

SPEECH AT THE ANNUAL THANKS GIVING  
CEREMONY (IGUE FESTIVAL) OF THE BENIN  
COMMUNITY IRELAND.

BY

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(PRESIDENT EDO GLOBAL ORGANIZATION)

ON 29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY IN DUBLIN IRELAND.

The Mayor of South Dublin,

His Excellency The Nigerian Ambassador to Ireland

President Benin Community Ireland,

President Nigerian Community Ireland,

Members of the High Table.

Ivbie do nu Uzomo, wahia obokhian,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be invited to chair this august occasion in the vibrant city of Dublin. Dublin which was a kingdom in the time past has a chequered history like the ancient Benin Empire which is your home. This city of Dublin brings many good memories to me as being the address of the first caucasians I met in my life. They were

the Parish Priests at St Joseph's Catholic Church Benin City, my first Principal whilst I was a student at Edo College, my music teacher and my first literature teacher were all Irish with their addresses in Dublin Ireland . I think I am here today because of the moulding people from this city and my other teachers gave me in my youth, so I am grateful to the City of Dublin for producing those God fearing men and women who left their shores in Europe to Benin City imprinting positive and indelible marks in my mind and in the hearts of my numerous school mates in Benin City.

You must count yourselves lucky to be amongst these very friendly people and to be in Dublin a city of arts which has produced many Nobel laureates, Dublin was one of the [UNESCO City of Literature](#) in 2010, Home of Guinness Stout, (black thing good oh, I hope you will remember that advert on TV in Benin City); Dublin is the UEFA host for 2011 and the European Capital of Science in 2012. Dublin houses one of the oldest monasteries in the Catholic faith and has produced many missionaries who helped spread the word of God so you have no reason not to

improve yourselves during your sojourn here in Dublin.

I am also very pleased to be here to celebrate with you the ancient IGUE festival which is a festival of good overcoming evil, a festival of love; a festival and people's power, and above all a festival of thanksgiving to the Most High God, the God of the Universe, the Supreme God, the God of Isaac, Jacobs and our ancestors, who gives graces ceaselessly, who does not record wrongs; who provides for our everyday needs as His children and protects our going out and our coming in.

I am proud of all of you here and thank God that you have been able to organise yourselves in a faraway land to promote that Edo spirit and culture in you of excelling wherever you find yourself on mother earth, of being your brothers' keeper and living sociably.

I am particularly pleased that you have found time to celebrate Igue in faraway Dublin in Western Europe and enter the New Year with hope and determination to break new grounds in your

individual endeavours and collectively to take this Benin Community to the highest possible level.

I am aware of a number of organisations that have been formed and could not live long enough to have their names etched in the rock of times due to incessant squabbling and not adopting live and let live attitude. You must remember the system that sustained our culture; I mean the political system of the Benin people which in modern terminology is a mixture of gerontocracy and democracy, i.e. e rulership or government by the community elders and by the wishes of the greatest majority of the people. A leader chosen by this system is almost always a popular leader of his people and will be able to achieve leaps and bounds even with minimal resources due to the unalloyed support and co-operation from all in that community so I wish your leaders success in taking this community to the greatest height.

As you live in Ireland make yourself sons and daughters of the soil, forge in to the larger Dublin society, and do not stay aloof, celebrate with other Dubliners when they celebrate and mourn with them if occasions calls for it and you will be blessed. It is easy, obey the laws of the land and

all good things will follow you. Remember the earth and every human being in it belongs to the Almighty God and as His children, you should partake of the fullness therefore.

Making progress must be your dictum, if there is an obstacle as there will always be sometimes; you must get around it, pass under it, move above or just burst through it. You must overcome any perceived obstacle if you stay focused. Remember your lives are in your hands so you must do well with it. Spend your time to improve yourself socially, physically, emotionally, professionally and academically; get the required qualifications so that you can have an edge and compete well, so that you are sought after. See where your talents lie and develop it thereby creating a niche and become the best in your field. If you are a grass on the bottom of the valley, be the best grass that ever grown on the bottom of the valley; and so also if you are a tree on the hill top; be the best tree that ever grown on the hill top. There will also be hard times but as our Heavenly said, you may stumble but you will never fall if you are truthful, honourable and put God first in your dealings. Let your lives be an embodiment of

integrity, reliability, credibility and passion for what is best in the community and the world.

There are many get rich quick schemes globally these days, you must avoid them. Schemes like human trafficking, being drug couriers, gun running and other illegal 419 schemes should be shunned. They do not only destroy physically, they also destroy the perpetrators spiritually. Remember you are an ambassador of Edo people and in fact of all Nigerians, so you must stop to think deeply before taking any course of actions so that you are right always before embarking on it.

You all got here by different routes and you all have different stories but there are things common to all of us; that we left home to make our lives better abroad, that we have left our relatives at home in Edo land, that we have the hope of going back after our success to improve our lot.

Remember that it is only when you succeed here that you can support your kits and kin at home in Edo State and Nigeria. Failure therefore is out of the question as you all carry a burden of

improving the lots of your families left in our homestead. So as not to forget home or be forgotten by those at home, try to visit at least every two to three years and if you are blessed, the more often you visit, the better as your visit will put a smile on one or two faces amongst your relatives.

My brothers and sisters, make your presence felt here in Dublin City and the whole of Ireland. You can do this through the arts, science, information technology and competitive sports. Look at all of you, one can only see healthy looking, strong, very beautiful people determined to succeed. Someone here can win a gold medal for Ireland in the next Olympic Games if he/she puts his mind to it because you already have that innate athletic spirit of endurance that can win laurels. When you can achieve that, you would have put Edo people and Nigeria in the heart of the Irish people. Do not just be receivers but also a giver as well because God loves a cheerful giver. You must excel to create a positive impact in the community you live in. If you cannot achieve it, then train your children to achieve these great

heights that great men reach by toiling whilst their companions slept.

Igue festival is a time of merry making so I would not wish to bore you with long speeches like discussing the origin of Igue festival; other than to tell you to water your Benin Community plant effectively and appropriately so that it can grow and become an Iroko, then it can achieve, it can link with other of our brothers and sisters in all the countries of the world and take its place in the Edo Global Organization Board of Directors as a respectable constituent part.

The next Edo Global Conference will be held in London from Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> of July to the 31<sup>st</sup> at the Waltham Marriot Hotel London. May I use this opportunity to invite all of you to that event?

Finally I wish you a successful year ahead, with good health, long life; prosperity, lots of joy; laughter and above all I wish you the Peace of God Almighty now and always. Once again I thank you for the opportunity to chair this Igue Festival and New year celebrations here in Dublin Ireland

SEO Ogbonmwan

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