

THE CONSTITUTION OF IJAW NATIONAL CONGRESS

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PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality is the fourth largest ethnic nationality in the Federal Republic of Nigeria and is richly endowed with enormous human and natural resources.

AND WHEREAS, it is imperative for Ijaw People to form a socio-cultural and non-partisan organization for the purpose of protecting, promoting and fostering their cultural heritage, development, advancement, unity and socio-political interest within and outside the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

AND WHEREAS, the Ijaw people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria having firmly and solemnly resolved to regulate and guide the conduct of their affairs by rules agreed upon by them.

DO HEREBY MAKE, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THE FOLLOWING CONSTITUTION:-

ARTICLE 1: ESTABLISHMENT AND NAME OF CONGRESS

There is hereby established a socio-cultural and non-partisan organization to be known as **IJAW NATIONAL CONGRESS (INC)** which is hereinafter referred to simply as the "CONGRESS".

ARTICLE 2: MOTTO OF CONGRESS

The motto of Congress shall be "Leadership by Service".

ARTICLE 3: THE LOGO OF CONGRESS

The Logo of Congress shall be a symbol of crude oil drop at the centre of the red strip of the flag to depict the rich mineral endowments of the Ijaw nation.

ARTICLE 4: FLAG OF CONGRESS

The flag of Congress shall have the following colours blue, red and green in rectangle horizontal configuration of equal strips from top to bottom with the logo of Congress embedded in the red portion thereof.

ARTICLE 5: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF CONGRESS

- i) To protect and promote the cultural heritage of the Ijaw people.
- ii) To defend the rights of the Ijaw people.
- iii) To provide for the articulation and achievement of the interests of the Ijaw people on all issues.
- iv) To foster peace, understanding and unity among the Ijaw people
- v) To foster rapid socio-economic transformation of Ijaw land.
- vi) To conduct research into the problems of our peculiar environment and advise governments in Nigeria on ways and means of effectively addressing our environmental problems.
- vii) To encourage development in education, especially the scientific and technological spheres in Ijaw land.
- viii) To encourage the spirit of self-help and selfless service among the Ijaws.
- ix) To defend and protect the environment from being degraded and to collaborate with local and international organizations for environmental regeneration.
- x) To assist those in need, especially victims of the environment and other natural hazards in the society.
- xi) To cooperate and identify with other organizations whose aims and objectives do not negate those of the Congress.
- xii) To champion, promote and defend the rights of women and children, including the aged and weak persons throughout Ijaw land.
- xiii) To encourage and promote the productive development of Ijaw youths and in particular, to work with Government and Non-Governmental

organizations on the development and implementation of youths' empowerment programmes in Ijaw land.

- xiv) To promote and defend democracy in Nigeria and to collaborate with other socio-cultural and Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) for the purpose of ensuring its realization.
- xv) To promote inter-ethnic understanding among the diverse people of Nigeria.
- xvi) To promote order, peace and good governance in Nigeria.
- xvii) To do all such other things that may be beneficial to all Ijaws

ARTICLE 6: MEMBERSHIP OF CONGRESS

- i) Membership of Congress shall be open to all persons who are Ijaw by birth, naturalization or marriage provided that a man who is married to an Ijaw woman shall not be qualified for membership of Congress by virtue of this provision.
- ii) Subject to paragraph (i) of this Article, any woman married to a person who is Ijaw either by birth or naturalization, shall be qualified for membership of Congress.
- iii) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (i) of this Article, a person who is Ijaw by birth, marriage or naturalization shall not become a member of Congress unless such person has been registered with Congress and has obtained an identification card from Congress as evidence thereof.
- iv) A person who is Ijaw by birth, marriage or naturalization and who fulfils the requirements of paragraph (iii) of this Article, shall be an ordinary member of Congress and shall not be qualified to vote or be voted for at any election of Congress.
- v) An ordinary member of Congress under the provisions of the preceding paragraphs of this Article, who has paid the membership fee and annual subscription as may be prescribed from time to time, shall

qualify as a participating member of Congress and may take part in all activities of Congress including holding any elective office unless otherwise disqualified under the provisions of this Constitution.

- vi) Notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding paragraphs of this Article, no person of Ijaw descent who has not attained the age of forty (40) years shall be eligible to hold office in the Executive or Legislative Organs of Congress at the National tier of Congress

ARTICLE 7: TIER OF CONGRESS

Congress shall have the following tiers of government

- i) National
- ii) Zonal
- iii) Clan
- iv) The Chapter

ARTICLE 8: ORGANS OF CONGRESS

(a) The National Organs of Congress shall be:

- i) The National Convention
- ii) The National Executive Council
- iii) The National Representative Council
- iv) The National Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders

(b) The Zonal Organs of Congress shall be:

- i) The Zonal General Assembly
- ii) The Zonal Executive Committee
- iii) The Zonal Representative Council
- iv) The Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders

(c) The Clan organs of Congress shall be:

- i) The Clan Assembly

- ii) The Clan Executive Committee
- iii) The Clan Traditional Council

(d) The Chapter Organs of Congress shall be:

