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IMO STATE

Recapturing our past for greatness

@49

1976- 2025

2027

OKIGWE ZONE RUNS EQUITY AT WORK

Odds Favour him.
Age, integrity, Capacity,
Private Sector Experience,
Non Career Politician.

Governor's Giant Strides on Roads Infrastructure

Owerri and the creation of IMO State.

Gov. Uzodimma

Chief Duru Mike Ejiogu
(Choice of Imo Youths)

Investment Opportunities in the State

IMO STATE

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IMO STATE @49

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Congratulations to Ndi Imo as our beloved state is 49 years old. As a media house, we publish this annually since the state turned 10, to commemorate the creation of our state, refresh our memories of our great past, interrogate now and make projections for a better tomorrow.

Expectedly, our energies would focus on who occupies the Douglas House, come 2027, vis-à-vis the resonated "Imo Charter of Equity" which reached its crescendo after the mandate renewal of the Governor.

From our findings, the feelings of greater percentage of Imolites is that Owerri and Okigwe Zones have moral rights to produce the next Chief Executive of the State. This is with due respect to the remarks of the Governor that Owerri Zone should prepare for 2027. But he put a caveat to the statement, that it depends on which zone between Okigwe and Owerri that outscored each other during his re-election. Okigwe zone, did despite the fact that one of her illustrious sons was on the ballot.

Regrettably, charter of equity did not reflect on the outcome of the Local Council election held recently. As a people who want a better Imo for ourselves and children, must we be pigeonholed into this elitistic power sharing formula that has retarded our growth? In 2027,

Our energies would focus on who occupies the Douglas House, come 2027, vis-à-vis the resonated "Imo Charter of Equity" which reached its crescendo after the mandate renewal of the Governor.

we must break out from yesterday's thinking by jettisoning zoning sentiments that has produced ill-equipped leaders and look for a leader who has a thorough grasp of development logic, a team player, pro-poor and a non career politician who will put the people first. Same template is what "Imo Young Professionals" used to search in, Chief Duru Mike Ejiogu, a real estate and hospitality industry mogul who has made his marks sub-nationally and nationally as their preferred candidate in the 2027 gubernatorial race.

Among other good variables, they said that age is on his side, track record of service. No baggage of any sort. Ranks very high on human capital development. Not a professional politician, private sector experience, visionary team player, caring, capacity, God fearing and tremendous good will and followership in the state; social capital that cannot be quantified in terms of Naira and Kobo.

And that if he agrees, would fund his campaigns even though he has deep pockets. The group added that Chief Ejiogu is highly cerebral, humble and sufficiently prepared himself for leadership.

Imo State Personality of the year 2021, TPM, Anara Ancient Kingdom, Akaekpuchionwa Isiala Mbano and the President of Akuluno United Brothers, you are the "Fresh Air" Imolites need. The ball is now on your lawns. In terms of suitability and zoning, Chief Ejiogu is qualified.

For us, economic and political emancipation can only come from a competent and caring administration. Prosperity does not come through sentiments of zoning or imposition of a successor, but through a sound and efficient management of the state resources.

You will also read about other trending issues, such as the governor's roads revolution, his upscaling in infrastructural development, investment opportunities in the state, late Dee Sam Mbakwe's scorecards yet unmatched etc.

Imo State at 49 is a memento to our struggles in building a modern city state.
Get a copy today.
Thank you very much.
Mr. Emeka Ogaraku

"Prosperity does not come through sentiments of zoning or imposition of a successor, but through a sound and efficient management of the state resources."

OWERRI AND THE CREATION of IMO STATE

The Nigeria-Biafra war remains the greatest catastrophe that has visited this part of the world and old Owerri Province which evolved into Imo State bore the greatest brunt of the war. The area of Imo State which the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) described during the war as the Igbo heartland was the main theatre of the war and suffered so much destruction that at the end of the conflict it became bereft of infrastructure, thus, Eastern region of Nigeria, of which Imo state was part, which had the best network of roads in the 60's lost all its roads to bombs and mines with the result that a journey from Owerri to Aba which took less than an hour before the war was now done in upwards of three hours. Schools suffered similar devastation. At the end of the war the East Central state

Government failed to perform a rehabilitation miracle in the area. The people feeling deprived, decided to agitate for a separate state in the Nigerian belief that that would be the only panacea to their political, social and economic ills.

An Imo State Movement was born contemporaneously with other agitations for states all over Nigeria, a situation which compelled the Federal Military Government to set up the Irikefe Commission to look into such agitations. The case for the creation of Imo State was presented at the Irikefe Commission by Samuel Onunaka Mbakwe, a Lawyer well known for his human right stand, particularly, as it affected the recovery of what has now become known as "Abandoned Property" in the Rivers State.

The people of the former Owerri Province were unanimous in their demand for an Imo State their only point of difference was where

> ***"The first Owerri Province was created in 1912 with Owerri as Headquarters and J. D. Maxwell was the first Resident. Owerre Province then comprised the present Rivers and Bayelsa States, minus Western Ijaw which was then in Benin Province; and the present Imo, Abia States, minus Arochukwu which was then in Enyong Division of Calabar Province."***

UMUAHIA

the capital would be sited. The area of Imo State would be made up of the Administrative Divisions of Umuahia, Aba, Owerre, Orlu and Okigwe. The people of Umuahia campaigned for the capital of Imo State to be in Umuahia, arguing that when the Rivers Province was created out of the original Owerre in 1948, the headquarters of the Province was moved from Port Harcourt to Umuahia and never returned to Owerri.

The first Owerri Province was created in 1912 with Owerri as headquarters and JD Maxwell was the first Resident, Owerre Province then comprised the present Rivers and Bayelsa States, minus Western Ijaw which was then in Benin Province; and the present Imo, Abia States, minus Arochukwu which was then in Enyong Division of Calabar Province. The people of the riverine area found it difficult and inconvenient to come to Owerre to see the Resident or do other business which they must transact in the Provincial Capital.

So they petitioned the then colonial government and the headquarters was moved from Owerri to Port Harcourt in 1926. Further agitation led to the creation of Rivers Province in 1948. This time the Provincial Headquarters did not return to Owerri but moved to Umuahia because the Resident, J.B. Carr argued that Umuahia was becoming a fast economic growth point through which a railway line passed. Besides, most British Administrative Officers in those days were Scotsmen who loved areas with hills and dales reminiscent of their home in Scotland, hence Carr preferred Umuahia to Owerri which he described as featureless. The people of Aba preferred Aba as headquarters for the new Imo State, whereas the people of Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe supported Owerri because they argued that Owerri was central and endowed with a lot of flat land, hence cost of development will be reduced to the barest minimum and not constrained by difficult terrain such as was the case with Umuahia. The contest for headquarters finally was between Umuahia and Owerri.

At the Irikefe Commission, however, the spokesman for Imo State Movement, S.O. Mbakwe, made the point that State Capital issue was a domestic matter which the people will resolve on their own, with time T.K. Oguamanam, an acknowledged leader of Owerre people, told the story of the choice of Owerre as Capital. In his account, he said, about December 1975, one Chima Okereke of Umuonyeche Owerre introduced one Orji of Uzuakoli to him through a letter that Orji was a civil servant from Uzuakoli who was posted to Owerre from Obehe, in the letter T.K. Oguamanam was requested to find accommodation for Orji. During the course of discussion, Orji was quoted as boasting that arrangement had been concluded to make Umuahia the capita of Imo State and that a well known politician from Ibeku, Dr. J.O.J. Okezie, had used his influence to bring that about. Disturbed by that information, T.K. Oguamanam had to rally round other Owerri leaders and a ten-man Committee was formed on which Dan Njemanze, E.E. Anozie, D.E. Njiribeako, H.S.K. Osuji, T.C.K. Osuji and Emmanuel Nkwopara served. Two days after, S.E. Onukogu came to T.K. Oguamanam and said that information had gone round that the capital agitation issue had been settle in favour of Umuahia. A mass meeting of the people of the former Owerri Division which used to hold at Christ Church, Owerri was moved to Ubomiri.

On January 18, 1976, the people of the old Owerri Division stormed St. Mary's Catholic Church, Ubomiri Compound and their presence

caused a stir in Ubomiri to the extent that the people were wondering what such a large gathering was all about. The meeting was chairmanned and addressed by S.E. Onukogu.

The meeting was also addressed by R.A. Njoku who described Owerri people as "achara di woro miri" that is to say, people that nature denied infrastructure but must get things done by themselves. Money was raised and R. Amanze Njoku started the ball rolling with a donation of N2,000.00. Naira rain followed and a delegation led by R.A. Njoku was sent to Lagos to agitate for designation of Owerri as the Imo State Capital. The delegation was to report back to the meeting on the 1st of February, 1976 at the same venue. On the 1st of February, 1976, the meeting re-convened at Ubomiri. S.E. Onukogu presided over the meeting. The meeting was brief. Before the meeting closed, R.A. Njoku told the people that within the next 48 hours an announcement would be made over the radio. He warned that anyone who heard that announcement should neither kill himself nor someone else – an Oratta way of saying that something spectacular was in the offing. On the 3rd of February, 1976, Murtala Mohammed announced the creation of Imo State and declared Owerri as the Imo State Capital.

No woman attended the meeting of the 1st of February, 1976. This assertion is important because of the view which gained currency at the time that Owerri people won the State Capital battle through their women who were then accused of all types of manners of lobbying.

Apart from the presence of Shell D" Arcy, nothing has influenced the growth of Owerri more than its designation as State Capital. The creation of Imo State immediately raised the question of a befitting and worthy State Capital. This author immediately wrote the following letter to the new Military Governor.

FOOTNOTE: The above Article was reproduced from OWERRE IN THE 21ST CENTURY, a priceless Book of History, written by a Senior citizen, Chief E.A.C Orji, a retired top Civil Servant and Author of repute.

PROFILE OF FORMER GOVERNORS OF IMO STATE

LATE REAR ADMIRAL GODWIN NOUBUISI KANU

(Lt. Commander then, First Military Governor, Imo State, Feb 3, 1976-August 10, 1977)

He was born on November 3, 1943 in Enugu. He hails from Ovim, Isuikwuato of now Abia State. Rear Admiral Kanu, after his primary Education, attended Metropolitan College Onitsha from 1957 to 1961, and thereafter, enlisted in the Nigerian Armed Forces. He attended the National Defense Academy, Kharakvasla India, where he obtained a B.Sc. degree in 1965. He also obtained an M.Sc. in Defense Studies. D.Sc. (ABSU Honoris Causa, D.Tech FUTO Honoris Causa).

Rear Admiral Godwin Ndubuisi Kanu was appointed the first Military Governor of Imo State of February 3rd, 1976 to August 10, 1977 and later Military Governor of Lagos State. Godwin Ndubuisi laid the solid foundation for the State. he gave the State Capital its Master Plan. Built so many infrastructural projects such as Wetheral and Douglas Roads. Aladinam, Ikenegbu Housing Schemes and many

Water projects were built by him. He established the College of Technology, Nekede, commissioned the State Library and the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC).

He is married with children and plays Lawn Tennis, reading and writing.

LATE REAR ADMIRAL ADEKUNLE SHAMEUSIDEEN LAWAL

(Commodore August 10 1977-July 24, 1978)

Adekunle Shameusideen Lawal, Military Governor of Imo State was in office August 10, 1977 – July 23, 1978. Born on 8 February 1934 in Lagos State and died on 27 November 1980. Adekunle Shameusideen Lawal started his early education at Holy Ghost Cathedral School Lagos, Nigeria. He attended Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, from where he graduated in 1963 with B.Sc. (English) Honours. Adekunle Shameusideen Lawal was a Chattered Fellow; Institute of Marine Engineering. He established Colleges of Agriculture Umudike and Umuagwo. He voluntarily retired from the Nigeria Navy as an Admiral in 1980.

He died in November 1980 after an illness. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Taiwo Adefumilayo Lawal and his six children.

The Military Administrator would always be remembered that the young state was peaceful and law abiding people.

LATE BRIGADIER SUNDAY AJIBADE ADENIHUN

(Colonel, July 24 1978-Sept 30, 1979)

Sunday Ajibade Adehihun, Military Governor of Imo State was in office 25 July, 1978 – 30 September 1979. Born 12 March 1940, at Ikirun Osun State and died 25 November 2008 (aged 68). Sunday Ajibade Adehihun was appointed Military Governor of Imo State from July 1978 to October 1979 during General Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. In October 1979, Adenihun handed over to the administration of the first Civilian Governor of Imo State in Nigerian Second Republic. He brought SULO into Owerri. This revolutionalised refuse collection and disposal in the state capital. It is on record that he started the new Parliament Building, New Governor's Lodge, Deputy Governpor's Lodge, Chief Judge's Quarters for Parliamentarians and Commissioners. Late Col. Adenihun built the first street lights in Owerri. In October 1st 1979, he handed over to Chief Samuel Onunaka Mbakwe.

His administration was known for maintain peace and order in the state. He died of a heart attack in the United States on 25 November 2008.

LATE CHIEF SAMUEL O. MBAKWE Ph.D (Governor, Imo State Oct. 11979-Dec. 30, 1983)

Governor of Imo State (Oct. 1, 1979 – Dec. 30, 1983). Chief Barrister Samuel Onunaka Mbakwe, Ph.D. was the first elected Civilian Governor of the old Imo State during the Second Republic. He was born at Avutu Obowo in Obowo L.G.A. in 1930. After his primary education, he attended Teacher's Training College, Oleh, Warri and Teacher's Training Awka. He also attended Fourah Bay College, (University of Durham) Sierra Leone, University of Manchester, England, Hull University East Yorkshire, England, where he did his Master's Degree in Law. Dee Sam Mbakwe also studied at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. He did his Ph.D. in Law from the Imo State University.

Chief Mbakwe had distinguished career in public and private life. He served on the Board of Governors of the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (N.B.C.) from (1962 – 1966). For many years, Chief Mbakwe was a Legal Practitioner at Port Harcourt and Aba. He was the Administrator of the former Okigwe Province during the Nigeria Civil War, Chairman, Star Printing and Publishing Company Ltd. Enugu, Chairman, Monier Construction Company Ltd (MCC).
As a Member of the former Nigerian Constituent Assembly, he made valuable contributions during the drafting of the present Nigeria Constitution. He presented the case for the creation of Imo State at the Irikefe Commission and championed the case of the seizure of properties of Ndi Igbo in Port Harcourt after the Civil war (Abandoned Property).

Chief Mbakwe is today remembered for many laudable projects he initiated. These includes: The Aluminum Extrusion Plant, The Resin and Paint Industry, Cardboard and Packaging Industry. He established the defunct Progress Bank, Imo State University and Concorde Hotel, Owerri among others. He was married and had 8 children.

MAJOR GENERAL IKE OMAR SANDA NWACHUKWU FSS, MNI

Major General Ike Omar Sanda Nwachukwu was born on September 1, 1940 at Port Harcourt. He hails from Naiahala Ukwu, Umudinja Amaeke , Ovim in Isuikwuato, Abia State. after his primary education he attended Lagos City College Yaba, from 1953 to 1958. He joined the Army and was admitted to the Royal Canadian Academy in 1963 and graduated in 1965.

Major General Nwachukwu rose through the ranks until he became the Provost Marshall, Nigerian Army in 1979, a post he held until his appointment as Military Governor of Imo State in January 1984. Notwithstanding financial difficulties, General Nwachukwu paid attention to many projects which had suffered stagnation. He started new projects such as Blood Bank in which Imo Philanthropists took the challenges to build Blood Transfusion Centres in Owerri, Okigwe, Orlu and Aba.

He introduced, Imo Development Fund and Sports Endowment Fund. He restored confidence in the teaching profession among Elementary and Secondary School Teachers. He restored harmony to the people torn apart by partisan politics. He is married with children, plays squash, Tennis, reading, listen to music and discussions.

REAR ADMIRAL ALISON MADUEKE (NAVY CAPT.)

MILITARY GOVERNOR, IMO STATE, SEPTEMBER 4, 1985 TO AUGUST, 1986

Then a Navy Captain before appointment to replace the then Brigadier Ike Omar Sanda Nwachukwu. He was born on March 7, 1944. He hails from Inyi in Oji River of Enugu State. he had a brilliant career as a Naval Officer. He was commissioned a Sub. Lieutenant in September, 1967, had various on Board and Ashore appointments between 1968 and 1972. He served as a Naval Attaché, accredited to the U.S.A department of Defense, (Naval) from the Nigerian Embassy, Washington DC before he was appointed Military Governor of old Anambra State in 1983.

Governor Madueke had distinguished himself in many fields right from the Secondary School days. Rear Admiral Madueke was the winner of Eastern Nigeria Shell Essay Competition in 1962. He was married to late Uche, and later he remarried Diezani Madueke, the immediate past Minister of Petroleum Resources.

LATE COMMODORE AMADI IKWECHEGH

(Governor, Imo State August 29 1986 - Sept. 2 1989)

Amadi Ikwechegh, Military Governor of Imo State was in office 29 August 1986 to 2 September 1989. Born 25 February 1951 (Bede Abia State) and died 10 November 2009 (Aged 58).

Commodore Amadi Guy Ikwuechegh was appointed Military Governor of Imo State during the Military Regime of General Ibrahim Babangida. He attended Township School Aba and the Nigeria Military School Zaria (1963 – 1966) and attended the Nigeria Defense Academy in 1974. He was commissioned as a Sub-Lieutenant in 1974. He then studied at Britannia Royal Naval College of Dart Mouth, the Royal Hydrographic School, Australia and the Naval School of Oceanography U.S.A.

He attended the Armed Forces Command and Staff College Jaji, and also earned Masters in Strategic Studies from University of Ibadan. He served as ADC to Military Governor of Niger State, Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe. He was retired in June 1999, along with all other Military Officers who had held political offices.
Amadi Ikwechegh died on November 2009 after protracted illness. He would always be remembered for maintaining peace and order in the state.

NAVY COMMODORE ANTHONY E OGUGUO (PSC)

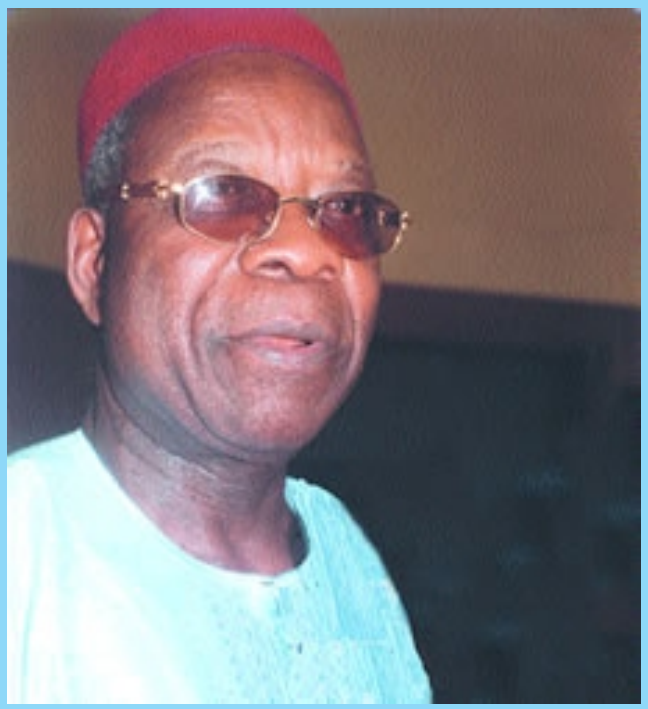
(Military Governor, Sept 5, 1990-Jan. 2", 1992)

Commodore Anthony E. Oguguo, Military Governor of Imo State was in office August 1990 – January 1992. Navy Commodore Anthony Emeluwa Oguguo was appointed Military Governor of Imo State during the Military Regime of General Ibrahim Babangida. During his administration, Imo State Airport for operations. His very famous statement "I saw money and looked away, it is not everything; we can all do the same and teach it to our children". His administration took a stronghold with Trade Unions. In 1991, he demanded a list of absentee workers who were asking for minimum wage of N380. As a Governor, he commissioned the 100 bedded Osina Community Hospital, in 1990.

He was a member of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) and was involved in the transition to democracy during the short-lived Nigerian 3rd republic. He maintained peace and order in the state. He was a member of the creation of Enugu State. In August 2002, he was an aspirant to be a Governorship Candidate for Enugu State for All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP).

LATE CHIEF EVAN ENWEREM

(Governor, Jan. 2nd 1992-Nov. 17, 1993)



Evan Enwerem was elected Governor of Imo State in 1991 during the failed 3rd Republic Era of Nigeria Government. Earlier, he served as Chairman of Nigerian Airport Authority between 1980 and 1983. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom. Evan Enwerem was elected into Nigerian Senate in 1999 to represent the Imo-East Senatorial Zone. He became the first Senate President of the Nigerian Senate during Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Chief Evan Enwerem died on 2nd August 2007 in Abuja.

He is survived by his wife Vivienne and seven children.

NAVY COMMODORE JAMES ANEKE
(Governor, Dec. 13, 1933-Aug. 21, 1996)

James Aneke, Military Governor of Imo State was in office 13 Dec. 1993 – 21 August, 1996. Then, Navy Captain James Nwabueze John Aneke was appointed Military Governor of Imo State during the Military Regime of late Gen. Sani Abacha. He tried to ensure, there was peace and order in the state.

During his regime as a Governor, the state (Owerri) was plagued by kidnapping and ritual killings, to which he was able to control. In April, 2009, Commodore (Rtd) James Aneke joined the Peoples Democratic Party.

LATE COL. TANKO K. ZUBAIRU, FSS, PSC
(Governor, Aug. 22nd, 1996-May 29, 1999)

Military Governor of Imo State was in office 22 August 1996 – 28 May 1999. Col. Zubairu was appointed Military Administrator of Imo State during Military Regime of General Abdulsalam Abubakar. He was the 9th Military Governor of the state, who handed over power to the third and sustained democratically elected (Civilian) Governor of the state, Chief Achike Udenwa who was elected under the banner of P.D.P.

During his tenure, he had dealt with violent protests over ritual killings. In 1997, he signed warrants for execution by firing squad of six men who were condemned for ritual killings. He tried to maintain peace and order in the state.

CHIEF ACHIKE UDENWA (ONWA) FCCA
(Governor, May 29, 1999-May 29, 2007)

Executive Governor of Imo State was in office 29 May 1999 to 29 May 2007. He was elected under the platform of P.D.P. Born in 1948 (Onwa) Chief Achike Udenwa is reputed for the building of the Imo State Secretariat, Imo State Teaching Hospital Orlu, the Orlu International Market, among others during his 8 years tenure. He is a Chartered Accountant by profession.

