.....Not represented
Boston.....Chike Odunukwe

CHAPTER REPORT

Chicago:

Mrs. Celina Ileka stated the chapter president Mr. Emeka Ukachukwu is on the way. She stated that she was unaware of the fact that she will be giving her chapter report and therefore did not come prepared to make such presentation. She however, urged the Nnewi people who are residents of Chicago present in this convention to join their local chapter.

Houston:

Dr. Chris Ulasi representing the Houston chapter informed this convention that Raymond Azubogu is on the way. Dr. Ulasi announced that their chapter is a unified and stable organization that prides itself in promoting the wellbeing of its members. He stated that Houston is preparing for Afia Olu which is going to involve several cultural activities including masquerades. He extended an invitation to the Nnewi people to come and experience this event. Ulasi noted that Houston hosts annual celebration of summer picnics which helps to cultivate and strengthen family alliances within his local chapter. Dr. Ulasi stated that Life Insurance is a benefit that the Houston chapter has already secured for its members. Dr. Ulasi noted that Nnewi people came out in mass for his father's wake in Houston. This show of support according to him reflects the solidarity of the Houston chapter and is worthy of emulation.

LA:

Chi Uba representing Los Angeles informed the convention that there is "perfect peace" in LA. She said that it is not that their members do not have disagreements but their disagreements do not linger making it possible for them to form meaningful relationships. She discussed their upcoming "Tri-Ji" annual event which has always been a well attended event by people in California.

NY/NJ Tri-State:

Mr. Ossy Okeke introduced his chapter members present. He described his chapter as a "model chapter" since 1996 noting that there are no squabbles in their chapter. He reports that his chapter is exploring group life insurance for its members. To that end, he has spoken to other chapters who have life insurance as to how to go about the process should they decide to pursue this benefit for their members. He mentioned that after Tri-State hosted last year's convention, it depleted their funds. He therefore, pleaded with NUSA to help ease their financial burden. Ossy noted that due to their present financial situation, no planned project has been undertaken by his chapter. There are however, plans for fundraising events after which the Tri-State chapter will decide on appropriate projects to be undertaken. At that time, NUSA will be apprised of those projects. In the interim, Ossy extended an invitation to the Nnewi people to come and support their planned fundraising events.

Atlanta:

Ms. Ruby Nnadi welcomed Ndi Nnewi to Atlanta noting that it has not been financially easy for her

chapter to host this convention. She suggests that NUSA should consider taking over the sole responsibility of hosting the convention going forward. Reports that the Atlanta chapter has donated X-Ray equipment for NUSA's next medical mission to Nnewi.

North Carolina- On the way

Washington/Maryland:

Dr. Ebby Odunukwe noted that his chapter is thriving and that there is "peace" amongst their members as well. In an effort to bring our children together he states, we are trying to change this concept of "auntie/uncle" which tends to leave our children confused making them believe that all members of their chapter are related.

At-Large

Membership Florida Mrs. Chinwe Enemchukwu informed members that she secured wheel chairs to be donated to Akwudo Hospital in Nnewi -the designated hospital for NUSA's first medical mission.

Oklahoma

Dr. Chukwukadibia Odunukwe (C.J) reported that the Oklahoma at-large chapter is also thriving and that there is harmony there as well. He urged Nnewi people to be respectful of one another and to allow "peace to reign".

Boston

Chike Odunukwe representing Boston stated that their chapter continues to be a viable and progressive chapter noting that Boston was actually the first chapter to elect a female president. He further reported that the Boston chapter's cultural events, within the Boston metro area, have become so prominent that it warrants coverage by the local newspaper. Boston's solidarity was evident in the recent tragedy that befell a member whose child was killed. Chike gave a moving account of how the Boston chapter rallied around this family and supported them throughout this difficult period. He notified NUSA members that Boston is gearing up for Nnewi day scheduled for next week.

Dallas

Dr. Ik Ofomata representing Dallas chapter informed those present for this convention that Nathan Momah, the NUSA president came with his executive to Dallas to settle the long standing dispute amongst the Nnewi people in Dallas. As part of the resolution process, a caretaker committee was developed. This committee he states was chosen equally from both groups. Following the formation of this committee, a harmonization committee was formed headed by Mr. Nnabuenyi Momah. Dr. Ofomata indicated that out of the harmonization endeavor came a newly formed Dallas chapter comprising of 46 families and that membership is still increasing. For example, he reported that four new families recently joined this organization. He further reports that life insurance for their members is an area that they have already explored. He indicated that Dallas is interested in exploring ambulance services for the Nnewi area down the road. He announced that their annual picnic has been scheduled for July 24th, 2009.

