



# THE IGBO FORUM

( A publication of Igbo Contact Forum (I.C.F) e.V. Munich, Germany)

... to restore the dignity of man through projecting lights and bringing cultures together.

" A LIGHT THAT DOES NOT BURN, CANNOT SHINE FOR OTHERS. "  
- LATIN PROVERB

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## EDITORIAL

Kola nut, in Igbo culture, is an embodiment of peace, unity and purity! In this edition, we bring to you the concluding part of this wonderful and educative article.

Just like in every society, misunderstanding and indiscipline are, among others things, the cankerworms that eat up the very fabric of a united, peaceful, civil and loving society. No matter how hard any situation seems, the truth remains real. Courage is needed to tackle such issues in order to bring the needed and lasting peace, unity and great success in such societies.

There are, in every society, people that make things happen upon all odds. In Focus, we looked at people that are making history. And before I forget, History, according to John W. Gardner, never looks like history when you are living through it.

And in Kid`s Corner, the dangers of overstaying on computers are exposed. Parents should keep an eye on their kids. It is very important to their health!

In all, please read through and enjoy yourself! Your criticisms, suggestions or comments will be highly appreciated. I thank you for your time.

By Emeka Nkem

## Strictly My Opinion

Change they say is inevitable. It can only take time, but surely, it must come! According to Esther Dyson, change means that what was before wasn't perfect. People want things to be better. There is a wind of change blowing. Things can never remain the same again. Crises after crises, whether economical, political or otherwise, produce changes. A change, brought about by a sense of good-will, is always productive. But, changes brought about by evil intentions, are always counterproductive. These type of changes need to be checked! Let there be change when we really want it, and when, it is really needed. I think this change is needed now! Nobody can stop the change. It will surely be there!

Change, coupled with love, is the best type of change. John Lennon said "Love is a promise, love is a souvenir, once given never forgotten, never let it disappear". Our life can only be meaningful when we love each other.

In the Bible we are told to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. If we love our neighbours as we love ourselves, the probability that we will not want any evil to come the way of our neighbours is high! May be we can extend this love to our brothers

and sisters, for whatever we wish them; we are inevitably, wishing them to ourselves!



(Continued on Page 7)



# Spotlight

## The Kola Nut: As an Igbo Cultural and Social Symbol



Oji:  
Kola Nuts

(Concluding part of our Spotlight on Kola-Nut)

### Why the Kola is Always Broken with a Knife

Why is the kola preferably broken with knife rather than with ordinary fingers? Many of the answers received from the questionnaire indicate that it is due to health reasons, that is, for hygienical reasons as the immediate motive. Some people say it is because the kola is sacred, and as much should be treated holily – "Sanctae sanctae tractata sunt". The popular reason is that 'the kola is broken with a knife as a mark of honour to it because it is not up to the size of a piece of yam which people bite and chew'. The remote reason is essentially religious, for people who have shed blood develop a "strong hand" -"aka ike" and may not break the Sacred Kola for others using the soiled or profaned hand or bloody hand. The sacredness of the oji stems from the fact that oji is Igbo symbol of life.

### Right of Breaking the Kola

Another consideration that brings out the kola symbolism is the question of the rightful person to break it. Is it the youngest or eldest in any given gathering? There are two major traditions: In the south of Igboland, the youngest in any group breaks the kola, while in the north-west and

**The puritan ethics or mentality is strongly founded in Igboland. The old-man tradition is preferred because the eldest man blesses the kola, holds the Ofo, and represents the authority of the ancestors.**

northern parts of Igboland the eldest person breaks the kola. In both cases, the breaking of kola helps in the tracing of seniority. The young-man tradition says that the young is preferred because he is presumed to be innocent, and his hands are not polluted by blood-shed in battle. This tradition has a loop-hole because at times there are gatherings where no one is really young, or where the youngest in the group is also elderly. This tradition is nurtured by the philosophy of Igbo ethical puritanism. The puritan ethics or mentality is strongly founded in Igboland. The old-man tradition is preferred because the eldest man blesses the kola, holds the Ofo, and represents the authority of the ancestors. One of the strongest reasons for religious activities like blessings by the eldest person is that in Igbo traditional society, the first born or eldest man in a family or umunna (kindred) assumes some priestly functions ipso facto. It is more by reason of his priesthood

**"The high degree of sanctity accorded the Kola nut throughout Igboland is likened to that of the biblical 'forbidden fruit of Paradise' in that women are forbidden from either planting, climbing, plucking or breaking the Kola nut."**

and not necessarily because of his age that the eldest man is preferred; and this is why today, the eldest man gives an ordained minister the kola to bless as a privilege.