In December, 2008, late President Umaru Yaradua appointed him Minister of Commerce and Industry. He left office in March 2010, when Acting President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan dissolved his cabinet. He is married to Prof. Mrs. Theresa Agbomma Udenwa and the marriage is blessed with children and grand children.

CHIEF IKEDI OHAKIM (OCHINANWATA)
KSC (Governor, May 29, 2007 - May 29, 2011)

Executive Governor of Imo State between 29th May 2007 to 29th May 2011. Born 4th August, 1957 at Okohia, Isiala Mbano L.G.A. He was elected Governor under the banner of Progressive People's Alliance (PPA), and later joined People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Before he joined politics, he was a Director at First Aluminum Plc. Between 1992 to 1993, was appointed Commissioner for Commerce, Industry and Tourism, under late Governor Evan Enwerem's administration. In 1999, was appointed into the Board of Kaduna Refinery and Petro-Chemical Company Ltd by the Federal Government.

As a Governor, Ohakim concentrated more on keeping Owerri and its environ green with his Clean and Green Programme. Apart from infrastructural development of the state, he laid emphasis on youth empowerment and job creation. He started, the first ever flyover in the state. he also built a new Governor's lodge and office. This highly cerebral politician has authored many books including, the Courage to Challenge, Vision for a New Nigeria.

Chief Ikedi Ohakim is married to Barrister Mrs. Chioma Ohakim, and the marriage is blessed with five children.

BRIEF ON HIS EXCELLENCY, OWELLE ANAYO OKOROACHA CON

Owelle Anayo Rochas Okorocha, Executive Governor of Imo State, Nigeria, assumed office 29 May 2011 till 29 May 2019. Born 22 September 1962. This Senior Advocate of the Masses is married to Ugo Nneoma Nkechinyere Rochas Okorocha and they are blessed with five children. Rochas is a super entrepreneur politician, who won the May 6, 2011 Gubernatorial Election under a very unusual circumstance in Imo State. Was re-elected for second term on April 11, 2015. He contested under All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) during his first tenure. And on the platform of All Progressive Congress (APC) in his second shot.

Owelle was not born with golden spoons, rather through hard work and God's benevolence, he got to where he is today. He will always say “I love charity, hate injustice and hate poverty”. He brought the spirit of his charity into government, from the inception of his administration on 29 May 2011. Okoroocha demonstrated that he is in a hurry to develop the state, with his “Rescue Mission Mantra”.

BRIEF PROFILE OF HIS EXCELLENCY
RT HON EMEKA IHEDIOHA CON KSC

Chief Chukwuemeka Nkem Ihedioha was born on March 24th, 1965, at Mbutu, Aboh Mbaise Local Government Area in Imo State. he had his Secondary School Education at St. Ephraim's Secondary School, Owerrinta and his tertiary education at the University of Lagos, where he obtained Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in 1988.

He attended an Executive Certificate Course in Financial Management at Stanford University and a Leadership Certificate Course at Harvard Kennedy School of Government Harvard University, both Ivy-League Institutions in the United States of America (USA). His foray into politics dates back to 1992, from Chief Whip to two terms Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives.

Chief Ihedioha has recorded many accomplishments as a Lawmaker, the ultimate of which is the sponsorship of (NIMASA) Act, 2007. As Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, he was nominated as the Leader of Nigeria's Parliamentary Delegation to the Third legislative Session of the ECOWAS Parliament. He also doubles as the Deputy Leader of Nigeria Delegation to the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU).

In the course of service to his father, Chief Ihedioha has been conferred with numerous recognitions, Awards and Fellowships, the hallmark of which was the conferment on him on 14th November, 2011, of the prestigious rank of Commander of the Order of Niger (CON), by Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, then President and Cpmmander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This was in recognition of his selfless and meritorious services to the nation.

A fellow of the Chartered Institute of Shipping, he was awarded the Most Outstanding Maritime Legislator by the Maritime Reporter's Association of Nigeria, Distinguished Service Award from the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations and voted as one of Nigeria's 50 Most Outstanding Legislators (1999 – 2009). He has also been conferred with the Fellowship of the Nigerian Institute of Food and Science Technology.

In terms of attracting development projects to his immediate constituency in particular and Imo State in general. Rt. Hon. Ihedioha has a very outstanding performance record. He has facilitated the sitting of numerous community development projects by public and private sector organizations in his constituency, which include but not limited to the reconstruction of fourteen primary schools, reactivation and rehabilitation of Uvuru Amawo Water project, reactivation and rehabilitation/reticulation of Aronta Mbutu Water project, completion of Mbutu electrification project, provision of 100 sets of computers and V-Sat based internet access with power supply at Okpala Secondary School, Ngor Okpala L.G.A. and completion of Nigerian Immigration Service Centre, Aboh Mbaise – Ngor Okpala Federal Constituency.

Chief Ihedioha is a committed community leader and has bagged several chieftaincy titles from numerous communities in Igbo land and beyond, among which are; Eze Ugo Nri, Anambra State; Ezienyi Uvuru and Nguru Mbaise; Odoziobodo, Ngor Okpala; Odiukonamba Obinugwu and Aha Eji Mba of Mbutu, to mention but a few. He is a devout Christian, married and blessed with four children.

He was elected the Governor of Imo State between May 29, 2019 to January 14, 2020 before he was removed by the Supreme Court.

BRIEF PROFILE OF HIS EXCELLENCY
SENATOR HOPE UZODIMMA

Senator Hope Uzodimma was born in Ozuh, Omuma, Oru East Local Government Area of Imo State on the 13th of December, 1958. He attended Primary and Secondary Schools in Rivers and Imo States respectively before embarking on a very fruitful journey in the area of business.

At a very tender age, he became the Chief Executive Officer of a very successful Engineering and Consulting Consortium. His companies interest range from Dredging, Marine Construction and Shoreline protection among other very technical marine operations. He is also the Chief Executive Officer of Filtim-Huzod Oil and Gas Limited with an established interest in oil wells in the Gulf of Guinea, particularly the Island of Sao Tome and Principe.

He has been a key player in the political sphere having cut his wisdom teeth in politics as a youth leader in National Party of Nigeria in the 2nd Republic. Before being elected as a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, he had tried twice to become the Governor of Imo State and made indelible impression in those two attempts.

Needless to state that his sterling performance at the Red Chamber of the National Assembly has eloquently demonstrated that the confidence of his people in electing him as a Senator was a well thought out decision.

Senator Hope Uzodimma's philanthropic disposition is legendry because his meek human kindness knows no bounds whatsoever. Like his traditional title shows, he is the moon that shines for all. Onwa is a Christian of the Catholic fold and one that believes that God is the only ultimate provider.
He is the current Governor of Imo State under the platform of APC.

Maiden BROADCAST

By the military governor of Imo State,
LT COMMANDER GODWIN NDUBUISI KANU
now late

Here, we reproduce the Maiden Broadcast of the first Governor of Imo State, Lt. Commander Ndubuisi Kanu (now a Rear Admiral Rtd). His statements, true then as they are now, bear eloquent testimony to his foresight, honesty and devoted service to a people whose destiny are in their hands.

Fellow Citizens of Imo State:

It is now six weeks since I was sworn in as the first Military Governor of Imo State. I know that many of you have wondered why it has taken me so long to arrive here. I wish to assure you all that I was not held captive in Enugu by the people of Anambra State. On the contrary, my colleague, His Excellency Lt. Col. John Atom Kpera, has been most generous and kind in helping me to organize my administration and assemble my team.

CO-OPERATION:

He has also been very co-operative in sorting out our interests over the splitting of the former East Central State. We of Imo State are grateful to him and all

> "Prosperity does not come through sentiments of zoning or imposition of a successor, but through a sound and efficient management of the state resources."

Maiden BROADCAST.....

officials and I am confident that the mutual co-operation which has developed in the course of the past weeks, will endure and that this example will spread to the other seventeen states of the federation.

I have now arrived in Owerri, headquarters of the state, not on reconnaissance, but to stay. My government is now ready for action – action to heal the social wounds of the past five years and action to move forward with the entire people of the state, who regrettably, had marked time for so long since 1970.

"I have said that it is government's policy to heal the wounds of the post-war years. We intend to achieve this by taking steps to end the understandable frustration which marked this barren period of our history".

Although I did not come to power by the votes of the people, the Supreme Military Council sent me here, not as a master, but as a servant – a servant of the Federal Military Government and a servant of the people of the Imo State. My government will therefore be fully responsive to sound public opinion within the context of total loyalty to the Federal Military Government.

TOO REMOTE:

The principal cause of frustration and of misunderstanding in the last regime was that, though the State Government was physically close to the people, it was, by its actions, mentally too remote from them. There was no dialogue and little understanding between the government and the governed. The result was that the people endured the pressures of being subjects without the compensative

satisfaction of being properly governed.

"I wish to assure you today that such a government is now a thing of the past. My government is not one of proud and arrogant superman. In my cabinet and among all my officials you will find ordinary men and women selected in the hope that they will display patriotic zeal in the service of their state and the country. You will also find that, within reason, they will be accessible to those of you who really need to see them".

TOTAL RECONSTRUCTION:

"The other areas of frustration since 1970 is in the deplorable state of our infrastructure – roads and bridges, schools and hospitals, water supply and electricity. A most urgent concern of my government is the total reconstruction of all the damaged and ill-maintained or neglected roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and water supply systems and the construction of new ones. We shall therefore not tolerate backsliding and dishonesty among those who are paid to plan or execute our construction programmes. Every citizen has a duty to expose any contractor or government functionary whose conduct will frustrate our efforts in this state to match the progress which is so evident in most part of the federation".

Yet another important source of discontent and therefore of disunity is the uneven distribution of government amenities. This has led to a situation where some areas are over-endowed with government patronage while others stagnate in backwardness and their inhabitants are abandoned to second-class citizenship. I want to assure you now that it is the intention of my government to restore a sense of fairness in the location of government

projects and in the distribution of all amenities. No longer shall the government promote or condone a situation where the deprived divisions are fobbed off with sweet promises never intended to be kept or silenced with sub-standard facilities.

SELF-HELP:

However, to benefit fully from this new spirit of fairness, the under-privileged areas have a duty to abandon the illusion that all their problems can be solved by the government alone. A lot of the progress in this part of the country has been achieved through communal effort. I would therefore commend to our brothers and sisters from the less fortunate areas the need to embrace the spirit of self-help. They should show in community development the same unity and the same energy which they display so admirably in the frequent recitals of their grievances, for no part of this state has emerged from backwardness without local patriotism, perseverance and self-sacrifice of its inhabitants. Nevertheless, I reiterate, my government will take deliberate steps to ensure that fast development is generated in these areas.

TRANSFORMATION:

"Owerri our capital enjoys a great name which, however, conceal a small provincial town. It is now our duty, as well as our privilege, to transform it into a great capital that will be worthy of its great name. In this exciting venture, we all have our vital parts to play. In order to arrest the spread of land speculation, with its attendant evils, and to provide the city planners with a clean slate, my government has already issued an edict which has vested in the state government all land within a radius of 15 Kilometres from the Owerri Post Office. We will ensure, that the planning is left to experts – if necessary to international experts and that it will stand to the most rigorous international standards. But the best plans are nothing unless they are realized.

The government therefore expects all of you, whether you are an ordinary citizen or an official, to observe strictly planning and building regulations which may be made to ensure that our dreams for a modern capital city are fully realized. We shall enforce these rules by exacting the severest policies for any breach.

HOSPITALITY:

I cannot talk of our plan to build a new Owerri without acknowledging my government's gratitude to the chiefs and people of Owerri. The traditional hospitality has, once again been demonstrated by their voluntary offer to my government of all lands that may be required for all government projects including roads, staff quarters public buildings, educational institutions, parks and offices. They have assured me that they will not demand or take a kobo for land acquired by the state government for any of these purposes.

Naturally, this offer excludes lands which we may acquire specifically for commercial, residential or industrial compensation. It is my fervent wish that this example in patriotism by Owerri people will inspire other communities in Imo State and beyond to a similar gesture as and when the need arises.

STABILITY:

"I will now end by reminding all of you in this state that, splendid as our hopes and plans for Imo State are, success will certainly elude us unless there is peace and stability among us. We can contribute to this peace and stability by the realization that whatever role anyone might have played for or against the creation of Imo State, we are now all in the same boat and cannot therefore afford to rock it. We can also contribute to peace and stability by nor demanding special treatment for whatever voluntary contributions or self-sacrifice we, communally or individually, may have made or may make in the future for the common good. Indeed, these are our pioneering days and, if Imo State is to get off to a good start, we must all endeavour to put into it much more than we expect to get out of it. The task ahead is not easy. It calls for all hands on deck. May I therefore charge on and all to exhibit in all seriousness, a sense of responsibility. A bright and glorious future is beckoning at us. Let us therefore sink our differences and rally round the government so that the sun of progress which set ten years ago in this part of the country will rise again to light our path to this great future.

"We can and we will".

IMO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP.

(For Better Imo State)

By Honeywell Plaza, Spibart Rd. Owerri.

Tel: 07063516021.

PRESS RELEASE

PREAMBLE

Imo Young Professionals Group is a non partisan Group made up of well educated and informed professionals of varied backgrounds with over 500 Members across the 3 Senatorial Zones of the State.

2027 Imo State Governorship Race.

We have been watching with keen interest, the unfolding political happenings since the re-election of our Governor, Distinguished Senator Hope Odidiaka Uzodinma, CON with focus on the "IMO CHARTER OF EQUITY",a political power Rotation compass put together by some patriotic IMO Elders in 1998.

It is obvious that implementation has been in breaches. As Young people between the ages of 20 and 45 whose future are at stake and who constitute over 60% of the voting population, would not like to dissipate much energy on the political formula, even though stretched further, favours Okigwe and Owerri zones.

At this point of our political evolution, we shall have no one but ourselves to blame if we do nothing and allow ill equipped people waste our future and that of our children.

Germaine to this, we have set up a team to engage one man who is not a professional politician, who is a serial investor, human capital developer, sufficiently educated and who has prepared himself for leadership. He has no score or scores to settle with any one or political godfathers waiting to emasculate us. This man is no other than, Chief Duru Mike Ejiogu.

Chief Ejiogu is a graduate of Public Administration from University of Abuja. He has his pie in Real Estate and Hospitality industries with over 500 staff on his employ. When you meet with him, you will be struck by his energy, clarity and intellectual capacity. This Anara, Isiala Mbano born business mogul falls within the bracket, Mario Puzo, the fabled Italian/ American in his 1969 Master piece, the Godfather had in mind, that " Great Men are not born great, they grow great " For us, greatness is the capacity of men to break the rule and smash bars of limitation.

The Traditional Prime Minister of Anara Ancient Kingdom and Akaekpuchi Onwa of Mbano is one of such men, who reached for their inner strength, ignored the negative vibes from watchers and by standers to achieve greatness. And that is why he has empathy for the vulnerable.

We as major stake holders in the affairs of the state, strongly belief that freedom and democracy have nothing to do with ethnicity and zone, but everything to do with the articulation of policies and programmes that put the people first and at the center of strategies for change. Ndi Imo, we shall continue to interface with Chief Duru Mike Ejiogu, severally Garlanded, including the IMO STATE PERSONALITY of the year, 2021 ,to stake his reputation, Professional integrity, Seriousness of Purpose, morality and fear of God to come out and vie for the Gubernatorial , come 2027. Even though he has the financial muscles to fund his election but we shall do that as our sacrifice for GOOD GOVERNANCE.

Imolites, we remain your children and partners in progress.

Signed.

Comrade Achiever Onyelike.
Engr. Ike Kezie.
Dr. Chidiebere Onye.
For Okigwe Zone

Hon.Bright Osuigwe.
Dr. Mrs. C. Igwe.
Miss Chika Nzeribe.
For Owerri Zone

Dr Emeka Nwafor.
Miss Onyeka Ihim
Engr. Uzor Onyeka
For Orlu Zone

BRIEF PROFILE

CHIEF DURU MIKE EJIOGU,

(TPM, Anara Ancient Kingdom, Akaekpuchi Onwa, Isiala Mbano)
(A selfless principle-centered leader)

In the words of Machiavelli, "while fate and fortune determine one half of our lives, the other half will depend on us", This is the true picture of the trajectory of the life of this personality. His life stay depicts a man destined to excel in life and provide purposeful leadership in all endeavour.

HIS EARLY LIFE
This business mogul was born into Ejiogu dynasty, Umudo, Anara, Isiala Mbano, on 24th, February, 1974. He passed through Amuwo Odofin Boys High School, Lagos for his secondary education and later out of sheer determination and urge to improve his knowledge, bagged a degree in Public Administration from the University of Abuja.

He can better be described as one of the alumnus of the famous IGBO APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME.

In the late 80s and early 90s, he went through tutelage before starting his own outfit. He has diversified interest in the real estate and hospitality industries. His outfits City Gate Homes and Apartments Abuja, Royal Suites and Mbano Royal Suites are success stories and major employers of labour in the country.

He has almost three decades of experience in the corporate world. Highly garlanded by various bodies. A fellow, Institute of Advanced Entrepreneurship and Research Development (I AERAD), Fellow, Charted Institute of Commerce Nigeria Patron, Young Entrepreneurs of Nigeria (YEN), Ambassador for Peace, Universal Peace Federation, Patron, Okigwe Students Association, IMO State and President, Catholic Men Organization, F.C.T, Abuja. Akaekpuchionwa is also the President of Akuluno United Brothers, a Social Club of notable Billionaires of Igbo extraction pushing the Think Home, Invest Home mantra.

This Traditional Prime Minister of Anara Ancient Kingdom was the Imo Personality of the year, 2021. He is an unassuming humanist whose love for youth empowerment and charitable gestures is unequalled. Akaekpuchi Onwa"s humility and affable personality has endeared everyone who has had encounter with him.
He is a good family man with children. Only last year, he gave out his loving first daughter in traditional marriage at his country home, Anara. The occasion was attended by who is who in the country

THIS IS MASSIVE.

Yuletide: Onowu Mike Ejiogu fetes over 600 Anara families

A spectacular new year celebration galore in Anara on this first day of January 2025.

the TPM of Anara ancient Kingdom, Onowu High Chief Mike Ejiogu, Akaekpuchionwa
gave back to the society today in a manner that is monumentous and a heart warming succor to people. the first of its kind in our community and environs.

over 1000 people were fed, and all happily went home with bags of rice , noddles and other food items.
"i was hungry you fed me, i was naked you clothed me. Who ever does this to the least of my brother ,that you do on to me". thus said the lord.

Onowu mike Ejiogu, a philanthropist per excellence,

THIS IS MASSIVE.

Yuletide: Onowu Mike ...

the gentle giant, has continued to do this to the glory of God.

the supplications and the meditations in the hearts of these people for him touched the high heavens as acceptable in the site of dear good lord.
god will reward him in Jesus name amen.

Citygates Homes Chairman, Mike Ejiogu, bags Arewa TV employer of the year, dedicates award to the resilience of his workforce

By NJOKU MACDONALD OBINNA, Abuja, Nigeria

The prestigious Arewa TV| Humanitarian Awards, an initiative focused on recognising humanitarian efforts in Northern Nigeria, has announced Chairman of Citygates Homes, Chief Mike Ejiogu, as the Employer Of The Year 2024, in recognition of his unwavering commitment in productively engaging young people by creating job opportunities in his various business establishments at the Citygates Group.

"Complementing the awards, the Arewa Humanitarian Magazine serves as a platform to share the inspiring stories of individuals and organisations driving meaningful change across Northern Nigeria, including the federal capital territory. Through interviews, project features, and insights, the magazine amplifies the voices of humanitarian leaders and fosters solid collaboration."

The awards ceremony, which held last month, December 2024, gave spotlight to key sectors such as poverty alleviation, healthcare, education, job creation, empowerment, and sustainable community development, brought together individuals and organisations that are making positive impacts in their different fields of endeavors.

Complementing the awards, the Arewa Humanitarian Magazine serves as a platform to share the inspiring stories of individuals and organisations driving meaningful change across Northern Nigeria, including the federal capital territory. Through interviews, project features, and insights, the magazine amplifies the voices of humanitarian leaders and fosters solid collaboration.

Following its impressive business trajectory and consistent performance index in the last 10 years, Citygate Homes has recorded significant milestones and strategic growth in the real estate sector;

pioneering innovations that set new standards across the industry with sheer resilience and tenacity amid challenging economic conditions in the country.

As one of the key players in the Nigeria's real estate industry, Chief Mike Ejiogu has proven his mettle as a leader and doyen in the industry by leading his company to navigate the complexities faced in doing business in a relative difficult economic clime like Nigeria while delivering on the company's mandate of sincerity, integrity, and reliability; providing jobs for over 500 staff strength in Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Imo.

The above feat is a true testament to the leadership capacity of the Chairman of Citygates Homes, Chief Duru Mike Ejiogu , to revolutionize real estate business in Abuja as well as providing a common platform for highly focused and result -driven workforce.

Appreciating the delegates of Arewa Humanitran Group who visited his Abuja head office to present the award, the Citygates Homes' Boss, Ejiogu, commended their commitment in dispassionately looking out for deserving individuals who are truly making positive impact in the different sectors of the economy while providing solutions to societal challenges.

Ejiogu who felt spurred to do more by that singular honour bestowed on him by the Arewa Group , promised to use every opportunity at his disposal to keep touching lives, improving societial well being , while further pushing the frontiers for community development and inclusive leadership.

Njoku Macdonald Obinna
Media Consultant|Newspaper Columnist|Public Analyst|PR- Expert
Publisher,
4TH ESTATE REPORTERS

DATELINE.....2027.

FEEDBACK FROM
CHIEF EJIOGU

When our team reached him on his reactions on the call by YOUNG IMO PROFESSIONALS to run ,he has this to say

" The Association and many other notable ones are unrelenting on their calls for me to join the political affray for the Douglas House, come 2027. I am still subtly consulting and widely, too.

Will not want to distract H.E Senator Uzodinma for the good job he is doing.

At the appropriate time I would speak to Ndimo ". he submitted.

"IGBO ARE THE MAKERS OF MODERN NIGERIA"

- PROF TEKENA TAMUNO

The problem with writing skewered history is that it equally misinforms its target: Kayode Esho was a great jurist, but Akunne Oputa was the "Socrates" of the Supreme court. Enahoro was a young editor, but Azikiwe made him that young editor with Osita Agwuna as his assistant, at his paper, the Southern Nigerian Defender in Ibadan, where my own father incidentally started as a rookie before shortly abandoning journalism for the stable berth of the civil service. The myth of Awolowo as building the first this and that does not match the documented economic history of the period.

