

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH GIVEN BY MR. EDDY ABAKPORO
WOPC NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT ON JULY 25, 2009
CLEVELAND, OHIO. USA

My Fellow Nde Owerri

I am greatly privileged to be given the opportunity this afternoon to speak to you. Today should be an occasion for us to reflect on those qualities that have made us who we are. It is with deep humility and profound sense of appreciation of the oneness task ahead in our bid to bring all Qwerri people in the Diaspora into a fraternal fold, that I accept my election as the president of the **World Owerri Peoples Congress**. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you, and I am grateful for earning your trust. It is said that without faith nothing is possible, with it nothing is impossible. To those of you who voted for us, it was an act of faith; to us it is a transition in faith. We can assure all that we shall not betray the trust and confidence reposed in us.

Before I proceed, I must not fail to thank on behalf of our members, the out-going president, Chief Chris Nwaneri. I must also extend my gratitude to all the pioneer members of WOPC who are still here today, whose tireless efforts made it possible for us to be here today as members of this great association. You are all patriots and your visionary ideas would always remain indelible in our minds.

I have always believed that excellent public service is next to Godliness, and good stewardship should be of higher value. One basic thing that should guide us is the fear of God and the commitment to do our best. I am filled with hope that our stewardship begins with a sense of enhanced perception of the responsibilities of our offices. I strongly believe that it is rational argument, vigorous debate of issues, and understanding that should help us in the challenges that lie ahead.

Together with my fellow executive members, we have taken these leadership positions to serve WOPC and to serve her members. We assure you that we will be fair, honest, and respect every opinion.

After nine years of a drugged moribund and fitful sleep, WOPC needs a strong, creative, innovative, and action-packed leadership that is dynamic, visionary, purposeful, issue, and goal oriented. My brothers and sisters, this new executive under my leadership must wear the coat of truth, honesty, integrity, and decency while paddling WOPC and Nde Owerri to progress and real development.

We must remind ourselves that Nde Owerri, both here and at home, expect more from us than cries of indignation, denial, defense, and/or attack. The challenge is too urgent, and the stakes too high. We must light the candle that can guide Owerri to a safe and sane future. It has been said that “if we open a quarrel between the present and the past, we shall be in danger of losing the future”. We need courage, not complacency; leadership, not salesmanship.

The truth is that WOPC can no longer afford the luxury of crawling when it can be made to run. It cannot continue to disillusion and dissipate the bubbling energy of its members. Rather, WOPC should explore and capitalize on our collective energies for results. WOPC cannot afford, chase away, reject or disenfranchise its members; rather it should unify and magnify collective efforts.

At nine years, WOPC has passed the proverbial “teething” age, and we all need to pull together and transform WOPC to the “growth and development” age. The time has come for WOPC to become a beacon of unity. We should be preaching the value of peace and oneness, and love for our families.

Our first consideration is to be true to our own convictions, and conscience. Our conscience tells us clearly and certainly that it is our duty, not merely to maintain WOPC tranquility, but to use every meaningful apparatus available to insure it. I can assure you that we, your elected stewards are ready to shepherd WOPC with great care and passion. We, your stewards pledge fidelity to the WOPC constitution. We will work tirelessly to develop a renewed faith in our members, their families and the brotherhood of our collective interest and manifest destiny.

How we chart that destiny will define how our history as a people is written. It is no more a theoretical or an idealistic question. Frankly, it has become a practical issue that requires urgent but reasonable response. We must live by our forefathers' mantra - "Igwe wu Ike". (Unity is strength) We must remain united and speak with one voice both in deed and in spirit. We share with you the general premise that the best form of an association is one that is well-governed, one in which everyone is capable of fulfilling his or her responsibilities, an association in which all individuals are acquainted with each other, so that neither vice nor the modesty of virtue can escape our notice and judgment.

While we must keep our guard, we must continue to work together to eliminate tension and mistrust. We realize that as stewards, we are given a broad responsibility to lead, but we cannot successfully lead without your support and consent. Only the understanding and involvement of the members through full and open debate can help us avoid serious mistakes and assure the continued dignity, unity, and existence of our association. Our collective moral compass should point to equality and unity of purpose.