The Ndi Ichie Akwa Mythology gives what seems to be the solution to the problem of the right of breaking the Igbo kola as regards the two conflicting traditions in question. The Arọs became very powerful during the slave trade mainly because of the one Ndi Ichie Akwa which is in their possession. Thus they wished to dominate the Igbo as a whole and with the advantage of the oracle, they hatched a plan as the author puts it: "The Arọs then brought an Afa oracle message from God 'Chukwu'. The divine message said that the Igbo tradition of the oldest person's right to break kola had been abrogated by God so that the right had been transferred to the youngest person. This oracle message automatically gave the Arọs who were the youngest of Igbo family groups, the right to

break kola whenever the Igbo people were gathered as a nation." Many Igbo communities in the south obeyed the 'divine message' and changed their tradition of the eldest man's right to break the kola. However, the most probable solution is that the eldest man blesses and breaks the oji and gives it to the youngest in the group to share and distribute. Another probable solution is that the eldest man blesses the kola and gives it to the youngest to break and share. This second alternative will eliminate monopoly of function by the eldest man.

### Why Women do not Break Ceremonial Kola

Eze Ugbala of Okporo says that "The high degree of sanctity accorded the Kola nut throughout Igboland is likened to that of the biblical 'forbidden fruit of Paradise' in that women are forbidden from either planting, climbing, plucking or breaking the Kola nut."

(Continued on Page 7)

**Do you have a burning issue in your mind and you want to speak out?**

**Or,**

**Do you have an opinion or Article to share with the public?**

**Contact us at:**

**igbos\_in\_munich@yahoo.com**

# HARD BUT REAL

## Is This The Beginning Of The End? - Please Don't Tear Us Apart

When I was the chairman of the Igbo Contact Forum (ICF) from 1998 – 2006, I faced quite a number of challenges, one of which was advice and pressure to pull old Imo State (Imo and Abia states) out of the ICF to be an independent association. I strongly resisted the temptation to do so. My “Wise-Men-from-the-East” advisers called me names, reminding me that Late Nnamdi Azikiwe believed in one Nigeria when North was not particularly interested and look at where we are today with Azikiwe’s One-Nigeria-Philosophy. Those advisers may (or may not) have been right but I was quick to point out to them that one united ICF and one Nigeria were different kettle of fish and had no comparison at all. I believed, still believe and will always believe in one Igbo Union in Munich because the Igbos share so many good attributes together like common language, culture, religion, ideology, aspiration, belief, geographical location and, most of all, common origin.



## Is The Creation Of Splinter Groups The Solution?

We need to be disciplined to know, accept and live up to our rights and obligations. We need to be tolerant of each other and we need to show understanding to our individual differences and, above all, RESPECT one another.

Most of us think, believe or assume that separation from ICF or creation of individual state unions like e.g. Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Abia, Delta or even Owerri, Orlu, Uturu, Mbanu, Amucha, etc., associations are the solutions to our problems. I’m not here to judge if it is right or wrong but I strongly believe that the solutions to our problems hang on discipline, tolerance and understanding. You can’t touch any association, no association can behave itself regardless of the name you give it – it’s all about the members, who are the constituents of any union. We need to be disciplined to know, accept and live up to our rights and obligations. We need to be tolerant of each other and we need to show understanding to our individual differences and, above all, RESPECT one another.

If we are not disciplined to pay our dues, to respect one another and to understand that there is no right without responsibility on earth, then the survival of whatever new association will always remain a mirage. We all pay our solidarity tax contribution (Solidaritätszuschlag) for the rebuilding of former eastern Germany regardless of whether we benefit from it or not. We also pay our compulsory nursing care insurance (Pflegeversicherung) even though some of us are pretty sure that we won’t be residing in this cold country by the time that insurance matures. But why do we pay all the aforementioned compulsory taxes and insurance? Because it is all about discipline to obey the laws / rules and regulations and being aware of the consequences of default.

We used to have twelve states in Nigeria, then 19 and now 36 plus Abuja – the idea of which was to group geographical, cultural and language identical ethnic people together. But are things now politically better than it used to be? We have one Igbo union in Munich, one splinter group, now one state has just formed an association and we all know that some states / other people are gearing up to pull off theirs – are we better off now and more progressive in Munich? We have two separated Igbo Roman Catholic Church Centers in Munich - but are we enjoying better peace and understanding among ourselves? Let me leave you to your opinions. The truth is, it is not about separation or endless creation of unions, church centers, associations but will these splinter groups withstand the test of time and internal challenges? There is always exciting enthusiasm that engulfs every new creation, be it business, union, association, etc, until the challenges set in and until the “Wise-Men-from-the-East” arrive. Without discipline, regardless of the nomenclature given to any association, it would be living on borrowed times. Period!

When I was a student in Nigeria, we used to have LOZONS (League of Orlu Zonal Students) which was one of the biggest, formidable and respected unions in the campus until one Mr. Godwin Ezeala from Nkwere lost election to be the Students’ Union Director of Social (DOS). Out of frustration, he pulled his Nkwere compatriots out of LOZONS, then Arondiogu, Ideato, Ugwuta, Orlu Town, etc, followed and the rest is bitter part of history. It is not about separation but all about further separations which would definitely follow. I’m not a soothsayer and would never want to be one but, believe me, it would be a matter of time before the members of the new union would start feeling restless within their “new-found-home”. Time will always prove us right or wrong. Please don’t get me wrong, it is our fundamental human right to form associations as and when we deem fit. But why can’t we be disciplined enough, patriotic enough, dedicated enough to call ICF our own and pull forces together to make it something we all would be very proud of? It is very sad to hear some of us argue and rebel **against any assistance to bereaved members, neglect any contribution to the union but** constantly go about, feeling very good like messiahs, in telling all willing to listen that ICF doesn’t do much for her members.