Between 1954 and 1964, Eastern Nigeria was described as "the fastest growing economy in the world," by the Harvard Review; faster than China, faster than Singapore, and all the so-called "Asian Tigers." Awolowo is often credited with "free education".

But no one yet has pointed out any surviving school buildings of the period built by Awo. But all over the East there were quality schools built by the various communities using the Town Development Unions from 1954, and acessing the matching grants of the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation. And this was the East with the poorest revenue resources of any of the regions. The Mbaise secondary school exists, the National High School Okigwe exists, the Ngwa High school exists, the Enyiogugu Grammar School exists, etc. These were solid schools built all over the East with matching government grants. But where are the buildings of the Modern schools in Western Nigeria? They do not exist. They were makeshift.

The Catholic church forced the Azikiwe government from its scholarship program, but it is also on record, that the Eastern government was the only government in the world that invested 45% of its revenues in education. The East had the highest number of schools; the highest school enrollment; the broadest penetration of medical services; and the best modern road network in west Africa.

Indeed if we look carefully, the only public hospitals and most of the schools still standing in the East today, at various stages of run down are the schools and hospitals built by Azikiwe/Okpara. Every division of the East had a Joint Hospital as part of the Eastern Medical services. So it is often claimed Awo built the first television station; the first sky scraper, and the first Sports stadium, the liberty stadium in Ibadan. Well, these are prestige or white elephant investments.

First, the Eastern Outlook, the government paper of Eastern Nigeria was the first newspaper established by any government in Nigeria, and it was of such quality and impact that the literacy level of Easterners, and

the depth of public information retailed by Outlook was without compare. This is besides the fact that Western Nigerian Broadcast Services, WNBS-TV founded in 1958 only preceded the ENBC-TV founded in 1959, by only seven months. But Outlook preceded Sketch by about 15 years.

Now Azikiwe built the Onitsha Modern market, the first modern mall or trade emporium in West Africa. Onitsha was effectively Dubai before Dubai. People traveled all over Africa, from as far as the Congo and Sudan and Egypt, to come and buy and trade in Onitsha. The economic impact of this was humonguos. So, give me the vast Onitsha modern market over Cocoa House in Ibadan. Azikiwe built the first Nigerian University at Nsukka with the first School of Law, the first School of Engineering, the first Business School; the first school of journalism, and the first school of music and performance, etc. By the time its first graduates took the Nigerian civil service exams in 1963, everybody began to raise the cry of "Igbo domination" starting with Akintola and Ayo Rosiji. Give me UNN over Liberty stadium.

Azikiwe began the first modern library system in West Africa. The East had a system of city libraries starting with the very modern Ziks Library in Enugu. I Literally grew up in the Umuahia Divisional Library. These libraries were built all over the East. Schools in the East were built with libraries. Moreover the Eastern Nigerian Library Board had a system of rural and mobile libraries. There was nothing like it anywhere else in Nigeria: kids having library cards and able to borrow or order books from the public library. Give me the the first library over the first TV. I do not by this mean that Awolowo did not make his contributions, but the regular skewering of the facts, and angling of contemporary national narratives often makes it seem these days like the greatest contributor to the founding of Nigeria and its development is Awolowo and the Yoruba, when the actual facts speak differently.

The great Ibadan historian, Tekena Tamuno, was unambiguous in stating once at NIPPS, Jos, that " the

“Azikiwe began the first modern library system in West Africa. The East had a system of city libraries starting with the very modern Ziks Library in Enugu. I Literally grew up in the Umuahia Divisional Library. These libraries were built all over the East. Schools in the East were built with libraries. Moreover the Eastern Nigerian Library Board had a system of rural and mobile libraries. There was nothing like it anywhere else in Nigeria: kids having library cards and able to borrow or order books from the public library.”

Igbos are the makers of moderm Nigeria. When they abandoned their project, Nigeria collapsed." We must remind Nigerians, particularly Igbo children, daily of these fact, to achieve what Achebe called " a balance of stories." And that also means we must read beyond the surface of things. Babarinsa's Guardian essay is angled carefully to maintain a revisionist narrative. And that is to be always challenged, however innocent it might seem.

Even today, most Yoruba think that Awolowo founded the Universities of Ibadan and Lagos. No one has reminded them that it took Azikiwe's pressures for a university for Nigeria, in his meeting with Arthur Richards in 1946, that led to the constitution of the Eliot commission and subsequently the founding of the University College, Ibadan. This fact is even clearly conveyed in Michael Crowder's eponymous book, The Story of Nigeria. Nsukka was Azikiwe's critique of what he felt to be the conceptual limitations of Ibadan. The University of Lagos was the result of NCNC's ideological contributions to the federal policy during the ill fated coalition government with the NPC. UNILAG was an NCNC project, shepherded by Aja Wachukwu as minister for education. Even the great UNILAG in her 50th anniversary failed to mention Prof Eni Njoku as the pioneer Vice Chancellor of the university, a man that layed the solid foundation of what made Unilag is today.

These facts must be made known and put as forcefully across as possible. Again, until the lion tells his own story, the story of the hunt will belong to the hunter.

God bless every unbiased mind

K. O. MBADIWE UNIVERSITY:

3-YEARS OF MODEST AND STEADY ACHIEVEMENT

By BRIGHT C. OKEREKE

Aware that University education, is a key pathway to dignified personality moulding and a responsive nation building; the Imo State Governor, His Excellency, Senator Hope Uzodimma, on assumption of office in January 2020, embarked on a dogged and diligent reformation of the various sectors of the State's economy with a view to leaving enduring legacies of healthy and productive economy including the education sector.

True to the amiable Governor Uzodimma's dream, he transformed the defunct Eastern Palm University to Kingsley Ozumba (K.O.) Mbadiwe University through the enactment of the enabling Law by the House of Assembly and ensured its academic activities are brought to optimum performance level.

The Governor's impeccable wisdom may have occasioned the renaming of the recovered and re-established University after a late prominent nationalist, politician, statesman and a Central Minister in the First Republic, Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe (1915–1990) who hails from Orlu, Imo State,

These excellent and progressive moves by the Imo State Governor, His Excellency, Senator Hope Uzodimma CON, to sanitize the educational institutions in the State including the State-own Universities, possibly threw-up an experienced and proficient scholar, Professor Ikechukwu Nosike Simplicius Dozie, as the first Vice Chancellor of K. O. Mbadiwe University, in May 2021 and his visionary and resourceful leadership has accomplished massive and tremendous achievements for the University.

The unprecedented transformations and developments both completed and ongoing at the K. O. Mbadiwe University (KOMU), in Ideato South LGA, Imo State, within the past three (3) years can certainly be traced to God, the Imo State Governor Hope Odidika Uzodimma and the proactive Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Ikechukwu Nosike Simplicius Dozie.

Very noticeably, K.O. Mbadiwe University is fast reshaping to a classical 'Knowledge Power Centre' with the introduction of novel and ideal innovations that are reforming its education structure and standards to meeting the world class standards.

The top Management of KOMU has instituted an appropriate architecture for university education that creates an appropriate and navigable roadmap to facilitate genuine, academically credible, and enduring improvements in the quality of its education.

The dogged efforts of Prof. I.N.S. Dozie and his Management team have sponsored the progressive development of successful strategies dealing with the teething issues concerning academic and educational excellence, funding, support facilities' sustainability, academic staff qualifications, and graduates' competencies.

To improve the quality of any academic institution; commitment and expertise knowledge of the leadership is priority. It is on this premise that the University Management is vigorously pursuing its 11-point Strategic Goals of Action (SGA) that is summarized in achieving the fundamental mission of K.O. Mbadiwe University encapsulated in research, teaching and community service.

Other impressive feats also recorded within the three (3) years under review, by the administration of Prof. Ikechukwu N.S Dozie as the Vice Chancellor include: -

Sustenance of stable academic calendar that makes timely graduation, processing and release of results,

transcripts and degree certificates upon graduation, timely mobilization of graduates for National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme as well as deployment of innovative technologies in teaching and learning.

Securing successful FULL ACCREDITATION Status for seventeen (17) mature programmes of the University from the National Universities Commission (NUC).

Securing National Universities Commission (NUC) Resource Assessment Approval for eight (8) new programmes that have already commenced with the 2024/2025 academic session:- They are LL.B Law, MBBS Medicine & Surgery, B.NSc. Nursing Science, B.MLS Medical Laboratory Science and B.Sc. in Public Health; Cyber Security; Environmental Sciences; Information Technology.

Graduation of three (3) Sets of students and subsequent mobilization for National Youth Service Corps with a set already passed out of the service year. And production of academic transcript for graduated students' further studies or other purposes.

Introduction and commencement of K.O. Mbadiwe University Public Lecture Series in October 2023, with the 6th of KOMU Lecture Series held in December 18, 2024.

Procurement of four (4) nos. fairly used vehicles for the Principal Officers of the University.

Procurement of Tractor (FramTrack) for use on Agro-enviromental services.

Establishment of a Liason Office at Owerri, production of University Annual Reports, Policy Documents and University quarterly NEWS Magazine (KOMU NEWS Digest).

Establishment of a World-class ICT Academy in KOMU in partnership with TD Africa and HUAWEI Technologies, in a bid to achieve the university's mission of producing students with cutting-edge technology education needed for the fast changing global society.

Restored public confidence in the young university with increased enrollment in the 2024/2025 academic year.

Stemming on the afore-listed achievements, academic successes thus far recorded and in recognition of the strengths and potentials of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dozie and his working team at K.O Mbadiwe University Ideato, are strongly pushing towards a world-class status with cutting-edge technology.

Conscious of the fact that our present day society is very ripe for another paramount shift in our understanding of the university as the key to our continuously varying world, Professor Ikechukwu N. S. Dozie is initiating many other classic innovations and initiatives that are gradually growing KOMU to the status of a modern research university, flexible enough to accommodate learning across disciplines that harmonizes education with the developmental needs of our society.

Uniquely, K.O. Mbadiwe University, is trending with facilities that have made visual classroom and online lectures an integral part of its new education policy such that students can take lectures from anywhere via smart phones and laptops.

The university management has further developed active partnerships with some first-class universities around the globe to enhance the University's educational standing.

K.O. Mbadiwe University offers undergraduate courses covering various faculties including Arts, Sciences, Social and Management Sciences, Computer and Information Technology, Law, Architecture, Medicine & Surgery, Nursing Science, Medical Laboratory Science, Environmental Health Science, Cyber Security, and Health Sciences.

Kingsley Ozumba (K.O.) Mbadiwe University Ideato, may be conducting its first convocation ceremony, this year (2025), with its graduation policy of "Graduating Students Convoking with Original Degree Certificates", if the University Visitor, His Excellency, Distinguished Senator Hope Uzodimma CON, the Executive Governor of Imo State, gives his consent.

Most interestingly, the University's relationship with the host communities is most cordial and peaceful. The architectural and infrastructural development of the University are superb and as such promotes a healthy, safe and aesthetic environment, conducive to a productive and eventful academic activities. We cannot gain say the fact that K.O. Mbadiwe University is changing the narratives and offering young people a unique opportunity to achieve quality education and mentorship for the sake of nation building.

Bright C. OKEREKE, is the SA Media, to KOMU VC

ACCOLADES FOR UZODINMA

ROADS INFRASTRUCTURAL DRIVE

By our Editorial Team.

The velve, vigour and energy, H.E Senator Hope Uzodinma is putting in road infrastructure has received national attention is unprecedented. As soon he came into office in 2020, his administration faced the hitherto dilapidated roads that connect Okigwe to Owerri and the city capital to Orlu. These two roads are still very solid and as fresh as ever because of the quantum of engineering works put in place.

Governor Uzodinma focus on urban renewal can be seen on other major internal and link roads, which include:

Sam Mbakwe Airport Road and security lightings, Chukwuma Nwaoha, Aladinma Ring Roads and Dick Tiger Street.

Relief Market Road is a beauty to behold.

Flooding on Chukwuma Nwaoha road is now checkmated through balloon technology module

You can now drive seamlessly through MCC Road to Owerri North L.G Headquarters. Courtesy of Onwa Onyoko administration.

Assumpta Cathedral flyover is another strategic road project under taken to reduce traffic congestion in the area. IMO Concord hotel, the flagship of hospitality and tourism in the South East is going rehabilitation.

Mbaise/ Umuahia Road project

Commissioning of DSS Road by His Excellency, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, OFR. National Chairman, All Progressive Congress (APC)

Owerri - Mbaise - Umuahia dual carriage way stands him out also.

It's therefore not surprising to Ndimo, when a nationally recognized Newspaper Group like the VANGUARD Newspaper honored him as the Infrastructure Governor of the year , 2024 . The Newspaper Group ,said among others, that his administration's ambitious Road Revolution has significantly improved economic growth and connectivity across the state. Over 100 roads, including the dualization of Orlu/ Owerri Road and is still counting has been delivered by his administration. If this tempo is sustained, our state will regain her pride of place as the socio.economic hub of the South East.

This informed our choice as a media group to make this major stride,our front page story. Kudos to Senator Hope Uzodinma, Governor of the state.

'Iri ji' in Ezike, Nneator Nweafor Autonomous Community, Isiala Mbano LGA, Imo State.

By DR LEMCHI REMIGUS ONYEMA

One of the most spectacular and captivating cultural events in Igbo land of the East of the Niger is the 'Iri ji', literally meaning 'Yam eating' but in the practical sense 'Festival at the end of the raining season', symbolising conclusion of a harvest and the beginning of the next work cycle. In many Igbo communities across Nigeria, 'Iri ji' is variously called 'Orureshi' in Idoma dialect or 'Iwa ji', 'Ike ji' or 'Otute' all depending on the dialect. Interestingly, the New Yam Festival is celebrated annually across West Africa especially in Nigeria generally and Ghana. The yam crop is prominent in the socio-cultural life of the Igbo people in such a way that people are named 'Osuji', meaning 'King of Yam'.

And so, Ezike as a vibrant community in Nneator Nweafor Autonomous Community in Isiala Mbano Imo State is never left out annually in the celebration of the New Yam Festival called 'Iri ji. Every second week of August spanning two days, the Ezike Community is agog with celebrations of 'Iri ji'. There are eight(8) kindreds that make up the Ezike larger community. The eve of the 'Iri ji' is done solemnly leading to the D-day when the symbolic celebrations are held. People including visitors and invited guests like friends and in-laws from far and wide often gathered at the village square called 'Mpacha Ezike' to celebrate and uphold our cultural heritage. 'Iri ji' Ezike has been modernised over time to conform with the dynamics of modernity though the ceremony is traditional with a blend of modernity. For instance, the slaughter of goats and fowls in and around Mkpacha Ezike with incantations and pouring of libations have all ceased to exist.

DR KPADUWA

Rather, the community head called the National Chairman usually sets up a planning committee that draws up a spadework on how a befitting celebration would be executed. Nowadays tents, canopies and chairs are hired for reception of guests who are officially invited. Roasted yams with 'ngo' and 'ugba' are served guests who often support the ceremony with donations. The 'Edere' dance and other cultural dance of various shapes and degrees are staged, with pockets of groups of people playing talking drums, alongside gongs and flutes adding colour to the celebration including 'Ogene' boys and 'Igba ndi Eze' moving round to entertain people. Meanwhile, commercial activities are often at their peaks with bars and restaurants open for brisk businesses. Traditional delicacies like 'akidi' (a specie of bean)

'Iri ii' in Ezike...

sometimes mixed with maize, 'ugba' and 'okporoko' laced with the local palm wine called 'nkwu na ngwo' are prepared and served to guests at the residencies of the indigenes and even at the village square of the community. It should be noted that these food crops are often bought the previous day at 'Orie Ezike' market located just by the market square.

One interesting fact about the 'Iri ji Ezike' is that there is never a dull moment and to get the best out of it, one needs to go round the village square Mkpacha and the school field to savour and relish various cultural displays independently brought in by people from neighbouring villages like Okwelle, Ugwuala, Umuegbe, Umuohiri and Okwe just to mention but a few. Masquerades adorned with colourful regalia are always on hand to dance and display around the area with fun lovers handing them tokens as 'well done' gifts. Usually, a circular dance is open for all both men and women including children. Interestingly, the dance steps are learned prior to the D-day during the practice days fixed by the head of the drummers. Sometimes, novelty football matches are played on the eve of the 'Iri ji Ezike' to create awareness for the upcoming ceremony.

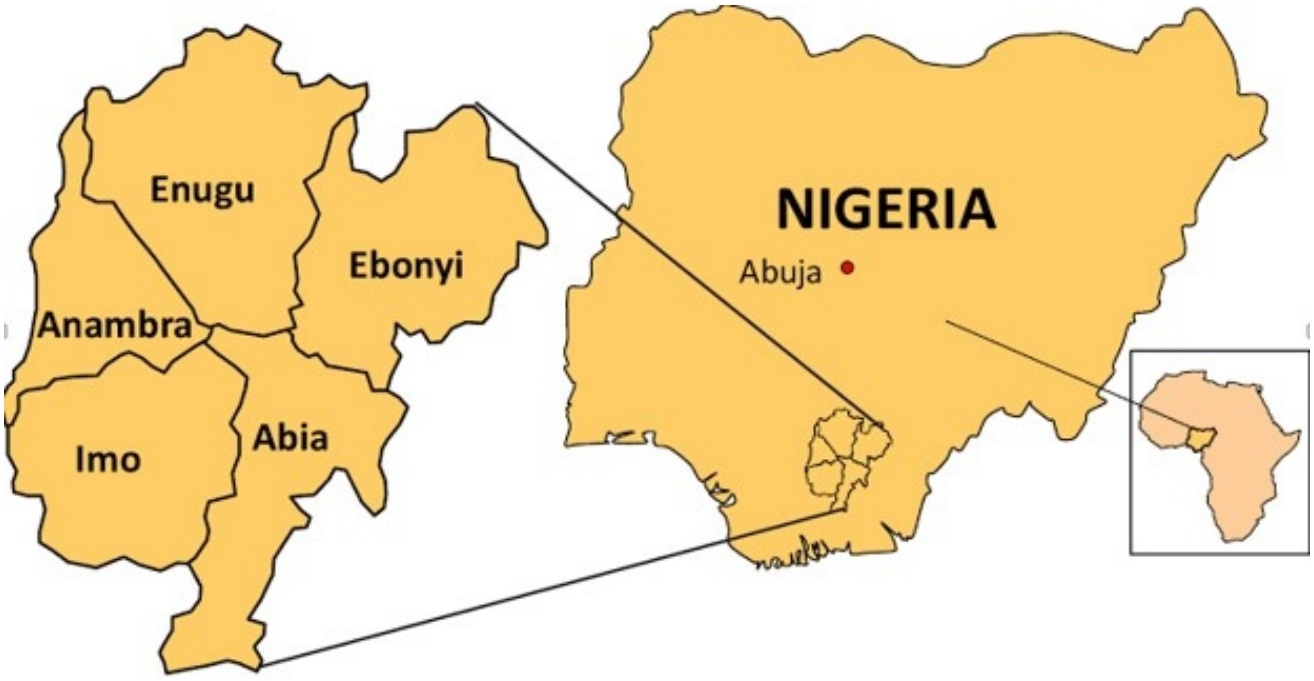
Ezike is a well-known community that makes up the Nneator consisting of Umuohiri and Obiohuru in Isiala Mbano LGA of Imo State. It has always been on the map of developmental strides of Ndigbo who are known for community development through self-help efforts. As far back as 1940's for instance, the Community School located at Mkpacha Ezike had already been established by our illustrious sons. Also, the Health Centre serving the community and adjoining villages is located at Ezike. Another amenity worth mentioning is the waterfalls popularly called 'Nwaosu' from which clean natural water permeates and people use for drinking and cooking. An indigene that returns home and has not visited the 'Nwaosu' often feels discontented because of the symbolism of the natural gift and its tourist potential. Many take photo shoots there and act some scenes in their films. 'Nwaosu' equally serves as a bathing pool for those interested both males and females. On the economic plain, Ezike is fast becoming a haven of small and medium scale industries with the establishment of an integrated farm, bottled water factory and cosmetics industry. This has contributed in no small way to the economic development of the community with ancillary activities growing to serve the teeming population.

Politically, Ezike illustrious sons have played their roles in various ways with people like the late Chief Paulinus Obiefule who was a member of the Imo State House of Assembly during the 3rd Republic under the tenure of the then Governor Evan Enwerem. Worthy of note also is the late Chief Ferdinand Achom who was the PDP Okigwe Zonal Chairman between 2008-2011. In addition, Dr Julius Kpaduwa, a well-known philanthropist and US based medical practitioner per excellence was a gubernatorial candidate in Imo State under the 5th Republic. He is credited with many medical missions to Isiala Mbano for more than a decade now. Annually, he attracts and brings home his professional colleagues from the US to perform surgeries of varying degrees free of charge. He was a one-time Chairman, Board of the Imo State University Teaching Hospital, Orlu. At the level of Nneator Nweafor Autonomous Community also, our illustrious son in the person of the late Chief Gilbert Ujunwa was the President-General. Currently, our indigene by name Honourable Jude Egbuleze is the Councillor of Osu-Achara Ward in Isiala Mbano LGA, Imo State.

This piece will not end until I greet you readers in our dialect by saying 'Unu awuchule o'!

SOUTH EAST;

the Need for Regional Economic Development Master Plan



Reminiscing Biafra or the Igboman utopia, would begin with rediscovering the boundaries, ethos and spirit of the original Eastern Nigeria. The region that had the fastest growing economy in the world for a consecutive 9 years (before the civil war botched it), growing at above 9 percent APR, and was guided to match and surpass the Western Region in Total Gross Capital Formation by 1978.

That was the Eastern Region that reminence in anyone's mind. An economy that would boost anyone's talents and skills to fruition and provide the opportunity for inclusiveness and growth.

That is the Eastern Region that we miss, and that is the region that can cater to everyone's dreams and aspirations, and the region we must purposefully design, support and develop, if we do not want to suffer self implosion and debilitation as a people and region; (for most of these social vices in the South East are products of poor socioeconomic standing; these weird insecurity, kidnappings, ritual killings, prostitution, drug abuse and internet frauds that are prevalent in the region, are all manifestations of a

SOUTH EAST....

failed and rudderless economy, lacking in the provisions of hope, inclusiveness and opportunities for the people and the youths – a political-economy that inspires no hope in the future.

But for as soon as an economy begins to grow at 7 to 7.5 percent (APR) (at the least), these symptoms of sloppy economy will disappear to almost non-existence.

