

**SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF AKUGBE ASSOCIATION
DFW INC. DALLAS-FORT WORTH**

Chairman, Traditional chiefs, My fellow presidents, Members of the Cities Council, Senators, Special Invitees, Distinguished guest, Ladies and gentle men. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 1st annual Fund raising event of Akugbe Association of Dallas-Fort Worth. This association was founded 4years ago under the leadership of our formal president Mr. Felix O. Igbini. Our goal is to reach out to the less fortunate ones in our community and Edo state of Nigeria through provision of community awareness programs, adequate health care and educational infrastructures. The true meaning of “Akugbe” is unity. We as members stand by this principle, when there is unity, we can move mountains, with unity there is joy, love and happiness.

Your being here tonight ladies and gentlemen is not by travesty, I do believe every one had other engagement, but choose to honor the invitation extended to you by this association to contribute your quota to humanity. We applaud you for your time and sacrifice.

The theme of this year’s fund raising is “Aids awareness and prevention” in Edo state. HIV / AIDS knows no boundary, it has no respect for Social class, gender or creeds. It does not discriminate between the rich and poor.

Nigeria have a population or over 120 million people , made up of 36 states with over 96 tribal languages, blessed with rich cultural heritage. Majority of the people you see here tonight are of the Edo speaking tribes.

There are increasing spread of HIV/AIDS in African, Especially in Edo state Nigeria, due adopted life style, lack of educational awareness and adjunct poverty. The spread of this disease has reached an alarming stage. Without urgent intervention this pandemic disease could possibly wipe out an entire continent in years to come. We should realize we have one universe with nations s of diverse creeds and culture; we have a global health problem that must be handled as a people, if we are to achieve lasting solution to these global HIV/ AIDS epidemics.

President J.F Kennedy said, we stand today on the edge of new frontier, a frontier of unknown opportunities, frontier of unfulfilled hopes and dreams, with the treats of the HIV/ AIDS. The problem of this world cannot be solved by skeptics or cynics who seat back and procrastinate on obvious realities. We need men and women who can dream of things that never were to save the world of this pandemic disease. I see that tenacity in every one present here tonight.

According to Abraham Lincoln, “All my life I have tried to pluck a thistle and plant a flower wherever a flower will grow in thought and in mind, I soon realize that I cannot do it alone.” It takes the joint ventures of realistic men and women to make this happen. I call on every one present here tonight to assist us morally and financially to make this dream a reality.

People might wondered why Edo states, Edo state was chosen due to lack of educational awareness and knowledge of this catastrophic disease couple with adjunct poverty our people are forced to live with due to lack of help and fore sight by our selfish and corrupt government in Edo State of Nigeria. Majority of the indigenes earn less than \$100.00 a month as their average salary. They are left to choose between their health and

their livelihood. To purchase a condom to protect themselves and their partner is a luxury.

Some people might have the opinion it is not my problem, I do not reside in Edo state, why worry, people with this type of ideology are living in euphoria, this is a wrong approach to problem solving. Nigeria is made up of multi-national who are gainfully employed migrant workers in various oil fields and other industrial sectors. If you are in doubt contact Exxon-Mobil, or shell Petroleum Corporation and obtain data on the number foreign workers they employed in Nigeria and the numbers of Nigeria national currently working for Exxon-Mobil and Shell Corporation in the USA. Majority of these migrant workers may have contracted this deadly disease through social interaction and transmit it to their significant others on return to their home vase.

It is worth mentioning that no one really know how this disease originates, one thing we know for sure is we have a global issues that must be resolved through collective effort, I have a dream that if we as a people can pull our resources together and look beyond national boundaries, race or creed, we can eradicate this deadly disease. I have a dream; some day we can attain this goal.

There is high stigma attached to people inflicted with the HIV/ AIDS in Africa. They are treated as outcast by their love ones; family and friends often abandon them. These people failed to realize that having tested positive for HIV/ AIDS is not an automatic death sentence.

In advanced country “universal precaution” is used when attending to these patients, a term that is well coined. It means we have a global problem that affects the entire universe that must be attended to by everyone in this planet.

According to Senator Edward Kennedy you don't have to make headline to make things change; these are people you may never known or see. I command your commitment to community service, you do not make the world you live in, but you have the chance to change it. It is better to light the candle than to encourage darkness, remember it is the hard work of the past that brought opportunity for the present, give something back to humanity and your community for all it has given you. Please help us fight this pandemic episode of HIV/ AIDS in Edo state. Your financial support is highly solicited.

Lastly, I will not forget to express my deep appreciation to my beautiful wife and children for their support over the years, thanks for the love and inspiration. To my patrons Dr. Samuel Egua, and Mr. Tony Aguebor, Vice president Dr. Lillian Egharevba, Executive council members, fund raising committee and members of this noble association who contributes in various capacity toward the success of this occasion. I appreciate your hard work, and dedicated services to humanity.

To everyone present here tonight, may each of us in our old age perform something worthy to be remembered, dream your dreams and try to live them to the fullest, the greatest disappointment is the sense of not haven't tried. Remember our goal is to raise fund, please donate generously. There are plenty to eat please help your self, remember don't drink and drive. May the almighty god bless us all, long live Akugbe Association Dallas-Fort worth, long live the Bini Kingdom, long live the King OBa gha to kpere, ise