The truth is, it is not about separation or endless creation of unions, church centers, associations but will these splinter groups withstand the test of time and internal challenges?

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## INSIGHT:

### THE RESTORATION OF OUR FAMILY TIES AND VALUES

The family in Igboland and indeed the entire Nigeria is a natural school where we are taught moral discipline and values in line with our traditional way of life, which forms the basis with which we are identified as a people.



Over generations these have been derived from our cultural heritages and entrenched in our traditional system of life. An example of this is found in our naming behaviour as elegantly seen in the name “Ahamefuna” in Igboland meaning: my name shouldn’t ever get lost.

Another vital element of family as an institution is marriage. In Igboland for instance when a man wants to take a wife, his kindred must first inquire about the reputation of the family of the bride. And the grand family of the bride will equally investigate the social standing of the family of the bridegroom in terms of possible stigmas. Only after both sides are satisfied with each other is the blessing for the marriage given. The family is the first university that teaches moral attitudes. As kids we were taught to be obedient to elders; respect our seniors; not to steal or do harm to our neighbours; etc.

But today we Igbos and Nigerians in Munich seem to have forgotten where we come from. We involve ourselves in so many vices/practices, which should I say that we have learnt. Vices like antagonism, rumor-mongering, character assassination, etc are commonplace. I dare to say here that we use our various blessings (talents) rather diabolically. We are endowed with the right senses of reasoning; we are configured and imbued with good understanding ability as well as identifying what is right and what is wrong irrespective of where it is coming from or the issue at stake; we have the power of unifica-

Today my people I say to us  
“TAKE DOWN THIS WALL AMONG US AND  
BREAK THE SHELL DIVIDING US”

tion even in diversity. I am not saying we shouldn’t criticize one another. That is a part of life, but only a constructive criticism can bring out the best from whoever stands criticized.

Before the unification of Germany in 1990, the then president of America, President Ronald Reagan said to then Russian president, Mr. Michael Gorbachev, “TAKE DOWN THIS WALL” and with the total support of people the unification of Germany became a reality. Today my people I say to us **“TAKE DOWN THIS WALL AMONG US AND BREAK THE SHELL DIVIDING US”**. If there is anyone you offended willingly or unwillingly, come down from your high horse; go to him and say “I am sorry”. There is no humiliation in that rather it is the height of strength. In fact strong people are those that can say “I am sorry at ease”. Let us throw away unnecessary ego and pomposity, which will only lead us to division and doom.

You can deny a man everything, but you can’t rob him of his conscience. My people, where is our conscience? How can we throw away years of friendship and family virtues? What had happened to our mutual understanding, love, and co-existence? Have we forgotten that life itself is greater than what is used to nourish it? This tells you why a man sells or mortgages everything he possesses to cure himself, if he falls deadly sick. When U.S president Mr. Barack Obama was running for the presidency, he used the slogans “HOPE we can believe in” and “YES WE CAN!”

*(Continued on Page 12)*

## FOCUS

### Poland Swears in Nigerian Godson as First Black MP

By Paul Ohia - (14.12.2010)



John Abraham Godson, a Polish citizen born and raised in Nigeria, has been sworn in as the first black member of Poland's parliament. Godson had served as a councillor in the city of Lodz before taking up a parliamentary seat, vacated by a party colleague after local elections, the BBC reported. His entry into parliament has created a media stir in the mainly white country. He has since married a Polish woman and the couple have four children. A member of the centre-right Civic Platform party, he was appointed to the seat vacated by party colleague Hanna Zdanowska after she became mayor of Lodz. It is still quite rare to see black people even in the Polish capital Warsaw, Poland's most cosmopolitan city, the BBC added. Racism is still a problem in Poland, where it is not uncommon for well-educated people to make racist jokes. Godson was beaten up twice in the early 1990s but he said attitudes to black people in Poland are changing for the better, particularly since the country joined the EU six years ago.

"I am from Lodz, I will live here, I want to die here and I want to be buried here." The 40-year-old university lecturer said he wants to "ensure Poland had found a place in Africa".

Speaking earlier to Polish radio, Godson said: "I am from Lodz, I will live here, I want to die here and I want to be buried here." The 40-year-old university lecturer said he wants to "ensure Poland had found a place in Africa" and that he hopes to promote race relations in a country that is overwhelmingly white and monocultural. Godson moved to Poland in the early 1990s from his native Nigeria, and since taking citizenship in 2000 he has put down roots in the central city of Lodz, marrying a local girl and serving on the city council for a number of years. His arrival in the Polish parliament is remarkable given that Poland only has a tiny number of ethnic minorities, with the country's 2002 census putting the number of people of a non-European origin at little more than a couple of thousand. Although racism still occurs in Poland, and occasionally blights football matches involving coloured players, it has dropped significantly since the early 1990s when far-right groups flourished in the years following the collapse of communism.