In the journey of self-discovery, it is important to ask where we started missing it. Where we got drenched, and at what moment the glitch occurred in our quest for progress and development.

It is also important to query what turned the fastest growing economy in the world to the shadow of itself, that the Igbos have turned to economic nomads, roaming the cities of the Nation, and the World, developing everywhere but their home region, that the latest data from SMEDAN/NBS shows that only 9.07 percent of the registered businesses in the country are located in the South East, compared to 22.3 and 20.5 percents from South West and North West.

> "SMEDAN/NBS shows that only 9.07 percent of the registered businesses in the country are located in the South East, compared to 22.3 and 20.5 percents from South West and North West."

Why is the South East not among the destination points for a young Nigerian or even an Igbo youth while choosing likely places to reside, hunt for jobs after College graduation, and make a living. Why is the South East not amongst the investments destinations in the country, as consistently only about one State in the region attracts about 1 percent or less of the FDIs coming into the country.

What is it that have turned this world fastest economy, to one that generates cumulatively amongst the 5 States an IGR equal to that of a single State (OGUN) in the South West, and less than 2 months cumulative IGR of Lagos State.

The South East region in the contemporary times

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develop to an economic powerhouse, purposely and meticulously building and aggregating our Total Gross Capital Formation and the platform it offers for economic growth and development, for assertiveness and respect and the due and desired recognition within the National and Continental polity.

EASTERN NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT PLAN (A Regional Economic Development Masterplan – to copy, adapt and implement for South East Regional Integrated Economy):

The economy of the former Eastern Region was planned from ground up by the US consulting firm Arthur D. Little

Dr. Azikiwe brought them and they worked with M I Okpara at first, then with Sam Otti and later Eluwa who headed the Civil Service and later with Sir Louis Phillip Odumegwu Ojukwu who at the time was the Chairman of the Eastern Nicerian Development Corporation (ENDC) and also the Chairman of the Eastern Nigeria Commodities Board (ENCB) Louis Phillip Odumegwu Ojukwu also sat as Chairman of 15 multinational companies at the time – John Holt, PZ, Michelin, Costain, Thomas Wyatt, Guinness, GB Ollivant etc.

He was so rich that he single handedly funded the establishment of the Lagos Stock Exchange but refused to list his company there for fear of losing control.

His photo still hangs proudly on the floor of that exchange as its first chairman Arthur D Little also worked with a coterie of young Eastern Nigerian economists at the time – Pius Okigbo (PhD Northwestern), Ukwu I. Ukwu (PhD Cambridge), Chukwu Sunday Okongwu (PhD Harvard). These young men in their early twenties worked with Arthur D Little to plan our economy from scratch I know this because Ukwu I Ukwu taught me at Nsukka and I also worked in Dr Chu SP Okongwu's economic planning firm right during and after grad school in Nigeria.

Arthur D. Little recommended the setting up of a university in the East to produce key skills needed to drive economic growth as most of those skills were not being taught in Ibadan at the time Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe sent Dr Akpabio (MA Columbia) who at the time was the East's Minister of Education on an extended tour to universities in Michigan and New York for collaboration in key fields like medicine, engineering,, surveying and photogrammetry and business administration.

UNN was the first school in Nigeria to offer many of these courses. Ibadan at the time taught mostly Classics, General Science and later Medicine Palm oil, Palm Kernel, Coal, Cocoa (from Ikom), Coffee from Obudu and later petroleum from firstly Izombe – Oguta area and later from Oloibiri in Ijaw land drove the economy of the East in terms of development, the East started late, compared to the West.

Development and education had started in Lagos and Abeokuta right after Beecroft occupied Lagos in 1850s and made it a British colony. Lagos and the SW thus

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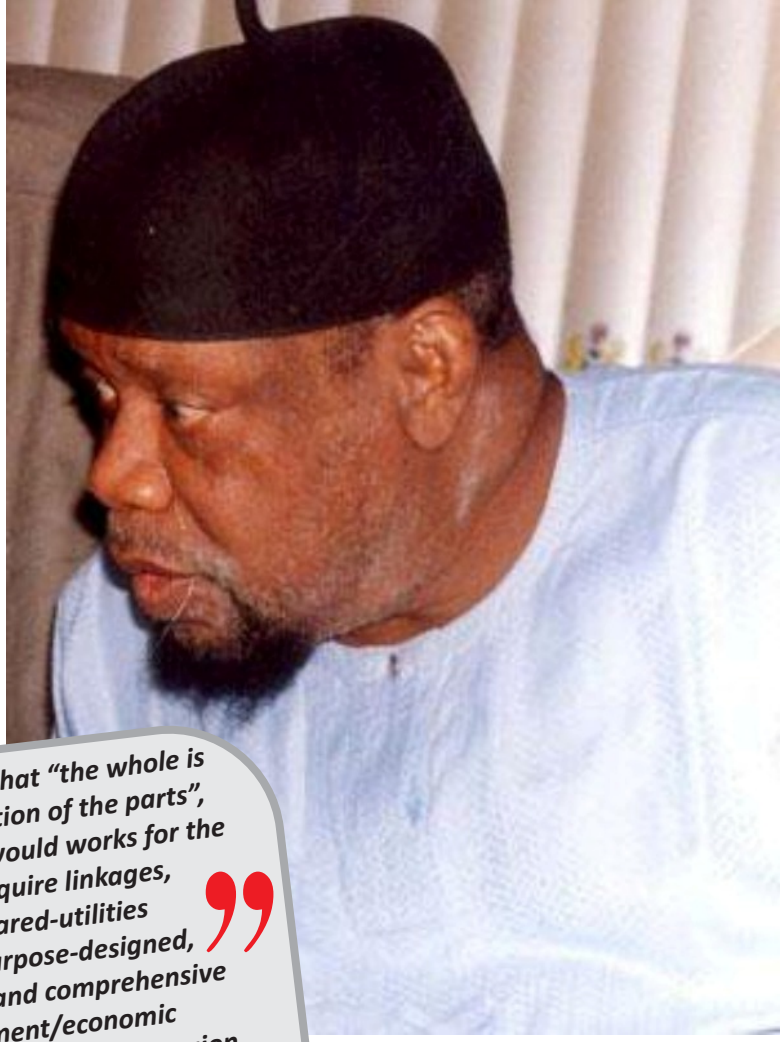
operates a 5 independent Subnational economies, without any form of collaboration or linkages, hence the economies lack the necessary depth, comprehensiveness and gravitas enough to create the critical mass for growth and sustainability needed for a vibrant economy.

The system theory has it that "the whole is greater than the summation of the parts", hence the economy that would works for the South East, would require linkages, collaborations, shared-utilities management, and purpose-designed, planning, supervision, and comprehensive resource management/economic development planning for the entire region, and not an independent and uncoordinated micromanaging of the Subnationals as independent entities.



"The system theory has it that "the whole is greater than the summation of the parts", hence the economy that would works for the South East, would require linkages, collaborations, shared-utilities management, and purpose-designed, planning, supervision, and comprehensive resource management/economic development planning for the entire region, and not an independent and uncoordinated micromanaging of the Subnationals as independent entities."

Since the various Subnational economies are too weak, incomprehensive and lacking in depth to boost sustainable industrialization and development.

Operating the Subnational economies in the region independently in this uncoordinated manner has led the region to suffer enormous population and capital migration to the other regions, hence adversely affecting the South East socio-culture, growth, development and population stock, with negative-effects and implications in the National Resource Distribution and the National Politics (having been reduced to almost a non-major tribe/region in the country, with a population of about 30 million, in a country of 220 million).

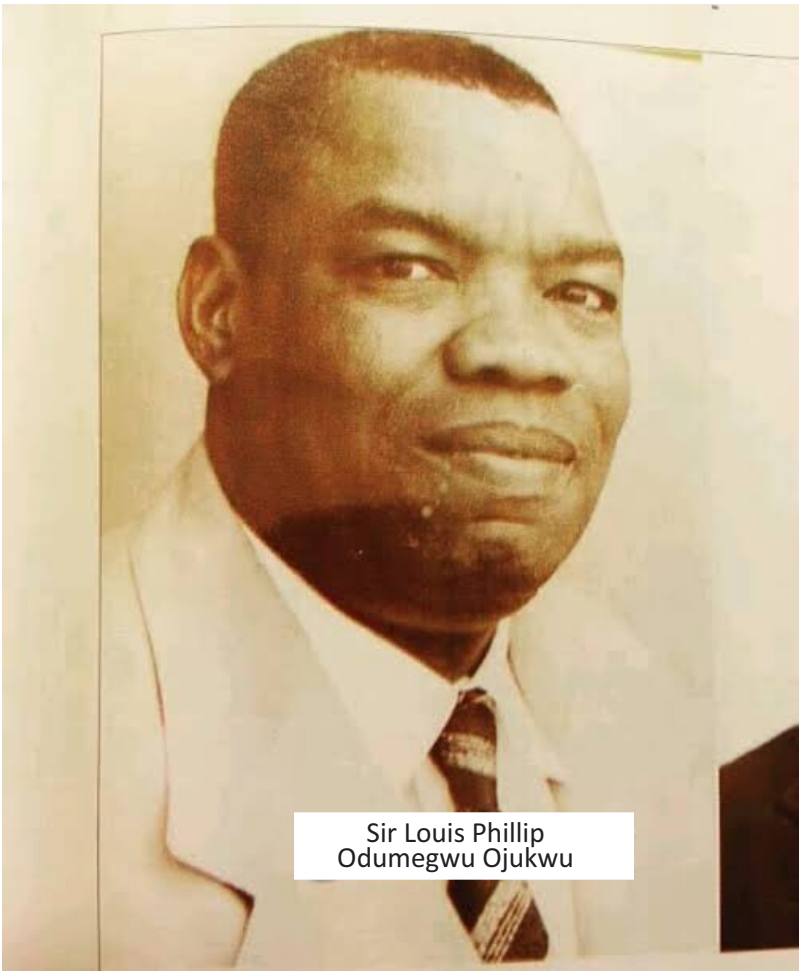
As said, knowing the moment of glitch that truncated the Eastern Region economic growth of above 9APR growth for consistent 9 years, and developing the strategy of reconnecting to that very Economic Development Masterplan and Implementation Strategy that produced such global record, that the likes of United Arab Emirates, (and on a National scale, the likes of the Republic of China, India, and Indonesia, etcetera, all copied and adopted to shoot to the great heights they have currently attained), would be how the South East, if not the entire original Eastern Region (if political expediency would allow) would have to adopt and implement the Old Eastern Region Economic Development Masterplan again for consistent, sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

The original plan may require modifications and retooling, but getting back to that document is a must do, if we are to make any appreciable economic and development stride.

Hence, find below a synopsis of the Old Eastern Region Economic Development Plan, for your interrogation, analysis, introspection and understanding, for the formulation of judgement, that would form the platform for discourses, thinking, planning and eventual strategies for adoption and implementation on the long-run, or sooner, if we are lucky.

It is important to stress that it is the Biafra of the mind, as espoused by Dim Odumegwu Chukwuemeka Ojukwu that will assert our position in the country, and not necessarily a territorial or physical autonomy. We need to take charge of our economy, development and growth for our people and homeland, for inclusiveness, total wellbeing, progress and security. We need to start thinking as the Baveria of Germany and the Bacelonia of Spain, and consciously grow and

SOUTH EAST....



Sir Louis Phillip Odumegwu Ojukwu

had more than a 70 year headstart over the East in terms of total gross capital formation and the platform that it gave for growth.

But after the implementation of Arthur D Little's recommended growth plan, the East's economy grew at more than 9.2%, starting from 1958 till 1967 when the war began at over 9%, the Eastern Region in this period, had the fastest growing economy on earth consistently for 9 years and was estimated to equal Western Nigeria by 1978 (in terms of total gross capital formation) and then overtake the Western Region after that.
The civil war truncated that momentum and the East never recovered after that.

Louis Philip Odumegwu Ojukwu brought his industrial influence to bear on the growth plan as he singlehandedly pushed for the establishment of not just industrial estates but industrial corridors in the region.

An industrial estate is localized. An industrial corridor joins two or more industrial estates to form an industrial conurbation.
Industrial estates sprang up across the East
TransAmadi in PH.
Aba for light industries.
Umuahia for biotechnology.
Emene in Enugu for steel and industrial automation.
Nkalagu, PH and Calabar for cement and building materials.
Onitsha as an emporium to drive retail trading.
Obudu in Cross River for dairy, holidaying and corporate meetings.
Because he was the chairman of 15 multinational companies at the time, he used his influence to compel many of them to buy into the East's industrialization plan.

Okpara also partnered with Israel for the setting up of industrial farms and plantations – seedling production, extension services, assistance to farmers etc.

So plantations (cashew nuts, palm kernel, cocoa, coffee, timber etc) sprang up in Oghe (Enugu State), Okigwe (Abia State), Obudu, Itumbenuzor, Akamkpa all in Cross River state and in various parts of Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Imo, Abia etc.

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Okpara personally delivered some of the seedlings himself by driving behind the trucks that did the delivery.

Sir Louis Phillip Odumegwu Ojukwu pushed for the establishment of 3 major cement plants in the region – Nkalagu, Eastern Bulkcem in PH and Calabar cement factory in Calabar.

Nkalagu and PH opened before the war started in 1967. Everything for the take off of the Calabar cement factory was purchased but the war truncated its take off.

In 1970, Governor Esuene of the newly-created Cross River State opened Calcemco plant to the applause of many.

Three industrial corridors were also planned for the East

The Emene-Nkalagu Industrial corridor which was to focus on automobiles, building materials and industrial automation. Kaiser Motors in the US at the time (it has since been acquired) had agreed to build a car plant in Emene and a plant for car engines. That corridor was to stretch for almost 100 miles
The second industrial corridor was to stretch between PH and Aba. So industrial centers were set up in Trans Amadi and in Aba and over a ten to 15 year period, these two centers were to be linked by many feeder industries that would be located on the highway joining both cities.

Okpara had hoped that over time, the PH-Aba industrial corridor would follow the old road between Port Harcourt and Enugu and join with the Emene – Nkalagu industrial corridor to create a massive industrial cornubation that almost imitates the almost 200 kilometer Ruhr Industrial Valley in Germany built under Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck Onitsha was to drive the East's Retail economy and so the market was built there as an Emporium...to attract buyers from all over Nigeria and West and Central Africa so they could come spend their money in the East.
Dubai would copy this same model 50 years later and implement it successfully but on a global scale. Onitsha market achieved its purpose by 1958, two years after the East achieved self government. It became the preferred destination for retail and bulk shoppers from all over West Africa and even Cameroon, Gabon and Congo. This gave the Anambra Igbo a head start in retail trading...an advantage that they enjoy till date.

"oil was discovered by Late. Chief Nwodo, Eastern Nigeria's first Minister for Trade (father to the past Ohaneze Chairman) negotiated the first contracts with Shell on a 50-50 investment and sharing basis."

All of these development and growth projects were centrally driven by the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation – ENDC and the revenues were centrally aggregated into the account of the Eastern Nigerian Commodities Board (ENCB). Both groups were headed by Sir Louis Phillip Odumegwu Ojukwu funds for development came mostly from 3 sources.
1. Local revenues from the export of cocoa(Ikom and Itumbenuzor), coffee (Obudu and Arochukwu), timber (Akamkpa) Coal (Enugu-Udi), Palm oil (Rivers, Imo, Abia), Palm kernel (Rivers, Imo, Abia)

2. Direct Foreign Investments
3. Loans from Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) Umuahia was to midwife the Easts' biotechnology industries which explains why Golden Guinea Brewery and the Root Crop Research Institute were established there.

Obudu because of its pristine hills and its fresh weather was to be a holiday resort for many as well as a primary center for a dairy industry that just started before the war commenced. Obudu Cattle Ranch was the first in a series of investments that got scuttled in Obudu by the war.

Lastly, oil was discovered by Late. Chief Nwodo, Eastern Nigeria's first Minister for Trade (father to the past Ohaneze Chairman) negotiated the first contracts with Shell on a 50-50 investment and sharing basis.

Virtually all of the East's oil assets were seized by the Federal Government under Gowon with no compensation paid till date. The Federal Government simply inherited the East's 50% slot and paid nothing for it. Today everyone profits from it
Most of the catalytic cracking and downward refineries

SOUTH EAST....

that NNPC would later build were in the plans that the Eastern Regional Government had for the region.

Today, some of those plants are located in faraway Kaduna and no mention is ever made of the East.
Every Nigerian today depends on that oil to survive including states that claim that they can survive from internally-generated revenues.

I believe that rather than whine everyday, we Igbos should sit down and learn our history...take a look at the growth plans that got scuttled in 1967 and see how we can work together to pick up the pieces and build again from scratch.

IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE SECTOR LED ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT – SOUTH EAST/NDI IGBO POLITICAL OFFICE HOLDERS MUST LEARN.
– INTEGRATED SOUTH EAST DEVELOPMENT.
The purpose of this work is to alert public office holders, especially, the Governors of the South Eastern states of Nigeria on the need/importance of working closely with sound, enterprising, deeply knowledgeable and creative entrepreneurs of the South East/Igbo extraction to evolve robust region-wide Private Public Partnership schemes to build wealth in South East/Igbo land, truly create factories/jobs devoid of empty rhetoric, enhance productivity and develop the eastern hinterland UNDER THE SOUTH EAST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATIVES

Lagos, Ogun, Kaduna and Kano states, are examples of states where the public office holders, leveraged on the private sector skills, and strength of their sons/daughters to grow wealth for themselves and their people. Obasanjo, Tinubu, Buhari and other past political office holders from those climes since 1999 ensured that they remained on top.

It is only a daft and unthinking public office holder/politician, that brazenly steals commonwealth meant for their people to buy houses they visit once in a year in London, New York, South Africa and other far flung areas of the world.

It is only a daft person/politician that travels all the way to build $50 million hospital in South Africa, when her aunts and uncles are dying daily for lack of proper medicare at home.
You can invest to have the same world class hospital here in Nigeria for half that amount with 50% partnership with Israelis.

You will not only have your money intact, you shall also be creating jobs, attracting medical tourism and transferring medical skills to your people who will work with the foreign experts.

WHAT CAN THE SOUTH EAST/IGBO PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS – GOVERNORS/LEGISLATORS DO AT ALL LEVELS TO DEVELOP THE SOUTH EAST AS WELL AS GROW PUBLIC/PRIVATE WEALTH?
Identify, structure and partner creatively with excellent entrepreneurs of South East/Igbo extraction to set up factories, industries and manufacturing concerns in the South East under robust PPP arrangements – adopting Project Technical/Designing/Structuring and Implementation Support; Collaborating in the following key areas:

(a).Petroleum Refinery (Orient Petroleum should be supported massively by the 5 SE governors). to engage in Gas gathering, collection, compression and liquefaction plants (South East has over 10-18 trillion standard cubic feet of gas reserve . Many capped gas wells exist already).

(b). Partner under PPP arrangements to set up Petrochemical/Lube/Blending and Fertilizer plants in the South East. South East has huge gas reserve and condensates for this. Also set up pet/plastic recycling plants.

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©. Set up joint/ PPP driven development bank under the Eastern Nigeria Development Cooperation arrangements. Such development bank in partnership with foreign development banks and agencies shall drive the funding support and arrangements for these PPP schemes in syndicate arrangement with the deposit money banks and other national development banks. (ENDC established with a secretariat that shall be manned by crack financial engineers/technocrats from the South East.

(d). Cement manufacturing and exploration of other mineral resources under a PPP arrangement. Support and partner with Ibeto, Chicason Group and other Igbo entrepreneurs in the cement bagging business to massively set up cement manufacturing plants in the South East. Ebonyi and Enugu states have huge coal, limestone and gypsum deposits. We have rich limestone, gypsum, coal and mineral dust deposits in the South East. Support Ibeto to develop and expand the old Nkalagu Cement factory.

(e). Under the same PPP arrangement, mine and develop the huge coal deposit in Igbo land. Integrate embedded coal to power plants within this mine locations.

(f). Massive quarry site/stone works developments under PPP framework to produce the chips and stones massively needed to turn Igbo land into huge construction sites, both for road, bridges and housing constructions. Also we can adopt the same model to develop the huge clay opportunities.

(g). Massive housing schemes under PPP arrangements incorporating/partnering with Diaspora Igbos. The state governors to make access to land (make sure you compensate the host communities and do not steal/grab their land brazenly), also provide infrastructure support for identified locations, making it easy for Igbos in diaspora and at home to build and develop Igbo lands.
We need to develop and build our own Banana Islands, VGCs, NICON towns in Owerri, Aba, Enugu, Abakiliki, Umuahia, Okigwe, Awka etcetera.

(h). Agric/ Agro processing of all Agric value chains, adopting the Italy Copado model under PPP arrangements.
Partner with the communities /LGAs to dedicate huge swath of available arable lands working with the community and town unions and putting our huge human capital to use under diverse cooperative schemes.

We quickly forget that Erisco that is creating jobs in Lagos is an Igbo man. There are many like him, who can head home, if they have solid public sector infrastructure/security support back home. Support the Tiger Brand in Onitsha to expand. Massively.
Partner with the South East Farms and Agricultural

SOUTH EAST....

Processing Companies to develop new 30,000 hectares of tenera palm plantation per state, which will support 725 cottage oil processing mills in the South East.

(I). Huge Animal husbandry, Ranching, Dairy production, Tannery/Leather production under robust foreign aided supported PPP schemes.

(J). Massively champion and develop the leather, Shoes, Garment and Textile industries in the South East under the PPP frameworks. (make Aba, Owerri and Onitsha as the hub and centers of excellence for this industry) . Massively industrialise that sector, create clusters and tap into the huge AGOA opportunities. USA alone imports over $100billion worth of garments annually.

(K). Develop and expand the scrap/solid metal foundry and recycling industry in the Eastern Heartland. We need such for massive industrialization under PPP frameworks.

(L). Support the local automotive industry – massively patronizing Innosson, Coscharis, Anamco and other local automobile assembly plants based in the South East. Partner with them to increase and diversify to parts production to take over the West Coast markets.

(M). Then support massively the growth/restoration of commerce and Industry in the South East. Restore the glory days when Onitsha and Aba used to be the hub of commerce in west Africa.

(N). Partner together to secure the eastern heartlands and all South East against external and internal marauders and criminals. Security of Lives and properties can be ensured adopting the same unique PPP arrangements.

(O). We must adopt the same robust PPP frameworks to develop massively our health and education sectors. Set up massive vocational and technical schools to train excellently our artisans in all field of endeavor to spearhead needed man power support. We can also export these huge man power and skills abroad.