Immediately following Dr. Ofomata's report, Rev. Dr. Oramasionwu stood up interjecting that he is "confused by what going on". According to him, the only recognized chapter in Dallas is the one headed up by Mrs. Nneka Okonkwo. Rev. Oramasionwu states that this particular Dallas chapter under Nneka's leadership is supposed to be the recognized chapter because they have paid their annual dues. He noted that people should not be given the impression that Dallas issue has been resolved because it is still an issue requiring attention and has not yet being fully resolved. Reports that his group is affiliated with ICAN an organization that provides life insurance coverage to its members. While Rev. Oramasionwu was still speaking, Chidi Metu, the NUSA Vice president, sprang to his feet and began interrupting Rev. Oramasionwu noting "that there has been an executive resolution for the Dallas issue to be squashed". Subsequently, an argument erupted on the floor with several individuals all talking at the same time, some of them blaming Chidi for the blatant disrespect of an elder. Ossy Okeke chimed in noting that the executive decision for the resolution of the Dallas issue was subject to delegates' approval and not just based on executive authority as previously stipulated by Chidi Metu. Thereafter, the president discouraged people from using this convention as the forum to discuss the Dallas issue, noting that continued discussions of this issue in this convention it is likely to take away from the focus of this convention.

Mississippi

Leo Okoli representing at-large chapter for Mississippi suggested life insurance coverage for all members is a benefit he feels ought to be provided at the national level. He recommends that national membership supersede chapter membership. He urged members without membership to see Eddie Ukatu to join.

Minnesota

Eddie Ukatu representing the at-large chapter for Minnesota reported their effort toward the recruitment of members is ongoing and that once enough members are recruited, a formal Minnesota chapter will be formed.

Youth Program Dr. Mike Okeke and Mrs. Anita Emefo discussed the cultural activities planned for our children. Anita Emefo spoke passionately about her love for children while expressing her desire to engage our children in cultural activities that would enrich their lives and hopefully broaden their horizons. Mike Okeke and Anita Emefo engaged the children in a lively cultural exchange discussing their identity as children born in America to African parents. Mike Okeke described this session as enlightening, meaningful and interesting, noting that there were mixed responses from our children as to "who they think that they are." The responses from the children sparked a discussion laying the groundwork for Mike's discussion educating them about the origin of Nnewi people and the leadership in Nnewi specifically as it pertains to the current Igwe, Kenneth Orizu III. This session was reportedly very well received by our children. The family bus tour as arranged by Atlanta was announced from 1-6pm and the children's cultural night to begin at 8:00pm tonight. Recess, Atlanta Bus Tour and Cultural Night

DAY THREE: SATURDAY JULY 4, 2009

Dr. Chris Ulasi as the chairperson for this convention, called the meeting to order at about 9:45am. Opening prayers was said by Rev., Dr. Ngozi Obi. He acknowledged Mr. Nnabuenyi and Mrs. Arunne Momah for their selfless service to NUSA. Rev. Obi prayed for the safety of a family who were involved in an accident on their way to this convention. She also thanked the present executive council for the job that they are doing and publicly acknowledged her local Boston chapter leadership commending for the extraordinary job that they are doing. She further acknowledged other members from her Boston chapter present during this convention. Thereafter, the kola nut was broken and blessed by Nnabuenyi Momah.

Mrs. Chinwe Enemchukwu commenting on children's program strongly encouraged the Nnewi parents to speak Igbo to their children and teach them our culture. She informed this convention about the Igbo Unite Organization which she explained is an organization that teaches and fosters cultural identity amongst the young Igbo people. The required ages for participants is typically between 18-35 years. She encouraged parents to visit the website and pass the information to their children so that they can begin to think about their involvement with this Igbo organization. Chinwe commended the Atlanta chapter for their hospitality and the children's cultural event which was spectacular and thoroughly enjoyed.

Minutes of the 2008 NUSA Convention & Matters arising after the Minutes has been Read

Achebe Anosike, the former NUSA General Secretary read the 2008 convention minutes taken during last year's convention in New Jersey. Immediately following that a discussion ensued relating to the minutes as so read followed by corrections and amendments.

The question was raised as to why the names of the present executive as elected in New Jersey was not part of the minutes of the last convention. Achebe indicated that the reason for this omission is that the out-going administration was dissolved before the election of the present executive.