(culled from Thisday online)

## QUOTES

**No matter what age you are, or what your circumstances might be, you are special, and you still have something unique to offer. Your life, because of who you are, has meaning.**

**- Barbara de Angelis**



## Obama Appoints Nigerian into Key Post

By [Tokunbo Adedoja](#) - 25 Feb 2011

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### Olufunmilayo Falusi Olopade

A Nigerian, Olufunmilayo Falusi Olopade, was among six individuals appointed into key administration posts yesterday by United States President Barack Obama. A statement by the White House Thursday said Olopade, who is the Walter L. Palmer Distinguished Service Professor of Medicine and Human Genetics, Associate Dean for Global Health, and Director of the Center for Clinical Cancer Genetics at the University of Chicago, had been appointed by President Obama as a member of US National Cancer Advisory Board. Olopade, who is an authority on cancer risk assessment, prevention, and individualised treatment based on risk factors and quality of life, is also a practising clinician and director of the University's Cancer Risk Clinic. A recipient of numerous professional honors and awards, including the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, ASCO Young Investigator Award, James S. McDonnell Foundation Scholar Award, and the Doris Duke Distinguished Clinical Scientist Award, the White House said: "She also works with educators, doctors, government officials and pharmaceutical companies to improve access to quality education and medical care in low-income communities. "The Nigerian, who holds an M.B.B.S. from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, did her residency in internal medicine at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in hematology and oncology at the University of Chicago. Others appointed into key administration posts by the US President include Thelma Duggin, member, Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; Marcia Cruz-Correa, member, National Cancer Advisory Board; Kevin J. Cullen, member, National Cancer Advisory Board; Olufunmilayo Falusi Olopade, member, National Cancer Advisory Board; Jonathan M. Samet, member, National Cancer Advisory Board; and Bill Sellers, member, National Cancer Advisory Board. Announcing the appointment, Obama said: "These dedicated individuals bring a wealth of experience and talent to their new roles and I am proud to have them serve in this Administration. I look forward to working with them in the months and years to come."

This does not mean that men are holier than women in Igbo society. It is just a question of a mentality similar to the biblical regard for women. The denial of women's right to break Igbo ceremonial Kola is more of social character and organization and does not imply a let down or inferiority. Women do break the Igbo kola when they gather in their usual cultural groupings of *umada* or *umokpu* or *umumgboto*; and also in the *Oha Ndom*, that is council of women where no man has a saying. On the contrary, Igbo women have their cultural organizations which are completely independent of men. Igbo women have many customary rights and privileges in the society so that they may not complain over the kola nut tradition which is a matter of division of labour or function. Coming near to the kola symbolism, we note that kola is also used as a symbol of reconciliation and to effect a covenant between two or more persons. A case between two brothers, Ezeakam and Igwe was settled by their eldest brother Elem, who "... brought a piece of kola nut and divided it into two and gave one half to each." When settling murder case in an *Abiriba* traditional way, kola is normally used.

In a general sense, the kola nut in Igboland constitutes a remarkable social symbol of hospitality, life, peace, kindness, good-will, commensality, fraternity, reconciliation and integrity. The kola is a typical multi-referential social symbol. While the eldest and youngest persons may break and share kola in social gatherings, it is the exclusive right of the priest to break kola during Igbo rituals to juju, as is made evident in *Abiriba*. "The kola nut and palm wine are jointly used in the Igbo Sacrament of *Igbandu* – final reconciliation of man with God in all disputes or misunderstandings." The unconditional attention given to *oji* symbolism reveals much of the Igbo cultural identity.

**By****Rev. Fada****Jon Ofoegbu Ukaegbu, Ph.D.****(Culled from Ahiajoku Series)**

**YOU  
CAN ADVERTISE  
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BUSINESS HERE!**

A change of will, a change of attitude, a change of character and a change of direction should be our watchdog at these trying times. As we have made our resolutions for the year, I also appeal that we extend these resolutions to the above mentioned points, if they are not already included. We need each other and no man is an island. Can you hear the music? Sing along with me please ...

*I follow the Moskva**Down to Gorky Park**Listening to the wind of change**An August summer night**Soldiers passing by**Listening to the wind of change ...***Chorus:***Take me to the magic of the moment**On a glory night**Where the children of tomorrow dream away**In the wind of change ...*

Thank you for singing along!

**By Emeka Nkem**

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HAKUNA MATATA

If you're like a lot of kids, you probably spend time sitting at the computer, doing schoolwork or playing games. But whether you're writing a report about aardvarks or zapping aliens, using a computer can be tough on your body. How? Sitting for a long time in positions that aren't natural for your body can strain your hands, wrists, back, and eyes. Over time, this can result in pain and a kind of injury called a **repetitive stress injury**.

