

ADDRESS BY:

JANET FASHAKIN, RN, ESQ
PRESIDENT EGBE OMO OBOKUN OF IJESALAND
(NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY/CONNECTICUT)
AT THE TOWN-HALL MEETING AND THE SWEARING-IN OF THE NEW EXECUTIVES
FOR 2010-2011

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2010

On behalf of all of us at Egbe Omo Obokun of Ijesaland NY/NJ, I welcome everyone and I hope that this will mark the beginning of unity among all of us the Ijesa sons and daughters in the Tristate area comprising of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

I thank the Association for the trust imposes in my Cabinet to lead the Egbe for the next two years. Realizing that we have a daunting task ahead of us in unifying, strengthening and broadening the vision of Egbe, I want to tell my Cabinet members to buckle up and as I have promised them it is not going to be all works with no play that makes Jack a dull boy. We will work and we will have fun together. To this end, I am giving out tickets to Sunny Ade Show on April 9th here in New York. It is not a bribe; it is an incentive to gear you to work. (Distribution of tickets).

You all have gifts also from me-Calendar to help you remember the dates of our meetings. (Distribution).

WHO WE ARE:

This association is a member of the National Council of Egbe Omo Obokun of Ijesaland in the United States and Canada and collectively we are all Ijesa sons and daughters with one purpose in mind which is to foster the spirit of togetherness among the Ijesas in North America and seek to preserve and promote the interest of Ijesaland.

The Yorubas have a saying that *"agbajo owo la fin soya"* which could mean that "united we stand and divided we fall."

There is also a saying that *"airin po ejo lo nse ku pa won. Ti oka ba saju, ti sebe ba te le, ki paramole ma nwo bo leyin won ruru, ta lo ma duro."* That is one of the reasons why we reached out to you- fellow sons and daughters of Ijesaland. Join us to build a united front.

President: Hon. Janet Fashakin, RN, Esq.
PRO: Hon Ayo Komolafe
Social Secretary: Hon. Ademola Adegoke
Whip: Hon Adeyinka Oginni

Vice President: Hon Gbenga Ojofeitimi
Treasurer: Hon. Niyi Asaolu
Financial Sec.: Hon Niyi Ajetomobi
Chief Auditor: Hon (Mrs) Emiola Jegede

Chief

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Join our <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/egbeomoobokun-NA> and share your recipe for Ijesa food like akara ijese, kango irojo, abari, aadun, ekuru etc. Share your oriki, nursery rhymes and join discussions. <http://ijeshaland.org>

We are One People with One Purpose to build a strong and One Ijesaland

My slogan as you would have seen in some of my e-mails sent out on behalf of Egbe and which will dominate how we carry out the mandate given to my Cabinet will be:

“ One People, One purpose, One Ijesaland.”

It is about time that we began to work together in unity and set the tone for the kind of Ijesaland that we all want our children to embrace. I must confess that I am not unaware of the obstacles of working together as Ijesas. But I know that the good Lord, who brought us to the land we are in today, must have a purpose for our Ijesaland. We have to begin to set the tone of unity among ourselves here. I sometimes giggle when I hear Nigerians abroad condemn what goes on in Nigeria and yet in their little associations all they do is fight themselves. *Nje oro ko pa esi je. Eni to ma fun ni laso, torun e la ko ma wo.* But the Ijesas are not in that category.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE IJESAS:

I tell you what I know about the Ijesas.

LOYALTY: contrary to the agidi that people stigmatize us with, we are loyal to the core which was one of our undoing during the wet e period in the Western region. I want us to begin to channel that loyalty in the right direction.

HONESTY: Ijesa people are very proud and hate insults. For that reason they are usually very upright and trustworthy. God forbid that there is any Ijesa among the 419s of this land.

HARDWORKING: Who could forget the Osomalos of Nigeria? An Ijesa parent will do anything except stael to put food on the table for his/her children. We are not ashamed of working hard and we do not discriminate when it comes to honest jobs. You can see that in many of us in this room this evening.