Lastly, demography and population are key integral parts of economic development, as everything, resources or otherwise are distributed on the basis of population and spread; hence for the South East with a population of about 30 million, in a country of 220 million, cannot be playing on the big league, (it couldn't be a major region with such population size), therefore the South East and the Igbos in general must consciously grow and sustain their population and maintain a healthy demography to compete and assert themselves economically and politically in the country, as was the case in the first republic and before the rains began to beat them.

The Igbos would have to begin to take a cue from the Northers or the South West in bearing more children, or in having more wives, to be able to compete effectively in the population politics in order to maintain healthy political and economic status in Nigeria and the World – for whatever the consideration is, population is key – be it elections, creation of Local Governments, Polling Units/Political Wards, Number of Representatives at the National Assembly, Allocation of Revenues, Quota allocation and Employment Slots, and other Resources, population is key. Therefore the South East and the Igbos in general must learn to play the population politics to aid their easy assertiveness in the country, and achieve seamless economic emancipation.

The South East/Igbos must consciously work to double and sustain their population, especially the working and youthful population, and maintain a healthy demography and spread to successfully attain their economic and political eldorado.

.Dr Nwaodu Lawrence is a
Development Economist (Liverpool).
IMSG Owerri

ASSESSING MBAKWE'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND RURAL INDUSTRIALIZATION IN OLD IMO STATE (1979-1983):

WHAT LESSONS FOR IMO TODAY?

By
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Imo was on the path of development during the glorious days of late Dr. Samuel Onunaka Mbakwe, former Governor of old Imo state. He was a notable Igbo son that held sway as Chief Executive in Douglas House, Owerri (October 1, 1979 to December 31st 1983). He put Imo State comprising then, of the present Abia State, some parts of Ebony State and the present Imo State on the path of greatness and progress with what has come to be described and acknowledged as selfless services, laden with edifices of monumental infrastructural facilities and institutions.

Presenting a paper during the Dr. Sam Mbakwe First Memorial Lecture at the Concorde Hotel, Owerri, Imo State in January 2005. Former Rivers State Governor, Dr Peter Odili re-emphasized this view when he stated that the legacy which late Chief Sam Onunaka Mbakwe left behind remains widely accepted as a daunting challenge to serving political leaders not only in Imo State but also in Nigeria. He described late Dr. Mbakwe as an intelligent and astute politician who combined socio-economic ingenuity and political prowess to improve the living conditions of the greatest number of imolites during his tenure as the Imo State Governor.

My contribution on the development strides of late Dr. Sam Mbakwe is a socio-economic essay. It is therefore, particularly concerned about his government's strategies to alleviate absolute and disproportionate poverty through the broad application of rural development and the institutionalization of employment-creation projects. A few of these are mentioned in my discussion.

Late Dr. Sam Mbakwe started his giant development strides with the inauguration of Progress Bank of Nigeria and the Lake Insurance Brokers.

Next in the line in his memorable achievements that prodded Imo State forward was the establishment of Imo State University with campuses at the former

Madonna High School Ihitte and Ngwa High School Aba.

Some international corporations for the provision of potable water to the majority of Imo citizens: JDP for the Owerri Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant Project, the SCC contract for the Umuahia Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant Project and the Worthington SPA Italia contract for the Okigwe Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant. At the same time, he was also building the gigantic Concorde International Hotel at Owerri and the Enyimba City Hotel at Aba.

It is a global truism that rural development is accepted as a veritable tool for alleviating poverty and achieving economic prosperity at the grassroots level. The concept of rural development embraced by most countries connotes a process through which rural poverty is alleviated by sustained increases in the production and productivity of low income workers and -marginalized households. Imo State had and still has great agricultural potentials and high proportion of farmers.

Consequently, he commenced the Adapalm Palm Plantation and estates at Ohaji which remains today the single largest money spinning farm project in the entire South-East of Nigeria. A similar Palm Project was simultaneously started in Obehie, the then Ukwa Local Government Area (LGA) which today forms the bedrock of Abia Palm Plantation.

As the Nostradamus of his time, Mbakwe was the first Nigerian Civilian Governor to commence the construction of three electricity power generating plants: one at Amaraku, the other at Mbalano and Izombe. Through these projects, many remote villages enjoyed electricity for the first time.

As part of his monumental development strides, enigmatic Dr. Sam Mbakwe initiated the SULO environmental sanitation and refuse disposal scheme. This novel project environmental sanitation project attracted the attention and interest of ex-Governor Lateef Jakande of Lagos State who adopted and adapted same in his State.

It must be acknowledged that through prudent management of available scare resources, late Dr. Sam Mbakwe touched every facet of the Imo economy and impacted positively on the greatest majority of the citizenry. Consequently, he initiated the movement to the Relief Market Owerri and built the Owerri International Modern Market. Late Dr Sam Mbakwe's government designed the master plan of Owerri and carved out New Owerri out of the Owerri Capital Development Authority for the relocation of the seat of Government. He could also be credited for initiating the building of Imo Airport at Obiangwu.

Late Dr. Sam Mbakwe's rural industrialization policies were dynamic. He established industries such as the Modern Tiles and Ceramic Industries at Ehime Mbano LGA; the Modern Shoe Industry at Owerri; the Hercules Motorcycle Assembly Plant at Naze, the Compost Recycling Plant at Olugwe the Card Board Paper Packaging Industry at Owerri-Ebein, the Resin and Paint Industry at Enyrogugu, the Integrated Poultry Complex at Avutu, the Ogwe Golden Chicken Poultry Complex at Asa the International Glass Factory at Aba, the Metallurgical Complex at Aba and Umuahia and the impressive rehabilitation of Golden Guinea Breweries PLC. Umuahia.

Other industrialization projects at different stages before the military take-over of December 1983 include a Refuse Recycling Plant at Egbema and the proposed Brewery at Owerrs Nkwor in the Nkwerre/Orlu Area, the Aluminum Extrusion Industry (ALEX) at Inyishi in İkeduru LGA, which though presently privatized is still very viable: the Black Burnt Bricks Industry at Ezinnachi.

The true success of any comprehensive. economic and social development policy is primarily dependent upon the extent to which it contributes to the well being of those living in the rural areas. This is because the bulk of Nigeria's population, resources, particularly land, natural and mineral resources are in these areas. Various governments in ime State have tried several programmes, approaches and strategies aimed at improving the conditions of the rural poor. While some of the efforts are still on course, many have since gone moribund.

Late Dr. Sam Mbakwe's rural development policies connoted a sustained improvement in the quality of life of the rural people. They resulted to a consistency in approach in which micro and macro economic and social variables ware engineered, combined and implemented as an organic and dynamic whole for the benefit of the people.

The above policies had a positive stimulus on poverty alleviation. They led to increase in rural productivity, income and diversification of rural economy, improvement in the supply of rural infrastructure (physical, social and institutional), enhancement of social participation and radical improvement of the quality of life of the rural people Consequently the government of Dr. Sam Mbakwe broadened the concept of rural development in Ime State to accommodate non-economic issues especially those relating to social, political, legal cultural and environmental issues.

In the government of late Dr. Sam Mbarwe, the participation approach was emphasized it meant the active involvement of Imo communities in need assessment, determinaboo of prionties, planning and execution of projects Following this approach, contributions were expected sought and accepted from potential beneficiaries to the realization of a project for their own development. To ensure that imolites took ownership of their own development the community based participatory approach to development was expanded. The Imo State policy blue-print described it as an umbrella term for anti poverty programmes that involve the beneficiaries in their design and management The key factor in participation is the incorporation of local kriowledge into projects decision-making process. Due to the depth and multi-dimensional nature of poverty in old Ima State poverty alleviation strategies adopted and implemented by the late Or Sam Mbakwe administration were aimed at eradicating absolute and disproportionate poverty.

IMO ON THE WORLD STAGE:

FROM LOCAL ROOTS TO GLOBAL REACH

Kenneth Amaeshi, PhD

It is very easy to see Imo State simply as one of the states in southeast Nigeria. Some of the inhabitants hardly see the state beyond their vicinities. For many people in Owerri, it is all about the Ekeonunwa market, the government house, and probably the New Owerri. For many in the rural areas, the City of Owerri is a luxury and an aspiration. That's how it is. This imagination can, at best, be described as sub-optimal and local because it does not readily acknowledge Imo in the world!

However, Imo State boasts of a population of 5.5m. It is about the population of Ireland, Scotland, and Finland. It is about twice the population of Qatar, four times the population of Estonia, and eight and ten times the population of Luxembourg and Malta, respectively. Nonetheless, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of Luxembourg and Malta are about USD128,000 and USD38,000, respectively, while the GDP per capita of Imo State is roughly USD1,000. Why is Imo State comparatively poor and less competitive?

Coincidentally, Imo State is rich in both natural and human resources. The state is claimed to have the largest natural gas reserve in Nigeria. It is also one of Nigeria's states with a very high literacy rate and educational attainments. As such, Imo State has no reason to lag. Unfortunately, her citizens appear constrained by their unambitious imagination.

As they say, imagination is everything. In my opinion, Imo people need to rid themselves of their unambitious imagination. That's where the Global Imo Agenda or Imo in the World Agenda comes in. It is high time the citizens of the state thought of themselves as citizens of the world as opposed to those constrained and shortchanged by the limited imagination of Igboland, Biafraland, and Nigeria.

"Imo people need to rid themselves of their unambitious imagination. That's where the Global Imo Agenda or Imo in the World Agenda comes in. It is high time the citizens of the state thought of themselves as citizens of the world as opposed to those constrained and shortchanged by the limited imagination of Igboland, Biafraland, and Nigeria."

This global thinking and imagination are at the heart of the Skill-up Imo programme. Under the leadership of Distinguished Senator Hope Uzodimma, the government has committed to

training about 300,000 young people in digital skills. The digital economy is global and transcends boundaries. It allows leveraging technology to access remote opportunities. The idea is to make Imo state the digital hub of sub-Saharan Africa.

Leveraging the digital economy, Imo citizens can access all corners of the world from their stations in Imo State. Imagine an Imo youth making up to USD1,000 (i.e., N1.6m by today's exchange rate) a month in Owerri through remote jobs. Regarding purchasing power parity, it will mean a lot and make more sense to work from Owerri than relocation. In that regard, there will be more opportunities for young people and a much-limited need for Japa.

The Orashi project, which aims to open Imo to the world through the Atlantic Ocean, is another audacious imagination of His Excellency Senator Hope Uzodimma to link Imo to the world. When completed, the Orashi project will host an oil and gas free trade zone, a power project, and a port. The project could create over 200,000 decent and meaningful jobs. It would be a historic and legacy achievement when realised.

The One Kindred One Business Initiative (OKOBI) is another laudable programme by the government of Imo State in its pursuit of a global agenda and visibility. OKOBI is all about group-based entrepreneurship. It is a grassroots economic empowerment programme for job creation and shared prosperity, which taps into the collective and communal entrepreneurial spirit of the average Imo person. Instead of waiting on the government and multinational enterprises for jobs, OKOBI encourages groups to create their businesses and economic opportunities. As such, it is all about self-help and a can-do spirit.

Today, there are over 350 OKOBI businesses in Imo State. Between them, there are over 7,000 members or associates. The initiative aims to create over 50,000 businesses in the near future. If each business engaged 15 to 20 people on average, that's about 500k to 750k extra jobs. This is definitely an innovative way of addressing high unemployment championed by Imo State.

Imo State is blessed with arable land and rich agricultural products. Economic trees and spices with billion-dollar global markets thrive in the state. When these are exploited through OKOBI and layered on digital platforms orchestrated by the Skill-Up Imo programme, OKOBI becomes truly international.

Imagine a situation where a local farm can sell directly to a global customer through a digital platform. Instead of focusing on local demands, the digital platform opens opportunities for global demands.

OKOBI has continued to garner global attention and position Imo on a worldwide stage. It recently emerged as the SERAS Award (social innovation category) winner, beating other international brands to achieve this feat. It has also attracted the attention of The New Institute, Hamburg, Germany, to fund a research project on how it could be applied to other parts of the world with similar contexts and challenges.

The digitalisation of OKOBI businesses can exponentially contribute to economic empowerment, attract foreign exchange, and contribute immensely to the globalisation of brand Imo. This type of joined-up thinking is required to realise the Global Imo Agenda.

These are just a few examples of what it takes to position Imo State globally. In a nutshell, they together constitute the Global Imo Agenda (GIA). Nothing happens accidentally. The Global Imo Agenda is a conscious attempt to position Imo in the world and explore opportunities for the state through that mindset. ”Uwa sara mbara” (the world is vast), as our people say. Imo citizens, home and abroad, should not be limited or constrained by their imagination of Imo in Nigeria. They need to go beyond Nigeria. That's where the necessity of a global mindset comes to mind.

To achieve this, education is critical. The state must invest in the right education and curriculum to drive the Global Imo Agenda. This needs to cut across the different tiers of education. In that regard, acquiring a global mindset is necessary to achieve the Global Imo Agenda, and local lads must be weaned of local wits to make this possible.

Imo can be great and prosperous. The realisation of this aspiration is dependent on the imagination of Imo citizens. As such, a global mindset is necessary and worth cultivating. Together, we shall create the Imo of our dreams if we are ambitious in our imaginations!

Amaeshi is a public philosopher and political economist from Imo State, Nigeria. He is currently a professor of sustainable finance at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy. He also holds a chair in business and sustainable development at the University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom. He tweets @kenamaeshi

Dr. Pius Okigbo

Prof. Joe Irukwu

Amb. Ralph Uwechue

Leaders of Ohanaeze Ndigbo (1976–2025): A Legacy of Leadership

Chief Gary Igariwey

Chief Nnia Nwodo

Prof. George Obiozor

Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu

Nze Fidelis Uzichukwu Chukwu

Senator Mbata Ohaneze

Ohanaeze Ndigbo, the apex Igbo socio-cultural organization, has been shaped by visionary leaders committed to the unity and progress of the Igbo people. Here's a look at those who have held the prestigious position of President-General:

1. Chief R.B.K. Okafor (1976–1980): The trailblazer who laid the foundation for Ohanaeze.
2. Chief Jerome Udoji (1980–1984): Strengthened internal structures and unity.
3. Dr. Pius Okigbo (1984–1988): Championed economic development for Ndigbo.
4. Chief Eze Ozobu (2001–2004): Focused on cultural revival and unity.

Prof. Joe Irukwu (2004–2007): Promoted economic empowerment and integration.

5.Ambassador Ralph Uwechue (2008–2013): Advocated for Igbo interests globally.

6. Chief Gary Igariwey (2013–2017): Worked on cultural preservation and stability.
7. Chief Nnia Nwodo (2017–2021): A strong voice for restructuring and Igbo self-determination.
8.Prof. George Obiozor (2021–2022): Fostered unity and tackled marginalization.
9. Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu (April 2023–July 2024): Rebuilt alliances with Southeast governors and Igbo businesses.
10. Nze Fidelis Ozichukwu Chukwu (December 2024–January 2025): Provided transitional leadership after Iwuanyanwu's passing.

These leaders have shaped the Igbo socio-political landscape, advocating for unity, cultural preservation, and progress. Each tenure marks a significant chapter in the journey of Ohanaeze Ndigbo.

Who among them do you think left the most lasting legacy? Share your thoughts!

#OhanaezeNdigbo #IgboLeadership #CulturalHeritage #UnityAndProgress

Anagboso Linus

Let's Toast To Rangers International @ 55

When the Nigeria-Biafra war ended in January 1970, there was gloom in Igboland.

Even as the then Head of State General Yakubu Gowon made the famous announcement of “No Victor, No Vanquished”, the vanquished ones knew themselves as they sauntered back into Nigeria, hungry and broken, after the end of the Biafra struggle.

The legendary football administrator, Jerry Enyeazu, strongly felt that football could lift the spiri

Enyeazu was ably backed by Barrister BSC Nzenwa with some financial muscle from Chief AW Ibe, and the club named Enugu Rangers was birthed on January 29, 1970.

The rest, as they say, is history - but let's just d a brief recap here.

The eminent Nigerian football administrators c that time, notably the iconic Oyo Orok Oyo, at the end of the war stressed that a team from the erstwhile rebel section must be involved for a true national champion to emerge.

The Nigerian Army football team, Lagos Garrison, was the reigning kings that had to be matched up with the team from the East. In the pulsating match the boys from the East defeated the Nigerian Army team 2-1, a clear case of the vanquished turning the table on the victors.

The Rangers team truly lived up to the club's motto: “From Difficulties To The Heights.”

A key player from the Nigerian Army team, Paul “Wonder Boy” Hamilton, recalled that Olusegun Obasanjo was so enraged when he saw the army team in the office of the team coordinator George Innih that he nearly had them flogged for “losing to those hungry boys”.

The eastern boys may have been hungry but they were quite determined such that one of their star players, Dominic Nwobodo, who had his head broken and bloodied, completed the match with a completely bandaged head that earned him the nickname “Alhaji”.

It was from the ruins of the war that Enugu Rangers was formed in 1970, and the team represented Nigeria in the 1971 African Cup of Champion Clubs, reaching the quarter-finals, only to lose to ASEC Mimosas of Cote d'Ivoire.

Cyril Okosieme and others

The pioneer Rangers team of 1970 was made up of Cyril Okosieme in goal, Ernest Ufele and Johnny “Wheeler” Nwosu as full backs, Peter Okeke as defensive midfielder, the skipper Godwin Achebe as central defender with Luke “Jazz Bukana” Okpala as his partner, while the forward players were Mathias Obianika, Kenneh Abana, Dominic Nwobodo, Chukwuma Igweonwu and Shedrack Ajaero.

There was a woman who was stronger than men backing the team in the shape and size of Mrs. Julie Alale, the inimitable “Madam Rangers” whose husband had been executed during the Biafra War.

She would later be joined in the supporting cast by the one-man-crowd, Unoenu Ewulu, a towering man mountain. As an all-conquering team, Rangers won supporters from all races and classes and creeds, but one Lagos lad, Segun Martins, deserves special recognition.

The Rangers team got to the final of the 1971 National Challenge Cup but lost to WNDC (IICC, 3SC) of Ibadan, with WNDC's goalie Adisa Amusa saving the penalty of Skipper Achebe.

A major addition to the Rangers team thereafter was the goalkeeper Emmanuel Okala

Sports

Let's Toast To Rangers ...

who took over from Cyril Okosieme.

In the spirit of rising from the ruins of the war, the schoolboys of East Central State won the 1971 Manuwa/Adebajo Academicals Cup, and star players from the team such as Godwin Ogbueze, Dominic Ezeani, Kenneth Ilodigwe and Christian Chukwu were immediately drafted into the Rangers team.

Crack centre-half Dominic Ezeani who had displaced Skipper Achebe in the gold-winning national team, the Green Eagles, at the 1973 All-Africa Games staged in Lagos equally took over from the legendary Achebe as captain of Rangers and henceforth led the team to winning the double, that is, the League and Challenge Cup, in 1974.

The 1974 Challenge Cup final was between Rangers and Mighty Jets of Jos, a team from Head of State Yakubu Gowon's Plateau State. Aloysius Atuegbu who was playing for Mighty Jets told me that Gowon came to his home and promised to buy him a Volkswagen Beetle car if he could help beat Rangers.

Aloy played like a possessed man. Rangers Skipper Ezeani advised Aloy that he would get injured if he continued playing like mad. In Aloy's next move, Rangers hard defender Harrison Mecha gave him a wicked tackle such that Aloy was stretchered out for good. Rangers beat Mighty Jets 2-0 and lifted the coveted trophy. No Volkswagen for Aloy!

Rangers won the coveted Challenge Cup three years on the trot, beating Shooting Stars of Ibadan 1-0 in 1975, and Alyufsalam Rocks of Ilorin 2-0 in 1976, a team remarkably made up of ten Ghanaian players and only one Nigerian!

Due to fixtures pile-up Rangers had to forego defending the cup in 1977. Playing too many matches caught up with Rangers in 1978 when after playing tough matches against Canon Sportif of Cameroun in the African champion clubs cup and replaying the Challenge Cup semi-final with Raccah Rovers of Kano, the team eventually succumbed 3-0 to Bendel Insurance of Benin in the final.

Rangers had played some truly remarkable matches, like when the team lost 1-3 to Mehalla of Egypt in the semi-finals of the 1975 Champions Cup only to trounce the Egyptians 3-0 in the return leg played in Enugu, even after one of the players, US-import Kenneth Ilodigwe, had been sent off by the referee. The match was aptly described as “Mehalla saw wahala in Enugu!”

Rangers lost the 1975 African Champions Cup final in Lagos to Hafia FC of Guinea after having waited in vain in Enugu for the match to be played there, only to be ferried to Lagos at the 11th hour. In the match, Rangers' main thrust of attack, Nwabueze Nwankwo's long-throws were continuously disallowed by the referee. Rangers lost 3-1 on aggregate.

Rangers won the African Cup-Winners Cup in 1977, beating Canon of Cameroun 5-2 on aggregate, and ending up as the only African team to win a competition without losing a match!

The semi-final matches of the competition against the Nigerian reigning champions, IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan, nearly caused a tribal war. The first leg was played in Lagos but the second leg had to be re-scheduled for Kaduna where Rangers won through a heart-stopping penalty shootout.

Rangers International of Enugu made the Igbo people to regain their pride of place after the debacle of Biafra. Rangers had no time for fancy, and their players would readily tell you: “There are no goal-posts in the midfield!”

There have been conquests and defeats over the years, but the Rangers spirit of “Never Say Die” remains undaunted.

Rangers went into a trophy drought from 1982 only to bounce back to win the Nigerian Premier League in 2016.

The crowning of Rangers International Football Club of Enugu as the winner of the 2023/24 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) is a resounding affirmation that the club is still at the top of the class.

Rangers holds the remarkable record of being the only Nigerian football club never to have been relegated.

Let's all raise a mighty toast to Rangers International @ 55!

“Rangers won the African Cup-Winners Cup in 1977, beating Canon of Cameroun 5-2 on aggregate, and ending up as the only African team to win a competition without losing a match!”

IMO POLITICAL SPACE AND VISIBILITY OF WOMEN

H.E Dr Mrs Ada Okwuonu

By EMMANUEL IHEAKA

Nigeria has since adopted the Geneva 35 percent affirmation for women. The policy stipulates allocation of 35 percent of political appointive positions to women.

Yet, the country has continued to fail in living up to this affirmation. Political administrations could be said to have paid lip service to this affirmation.