## Sitting Square in Your Chair

The way you sit is important. To sit square in your chair, put your behind in the center of the seat. Your legs should bend at the knees and rest on the floor. Most kids are too short to do this, so use a footrest or find a box or a stack of books to place under your feet. Sit so your back touches the seat back the whole time. Try not to slouch or lean over the keyboard while you type. A chair that has lower-back support can help you do this.

Don't get so involved in the computer that you forget to go to the bathroom! And even if you don't have to go to the bathroom, be sure to take breaks. Kids shouldn't sit at a computer for more than 30 minutes without a break.

your arms). A wrist rest can help you stay in the right position. If your wrists are starting to hurt, or you are waking up at night with wrist pain, you may be getting an **overuse injury** (this is also called **carpal tunnel syndrome**). If you're having this kind of pain, let your parents know. You might need to see your doctor.

## Eek! A Mouse!

A small wrist rest also can help support your right hand as you move the mouse. Using a trackball instead of a mouse is also a good solution. A trackball allows you to use a few fingers, instead of just one, as you move around the computer screen.

## All Eyes on This

Any time you're using the computer, your **eyes** are hard at work. Be kind to them by positioning the monitor 18 to 20 inches (46 to 51 centimeters) away from your face. At this distance, you shouldn't have to lean in to read what's on the screen. Position the screen at your eye level, with the top of the monitor itself level with your forehead. This will keep you from having to lean your neck back (or bend forward) to see the monitor. Your mom or dad can help you get adjusted. They can help you raise the monitor a little higher by stacking a few books under it. You also can raise the height of the chair or sit on a pillow or two.

## Take a Break

Here's a good piece of advice: Don't get so involved in the computer that you forget to go to the bathroom! And even if you don't have to go to the bathroom, be sure to take breaks. Kids shouldn't sit at a computer for more than 30 minutes without a break. When it's time for a break, start with your eyes. Focus on something far away by looking out a window. This gives your eyes a rest from all that focusing on the computer monitor. Then you'll want to give your body a break, too. Try to move your muscles. Go for a walk, shoot some hoops, or dance in front of the mirror. Doctors recommend only 1 to 2 hours of screen time per day — which includes TV, the computer, and computer games. Make computer time just one of the activities you do instead of the **only** thing you do. Your body will thank you!

Reviewed by: Wendy Harron, BS, OTR/L  
Date reviewed: September 2008

# GERMAN PROVERB

Morgen, morgen, nur nicht heute, sagen  
alle faulen Leute



# IN THE NEWS:

Global Witness: UK aiding corruption in Nigeria

From

Paul Obi in Abuja , 12.22.2010

The British authorities are not doing enough to stop the flow of corrupt money into the United Kingdom (UK) from Nigeria, says Global Witness, an anti-corruption non-governmental organisation (NGO). In an exclusive interview with THISDAY in Abuja, Founder of the organisation Anthea Lawson and her colleague Robert Palmer expressed disgust at the way British and Western banks facilitate corruption in countries such as Nigeria. They indicated that it would appear on the surface that the UK is "clean". But their investigations suggest that the actual enforcement of rules and regulations on money laundering leave much to be desired. Lawson asked the David Cameroon government to rein in on banks that receive corrupt deposits. Her words: "We want to emphasize that British banks and regulators are not doing enough to tackle money laundering. There is need for a global effort to effectively enforce the laws which are designed to stop the flow of dirty money, whether it is in corruption, tax evasion or organised crime or even money for funding terrorism."

"We want to emphasize that British banks and regulators are not doing enough to tackle money laundering. There is need for a global effort to effectively enforce the laws which are designed to stop the flow of dirty money, whether it is in corruption, tax evasion or organised crime or even money for funding terrorism."

Global Witness had in October this year published a damning report on how major British banks received stolen money from influential Nigerians. The ways through which former Governors of Bayelsa and Plateau States Dieprieve Alamiyeseigha and Joshua Dariye respectively laundered ill gotten wealth were uncovered. "Apart from the banks, the British government is supposed to be involved in strengthening laws, enforcing it so that we can stop this," stated Lawson. "The challenge to the David Cameron government is to push the regulator in the UK, the Financial Services Authority (FSA), to make a really serious effort to punish those banks who are taking corrupt funds. The reason banks think

this is ok is because there has not been deterrence," she added. Although, efforts have been made to improve the British system, however, the reality is that day after day, there are new cases of stolen money flowing into the country, Palmer stated. He said due diligence should be a priority for financial institutions; sources of funds have to be verified; and if they are questionable, they should be reported to the authorities.

Lawson recalled that some 23 banks that were reported by the FSA to have engaged in such practices were not publicly reprimanded. A few years later, the same banks were featured in the Global Witness report on corruption. She cited the example of the United States (US) where companies are fined heavily, if found to have breached the anti-money laundering laws. That aggressive approach also indicates the priority of the government there, she noted. "If you look at the US, the authority may have been willing to fine banks huge amounts, hundreds of millions of dollars.....it is something which is a priority.....so I think it is about the political will," she stated. Lawson went on to say that the NGO is trying to change the perception that Western countries are clean. She explained that establishing the link between poverty in developing countries and the actions of institutions in the developed world is paramount. She explained that the UK gives away development grants to developing countries but turns around to undermine that effort by aiding corruption across borders. That is inconsistent, she emphasised.

