

A WELCOME ADDRESS PRESENTED BY ENGR IKENNA OKONKWO ON BEHALF OF THE ANDREW CHIUGO OKONKWO MEMORIAL EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (ACOMEF) ON THE OCCASION OF THE GRAND FINALE OF THE 2ND EDITION OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS SPORTS FESTIVAL IN IGBO-UKWU AGUATA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE ON SATURDAY NOVEMBER 26, 2011 AT THE HOLY TRINITY PRIMARY SCHOOL PLAY GROUND IGBO-UKWU

The Honourable Deputy Speaker of Anambra State House of Assembly – His Excellency Hon. Chukwudi Orizu,
The Honourable Member Representing Aguata Constituency II in ASHA – Hon. Ikem Uzoezie
The President General Igbo-Ukwu Development Union - IDU,
His Royal Highness – IDU II of Igbo-Ukwu,
The Chairman of the Occasion – Arc. Sir & Arc. Lady P.O.C Osunkwo – FNIA, KSJI – MD/CEO PAT & PAN Developers, Lagos.
The Special Guest of Honour – Dr Okenwa R. Nwosu – MD, ably represented by the Executive Director World Igbo Environmental Foundation Inc. (WIEF) – Engr. Dr. Odili Ojukwu Odu, Oji and Alor of Igbo-Ukwu
The Vice Presidents of IDU,
The Chairman IDU Sports Committee,
The Organising Chairman IDU Youths Sports Programme
The representative of ACOMEF
Other IDU Executives here present
The Chairman of Umuezemuoka Ward 10, Kindred Meeting Obiuno Igbo-Ukwu
Our Reverend Fathers and Clergies here present,
Ndi Nze na Ozo here present,
Gentlemen of the Press,
Invited Guests,
Principals, Games Masters and Competing Students of the Secondary Schools in Igbo-Ukwu
Ladies and Gentlemen.

IGBO-UKWU KWENU! IGBO-UKWU KWENU!! IGBO-UKWU KWEZUOONUOOO!!!

It is with a great honor and privilege that I, Engr Ikenna Okonkwo on behalf of the Andrew Chiugo Okonkwo Memorial Educational Foundation (ACOMEF) welcomes all and sundry to the this Grand Finale of the Second Edition of Secondary Schools Sports Festival in the ancient city of Igbo-Ukwu. During the welcome address of the Maiden edition in 2010, I concluded by saying SEE YOU IN ACOMEF 2011 and when I made that assertion, it looks like it will be in a very distant time but low and behold it is TODAY and we give all the thanks to God Almighty for making this a reality and a success. Aside from welcoming all as a group, please permit me to welcome specially the Deputy Speaker of Anambra State House of Assembly in the person of His Excellency – Hon. Engr. Chukwudi Orizu – MNSE to this occasion and to Igbo-Ukwu. What makes his attendance interesting is not only coming from the Government Angle but that he is my class mate in the University at the Engineering School sharing the same seat in the class room. Your Excellency, on behalf of all our class mates who will be coming for this event and those with us in Spirit and the GREAT AND HOSPITABLE IGBO-UKWU PEOPLE, I say a very big welcome. Also on the list of

Special welcome is Honourable Ikem Uzoezie – Member representing Aguata II Constituency in the State House of Assembly, he is a worthy son of Igbo-Ukwu and we are very happy that he is here today to join in the celebration. Also worthy of mention in our midst is the Executive Director of World Igbo Environmental Foundation Inc. (WIEF) - Engr Dr. Odili Ojukwu who is ably representing the Special Guest of Honour to this Grand Finale in the person of Igbo-Ukwu born USA based Medical Practitioner and literary ICON – Dr. Okenwa R. Nwosu – MD. We appreciate your presence in no small measures.

The 2010 Edition of this Competition Grand Finale took place at this same venue on October 30, 2010 and it was characterized by beehive of activities which included sports and special awards to some Igbo-Ukwu illustrious sons and daughters who have distinguished themselves in their different field of endeavors. This year's event is not going to be different as it promises more and very quality activities. May I also use this opportunity to appreciate the efforts of all the participating schools more especially the Government schools who upon the little set back recorded due to labour dispute in Anambra State sometimes ago were able to bounce back and compete favourably with the rest of the schools. There is something that will continue to be a RECURRENT DECIMAL in our welcome address as long as this programme continues in future by His Grace and it has to do with the re-capping of the aims and objectives of this competition and may I still quickly summarize it as below to include but not limited to –