The incumbent federal government led by President Bola Tinubu is not an exception. Upon assumption of office, out of Tinubu's 47 ministers, only nine are females. This represents 19 percent, a far cry from the agreed 35 percent.

It wasn't any different in previous administrations. A Federal High Court in Abuja had in 2022 ruled that the federal government led by Muhammadu Buhari should obey the 35 percent affirmative action.

In Imo State, hardly has any administration lived up to the 35 percent affirmative action. Though the incumbent Hope Uzodimma administration has a female as deputy governor; its cabinet falls short of the affirmative action. Out of 24 commissioners in his cabinet, there are only two females - Commissioner for Women Affairs, Mrs. Nkechinyere Ugwu and her Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs counterpart, Chief Mrs. Ruby Emele.

Senator Chris Anyanwu

It is however, commendable that Governor Hope Uzodimma chose a woman, Dr. Mrs. Chinyere Ekomaru to run as the deputy governor while seeking re-election in 2024. It is the second time a woman would emerge the deputy governor of the state, with the first being Dr. Ada Okwuonu.

But how visible have Imo women been in the political space? Beyond waiting to become beneficiaries of

IMO POLITICAL SPACE...

the 35 percent affirmative action, a good number of Imo women have acquitted themselves creditably in the political space.

At a time it seemed politics were for the men, Chief Mrs Maria Egu, now late, took the bull by the horn and slugged it out with the men. Chief Mrs. Maria of the now famous Egu family of Ngor Okpala, alongside Late Barr. Gina Onyejiaka could be described as the touch bearers and pioneers of the struggle of Imo, nay Nigerian women in politics. There is also Hon. Victoria Akanwa, first female elected State Parliamentarian.

Prior to 2007, the Nigeria's Senate had seemed a preserve of the men in Imo. But a titan, Chris Anyanwu, emerged to change the narrative, thus becoming the first female elected Senator in the state. As if to say 'enough of the men dominance', she sought re-election in 2011 and won on a platform of the All Progressives Grand Alliance, APGA, which was considered an underdog then. By this feat, Senator Chris Anyanwu made history by becoming the first Senator for Imo East to serve two consecutive terms.

In 2015, Chris Anyanwu, took a bold leap by going for the soul of Imo - the governorship; but missed her target. This, indeed is reflective of her latest book, titled - 'Bold Leap'. She has since remained an icon of Imo women in politics.

Another Amazon who has shown the great stuff Imo women are made of, is Dr. Mrs. Kema Chikwe. Former Nigeria's Ambassador to Ireland, erstwhile minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the renowned Igolo of Imo. Dr. Kema Chikwe also displayed strong contention for the governorship of Imo State but were stopped by the men.

Celebrated educationist and former Minister of Education, Prof. Mrs. Chinwe Obaji has also made Imo women proud, just as Princess Miriam Onuoha representating Okigwe North in the House of Representatives and Hon. Juliet Akano who had also been in the House of Representatives.

At the state level, Imo women have been visible to a great extent. Chief Mrs. Ruby Emele has been a recurring decimal in Imo politics since the return of democracy in Nigeria. From being a local government

Kema Chikwe

chairman to becoming Chairman of Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Imo State Chapter and today a commissioner in the state cabinet.

Popularly known as Lady of the masses, Barr. Ugochi Nnanna-Okoro has also been a delight in the struggle of Imo women in politics. Having given a serious shot at the contest for Imo East Senatorial seat, she would later emerge as the first woman to serve as Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in the state. She superintended over chieftaincy and cultural affairs, an area that was hitherto considered a preserve of the men.

Erstwhile commissioner, Barr. Ngozi Njoku; former members of Imo House of Assembly, Hon. Uju Onwudiwe, Hon. Ngozi Obiefule, Late Hon. Eudora Igwe (Okwesilieze) and two-time House of Representatives hopeful, Mrs. Ijeoma Nwafor have all been great ambassadors of Imo women in politics.

However, it is disturbing that there is no female legislator in the present Imo State House of Assembly.

While women have been visible in Imo's 49 years political journey, it is not yet Uhuru for them. They still have great hurdles to scale, just as their counterparts in other states of Nigeria and beyond.

These hurdles are emerging as the Speaker of Imo State House of Assembly and clinching the soul of Imo by producing the first female governor of the state.

For now, it is kudos to Imo women. But the struggle continues.

DR. ATHANASIUS N. NWOKORO

Introduction!
Dr. Athanasius N. Nwokoro is a distinguished academic and lecturer in the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences at Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University Ideató, Imo State Nigeria. He hails from Umuezeala Owerre in Ehime Mbano, Imo State.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS
Dr. Athanasius N. Nwokoro obtained his Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Economics in 2003 and Master of Science (MSc Monetary Economics) in 2010 from the prestigious Abia State University and University of Port Harcourt respectively. He further obtained his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD Development Economics) from Imo State University Owerri in 2016. He also has Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

AREA OF RESEARCH INTEREST AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE.
Dr. Athan is a well groomed Monetary cum Development Economist. He has attended so many trainings, conferences and workshops and has published many academic and professional papers at high impact International Journals of repute.

MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS/BODIES
Dr. Athan belongs to different Professional bodies within and outside Nigeria. He is a
Fellow Chattered Economist, Institute of Chartered Economists of Nigeria (ICEN)
Fellow, Commonwealth Academy for Leadership and Management (CALM)
Fellow, Institute of Professional Managers and Administrators of Nigeria (IPMAN)
Fellow, Institute of Business Diplomacy and Financial Management (IBDFM)
Fellow, Institute of Management Consultants, Nigeria (IMC-N)
Certified Management Consultant (CMC)

ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS @ THE UNIVERSITY
Apart from other academic responsibilities and assignments, Dr Athan has served as the Chairman Committee on Ethics and Quality Assurance of Department of Economics. He also heads other sub-committees within the Faculty.

CAREER WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR
Dr. Athan rose to the rank of Director of Administration with Mathan Nig. Limited a famous indigenous company that is into Engineering, Procurement, Installation, Construction and General Services. He is also the Chairman/CEO Nasius Hochris Konsults Ltd.

COMMUNITY SERVICE
Dr. Athan is a shrewd administrator and management consultant. A vibrant youth ambassador; led and managed different youth bodies within and outside the state; and runs different programmes on youths advocacy. He is a social commentator of repute, economic planning and development analyst. He is involved in so many community development events and that has earned him multiple awards including a Chieftaincy title as UGO MBA 1, (Eagle of the land) of 'Mbano.

HOBBIES
The ANCIENT PROPHET as Dr. Athan is fondly called within the sociopolitical circle, is a gospel artiste and lover of music. He also plays table tennis so well. He is married with wonderful children.

BRIEF PROFILE

Dr. Stella Onuoha Obilor MD, DrPH, MPH, RN, FACHE, CPHO, CCM: A Luminary in the Medical Profession

By IZUORGU OBUMNEME NGOZI

As a paragon of excellence in the medical field, Dr. Stella Onuoha Obilor embodies the quintessence of compassion, dedication, and erudition. Her remarkable career is a testament to her unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional patient care, while also inspiring a new generation of healthcare professionals to emulate her exemplary standards.

The Significance of Being a Medical Doctor

In today's intricate and dynamic healthcare landscape, the role of medical doctors has become increasingly pivotal. These dedicated professionals serve as the primary interface between patients and the healthcare system, providing vital care, guidance, and support during times of need. Medical doctors are the epitome of altruism, often sacrificing personal comfort and convenience to prioritize the welfare of their patients.

As a medical doctor, one is entrusted with the immense responsibility of diagnosing and treating a vast array of medical conditions, from routine ailments to life-threatening diseases. This demands an unwavering commitment to staying abreast of the latest medical research, technologies, and best practices, ensuring that patients receive the most effective and compassionate care possible.

Dr. Stella Onuoha Obilor: A Beacon of Hope

Dr. Obilor's remarkable career is a testament to the transformative power of dedication, hard work, and a genuine passion for healing. With a distinguished academic background, including multiple advanced degrees in medicine and public health, Dr. Obilor has established herself as a leading authority in her field.

Throughout her illustrious career, Dr. Obilor has consistently demonstrated a profound commitment to delivering exceptional patient care, while also advancing the field of medicine through her research, teaching, and leadership endeavors. Her tireless efforts have earned her numerous accolades and recognition, solidifying her position as a respected and admired figure in the medical community.

As a renowned physician executive, Dr. Obilor has exemplified extraordinary leadership acumen, leveraging her expertise to foster transformative change within the healthcare ecosystem. Her visionary approach has facilitated the development of innovative healthcare solutions, optimized patient outcomes, and promoted a culture of excellence within her organization.

Dr. Obilor's remarkable attributes as a physician executive include her exceptional strategic thinking, astute problem-solving skills, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Her ability to navigate complex healthcare systems, foster collaborative relationships, and drive meaningful change has earned her a reputation as a trailblazing leader in the medical profession.

A Role Model for Future Generations

Dr. Obilor's remarkable achievements serve as a powerful inspiration to aspiring medical professionals, demonstrating the immense rewards and fulfillment that can be derived from a career in medicine. Her unwavering dedication to her patients, her unrelenting pursuit of excellence, and her generous spirit of mentorship and guidance have created a lasting legacy that will continue to inspire and motivate future generations of healthcare leaders.

In conclusion, Dr. Stella Onuoha Obilor is a shining exemplar of the very best that the medical profession has to offer. Her remarkable career, marked by an unwavering commitment to excellence, compassion, and patient care, serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of medicine to improve lives, inspire hope, and create a better world for all.

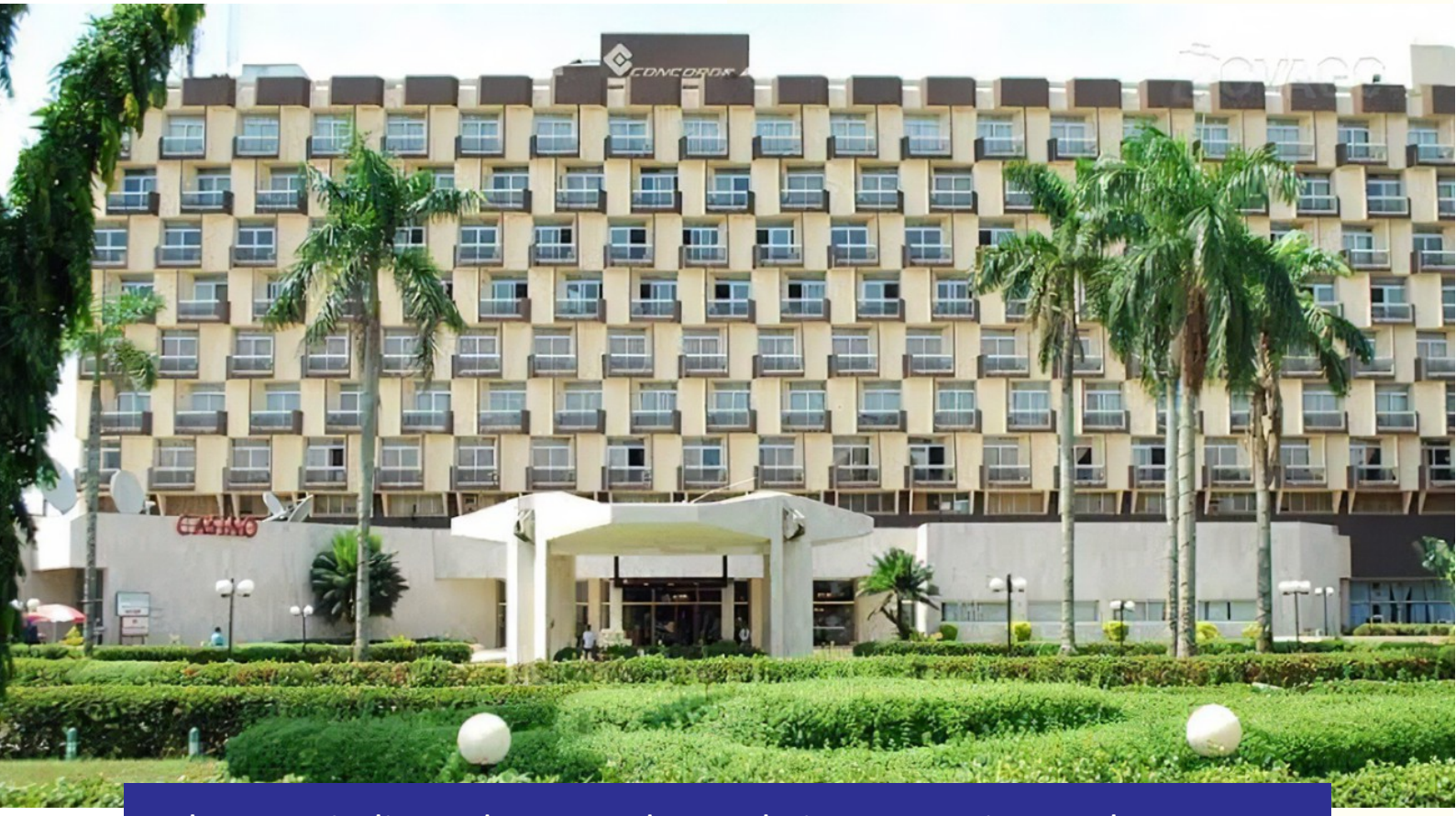
As we reflect on Dr. Obilor's remarkable journey, let us remember that the true measure of success lies not in the accolades we receive, but in the positive impact we have on the lives of others. May we all strive to emulate Dr. Obilor's selfless spirit, unwavering dedication, and unrelenting passion for healing, as we work together to create a brighter, healthier future for all humanity..

Dr. John Onyemauche Oparaduru

Dr. John Onyemauche Oparaduru is an esteemed academic, educator, and administrator with extensive expertise in Guidance and Counselling. He holds a Ph.D. in Guidance and Counselling from the University of Lagos and currently serves as Lecturer at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), where he is also the Acting Director of the Nsu Community Study Centre. With a career spanning over two decades in teaching and administration, he has contributed significantly to education at various levels, including serving as a principal and head teacher before transitioning into higher education. His research focuses on cognitive restructuring, self-control strategies, youth restiveness, and digital education, and he has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and books.

Dr. Oparaduru is actively involved in academic leadership, curriculum development, and professional training. He has played a crucial role in the design and implementation of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programs, serving as a grading facilitator and instructional designer for NOUN's virtual learning environment. He has also facilitated numerous training sessions on e-learning and counselling, earning recognition for his contributions to education. He is a member of several esteemed professional bodies, including the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON), the Association of Professional Counsellors of Nigeria (APROCON), the International Society for Policy Research & Evaluation in School-Based Counselling (ISPRESC), the Centre of Excellence in Migration and Global Studies (CEMGS), the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), the Journal of School-based Counselling Policy and Evaluation (JSCPE) Editorial Board, Open, Distance and e-Learning Association of Nigeria (ODeLAN), Nigerian Association of Artificial Intelligence Practitioners (NAAIP), and Forum of South-East Academic Doctors (FOSAD). His engagement in these organisations reflects his dedication to advancing counselling, educational psychology, and student support services in Nigeria.

Beyond academia, Dr. Oparaduru is deeply engaged in community service and leadership, serving as the President General of the Ezeoke Welfare Association (EWA). With nearly two decades of service as a community leader, he has demonstrated exceptional commitment to educational development, youth mentorship, and policy advocacy. His ability to bridge academic research, practical counselling, and digital learning innovations makes him a respected figure in Nigeria's education sector. His continuous dedication to research and education reforms reflects his unwavering passion for empowering students and shaping the future of learning.



The Hospitality Industry and Its Role in Economic Development:

A Case Study of Imo State

By CHIBUIKEM DIALA MIH

The hospitality industry is a key driver of economic growth worldwide, contributing significantly to both global and local economies. In 2024, the sector generated an estimated $24.5 billion in revenue, growing at an annual rate of 4.98%, with projections reaching nearly $30 billion by 2028 (Statista). Hotels alone account for nearly $12 billion of this revenue in 2024 (In On Africa), and Africa's hotel sector is expected to host 120 million visitors by 2030. This growth reflects a rising demand for quality accommodation and tourism infrastructure, positioning the hospitality industry as a critical economic force.

Nigeria is experiencing rapid expansion in the hospitality sector, in line with global trends. The hotel market alone is expected to generate $1.67 billion in 2025, growing at an 11.81% annual rate between 2025 and 2029, and reaching $2.61 billion by 2029 (Statista). The number of hotel users in Nigeria is also projected to increase to 18.78 million by 2029, underscoring the sector's pivotal role in the economy.

Imo State, traditionally known for agriculture, commerce, and education, is also witnessing a boom in its hospitality sector, which has rapidly become one of the region's fastest-growing industries. This includes hotels, restaurants, lounges, clubs, catering services, tourism agencies, and event management companies, all of which contribute significantly to the state's GDP.

The State's central location known as 'Eastern Heartland', the people's warm hospitality, youthful population, love for entertainment as well as government's modest investment in infrastructure, including road networks, 'improving' security, and the people's resilience has played a key role in facilitating the growth of the hospitality sector.

The state currently boasts over 1,000 hotels, with approximately 550 fully operational in Owerri Capital Territory. Protea Select by Marriott appears to be the only internationally branded hotel in the state. While Bon Hotel Tripod (now Tripod by Pedestal) and the two Golden Tulip properties have lost their branding,

OGUTA LAKE

there is optimism that the proposed Hilton partnership with the state-owned Imo Concorde Hotel will materialize. This development could significantly enhance the sector by introducing global hospitality standards.

Other prominent establishments include Villa Garden, Rento, Oxygen Holiday Resort, Full Moon, Rockview, All Seasons, Vienna Suites, Immaculate Royal, Beland, G Towers, and Bestway. New entrants such as Boulevard Hotel, Macdon Skye Hotel, and Golden Vista Hotel reflect the sector's continued growth, while Domino Hotel Limited, Bestway, Pinewood stands as some of oldest surviving Hospitality establishments in Imo State.

Additionally, quick-service restaurants like Mangrove Restaurant, Chicken Republic, and Donald's, Hungry Man, Chilis Restaurant, Best Lady, along with popular lounges and clubs such as Shrine, Options Lounge by Pedestal, Cartel Lifestyle Lounge, Old English Bar, Grills & Lounge, Black 30 Lounge, NV Lounge, etc, further reflect the expanding hospitality ecosystem.

The hospitality industry has become one of the largest employers in Imo State, potentially surpassing even the government in direct job creation. Hotels alone provide an estimated 16,500+ (Stats from 550 Hotels) direct jobs, with large hotels employing an average of 70 staff, mid-sized hotels around 30 staffs, and smaller ones about 20. Restaurants, fast-food outlets, clubs, and lounges contribute another 5,000+ direct jobs, while street food vendors, event centers, travel agencies, and support services add to this figure. When factoring in indirect employment from industries such as construction, textiles, laundry, agriculture, energy, and transportation, the hospitality sector sustains an estimated 39,000 direct and indirect jobs in the state.

Comparatively, according to official figures, the state government employs about 15, 276 Civil Servants. Unconfirmed sources claim that the real number of employees are far below the quoted figure above especially because those retired from the state's worksforce are yet to be replaced. This evidently shows that the hospitality sector in Imo is employing more direct employments than the state. The sector's contribution is strategic and verifiable.

The Imo Hospitality Sector is indeed impressive and dynamic as it absorbs both skilled and unskilled labor and by that proves the huge contribution to economic development. It provides opportunities for young graduates, artisans, and entrepreneurs while stimulating demand in allied industries such as agriculture, construction, and retail.

Also, the growth in the number of hospitality establishments has led to a reduction in insecurity (vices) and increase in demand for skilled workers, such as hotel managers, chefs, event planners, auditors, customer service personnel, and housekeeping staff.

Additionally, there is a demand for support services, including security, IT, maintenance, and administrative roles. This growing employment base has helped alleviate poverty and increase the standard of living for many Imo State residents.

Despite its significant contribution to the economy, the hospitality industry in Imo State has largely developed through private-sector investment, with minimal government support especially in the development of tourism assets that will attract visitors especially foreigners to the state's tourism destinations.

Imo State is home to cultural and natural attractions, such as Oguta Lake, Lagwa Monkey Colony, Abadaba Lake, Orashi River, and festivals like Iri Ji Mbaise, Iwa Akwa, etc. However, the lack of structured tourism investment has prevented these attractions from reaching their full potential. If properly developed, these sites could significantly increase visitor traffic, boost local businesses, and enhance the state's GDP.

Recently, the state government seem to have woken up and is showing renewed interest in tourism development, with the proposed MOU between the Imo State Government and Hilton Hotels, which could provide a much-needed boost to the sector. This partnership could raise the bar in terms of professionalism and guest experiences within the state's hospitality sector. It is heartwarming to say that this move may be the last chance in the fight for the soul of Concorde.

Additionally, the 2025 Imo State budget of ₦807 billion, which includes a commitment to “heavy investment” in hospitality and tourism, signals the government's increasing recognition of the sector's potential. However, industry stakeholders remain cautious, awaiting tangible action to support these pledges.

The hospitality and tourism industry in Imo State faces several challenges that need to be addressed for the sector to reach its full potential. Poor infrastructure, high operating costs, poor perception index, multiple taxation, lack of adequate skilled manpower, limited access to finance, and security concerns all hinder growth. Furthermore, the absence of a clear tourism development roadmap means that many opportunities remain untapped. For the industry to thrive, the government must take a more proactive role by investing in tourism infrastructure, positioning Imo as a premier destination for both business and leisure, and supporting hospitality entrepreneurs with favorable policies.

Imo State has the potential to become a leading hub for tourism and hospitality in Nigeria, particularly with the rise of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions). The global demand for MICE tourism is growing rapidly, and Imo is strategically positioned to attract both international and domestic events. By investing in conference facilities, infrastructure, and tourism promotion, the state could significantly boost its tourism and hospitality revenue.

To maximize its potential, Imo State's hospitality sector requires strategic interventions, including a clear tourism roadmap, strengthed, professionally managed and well funded tourism board, infrastructure investment, taxation harmonization, proper standards, and enhanced security. If these issues are addressed, the industry can significantly boost the state's GDP and attract both domestic and international investors.

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AkỤ RUO ỤLỌ:
DEVELOPMENT OF ALAIGBO
(Let Your Wealth Reach Home)

By BARRISTER IKENNA EMMANUEL

The story of the Igbo people is one of resilience, industry, and global excellence. Scattered across every continent, Ndi Igbo have built fortunes, established businesses, and contributed immensely to the development of their host nations. From the bustling streets of Lagos to the economic hubs of New York, London, Guangzhou, and Johannesburg, Igbo entrepreneurs, professionals, and industrialists have earned a reputation for being hardworking, innovative, and self-reliant.