Part of the job of Global Witness, Lawson argued, is to make bankers in the UK see how their actions impoverish people in other parts of the world. In order to create a just and fair world, all countries must cooperate in the area of fighting money laundering, she said. When reminded that politicians would always find safe havens elsewhere, Palmer said the plan is to make it more difficult to launder money worldwide. "We hope that the space will get smaller and smaller," he said. While corruption may not be wiped out completely, excesses can be curbed, Lawson added.

(culled from THISDAY)

Do you have an opinion or Article to share with the public?

Contact us at: [igbos\\_in\\_munich@yahoo.com](mailto:igbos_in_munich@yahoo.com)

## INFORMATION

ICF e.V. Munich: [www.i-c-f.net/](http://www.i-c-f.net/)

German Laws in English: [www.gesetze-im-internet.de](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de), and click translations

## FACTS OF LIFE

\* The first thermometers were called thermoscopes and while several inventors invented a version of the thermoscope at the same time, Italian inventor Santorio Santorio was the first inventor to put a numerical scale on the instrument. Galileo Galilei invented a rudimentary water thermometer in 1593 which, for the first time, allowed temperature variations to be measured. In 1714, Gabriel Fahrenheit invented the first mercury thermometer, the modern thermometer.

(from <http://www.about.com/>)

\* On Nov. 8, 1895, German scientist Wilhelm Roentgen's experiments with cathode rays led him to discover X-rays, a feat that earned him the first-ever Nobel Prize for Physics.

(from <http://www.findingdulcinea.com/>)

\* The English word "girl" was initially used to describe a young person of either sex. It was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century that the term was used specifically to describe a female child

\* The probability of a woman giving birth to a baby girl instead of a baby boy increases significantly the nearer the mother lives to the equator. While the cause of this gender selection is unknown, scientists believe the constant sunlight hours and abundant food supply in tropical regions may favor female births.

\* Worldwide, there are approximately 107 baby boys born for every 100 baby girls. Scientists believe the elevated birth rate in favor of boys may be linked to the higher mortality rates of boys in infancy and childhood.

\* Cocaine affects the heart's electrical activity and causes spasm of the arteries, which can lead to a heart attack or stroke, even in healthy people.

\* In 1929, German surgeon Werner Forssmann (1904-1979) examined the inside of his own heart by threading a catheter into his arm vein and pushed it 20 inches and into his heart, inventing cardiac catheterization, a now common procedure.

\* On December 3, 1967, Dr. Christiaan Barnard (1922-2001) of South Africa transplanted a human heart into the body of Louis Washansky. Although the recipient lived only 18 days, it is considered the first successful heart transplant.

(from <http://facts.randomhistory.com/>)

## Something to think about ...

### The UPS and DOWNS of LIFE

- 1] Prayer is not a "spare wheel" that you pull out when in trouble, but a "steering wheel" that directs you to the right path.
- 2] A Car's WINDSHIELD is large but the Rear view Mirror is small? It could be interpreted to mean that our PAST is not as important as our FUTURE. So, Look Ahead and Move on.
- 3] Friendship is like a BOOK. It takes few seconds to burn, but years to write.
- 4] All things in life are temporal. If you find any of them worth enjoying, enjoy them but remember, they will not last forever. If you find them troublesome, don't worry, they will not last long either.
- 5] Old Friends are like Gold! New Friends are like Diamond! If you get a Diamond, don't forget the Gold! In order to hold to the Diamond, you will definitely need the Gold!
- 6] Often when we lose hope and think this is the end, GOD smiles from above and says, "Relax, sweetheart, it's just a bend, not the end!"
- 7] When GOD solves your problems, you have faith in HIS abilities; when GOD seems not to solve your problems, HE has faith in your abilities.
- 8] A blind person asked St. Anthony: "Can there be anything worse than losing one's eye sight?" He replied: "Yes, losing your vision!"
- 9] When you pray for others, God listens to you and blesses them, and sometimes, when you are safe and happy, remember that some people are praying for you.
- 10] WORRYING does not take away tomorrow's TROUBLES; it takes away today's PEACE.

(from a good friend)

Why not? After all, those wise men are smart enough to believe that the stupid among us would always pay their dues while their own portion of the deal is to go about spreading criticism without any iota of positive contribution or support. Well, never mind, critics are like lame people teaching athletes how to run a race.