- (1) Grass root Sports Development for Igbo-Ukwu as a town***
- (2) Engaging the minds of the young ones as a saying that all works and no play makes jack a dull boy***
- (3) Providing entertainment to Igbo-Ukwu indigenes and visitors who will be watching the games as it kicks off and progresses***
- (4) Forming part of school curriculum development***

What we are witnessing today is a culmination of series of sports activities involving games such as football and volleyball played by men and women (sons and daughters of Igbo-Ukwu) in the various accredited football centres in the major villages of Igbo-Ukwu town in the past two weeks. This year's event has also been expanded to accommodate ATHLETICS which was the main mission of ACOMEF to provide a pedestal for all students of Secondary Schools in Igbo-Ukwu to participate in effective competition. The whole idea is that if you are not a footballer, you will be into volleyball or into athletics and with the Educational Schools Challenge sponsored by the same ACOMEF in June of every year; you can also excel in academic programmes in case you are not into sports. By these gestures, ACOMEF have provided avenues for effective engagement of Igbo-Ukwu youths and the surrounding towns. Twelve trophies will be up for grabs today with their attendant medals, various cash prizes to crown the winners of these events and this is courtesy of Andrew Chiugo Okonkwo Memorial Educational Foundation (ACOMEF). Our appeal to all the competing schools is to accept the results in good faith and in the spirit of sportsmanship. If you did not win your desired trophy or did not win at all, please remember that tomorrow is another day. All you need do is to prepare very well next year and you see your team come tops. It is a simple ideology in every sports competition.

This 2011 Edition will also feature some awards as was done last year and top on the award today is the ***GRAND HERITAGE AND ADVOCACY AWARD (GHAAA)*** being given to one of our own – Dr Okenwa R. Nwosu – MD, a USA based Medical Doctor who has had a lot of breakthroughs in the Medical Field, has done much in cultural advocacy of Igbo-Ukwu Culture and Tradition both here in Nigeria and world in general. He is a world acclaimed literary ICON, a motivator of the youths and above all have demonstrated a huge environmental stewardship to the mother earth through the Non-Governmental Organization – World Igbo Environmental Foundation Inc. (WIEF). This award is the highest in terms of rating and value given to anybody by ACOMEF. Please accept our candid congratulations and more grease to your elbows as you strive to affect humanity very POSITIVELY globally. ACOMEF will also in this event present a PLATINUM Merit Award of Excellence to 12 distinguished Igbo-Ukwu indigenes who worked assiduously in both the Education and Sports Committees of Igbo-Ukwu Development Union (IDU) for the four year period of this out-going administration ably piloted by one of the Igbo-Ukwu Administrative gurus of all times in the person of – Chief Rob Ezeife – Aha eji-eje mba 1 of Igbo-Ukwu. A dozen of you have done noble in helping ACOMEF institute and host a classical Educational Challenge and Sports Festival over the past two years. We appreciate you all a great DEAL.

The strong appeal to Igbo-Ukwu Development Union (IDU) to provide a good partnership to cushion the financial burden aspect of the project is still on course. We will appreciate it a great deal and we know that IDU has the capacity to do just that.

In conclusion, it is all going to be appreciation, and appreciation and huge appreciation from ACOMEF for the following groups (a) – *To the Igbo-Ukwu Development Union for giving us the opportunity to sponsor this all important competition for the second time, (b) – to the Principals and Games Masters of the participating schools for providing a very good organization from their various schools angle, (c) – to the competing students and student spectators for their great compliance to the rules and regulations guiding the competition, (d) to all Igbo-Ukwu inhabitants and the environs for providing good followership , good conduct and spectatorship at all match venues, (e) – to the Security Department of IDU for providing the much needed and maximum security at the match venues (f) – to all our special invitees (Deputy Speaker ASHA and Aguata Constituency II Representative) for finding time out of their very busy schedule to grace the occasion, (g) to all the sports officials including the medical team for excellent services delivered (h) to the ACOMEF representative for excellent representation (i) to IDU II for his unalloyed and unquantifiable ROYAL BLESSINGS, may your reign be long Amen!* We thank everybody who in one way or the other may have supported this programme as we cannot remember all as the achievements were also too many. Our joint prayers in ACOMEF is that the God Almighty will replenish your supports a million fold, guide and protect you all back to your various destinations in Jesus Name Amen!. See you next in ACOMEF 2012 by His Grace.

On behalf of the Foundation,

Engr. Ikenna Okonkwo – MNSE