Their achievements are evident in the thriving businesses they own, the industries they dominate, and the influence they wield in various sectors across the world. However, amid these remarkable successes lies a paradox—the land that birthed this enterprising people, Alaigbo, still lags behind in economic and infrastructural development.

Despite the immense wealth of Ndi Igbo in the diaspora, the five core Eastern states—Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, and Ebonyi—struggle with underdevelopment, limited industrialization, and a lack of sustainable investments that could transform the region into an economic powerhouse. The Igbo are known for their relentless pursuit of prosperity, but a significant portion of their wealth remains tied to foreign economies, fueling development in lands that are not their own. This reality raises a fundamental question: If Ndi Igbo can build thriving businesses and contribute to the economic transformation of nations around the world, why can't the same energy be directed toward the upliftment of Alaigbo?

The principle of Akụ ruo ụlọ—"let your wealth reach home"—is more than a mere slogan; it is a call to action, a philosophy that demands a shift in mindset among Ndi Igbo. It is a principle deeply rooted in Igbo tradition, emphasizing that wealth, no matter where it is acquired, should ultimately benefit one's homeland. History has shown that no people have ever risen to greatness without prioritizing the development of their own land. The Chinese, Indians, Jews, and even the Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani

“Despite the immense wealth of Ndi Igbo in the diaspora, the five core Eastern states—Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, and Ebonyi—struggle with underdevelopment, limited industrialization, and a lack of sustainable investments that could transform the region into an economic powerhouse. The Igbo are known for their relentless pursuit of prosperity, but a significant portion of their wealth remains tied to foreign economies, fueling development in lands that are not their own. This reality raises a fundamental question: If Ndi Igbo can build thriving businesses and contribute to the economic transformation of nations around the world, why can't the same energy be directed toward the upliftment of Alaigbo?”

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within Nigeria have all built strong economies by leveraging both local and diaspora investments. It is time for Ndi Igbo to do the same.

This discourse is not just about economic investment; it is about identity, legacy, and the preservation of the Igbo heritage. A homeland that lacks robust infrastructure, thriving industries, and economic opportunities for its people is one that risks losing its future generations to migration and brain drain. Alaigbo cannot afford to be a land where the best minds leave and never return. It must become a region that attracts, nurtures, and retains talent.

This is a clarion call to every Igbo son and daughter in the diaspora: Akụ ruo ụlọ! The wealth amassed across the globe must find its way home to build industries, establish institutions, and create opportunities that will secure the prosperity of Alaigbo for generations to come.

Development Starts from Within

No nation has ever risen to greatness without its sons and daughters deliberately investing in its growth. The Igbo people, renowned for their resilience and entrepreneurial excellence, stand at a defining moment. The call is clear: Akụ ruo ụlọ! Let the wealth generated globally by Ndi Igbo transform Alaigbo into an economic powerhouse and a symbol of cultural pride.

History teaches us that nations rise when their people prioritize home. China became the world's manufacturing giant because its diaspora poured resources into building industries back home. India transformed its IT sector into a global force because Indians abroad invested heavily in education and technology. The Jewish diaspora sends billions of dollars annually to Israel, funding infrastructure, research, and defense. Ndi Igbo, with their global influence and wealth, have the same capacity to transform Alaigbo into a region of excellence.

The Igbo people are globally acknowledged for their ability to thrive even in the most challenging circumstances. After the devastation of the Nigerian Civil War, with homes destroyed and finances wiped out, Ndi Igbo rose again, showing the world the power of resilience and determination.

Today, they are celebrated as one of the most industrious ethnic groups in Africa, excelling in business, technology, medicine, and academia across the globe. From the bustling streets of New York to the trade centers of Guangzhou, Igbos have left an indelible mark.

Yet, the question remains: how much of this success is felt back home? The five states of Alaigbo—Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, and Ebonyi—remain underdeveloped compared to the contributions of their people globally. While remittances from the Igbo diaspora account for billions of dollars annually, the region still grapples with poor infrastructure, high unemployment, and lack of industrialization. The time has come for Ndi Igbo to deliberately channel their wealth toward the development of their homeland.

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Defining Akụ Ruo Ụlọ Principles
The Akụ Ruo Ụlọ principle, which translates to "Let Your Wealth Reach Home," is an economic and cultural ideology rooted in Igbo philosophy. It emphasizes the necessity for individuals to direct a portion of their wealth and investments back to their homeland, ensuring communal development, sustainable growth, and long-term prosperity. This principle is based on the understanding that true wealth is not merely about individual success but about uplifting one's people, preserving heritage, and creating opportunities for future generations.

The core pillars of Akụ Ruo Ụlọ include:
1. Economic Patriotism – Prioritizing investments in one's homeland rather than solely enriching foreign economies.

2. Diaspora Contribution – Leveraging skills, knowledge, and resources acquired abroad to develop local industries.

3. Community Development – Building infrastructure, businesses, and institutions that improve living standards.

4. Generational Wealth Transfer – Creating long-term economic structures that future generations can inherit.

5. Cultural Preservation – Ensuring that Igbo traditions and identity remain strong through economic empowerment.

Throughout history, many nations have applied similar principles to transform their economies. Two striking examples are the Indian state of Gujarat and the transformation of Singapore's Chinese community.

How Akụ Ruo Ụlọ Helped Gujarat, India

Gujarat, one of the most economically developed states in India, owes much of its prosperity to the investment of its diaspora. The Gujarati people, known for their entrepreneurial acumen, have established businesses across the world, particularly in the United States, United Kingdom, and East Africa. However, unlike many other migrant communities that only focus on foreign wealth accumulation, the Gujaratis practice a principle similar to Akụ Ruo Ụlọ—they systematically reinvest their wealth in Gujarat.

This strategy was intentional. Recognizing the need for economic transformation, successive governments in Gujarat created a business-friendly environment, encouraging Gujaratis abroad to return home and invest. This resulted in:

The rise of the diamond and textile industries in Surat, driven by Gujarati investors who had worked in Belgium's diamond sector.

The rapid industrialization of Ahmedabad, fueled by diaspora-funded manufacturing plants.

The emergence of Gujarat as India's pharmaceutical hub, with returnee investors establishing global

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pharmaceutical brands.

Through these targeted investments, Gujarat now contributes significantly to India's GDP and remains one of the most prosperous states in the country. The Gujarati model demonstrates that when a people deliberately channel their global wealth into their homeland, they can drive unprecedented economic transformation.

How Akụ Ruo Ụlọ Helped the Chinese Community in Singapore

Singapore, now a global economic powerhouse, was once a struggling nation with limited resources. In the 1960s, Singapore faced significant poverty, unemployment, and economic instability. However, the ethnic Chinese, who formed the majority population, adopted a disciplined investment strategy that mirrored Akụ Ruo Ụlọ.

The key driver of Singapore's transformation was the return of wealth and expertise from the Chinese diaspora, especially from Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Singaporean-Chinese business leaders who had gained experience in other parts of Asia deliberately reinvested in Singapore, leading to:

The establishment of modern infrastructure, including ports, airports, and business districts.

The creation of a global financial hub, with returning investors setting up banks, trade companies, and investment firms.

The rise of high-tech manufacturing and education, supported by partnerships between local institutions and Chinese investors abroad.

The Singaporean government, under Lee Kuan Yew, recognized the importance of diaspora wealth and provided incentives for investments. Within three decades, Singapore transitioned from a struggling economy to one of the richest nations in the world.

Lessons for Alaigbo

The success stories of Gujarat and Singapore serve as powerful case studies for Ndi Igbo. The Igbo diaspora, like the Gujarati and Singaporean-Chinese communities, control vast wealth globally. However, unlike these groups, Ndi Igbo have not yet fully institutionalized Akụ Ruo Ụlọ on a large scale.

For Alaigbo to experience similar growth, three critical steps must be taken:

1. Igbo Diaspora Must Prioritize Home Investments – Just as the Gujarati and Singaporean-Chinese reinvested in their homelands, Ndi Igbo must shift their focus from merely accumulating wealth abroad to building industries, infrastructure, and institutions in Alaigbo.

2. Governments of the Five Eastern States Must Create an Enabling Environment – Just as Gujarat and Singapore provided incentives for diaspora investment, Igbo leaders must improve security, infrastructure, and economic policies to attract returnee investors.

3. Collective Effort Must Replace Individual Success Mentality – Ndi Igbo must embrace cooperative economic models, pooling resources to fund large-scale projects such as tech hubs, industrial parks, and financial institutions.

The principle of Akụ Ruo Ụlọ is not just an economic strategy—it is a survival imperative. Nations that have risen to greatness did so by leveraging the wealth of their people, both at home and abroad. Ndi Igbo have the capacity to transform Alaigbo into an economic giant, but it requires a conscious

“Governments of the Five Eastern States Must Create an Enabling Environment – Just as Gujarat and Singapore provided incentives for diaspora investment, Igbo leaders must improve security, infrastructure, and economic policies to attract returnee investors.”

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decision to bring wealth home.

As the Igbo proverb states, “Nwoke anaghi ano na ama na-ele ngwugwu ya na-ere n'oku.” A man does not stand idly while his bundle burns before him. Alaigbo cannot afford to be underdeveloped while Ndi Igbo thrive in foreign lands. The time is now. Ndi Igbo, Akụ Ruo Ụlọ!

Alaigbo is a land of immense potential. Anambra is home to Nnewi, famously known as the “Japan of Africa,” where industrialists like Innocent Chukwuma of Innoson Motors are proving that local investments can spark global impact. Ebonyi has vast agricultural resources waiting to be harnessed. Enugu, the historical coal city, holds untapped opportunities in energy and technology. Abia boasts of Aba, the hub of indigenous manufacturing and commerce, while Imo has the human capital and innovation capacity to become a center for education and technology. However, to unlock this potential, Ndi Igbo in the diaspora must commit to bringing their wealth home.

Statistics affirm the wealth and influence of Ndi Igbo globally. According to the World Bank, remittances from Nigerians abroad reached $20.9 billion in 2022, with Ndi Igbo contributing a significant portion. In the United States alone, over 400,000 Igbos are making strides in medicine, technology, and academia. In the United Kingdom, Ndi Igbo dominate legal, academic, and financial sectors. In Asia, especially in China and Japan, Igbo entrepreneurs control significant portions of the trade network. Yet, much of this wealth does not translate into tangible development in Alaigbo.

This disparity underscores the urgency of Akụ ruo ụlọ. It is not just a call for investment; it is a call for legacy, for the preservation of our heritage, and for the empowerment of future generations. Igbo proverbs remind us of the wisdom in prioritizing home: "Ala adịghị mma bụ uru onye ọzọ." An unkempt home benefits strangers. If we do not build Alaigbo, others will exploit its resources and opportunities.

Disadvantages of Non-Adoption of Akụ Ruo Ụlọ

The failure to adopt the Akụ Ruo Ụlọ principle has far-reaching consequences for Alaigbo, affecting economic growth, cultural preservation, political influence, and social stability. Below are some of the most critical disadvantages:

1. Economic Stagnation and Underdevelopment

Alaigbo remains largely underdeveloped because the wealth generated by Ndi Igbo across the world is not systematically reinvested at home. The absence of large-scale industries, modern infrastructure, and thriving financial institutions means that the region struggles with:

High unemployment rates, leading to mass migration of youth to Lagos, Abuja, and foreign countries.

Poor infrastructure, with inadequate roads, hospitals, and educational institutions.

Weak industrialization, making the region dependent

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on imported goods instead of producing them locally.

By contrast, other ethnic groups in Nigeria, such as the Yoruba, have channeled significant investments into Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo States, creating thriving economic hubs. Ndi Igbo, despite their global economic power, remain disadvantaged because their wealth is not strategically directed towards developing their homeland.

2. Loss of Political and Economic Power

Economic power directly influences political power. When Ndi Igbo fail to invest at home, they weaken their bargaining power within Nigeria's political landscape. A region that lacks financial independence is vulnerable to external control, resulting in:

Limited political influence at the national level, as economic power shapes political decisions.

Dependence on external investments, which can be withdrawn at any time, leaving the region economically unstable.

Exclusion from major national economic projects, as federal government allocations favor regions with strong economic foundations.

In contrast, the Hausa-Fulani have maintained economic and political dominance by ensuring their wealth remains within the North, strengthening their bargaining power in Nigeria's governance.

3. Increased Economic Exploitation by Outsiders

Without local investments, Alaigbo becomes an economic playground for non-Igbos. External business owners capitalize on the absence of Igbo-led industries, leading to:

Capital flight, where profits made in Igboland are taken elsewhere instead of being reinvested locally.

Dominance of non-Igbos in key economic sectors, such as real estate, retail, and agriculture, thereby controlling job opportunities and economic direction.

Price manipulation and exploitation, as local consumers and businesses rely on external suppliers for goods and services.

If Ndi Igbo continue to neglect Akụ Ruo Ụlọ, the region will remain at the mercy of external economic forces, limiting wealth creation for future generations.

4. Brain Drain and Loss of Human Capital

The lack of investment in education, technology, and industries forces many young Igbos to seek opportunities elsewhere. This “brain drain” results in:
Loss of skilled professionals, including engineers, doctors, and entrepreneurs who would have contributed to regional development.

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A growing generational gap, where younger Igbos lose connection to their homeland and become less interested in its growth.

Dependence on other regions for employment, making Ndi Igbo vulnerable to economic downturns in foreign lands.

Historically, countries like China and India reversed their brain drain by actively attracting their diaspora to invest and return home. If Ndi Igbo fail to do the same, Alaigbo will continue to lose its brightest minds.

5. Cultural Erosion and Identity Crisis

Economic power is a tool for preserving cultural heritage. When Ndi Igbo do not invest at home, they weaken the structures that sustain Igbo identity, leading to:

Dilution of Igbo traditions, as younger generations grow up in foreign cultures without strong ties to their roots.

Neglect of Igbo language and values, as economic migration prioritizes assimilation over cultural preservation.

Loss of historical landmarks, due to the absence of investments in museums, cultural centers, and heritage sites.

The Jewish and Indian diasporas have successfully maintained their cultural identity by ensuring wealth flows back to their homelands. If Ndi Igbo fail to do the same, future generations may struggle with an identity crisis.

6. Security Challenges and Vulnerability

Underdevelopment breeds insecurity. Without homegrown investments, Alaigbo faces:

Rising crime rates, as unemployed youth turn to illegal activities for survival.
Political instability, as economic frustration leads to agitation and unrest.

Over-dependence on external security forces, reducing the region's ability to manage its own affairs.

Many developed regions, such as Dubai and Singapore, prioritized economic investments to curb security threats. Ndi Igbo must recognize that sustainable development is the best strategy for long-term peace and stability.

Conclusion: The Urgent Need for a Paradigm Shift

The refusal to adopt Akụ Ruo Ụlọ has left Alaigbo economically weak, politically disadvantaged, and socially vulnerable. Ndi Igbo have the resources, knowledge, and networks to transform their homeland into a global economic hub. However, this requires a collective decision to prioritize homegrown investments.

Governments of the five Eastern States—Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo—must create policies that encourage diaspora investments, ensuring a secure and business-friendly environment. Ndi Igbo abroad must also take responsibility, recognizing that true wealth is not measured by foreign success alone but by the ability to uplift one's people.

As the Igbo proverb says, “Egbe bere ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebena, nku kwaa ya”—Let the eagle and the kite perch; if one refuses the other, let its wings break. If Ndi Igbo refuse to invest in their homeland, others will take over, and Alaigbo will suffer the consequences.

To achieve this transformation, the role of leadership cannot be overstated. The governors of Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, and Ebonyi must rise to the occasion by creating an enabling environment for investments. This includes improving infrastructure, providing security, offering tax incentives, and ensuring transparency in governance. Without these foundational elements, efforts to bring wealth home will face unnecessary obstacles. Leaders must remember the Igbo adage: “Ihe onye chụrụ anaghi agba ya ụkwụ.” What one genuinely pursues does not escape them. If we genuinely pursue the

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development of Alaigbo, we will achieve it.

Ndi Igbo abroad must also recognize that the strength of a people lies in their roots. A successful Igbo man in America or Europe who does not invest back home risks losing the connection to his heritage. Investing in Alaigbo is not just about economic returns; it is about cultural preservation and national pride. Imagine a future where the streets of Aba rival those of Guangzhou, where the technology parks of Enugu compete with Silicon Valley, and where the agro-industries of Ebonyi feed the nation and beyond.

Practical steps can be taken to realize this vision. First, Igbo entrepreneurs abroad can form investment cooperatives to fund large-scale projects in Alaigbo, such as industrial parks, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities. Second, partnerships with local governments and businesses can ensure that investments are sustainable and impactful. Third, the diaspora can mentor young entrepreneurs in Alaigbo, transferring skills and knowledge that will drive innovation and growth.

The need for Akụ ruo ụlọ has never been more urgent. Alaigbo is at a crossroads. It can either remain a region of untapped potential or rise to become a beacon of excellence.

The choice lies with Ndi Igbo. As the Igbo proverb says, “Ebe onye bi ka o na-awachi.” Where one lives, they must build and protect. Alaigbo is where our story began, and it is where our legacy must endure. Let us join hands to build a prosperous Alaigbo. Let us channel our resources, talents, and energy toward creating a homeland that future generations will celebrate. Ndi Igbo, Akụ ruo ụlọ! The world is watching, and history will remember us for what we choose to do today. Will you heed the call? Will you let your wealth reach home?

The time for action is now. Akụ Ruo Ụlọ!
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Barrister Ikenna Emmanuel is a distinguished leader...from UMUEZE two EHIME MBANO Local Government Area (Okigwe SENATORIAL Zone) He is , academic, and professional with expertise spanning multiple fields including law, economics, criminology, business development, and public health.
He is a penultimate professional scholar in business development, public health, agro-business economics, economics, cyber criminology, international relations, and public law.
With a wealth of experience as a consultant, educator, and corporate strategist, Barrister Emmanuel has shaped numerous future leaders through his commitment to excellence in education and leadership trainings
As the Chancellor of Lead Edge University (Proposed) and President of Faithhouse Leadership Academy, he has been at the forefront of innovative leadership programs that equip students and professionals to become change-makers
An authority in criminal law and criminology, Barrister Emmanuel has authored various works on leadership, governance, and public policy.
He has also spearheaded numerous leadership and economic development initiatives, particularly those aimed at empowering the youth and women of Africa. His multi-disciplinary approach blends business acumen with a deep understanding of socio-political dynamics, positioning him as a thought leader committed to creating transformative solutions for the continent.

Barrister Ikenna Emmanuel is Human development STRATEGIST at the FAITHHHOUSE LEADERSHIP CHURCH (international center for leadership, diplomacy, economic and human development) and also the CEO of Faithhouse Group, which encompasses a variety of educational, leadership, and business ventures aimed at promoting social justice, economic development, and peace-building efforts across Africa.

IMO STATE@ 49

-THE JOURNEY SO FAR

BY SIR DR. CHARLES NWAOGARAKU

Imo State was carved out of the former East Central State with capital in Enugu, by Decree No. 12 of 3rd February, 1976 by the then Head of State, General Murtala Mohammed. Our great son and Naval Officer, Lt. Commander Godwin Ndubuisi Kanu was appointed the first Military Administrator. Prior to the creation of Imo State. our people in the Owerri, Aba, Umuahia, Okigwe, Orlu, Arochukwu and Afikpo were complaining of the lack of attention by the East Central State government in Enugu. The frustration was such that Igbo sons in these areas had begin to organize themselves to lobby for the creation of new state from East Central State. Among the Igbo sons that led the struggle for the new state creation was Chief S.O. Mbakwe, Ph.D., who eventually became the first elected Civilian Governor of the state in 1979.

In his maiden broadcast to Imo citizens, Lt. Commander Godwin Ndubuisi Kanu, declared that his major concern was the total reconstruction of all the damaged and ill-maintained or neglected roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and water supply. “We shall therefore not tolerate backsliding and dishonesty among those who are paid to plan or execute our construction programmes”.
Owerri the capital of Imo was a community made up of five villages call Owerri Nchi-Ise. The only notable roads in Owerri city then, though untarred were Douglas, Wetheral, Tetlow, Okigwe and Mbaise roads. All the surrounding villages such as Nekede, Naze, Uratta, Avu, Umuguma, Obinze, Egbu and Emekuku were separated from Owerri by large farm lands with poorly maintained rural link roads. Inter city roads in Imo State were generally poor and ill-maintained. For instance it took the writer four hours to move from Okigwe town to Owerri in 1978 to attend a recruitment interview conducted by the then Imo Broadcasting Service (IBS). I left Okigwe at 10am and got to Owerri at about 2.30pm because of bad road network.

Lt. Commander Ndubuisi Kanu set to work on assumption of duty as the Administartor of the new state. He gave Owerri its **Master Plan** which

outlined how the city was to be developed. He started and completed the Aladinma Housing Estate and created the Ikenegbu Layout. All these efforts were geared to provide accommodation for junior and senior civil servants who were returning from Enugu. Aladinma Housing Estate remains the best in Owerri today. He started the reconstruction of roads in Owerri metropolis in addition to the building of Orlu and Okigwe roads Secretariats. Imo Broadcasting Service, Imo ADC, ADP and many other facilities were built by Kanu. Imo State was lucky to have had Kanu as its first Administrator. He laid a solid foundation for the development of Imo State.

The first civilian elected Governor of the state was Chief S.O. Mbakwe, Ph.D. of the blessed memory. He gave his all to Imo State and during his tenure as Governor, he constantly drew the attention of the world to the plights of Igbo sons and daughters in Federal Republic of Nigeria. Though, NPP was a minority party, he demonstrated his commitment to the development of Imo State. Chief Mbakwe gave Imo State its first University, its first and only Airport, its first 5 star Hotel, Concorde, and established many industries in all the Local Government Areas of the state. The Amaraku Power Plant which supplied electricity to most villages in Imo State was an independent power project, away from NEPA. The idea of independent power project was started in Imo State some 36 years ago before the government of Olesegun Obasanjo appropriated the idea for the development of power supply in Nigeria. Some of the major industries established by Chief Sam Mbakwe, include Adapalm Ohaji, Imo Modern Poultry, Avutu and Oguta Lake Motels, Oguta. Imo Modern Poultry Farm Avutu made such an impact in the lives of Imo people that cost of eggs dropped drastically. As a poor student at A.I.C.E, Owerri, I was patronizing the Avutu poultry until I graduated in 1982.