Initially we used to **pay visits to** mothers who put to bed until some smart ones among us told us that their wives put to bed in Nigeria even though they had not visited Nigeria since two years or more (don't worry, their wives were conceived by the Holy Ghost). Some of us argued against **condolence support** because their parents were long dead. Majority of us didn't **care about yearly development program** because they were wise-men-from-the-east who knew in advance that any project we may carry out would never be done in their villages. The examples are endless and I promise not to bore you anymore. Frankly speaking, if one suddenly recognizes the importance of discipline, payment of dues and solidarity with another union but all along showed none of the aforementioned solidarity and dedication to ICF, then it leaves us with lots of concrete conclusions about what a fool he/she thought we are. Most of us don't have anything personally to gain from ICF apart from enjoying being a member and contributing our very best which we expect from all and sundry. Don't we all believe in the creation of utopian Biafra? But how long can Biafra-mirage hold in the light of everyone being convinced that ten countries could be created out of Biafra because we failed to contribute our very best but only dream that if a separate country is created for us, we would fare a lot better?

Creation of ten thousand associations or a million countries called Biafra is not and would never be the solution but discipline, hard work, tolerance and understanding are and will always be. One of the best associations I've ever enjoyed in my life was during my time as the Brutal Marshal/ member of the Palm Wine Drinkards Club because of our love for one another, discipline to adhere to the rules and carry out our rights and obligations, tolerance of each other and understanding of our differences.

**PLEASE DON'T TEAR ICF APART, WE DON'T HAVE ANOTHER IGBO UNION WE CAN CALL OURS IN MUNICH!!!**

By

Chairman Sydneys Ozoemena Offer

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## NCAA Certifies Air Nigeria Air Operator's Certificate

By

Chinedu Eze - 20 Jan 2011

The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has re-issued an Air Operator's Certificate (AOC) to Air Nigeria Development Limited in line with the Civil Aviation Act 2006 and the Nigeria Civil Aviation Regulations to continue with passenger and cargo flight operations.

Announcing the re-issuance of the AOC in Air Nigeria's corporate name, the Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Kinfe Kahssaye said the development further reaffirms the existing safety standards of the airline, while also noting that another significant change would be the seamless usage of Air Nigeria's trademark across its route network. "We have consistently adhered to global aviation safety requirements and our operations are carried out by a well maintained fleet of aircraft as well as support from a competent workforce and it is our commitment to continually maintain the standards.

**"The re-issuance of our Air Operator's Certificate is coming at an auspicious time when we are implementing a fast and profitable growth plan to further expand our frontiers through the acquisition of modern fleet of aircraft as well as the introduction of new routes on both domestic and regional network to serve our customers better," said Kahssaye.**

The airline said that the re-issuance of the AOC to Air Nigeria is another major milestone in the ongoing turn-around initiatives of the airline, especially as the airline continues to adhere to global best practices in stabilising and positioning the airline on the path of profitability. Air Nigeria is one of the fastest growing airlines in West Africa. From its operational base at the Murtala Mohammed Airport, Lagos, Air Nigeria currently operates to Benin City, Owerri, Port Harcourt, Abuja, Kano, Sokoto and Enugu on the domestic routes. It also operates to Brazzaville, Accra, Douala, Dakar, Monrovia, Cotonou, Banjul, Libreville and Abidjan with further plans to extend services to more African destinations, Europe, Asia and America.

Today I say to you: “hope we can believe in” and “YES WE CAN!”

TO UNITY-- YES WE CAN!

TO PEACE—YES WE CAN!

TO LOVE—YES WE CAN!

TO UNDERSTANDING—YES WE CAN!

RESTORATION OF OUR FADING FAMILY VIRTUES ----YES WE CAN!

In conclusion: for us to achieve all these, we must start from our innermost selves, to re-examine ourselves, to eschew hate, dichotomy, rumor-mongering, antagonism etc. The power lies in us. Let's use our various capabilities individually and collectively as one people for the good of all. A family that prays together and stays together always holds out very well in terms of external tribulations. Let us pray together and be overwhelmed by the power of God in realizing this peace and harmony that we seek. The pursuit of excellence is excellence itself. Our God is not the author of confusion rather the author of perfection. A hero is not recognized by what he destroyed, rather by what he builds.

**“Those who make peaceful change impossible makes violent change inevitable” ----**

**Edmond Burke. What legacy will we leave behind for our children and those yet unborn? The future you save now will be your own.**

By Chucks Ifeacho (Ozomma)

## IN THE NEWS

### Women and immigrants must fill labour shortage, study says

Published: 21 Jan 11

Online: <http://www.thelocal.de/national/20110121-32575.html>

Women and immigrants will have to fill the skilled worker shortage expected to hit Germany in the coming years, according to a new 10-point plan by the Federal Employment Agency (BA). Improved educational programmes and better labour market policies for these groups could create several million new job candidates by the year 2025, according to the BA study cited by daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on Friday. “We can't afford to ignore the dormant potential in our country,” BA spokesperson Raimund Becker wrote in the study. As the population shrinks and ages, the number of potential workers is expected to drop by 6.5 million to 38 million, a situation expected to significantly slow economic development. In the best-case scenario, some three million full-time workers could be gleaned from better integration of women into the work force, said the study, entitled *Perspektive 2025: Fachkräfte für Deutschland*, or “Perspective 2025: Qualified workers for Germany.”

