

## MNA PRESIDENT'S SPEECH: 2021 VIRTUAL CONVENTION

Umu Nnem Ndi Mbano, unu abiaruole. Ejim oge a nanabata nmadu nile Ndi gbara nbo ibia na ogbako Umunne na Ndi enyi anyi nke anyi neme nafo. Dika anyi si eme mgbe nile anyi zukoro, anyi na asopuru Ndi enyi anyi si nkalu di iche iche na Umu anyi na anaghi anu asusu Igbo. Nihi nkea, anam anara ikikere iguputa Ozim n'asusu oyibo. Ma tutu mu eme nke ahu, anam ario Ndi nne na nna ka anyi nagba mbo ikuziri umu anyi asusu igbo. Onwere ebum n'obi Chineke ojiri were asusu anyi ji gozie anyi. Biko k'anyi were ya kporo ihe.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Umu Mbano, I am honored to welcome everyone who has joined us in this virtual gathering, on behalf of Umu Mbano in the United States, I welcome you all and appreciate your presence.

This year's convention is first of its kind. For everyone on this platform, the consequences of Covid have reshaped our realities in unimaginable ways. While some are beginning to venture out, there are many who are still in the throes of it.

Two years in a row we have missed our in-person convention billed for New York in 2020 and 2021. In like manner our annual medical mission has been postponed in view of the challenges of Covid. We have lost some of our folks, whose absence can never be replaced. At this juncture I'll pause for a minute of silence in their honor. (.  
.....) May the soul of our departed brothers and sisters rest peacefully with the Lord. Amen.

Though these Covid months have restructured our realities in very unique ways, it has also opened new opportunities that Only those who are able to rise to the occasion and embrace the offerings are able to not only survive but

excel. I want to use this opportunity to encourage our people to please speak with their providers on getting the Covid vaccine. Your provider who knows your medical history is in a better position to advice you; for me and my household, we have been fully vaccinated. Don't wait until it is too late.

At the California convention in May of 2019, when this administration took over leadership, little did we know of the challenges ahead, but in-spite of the difficulties of Covid, our administration has spared nothing to deliver for Umu Mbano as we promised.

Yes, we could not go for our annual medical mission two years in a row, but we focused with dogged determination to completing our ultra-modern surgical building at Mbano Joint Hospital.

What you will see later today is evident that when we put our minds to something of common value, we can accomplish exceptional things. This brings me to the theme of this virtual convention: Njiko aka udo, Ahuike Na O'ganihu. (Holding hands in peace, Health and progress).

We succeeded this far because we have people whose determination knows no boundary; the sum of their talents exemplifies our convention theme.

As a community, we shall be remembered by how much we worked together, to advance the course of our people, not in our individual successes, which is good, but also how we harness those talents to achieve community progress. The history of this beautiful ultra-modern theater gives testament to teamwork. When I watch Sir Clement Eze with his Architectural prowess ensuring that the angles and layouts conform in every update we receive, Engr./Sir Nkemdi Ohalete ensuring with his Engineering skill that the mixes of the granite and other sub-components are in

line to support the structure, while Building Inspector Cosmas Ileanachi insists that the workers perform as designed and approved, and Patrick Nwachukwu is busy looking for funds and bringing the efforts together, the result, is a beautiful theater standing as a testament for generations yet unborn. My brothers and sisters, this exemplifies holding hands for community progress. When we work in Peace and harmony, contributing our talents at various levels, we shall achieve a progressive society of our dreams.

Umu Mbano, we need to hold hands in peace and work as a team, whether in healthcare, economy or even politics, we shall overcome our challenges if we work together. Anywhere you are, whether at home or in the diaspora, whatever your trade, or vocation, we need you for us to achieve this harmony as a community.

Permit me therefore while thanking Umu Mbanu and all our donors and the building committee, to specially thank, the Architect who designed this building, Sir Clement Eze, the building Engineer, Engr/Sir Nkemdi Ohalete, the building Inspector, Cosmas Ileanachi and the committee chairman Sir Patrick Nwachukwu, these few make up the sub-committee tasked with daily supervision and implementation of every aspect of the building. These people meet throughout the Covid period by any means possible, sometimes three times a week in order to move the job forward. On behalf of Umu Mbanu, I thank them immensely for a job well done. I must thank Dr & Dr Mrs. Julius Kpaduwa for their continuous financial support and heading the equipment drive committee.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have reached a juncture where all we need is to equip the theater. This hospital serves all of us and our families. We need your help to continue the equipment part of the building to deliver quality care for

our people in Mbano. Nothing is too small, please before you leave today, contribute something. This is your opportunity to have your name on the building's wall as a donor. Your community will look for your name anytime they are in the building. Don't be left out.

Two days ago, I received a video that really shocked me, this is the first-time folks in Nigeria are not asking for what you can give to them, but appreciating good things and contributing their own quota financially. I am particularly thankful to the Umuekebi Village in Isiala Mbano community and Barrister Mrs. Amobi for their donation towards this project. I was moved to tears when I saw their donation. It is a challenge to all of us. These people are challenging all of us, nothing is too small.

I thank all those who have contributed in various ways for the success of this project, my Vice President, chief

Johnson Nwokorie, Secretary General, Mazi Obioma Iwuagwu, PRO, Nze Charles Ekpe, Assistant Secretary, Chief Amaobi Igwe our Financial Secretary, Mrs. Ngozi Lasbery , Lady Ethel Ibeh the Treasurer, and Mazi Golden Achumba, our Sergeant at Arms. Also, our chapters and other spirited individuals who have been our pillar of support. One thing I assure you is that all your donations have been and will continue to be judiciously used and accounted for just as we did last night.

From Nigeria, I thank His Lordship, The Rt. Rev Dr Amatu, The Catholic Bishop of Okigwe Diocese for his goodwill message and encouragement. The Matron of Mbano Joint Hospital, Rev. Sr. Trinita Umeh, Our Political Leaders, Distinguished senator Sir Frank Ibezim, Our Honorable member, Federal House, Princes Miriam Onuoha, His Royal Majesty Eze Dr Oliver Ohanwe, Obi Gburugburu 1 of Ihim Ancient Kingdom, we shall continue to partner for the progress of our communities



I want to thank all Chapter Presidents and their wives for all their dedication towards Mbano agenda. Finally, I cannot do this without the full support of my family. To my wife, Lady Esther Ngozi and our children Obinna and Kelechi, you remain God's best gift. I remain eternally grateful for accommodating my innumerable encroachments on your time. I pray that God almighty shall keep us all to gather in New York come May 2022. Plan ahead to make it memorable.

Udo Diri Unu