INDUSTRIOUS: Ajo –esusu- which is a form of traditional banking has been with Ijesa Osomalo for as long as anyone could remember. You will not find an Ijesa person collect his own ajo and abscond.

These are just a few of the attributes of the Ijesas. What then is happening to us? Where did we throw all these attributes that we as a people are now killing ourselves. I refer to what happened to industrious and prominent Ijesa sons like Chief Komolafe who was killed by someone who was suppose to be in a leadership position over something as stupid as asking the killer not to shunt at a gas station.

In unity we will be properly positioned to voice our opinions on what goes on in our land. We will be part of development of Ijesaland, we will be able to make sure that our future generation get qualitative education including exchange programs. Our people instead of putting all their resources in Lagos and Abuja will feel proud to invest in Ijesaland which is one way to bring the land to par with other Yoruba towns.

What do have to show as a people? -look at our roads, look at safety issues- look at water and electric supply .

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Another problem now is the North versus South imbroglio in Ijesaland that is also affecting us here among ourselves. As the composer says-*memo South o, me mo North o, ikan ti mo mo Ijesa mo pe meji o.*

I ask that we make ourselves a strong force to be reckoned with. *E je ka jo se, ko le dara lola.*

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER:

You may want to know how you can be part of this organization of your town people- it very easy.

The first step is to deprogram yourself of all the negativity of being part of your people.

Secondly, you register your name- forms will be passed around, please fill your information and return to us. Membership due is so small only \$20 a month- at McDonalds' you know how much you spend at a drive through.

Thirdly you attend the meetings –we have simplified this in consideration of how busy we all are. We have taken advantage of technology, by meeting physically once in three months and using teleconference the two months in between. The good thing about teleconference is that you could call in from anywhere- driving, cooking, on break , on your bed even with your spouse and while watching television. What can be easier?

We also ask that you make us part of your life such that if you have anything good to do you call us and if you are going through hard times, you share with us.

Going forward we have beneficial programs- one of it is the *esusu* that I mentioned earlier. It will take the format of simple lending with no interest but each person must have a collateral so as to remove the fear that someone can elope with others money.

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Another is workshops or seminars on for instance raising responsible children in a confusing cross cultural society.

Strengthening the bond of unity in your family in a litigious society where equality prevails over tradition ...I had a dialogue over this with another Nigerian lawyer on a case where we were adversaries

Another one is to carry out projects in Ijesaland-our Baltimore Chapter just carried out a successful bore hole project in Ijesaland. One of our alumni association just did an exercise book project for its alma matter.

We can do for instance sneakers and sandals drive for schools in Ijesaland . Give cups during inter-house sport to send messages of endurance . Give small scholarships the way it is done here in America or through endowments.

Each of these projects will carry the names of our members who are alumni of the beneficiary schools. So you are known to be somebody in the USA not just a number-another way to promote our members interest among their own clans.

In rounding up I like to thank those who many years ago establish this organization, and those who have carried on the touch to make sure that the vision (though sometimes dim), does not die.

I salute His Royal Highness Kabiyesi Oba Adekunle Aromolaran, the Owa Obokun of Ijesaland, the Grand Patron of this Egbe. *Ki ade pe l'ori, ki bata pe l'ese, ki igba yin ma a tubo ro wa l'orun.*

I also want to thank those who have sent their congratulatory messages be it through e-mail, phone calls and presence here tonight.

My appreciation to the news media that congratulated us in their papers, especially the African Abroad and the Diasporan Star. We also thank all our sister organizations and friends of Ijesa people. *E se o.*

Last but not the least; I thank my family for their support always.

Thank you all for listening, may God bless you.

A o kere oko dele o.

Signed

HON. JANET FASHAKIN, RN, ESQ.
PRESIDENT 2010-2011