However, Achebe noted that it was resolved that the elected executives for this current NUSA administration are as follows:

- Nathan Momah President**
- Chidi MetuVice President**
- Sam Azubogu.....General Secretary**
- Susan Odunukwe.....Assistant General Secretary**
- Innocent Izundu.....Traesurer**

Eddie Ukatu.....Financial Secretary
Chinwe Enemchukwu.....Public Relations Officer
Leo Okoli.....Assistant Public Relations Officer
Gladys Oramasionwu.....Provost

Chidi Metu stated that the minutes ought to be amended to reflect his comments that Nwafor - Orizu's statue in Nnewi is not appropriate for the T-junction and not as previously stated in Achebe's minutes that "Chidi Metu asked about the Nwafor-Orizu statue at the Nkwo Rotary". Arunne Momah pointed out that it was noted in the minutes that "the meeting was called to order by Arunne" and that sentence should be changed to reflect both her first and last name including the context in which she was calling the meeting to order as the chairperson of the NCC. Chukwukadibia Odunukwe also wanted the minutes to reflect CJ and Susan Odunukwe and not just the first names. Chukwukadibia correcting the history on the OSU cast system indicated an omission noting that "Ikwu Aru" is a promise made to Edo to agree to come to Nnewi.

Ossy Okeke stated that the minutes ought to reflect that there was a resolution passed that NUSA will write the local government relating to the issue of waste disposal at Nnewi. Achebe Anosike cautioned us to be careful in raising issues that were not voted on. It is impossible to capture everything said during a meeting, he stated.

Dr. Ebby Odunukwe suggested that to ensure proper documentation, the minutes of the 2008 convention meeting need to be reviewed and all names not fully noted, misspelt or not identified with the last names ought to be corrected to reflect accurate spellings and last names. Rev. Dr. Oramasionwu wants the minutes to be corrected and to reflect that he was a replacement keynote speaker. The original keynote speaker was not available.

Dr. Grace Anosike-Odunukwe questioned the statement as contained in the resolutions as read by Achebe Anosike that states that "there was a collective aspiration for a quick resolution of Dallas chapter's issues". Grace Odunukwe's questions was on the grounds that the issue was never discussed and therefore should not have been noted as resolved. She argues that the minutes ought to reflect that that it was mentioned and not resolved. Achebe Anosike, disagreeing, stated that the Dallas issue is a noteworthy issue deserving to be noted in our formal documentation as an issue to be resolved not just mentioned. After all, he says, we are all Nnewi people and should be concerned about the resolution of the Dallas issue.

Budget and Financial Report: Mr. Eddie Ukatu, NUSA's Financial Secretary, indicated that cash in NUSA's bank account as of June 2009 is a total of \$92, 013.35. Out of that amount, \$19, 590.45 is in the main account, \$62, 567.42 in the library account and \$ 9,855.93 at the Nnewi account. Typo error noting the Nnewi account as \$98, 55.93 was pointed out by Eddie to be corrected as indicated above.

Footnote and double asterisks as noted on the budget information distributed by Eddie Ukatu ought to be removed from the financial report.

61% of the net income as of this convention has not been collected. For complete details on the financial report, p/s refer to the financial report which was distributed during the convention. Ike Ofomata asked whether Igwe's travel's expenses included Igwe's entourage. Eddie Ukatu answered yes to that question.

In discussing the approval of the budget, Nnabuenyi suggested that unpaid pledges be recorded in the financial Secretary's notebook as receivables and not to be yet recorded in the overall budget report as it tends to give an erroneous impression that the organization has money that it cannot account for. Encouraged donors to ensure they make do on their pledges so that proposed projects can be undertaken.

Nnaerika Okonkwo stated that he thought that the gifts for Igwe Orizu and the three Obis was an allotted amount and not an ofala gift as indicated by Leo Okoli. Ossy Okeke and Mrs. Arunne Momah pointed out that it is an end-of-year gift. Mr. Nnabuenyi Momah indicated that the gift is broken down as follows: \$500.00 is given to Igwe and \$200 each to the Obis.

Isaac Emefo suggested that the money in the Nigerian account be reflected in Naira to show the true value of what is contained in the account. He notes that reporting it in dollars does not account

for the fluctuating value of the money. It was agreed that going forward, the money in the Nigerian account it going to be reflected and reported in Naira.

Ebby Odunukwe pointed out that the budget expenses for Igwe's travel shows that invited Igwe was invited by NUSA and not by any one specific chapter.

Ossy Okeke wanted to find out how many people incurred the expenses reported in the budget for travel to Dallas. Eddie responded that the expenses covered travel expenses for three executives and for the hall rental where the resolution of the Dallas issue took place.

Tony Ndum suggested that we add a line item to the budget for business expenses and phone charges to be incurred in collecting the receivables cannot be absorbed under this category.

Sylvan Odobulu recommended that going forward, that the budget should have an allocation for the children's program. He also suggested and supported by Chinwe Enemchukwu that the money raised by the children be reflected in the budget under the children's funds.

Town Hall meeting.

Dr. Ulasi called for a motion to have a line item of \$3,000 added to this year's budget to fund activities for the children's program. Elias Okonkwo moved the motion for this and it was seconded by Dr. Grace Odunukwe-Anosike.