GOALS:

Our goals for the next three years of this administration are:

- 1. Moving WOPC forward in a positive direction and in the process create a vibrant organization.*
- 2. Bringing greater transparency and accountability in the affairs of WOPC*
- 3. Operating the WOPC constitution to the fullest extent and implement the benefits arising from it.*
- 4. Expanding the membership of the WOPC by assisting and encouraging the creation of more local and international chapters.*
- 5. Fund-raising for the WOPC as an indispensable and integral part of building a stronger and more focused organization.*
- 6. Working with front-line Owerri leaders both at home and in the Diaspora in a collaborative way in ensuring that the interests of Nde Owerri are sought and defended vigorously.*
- 7. Consciously raising the profile of the WOPC and Nde Owerri as a force for good that must be respected by even her adversaries. We must be proactive and issues oriented, as well as, scan the relevant environment for politico-socio-economic threats to Nde Owerri before they arise or mature.*
- 8. Paying attention to the welfare of our members wherever they may be, and pursue, and/or defend their legitimate interests*
- 9. Addressing the welfare of our children, and matters of continuity with our children given the generational gap, by captivating their interest in our culture and the things we do*
- 10. Raising the profile of WOPC women .*

The challenges that lie ahead may be seem hard, but with your support, we will make it to the finish line. Every person gathered at this convention must have a centripetal force that pulls him or her to Owerri land. Together we can make a big difference for our beloved father land.

We will run an open and grassroots administration that recognizes and respects every WOPC family. Openness must replace secrecy, humility must replace high-handedness, and delegation cum collective effort will dislodge monopoly. We will at all times uphold the truth, transparency and decency. We will submit ourselves to your scrutiny at all times, and will own up anything that goes wrong under our watch. We opt and pledge ideologies that will be based on realistic vision, urgency of purpose, speed of action, currency of contacts, dynamism of result, and sustainability of outcome.

We extend our hands in friendship and fellowship to all of you. We will be consulting with many of you for ideas on how we can move WOPC forward. The road ahead may be turbulent, but with a clear vision, energy, and united effort from all of us, we should reach our destination and achieve our goal. Every Owerri person is now more than ever challenged to step up and contribute to the development and survival of WOPC. Nde Owerri, these are difficult and challenging times.

We cannot afford to procrastinate, agonize, or to wait for that proverbial "manna from heaven". The era of sitting in our homes and looking through the glass doors and glass windows is over. Just as the leadership is going to be challenged, every Owerri man or woman is today challenged so that we could collectively develop a "Marshall Plan" for Owerri. We elicit the best in ourselves when actively bringing out the best in those around us. I am consoled by the fact that in this association, one finds devoted men and women who will rise up to the challenge, and do that which is right, and to overcome that which has to be overcome.

We solemnly reiterate, renew, reinforce and reconfirm our irrevocable commitment to our goals, and agenda. We have much work to do and it will take time. We sincerely urge you to respect, support and encourage the leadership. The tasks may be overwhelming, but with the enthusiasm, unflagging support and loyalty among our members, we shall overcome. We offer our hands of fellowship to all of you, and we do so in total sincerity.

While we may not have the patience of an Archbishop, or the Wisdom of Solomon, we shall be calling and visiting all of you for suggestions, advice, and logistic support. As committed members and stakeholders in WOPC, we all need to make the best choices and seize opportunities that will enhance our lives, and our great organization.

Fellow members of WOPC, the past belongs to history, the future to our children, but the present is to us what clay is to potters. It is our duty therefore, to bequeath to the future a worthy legacy, so that history may say of us, we achieved our goals, and we made our mark and kept the faith.

Leadership is about being reasonable and responsible. Part of being a leader is being honest and trustworthy. The whole essence of leadership is to leave things better than you met them, and the only valid test of leadership is the ability to lead and lead vigorously and responsibly.

We should remember with gratitude the past, live with passion the present, and look forward with confidence to the future. Exerting one's self in an honest direction is bound to bring good results. With that frame of mind, we are ready to shepherd this great association with the utmost care and passion, without any malice, partiality, or polarization.

*With your support and help, these aspirations will not be pious hopes and vague promises. We believe that we can count on your support. **United we stand, divided we fall.** Thank you and God bless us all.*

Eddy Eberegbulam Abakporo, WOPC President