Other goals include lowering school drop-out rates and increasing workweek time by two hours, the study said. But these measures still won't be enough to keep the

**“We can't afford to ignore the dormant potential in our country,” BA spokesperson Raimund Becker wrote in the study.**

.....

**“Without immigration the problem can't be solved,”**

country's demographic decline at bay. “Without immigration the problem can't be solved,” Becker wrote in the paper. But an immigration programme tailored to economic needs could bring in some 800,000 skilled workers, he explained. Currently many potential foreign workers are choosing other countries above Germany, though. Of the 721,000 immigrants to arrive in the country in 2009, just 17,000 were counted as skilled labourers, the study said. “Since the turn of the millennium, migration statistics have been moving against Germany,” Becker wrote.

However if the need for qualified employees isn't solved in the long term, there will be drastic consequences for the country, he warned. Meanwhile Angela Merkel's centre-right government coalition continues to grapple with creating new immigration policies that include improved recognition of foreign educational credentials.

# JUST FOR FUN ...

## The Spanish Computer

A Spanish teacher was explaining to her class that in Spanish, unlike English, nouns are designated as either masculine or feminine.

"House" for instance, is feminine: "la casa."

"Pencil," however, is masculine: "el lapiz."

A student asked, "What gender is 'computer'?"

Instead of giving the answer, the teacher split the class into two groups, male and female, and asked them to decide for themselves whether "computer" should be a masculine or a feminine noun.

Each group was asked to give four reasons for its recommendation.

The men's group decided that "computer" should definitely be of the feminine gender ("la computadora"), because:

1. No one but their creator understands their internal logic;
2. The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else;
3. Even the smallest mistakes are stored in long term memory for possible later retrieval; and
4. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it.

**(THIS GETS BETTER!)**

The women's group, however, concluded that computers should be Masculine ("el computador"), because:

1. In order to do anything with them, you have to turn them on;
2. They have a lot of data but still can't think for themselves;
3. They are supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they ARE the problem; and
4. As soon as you commit to one, you realize that if you had waited a little longer, you could have got a better model.

Which group do you think won?

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## THE IGBO FORUM

This Newsletter is published by the Public Relations Department of the Igbo Contact Forum (I.C.F) e.V. Munich, Germany.

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### In the News

#### Bundesrat passes Hartz IV welfare reforms

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**After months of political wrangling, Germany's upper house of parliament on Friday finally approved an increase of €5 to Hartz IV welfare benefits. But a separate court decision said those on the dole should expect payment for TVs.** Welfare payments for some 4.7 million jobless and under-employed people will be raised to €364 a month, with the hike paid out retroactively from January 1 – the date by which the government had initially planned to implement the increase. But the reform stalled for weeks in the Bundesrat, the upper house representing Germany's 16 states, with the left-wing opposition demanding further changes. In early 2012, Hartz IV recipients will get another €3 increase, plus adjustments for inflation and wage growth, according to the deal. Meanwhile an educational programme for about 2.5 million needy children will be supplemented with an

additional €400 million between 2011 and 2013 to provide more school social workers and warm lunches. Both state and federal politicians said they were relieved that the struggle to achieve the reforms, which were required by a 2010 Constitutional Court ruling founding the payment system too confusing and ordering reforms by the end of 2010. "We had many stones in our path," conservative Labour Minister Ursula von der Leyen said. "Every stone is now in its place, and I am convinced we build something good with the educational package." Lead negotiator for the opposition centre-left Social Democrats, Manuela Schwesig, also said she was satisfied with the outcome, citing several of her party's changes included in the reform. Schwesig said she was particularly proud of a new minimum wage for temporary workers that provide "equal pay for equal work." The plan was approved just one day after the federal social court in Kassel ruled that televisions are not included in basic provisions for the apartments of Hartz IV welfare recipients. Though 95 percent of German households have them, TVs don't count as something necessary for "orderly housekeeping and an existence according to prevailing living standards," the court said. The decision came in response to a lawsuit by a homeless man in Göttingen who began receiving benefits in July 2007. After moving into a small apartment, the county allotted some €500 for the man to start his household, providing an additional allowance of €200 for curtains. But after they refused to pay for a television set, the 40-year-old filed a complaint. His lawyer argued that a TV was an informational object required for societal participation, a premise covered by standard Hartz IV welfare benefits. He was successful in both his regional and the Lower Saxony state social courts, but the federal social court struck down those decisions, saying that only a loan for a television was acceptable. The government has estimated there are around 6.5 million recipients of Hartz IV, including 1.7 million children, the long-term unemployed, the handicapped and those too sick to work. Hartz IV was named after Peter Hartz, the head of a commission that suggested changes to Germany's labour market and welfare system in 2002. It specifically refers to long-term unemployment benefits instituted in 2005, and has become synonymous with former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's highly unpopular Agenda 2010 reforms.

### IGBO PROVERB

**Oburu na Nne bu igwe, ndi uzu akpuo ya**

#### THE IGBO FORUM

... to restore the dignity of man through projecting lights and bringing cultures together.

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