Other major industries built by his administration included the Resin Paints Limited, Aboh Mbaise, Aluminum Extrusion Factory, Inyishi, Card Board Packaging Industry Orlu, Imo Concorde Hotel Limited Owerri, among others. In the good old days, major industries included the under listed were booming in the state with large number of our people gainfully employed. Unfortunately today all of them have gone moribund, including those industries in partnership with the state government.

(1) Standard Shoes Coy. (2) Clay Products Ezinachi-Okigwe (3) Sack Hercules Ltd. (4) Nsu Tile factory (5) Imo Healths Foods Ltd. (6) Adapalm Nig. Ltd. (7) Imo Modern Poultry Ltd. (8) Oguta Hotels Ltd.

IMO STATE @ 49...

When Imo was created in 1976, there was only one higher institution of learning and that was the Alvan Ikoku College of Education founded in 1963 by the government of Eastern Nigeria. Commodore Adekunle Lawal started the Imo State College of Technology Nekede, now the Federal Polytechnic, Nekede. Many higher institutions have been established in Imo State. They include Imo State University Owerri, Federal University of Technology, Owerri and the Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo. There is no privately owned higher institute of learning in Imo State and this is a major short coming. The state produces the largest application for JAMB UTME for admissions into higher institutions in Nigeria. But unfortunately, individuals and corporate bodies have not seen the reason to establish private universities, polytechnics and colleges of education as is the trend in the South-West Nigeria, were we have more than twenty private universities.

Imo State is apparently a mega city. One can move from Okigwe to Owerri and Umuapu the boundary town with Rivers State under one hour thirty minutes without stress in spite of the bad conditions of the roads. We have villages in Imo State with good houses, hotels, electricity, both public and privately installed sources. Most villages or shall I say all villages and towns in Imo State including the state capital Owerri has no functional public water supply and good roads.

Many years ago, recruitments into the civil service of Imo State was purely on merit. People of my own generation benefited from this. We got employed into the services by passing the selection examination and interviews. Now only the sons and daughters of the privileged class are selected and employed, and in fact, government has become family business in some states of the federation.

In spite of the moribund industries that liter the landscape, the Imo spirit of never loose hope is there and can never be discouraged. The aim of the founding fathers of the state, that Imo State must be a home for all, where opportunities are available for the willing spirit, has not been achieved. The failure is not that of the leaders alone. Imo State so far has been administered by 14 persons. The citizens must take responsibilities for the woes. Most of us are mere political yes-men and women, running around leaders for what they can get. Can we retrace our steps and return to the path of honour and service to Imo State?. "Yes we can a3nd we will".

Please find enclosed list of past Governors of the State.

IMO STATE @ 49...

Name	Title	Took Office	Left Office	Party
N. Kanu	Milad	March 1976	1977	Nil
Adekunle Lawal	Milad	1977	July 1978	Nil
S.A. Adenihun	Milad	July 1978	Oct. 1979	Nil
S.A. Mbakwe	Elected Gov.	1st Oct. 1979	31st Dec 1983	NPP
Ike Nwachukwu	Mil-Gov.	Jan. 1984	Aug. 1985	Nil
Alison Madueke	Mil-Gov.	Aug. 1985	1986	Nil
Amadi Ikwuechegh	Mil-Gov.	1986	1990	Nil
A. Oguguo	Mil-Gov.	Aug. 1990	Jan. 1992	Nil
Evan Enwerem	Civilian Gov.	Jan. 1992	Nov. 1993	NRC
James Aneke	Milad	Dec. 1993	Aug. 1996	Nil
Tanko Zubairu	Milad	Aug. 1996	May 1999	Nil
Achike Udenwa	Elected Gov.	May 1999	May 2007	PDP
Ikedi Ohakim	Elected Gov.	May 2007	May 2011	PPA/PDP
Okorocha Rochas	Elected Gov.	May 2011	May 2019	APGA/ APC
Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha	Elected Gov.	May 2019	Jan. 2020	PDP
Sen. Hope Uzodimma	Elected Gov.	Jan. 2020	Till Date	APC

Investment Opportunities In Imo State At A Glance

Imo State came into existence on the 3rd February, 1976, when it was created from the former East Central State by the then Murtala Muhammed administration.

One of the 36 states in Nigeria, with an administrative structure of 27 Local Government Area headed by a visionary and action-oriented Governor, His Excellency Senator Hope Uzodimma. Total land mass of approximately 5300 Kilometers with an estimated population of 5 Million people, who are generally enterprising and hospitable. Occupies a strategic location as the heartland of the Eastern Region of Nigeria with Owerri as its capital.

Is accessible via Sam Mbakwe International Cargo Airport in Owerri, Sea Port of Port Harcourt (less than 80Km from Owerri), and by road through all neighbouring states (under 4 hours radius to major markets in the company).
OTHER KEY FACTS

Population Density	-	811 per square Km (approx. 4 times National average
GDP (PPP)	-	$20 Billion
GDP/Capital	-	$4,500; (87.5% above national average)
Language	-	English (official), Igbo
Where Imo people live	-	Inside Imo 45%, Outside Imo 55% of which 30% (surrounding states), 5% (America), 3% (EU), 2% (Oceania)

Major Industries; Oil and Gas, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Education, Industries, Hospitality (Tourism), Mining, Construction and Artisanary, Rivers: the major Rivers in the state are the Imo, Njaba, Urashi and Otamiri Rivers.
Source: 2006 Census, World Bank Group

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN IMO STATE
These can be grouped into 3 distinct categories.

a. Investment made the PPP Model which stated for infrastructure type of investment.
b. Investments that arise from privatization and commercialization of state government owned businesses.
c. Generic Businesses.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PPP	PRIVATIZATION	GENERIC BUSINESSES
Water Schemes	Ceramic and Tiles Companies	Agriculture
Housing Schemes	Industrial Layout developments	Power and Energy
Imo freeway Oguta Blue Lake	Agro -based Companies	Oil and Gas

Of treasure	Palm and Cassava Mills	Education
ICT	Poultry Processing	Media & Entertainment
Imo free trade zone Markets and Trade	Plantations	Tourism & Hospitality
Fair Complexes	Fisheries & Livestock	Commodity supply and trading

INCENTIVES FOR INVESTORS

FINANCIAL

- Some start-up equity (on a cash by cash basis) for investments in critical sectors.
- Investment guarantees and minimum off-take, also on a cash by cash basis.
- Tax incentives for capital equipment purchases
- Allow easy repatriation of profits

INFRASTRUCTURAL

- Land (with Certificate of Occupancy) with basic infrastructure; access road, electricity, water e.t.c
- Government backed security network with 24hr patrols to ensure safety and security of lives and properties, support systems.
- Access to government – developed investor information and support through its investment agency, ISIPA
- One-stop channel access to all government bodies through ISIPAs one-stop investment centre.
- Re-engineered business processes and policies to boost ease of doing business, with aim to make Imo to rank first in ease of doing business rating.
- Fast tracked licensing and issuance of all necessary permits.

LOCATION AND UTILIZATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN IMO STATE

AGRICULTURE RESOURCES:

CROPS	ECOLOGICAL/TRADITION	USES
A) ROOT CROPS	All Imo especially in Oguta, Ohaji Egbema	Pounded Yam, Yam meals, Yam flour, Yam flakes, starch, livestock feed composting (yam peel)
Cassava	All Imo especially in Owerri-North, Owerri-West, Ngor-Okpala, Ideato-South, Okigwe, Ohaji Egbema	Garri, cassava livestock feed, starch, biscuit, bread, vegetable (leaves), composting (cassava peels)
Cocoyam	Obowo, Isu, Ezinihitte Mbaise	Staple food
B) CEREALS Maize	All Imo	Staple food, cornflakes, biscuits, livestock feed, breweries, commercial uses
Rice	Okigwe, Onuimo, Ideato-North, Ihitte	Staple food
C) LEGUMES Cowpea	All Imo	Staple food
Groundnuts	All Imo especially Aboh-Mbaise, Ahiazu Mbaise, Ezinihitte Mbaise, Ihitte-Uboma, Njaba	Groundnut Oil, groundnut cake, groundnut butter, livestock feed
Soya Beans	Okigwe, Onuimo, Ngor-Okpala, Ihitte-Uboma, Obowo	Soya Beans Milk, Soya Bean Oil, Soya Bean Cake, livestock feed
D) HORTICULTURE / CASH CROPS Oil Palm	All Imo	Palm Oil, Palm Kernel Oil, Palm Kernel cake, soup margarine, Wine, cosmetics

Coconut	Okigwe, Njaba	Eaten raw, the oil is used for confectionery, shell for fuel
Cashew	Okigwe, Njaba	Edible nut, wine, glue
Rubber	Owerri-West, Okpala	Tyres, rubber articles
Raffia Palm	All Imo	Wine and local Gin, roofing mat, ropes, local chairs and beds
Cocoa	Onuimo, Okigwe, Ideato-North, Ideato-South, Oru-East, Ezinihitte Mbaise, Ngor Okpala	Food beverage, cocoa butter and chocolate
Plantain/Banana	All Imo especially in Ihitte Uboma, Ohaji Egbema	Staple food
Kolanut	All Imo	Stimulant, wine, dye
Mango and Guava	All Imo	Juice, livestock feed
Citrus (Orange, Grapes, etc)	All Imo	Fruit juice
Pine-apple	All Imo especially in Ohaji Egbema, Oguta, Ihitte Uboma, Ngor Okpala	Fruit juice
Ginger	All Imo	Medicinal, spice, breweries
Sugarcane	Oguta, Ohaji Egbema, Onuimo, Okigwe	Sugar
Gmelina	All Imo	Pulp and paper

MINERAL RESOURCES:

MINERAL TYPE	LOCATIONS	UTILIZATIONS
Glass sand	Okwudor (Njaba), Ihiagwan Obinze, Okigwe	
Kaolin	Nsu, Ehime, Ihitte-Aforukwu (Ahiazu Mbaise), Umuna, Okigwe, Okwudor, Mgbee (Orlu), Awo-Omamma, Ngor Okpala, Obowo	Ceramic, Pottery, Paint Industry, Pharmaceutical Industry, Paper Industry
Rivers sand/Gravel	Amumara, Ite, Ihiagwa, Mgbirichi	Construction or building, Material abrasive
Lignite/Coal	Ihioma, Umuezeala, Obowo, Awo-Omamma	As mineral, fuel, electric power generation
Marc site	Umuobom (Ideato South)	As source of sculpture, could be used in fertilizer manufacturing
Rock Aggregates	Okigwe, Obowo	As construction materials
Clay (Laterite)	Okigwe	Construction
Limestone	Okigwe, Ohaji	Cement manufacturing
Lead-Zinc	Okigwe	Refinery, L.N.G plant etc
Petroleum	Izombe, Awara, Egbema	
Gyp sum	Okigwe	
Bentonite (Clay)	Ekwe, Okwudor, Njaba, Isiekenesi, Umuechele Agbaja	
Quartz	Obowo	

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AGRIBUSINESS AND ITS UNQUANTIIFIABLE BENEFITS IN AN ECONOMY

BY DR. VITUS AYO ENWEREM

VITUS AYO ENWEREM Ph.d
(Agric Extension, Fcai, Maeson, Masn, Lecturer And Agric Consultant)

Agribusiness refers to the collective business, industries and activities involved in the production, processing and distribution of agricultural products. It encourages a wide range of activities including:

1. **Crop and Livestock Production:** Growing crops and raising livestock for food, feed, fibre and other products.
2. **Agricultural Input Supply:** Providing seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery, and other inputs to farmers.
3. **Food Processing and Manufacturing:** Transforming raw agricultural products into consumable goods, such as flour, sugar and packaged foods.
4. **Marketing and Distribution:** Getting agricultural products from farms to consumers including transportation, storage and retailing.
5. **Agricultural Services:** Providing services such as farm management, consulting and financing agricultural business.
6. **Agricultural Technology and Innovation:** Developing and applying new technologies such as precision agriculture, biotechnology and digital agriculture to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability.

Agribusiness involves various stakeholders, including:

Agribusiness ....

DR KPADUWA

1. Farmers and producers
2. Agriculture input suppliers
3. Food processors and manufacturers
4. Marketers and distributors
5. Agricultural service providers
6. Government and policy makers
7. Consumers.

The goals of Agribusiness include:

1. Improving agricultural productivity and efficiency.
2. Enhancing food security and safety.
3. Increasing farmers income and livelihood.
4. Promoting sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship.
5. Supporting rural development and community growth.

Agribusiness ....

Agribusiness Models and Value chains

1. **Production–oriented Model:** Focuses on maximizing crop yields and animal productivity.
2. **Market–oriented Model:** Focuses on meeting customers demand on references.
3. **Value Chain Model:** Integrates multiple stages of the supply chain from production to processing and marketing.
4. **Cooperative Model:** Member- owned business that pool resources and shared risks.
5. **Contract Farming Model:** Farmers enter into contracts with buyers to produce specific crops or livestock.

Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Impact

1. **Climate Smart Agricultural Practices and Technologies:** Reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, improving resilience to climate change
2. **Soil Conservation and Health:** Techniques maintaining or improving soil quality, reducing erosion and promoting biodiversity
3. **Water Conservation and Efficiency:** Strategies reducing water waste, improving irrigation system and promoting water harvesting
4. **Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** Approaches minimizing chemical use, promoting ecosystem services and managing pests sustainably.
5. **Agroforestry and Permaculture:** Practices integrating trees, crops and livestock, promoting ecological interactions and synergies

Agricultural technology and innovation

1. **Precision Agriculture:** Using technology to optimise crop yields, reduce waste and promote sustainability
2. **Artificial intelligent (AI) and Machine Learning:** Applications in precision agriculture such as predictive analytics, automated decision making and robotics.
3. **Internet of Things(IOT) and Sensor Technologies:** Device monitoring soil moisture, temperature and other environmental factors, enabling data-driven decision-making
4. **Drone and Satellite Imaging:** Technologies providing high resolution images, enabling crop monitoring, yield prediction and precision application
5. **Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering:** Application in crop and animal improvement, disease resistance and nutritional enhancement.

Food Security and Safety

1. **Food Availability**: Ensuring sufficient food supply to meet demand.
2. **Food Access:** Ensuring equitable access to food, particularly for vulnerable populations.
3. **Food Utilization:** Ensuring food is properly stored, handled and prepared to maintain nutritional value and safety.
4. **Food Stability:** Ensuring consistent access to food throughout the year, despite seasonal fluctuations or disruptions.
5. **Food Safety:** Ensuring food is free from contamination, adulterants and other hazards that can cause illness or injury.

Agribusiness ....

CONTRIBUTION OF AGRIBUSINESS TO THE ECONOMY

Agribusiness makes significant contribution to the economy, food security and sustainable development.

Key contributions:

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

1. **Job Creation:** Agribusiness provides employment opportunities in farming, processing, marketing and other related activities.
2. **GPD Growth:** Agribusiness contributes significantly to a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
3. **Foreign Exchange Earnings:** Agribusiness exports generate foreign exchange earnings, which can help stabilize the economy.
4. **Tax Revenue:** Agribusiness can help reduce poverty by providing income opportunities for rural communities.

SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION

1. **Food Security:** Agribusiness helps to ensure a stable food supply which is essential for human well-being.
2. **Rural Development:** Agribusiness can contribute to rural development by providing infrastructure, services and employment opportunity.
3. **Community Engagement:** Agribusiness often engage with local communities through corporate social responsibility initiatives.
4. **Cultural Preservation:** Agribusiness can help preserve traditional practices and cultural heritage.
5. **Education and Farming:** Agribusiness often provide farming and education program for farmers, workers and local communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS

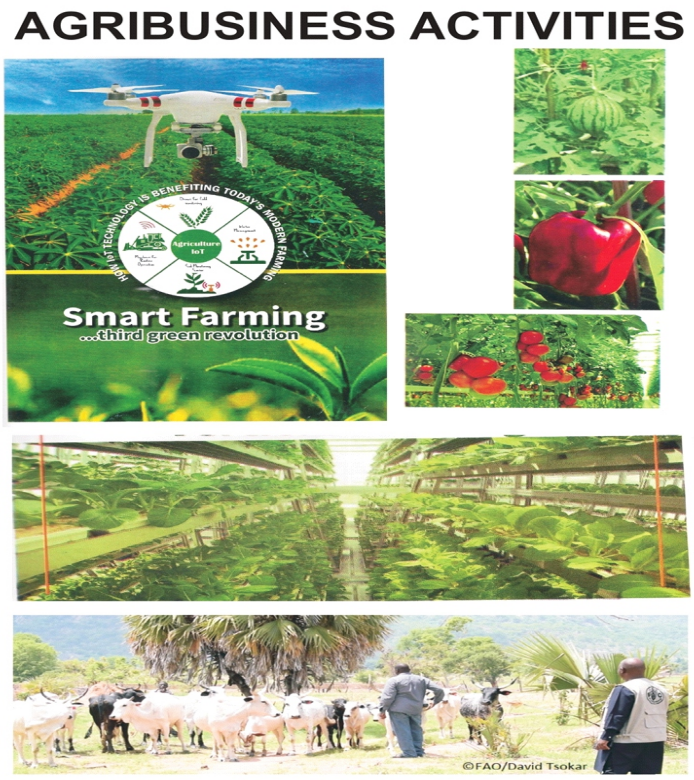
1. **Sustainable Agriculture:** Agribusiness can promote sustainable agriculture practices such as organic farming, conservation agriculture and integrated pest management.
2. **Biodiversity Conservation:** Agribusiness can help conserve biodiversity by promoting agroforestry, permaculture and other eco-friendly practices.
3. **Climate Change Mitigation:** Agribusiness can contribute to climate change integration by reducing green house emissions, promoting renewable energy and implementing carbon sequestration practices.
4. **Water Conservation:** Agribusiness can implement water saving technologies and practices, such as drip irrigation and rain water harvesting.
5. **Waste Production:** Agribusiness can reduce waste by implementing efficient supply chain management, reducing packaging and promoting recycling.

TECHNOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION

1. **Precision Agriculture:** Agribusiness can leverage precision agriculture technologies such as drones, satellite imagery and AI, to optimize crop yields, and reduce waste.

Agribusiness ....

2. **Vertical Farming:** Agribusiness can invest in vertical farming technologies which enable year-round production of crops in controlled environments.
3. **Biotechnology:** Agribusiness can develop and apply biotechnology solutions such as genetic engineering to improve crop yields, disease resistance and nutritional content
4. **Digital Agriculture:** Agribusiness can leverage digital agriculture platforms which enable data driven decision making, supply chain optimization and market access.
5. **Renewable Energy:** Agribusiness can invest in renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and biogas to power farm operations and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.



CONTRIBUTIONS OF AGRIBUSINESS TO NIGERIA'S GDP OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS

2020: Agriculture contributed 22.35% to Nigeria's GDP.

2021: The sector grew by 1.3% in real terms with crop production accounting for the bulk of the growth.

2022: Agriculture's contribution to GDP increased to 23.38% driven mainly by crop production which accounted for 90% of the sector's growth.

2023: The sector grew by 1.5% in real terms and crop production again driving the growth.

2024: As of first quarter 2024 Agriculture contributed 3,851.89 billion Naira to Nigeria's GDP accounting for around 20% of the total GDP.

These figures indicate that agribusiness remains a vital sector in Nigeria's economy, contributing significantly to the country's GDP.

However, the sector still faces challenges including poor infrastructure, inadequate funding and climate change.

Ehime Mbano Lawmaker, Hon Engr Bernard Ozoemelam, Celebrates With Governor Uzodimma On His Award Recognition By Vanguard Newspaper

-------- Says Uzodimma's Infrastructural Development In Imo Has Restored Hope

The Member Representing Ehime Mbano State Constituency at the Imo State House Of Assembly, Hon Chief Engr Bernard Ndubuisi Ozoemelam, has described the Governor of Imo State, His Excellency Distinguished Senator Dr Hope Uzodimma, as God sent, as he was specifically sent by the Almighty father to come and change the infrastructural landscape of the state.

Hon Bernard Ozoemelam made the statement while reacting to the Award of INFRASTRUCTURE GOVERNOR of the year presented to Governor Uzodimma on Friday 11th April 2025 by the VANGUARD NEWSPAPER Organization.

In a Release signed by the lawmaker, Hon Ozoemelam said, "For many years, Ndimo suffered and endured the construction of roads with inferior and substandard materials, when roads were constructed and commissioned, but were quickly washed away by rains the next day. For many years, Ndimo suffered and endured the building of Government housing projects with inferior and substandard materials, as such buildings constantly collapsed at the snap of the finger. School buildings constantly collapsed, such that students were afraid to enter their classrooms to learn. Police Stations built with state funds even collapsed. Bridges collapsed. Infact, Conference Centres built with state funds collapsed, due to inferior and substandard materials used for the project. The Legislative Arm of Government complex was completely dilapidated and nobody cared, as elected lawmakers became squatters and refugees outside their official office complex while making laws for the state".

"Ndimo cried and looked up to God. In due time, God responded with the message of Hope. One of the bold decisions Governor Hope Uzodimma took was to completely Rebuild, Furnish And Equip the Imo State House Of Assembly complex, and today, Lawmakers can sensibly and responsibly sit and make laws for the state".

"Infrastructure is beyond road construction and rehabilitation. Infrastructure is everything. Governor Hope Uzodimma, guided by his administration's 3-R philosophy of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation And Recovery has, indeed, done both the tangible and intangible. He has Reconstructed, he has Rehabilitated and he has Recovered, just as David Pursued, Overtook and Recovered All ..... Ndimo now drive on solid and durable roads. Projects are no longer built on Billboards and on the Internet, and Acidic Rains no longer destroy our roads, because of the Uzodimma effect. Indeed, Uzo Adigo Mma".

"While Governor Hope Uzodimma was busy carrying out these Infrastructural Revolutions, Ndimo were talking notes. Nigerians were talking notes. Corporate and Private organizations were equally taking notes. Then the Open Heavens, as Awards Of Excellence, Awards Of Appreciation, Awards Of Patriotism and even Doctoral Awards etc, started to locate the People's Governor, His Excellency Distinguished

Senator Dr Hope Uzodimma".

"Therefore, this Award as the INFRASTRUCTURE GOVERNOR OF THE YEAR from Vanguard Newspaper Organization didn't take anybody by surprise. It is rather an Endorsement and Validation that Governor Hope Uzodimma is doing very excellently in transforming the state. With massive Infrastructural Development across the State, he has Restored Hope. Ehime Mbano State Constituency is therefore very grateful, especially, for the restoration of Security Infrastructure in the state".

BERNARD OZOEMELAM MEDIA OFFICE
11/04/2025

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