- i) The Chapter General Meeting
- ii) The Chapter Executive Committee

ARTICLE 9: ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONES AND OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT OF CONGRESS

(a) Zones of Congress:

The following zones of Congress are hereby established

- i) **EASTERN ZONE** with headquarters at Port Harcourt
- ii) **CENTRAL ZONE** with headquarters at Yenagoa
- iii) **WESTERN ZONE** with headquarters at Burutu

(b) Chapter Level of Congress:

- i) There shall be Chapters of the Congress in a town or village which is not within or completely within the recognized Clans of Congress provided that the participating membership of Congress in the town or village is not less than 100 persons.
- ii) Such a town or village where a Chapter is established shall not be wholly indigenous to Ijaw territory.
- iii) Chapters outside the country shall have a minimum of 50 registered participating members.
- iv) All Chapters of Congress shall seek to be registered formally by the National Executive Council.

ARTICLE 10: CLAN LEVEL OF CONGRESS

The following clans / subclans, group of clans are hereby recognized within the three Zones of Congress as listed below and shall each operate as a Clan level of Congress and for this purpose be called a clan.

EASTERN ZONE: Asarama, Ataba, Ngo, Unyeada, Eastern Obolo, Ibeno, Bille, Ibani, Kalabari, Nkoro, Okrika, Opobo, Udekema

CENTRAL ZONE: Abua, Akassa, Apoi, Bassan, Boma, Engenni, Ekpetiama, Epie, Atisa, Gbarain, Iduwini, Kabowei, Kolokuma, Opokuma, Koluama, Nembe, Odual, Ogbia, Ogboin, Ogobiri-Mein, Okordia, Zarama, Buseni, Kou, Olodiana, Oporoma, Oyiakiri, Tarakiri, Kumbo, Tungbo, Kugbo, Gbaraun

WESTERN ZONE: Akugbene-Mein, Apoi, Arogbo, Egbema, Gbaramatu, Iduwini, Isaba, Kabowei, Kumbo, Ngbelebiri-Mein, Obotebe, Ogbe-Ijo, Ogbolubiri-Mein, Ogulagha, Okomu, Gbaraun, Furupagha, Olodiana, Oporomo, Seimbiri, Tarakiri, Tuomo, Diebiri

ARTICLE 11: POWERS OF CONGRESS

- i) The Legislative powers of Congress shall be vested in the National Convention and National Representative Council.
- ii) The Legislative powers of the Zonal tier of Congress shall be vested in the Zonal Representative Council
- iii) The Legislative powers of the Clan tier of Congress shall be vested in the Clan Assembly.
- iv) The Legislative powers of the Chapter tier of Congress shall be vested in the Chapter General Assembly
- v) The Executive powers of the National tier of Congress shall be vested in the National Executive Council
- vi) The Executive powers of the Zonal tier of Congress shall be vested in the Zonal Executive Council

- vii) The Executive powers of the Clan tier of Congress shall be vested in the Clan Executive Council
- viii) The Executive powers of the Chapter tier of Congress shall be vested in the Chapter Executive Council

ARTICLE 12: COMPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE ORGANS OF CONGRESS:

(a) The National Executive Council of Congress shall be composed as follows:

- i) President
- ii) Vice President
- iii) National Secretary
- iv) National Assistant Secretary
- v) National Financial Secretary
- vi) National Publicity Secretary
- vii) National Organizing Secretary
- viii) National Treasurer
- ix) National Legal Adviser
- x) National Auditor
- xi) National Welfare Secretary
- xii) The Chairmen of the Zonal Executive Committees shall be ex-officio members.
- xiii) The immediate past President of the National Executive Council shall be an ex-officio member provided he / she was not removed from office under this Constitution for misconduct.
- xiv) In order to cater for the interest of our border communities namely TORU-IBE, EGBEMA / AROGBO and EASTERN OBOLO / IBENO, members of Congress from these Clans would be encouraged to contest for positions in the National Executive Council of Congress.

(b) The Zonal Executive Committee of Congress shall be composed as follows:

- i) Chairman
- ii) Vice Chairman
- iii) Secretary
- iv) Assistant Secretary
- v) Financial Secretary
- vi) Publicity Secretary
- vii) Organising Secretary
- viii) Treasurer
- ix) Legal Adviser
- x) Auditor
- xi) The immediate past Chairman of the Zonal Executive shall be an ex-officio member provided he / she was not removed from office under this Constitution for misconduct.

(c) The Clan Executive Committee of Congress shall be composed as follows:

- i) Chairman
- ii) Vice Chairman
- iii) Secretary
- iv) Assistant Secretary
- v) Financial Secretary
- vi) Organising / Publicity Secretary
- vii) Treasurer
- viii) Legal Adviser
- ix) Auditor
- x) The immediate past Chairman of the Clan Executive shall be an ex-officio member provided he / she was not removed from office under this Constitution for misconduct.

(d) The Chapter Executive Committee of Congress shall be composed as follows:

- i) Chairman
- ii) Vice Chairman
- iii) Secretary
- iv) Assistant Secretary
- v) Financial Secretary
- vi) Organising / Publicity Secretary
- vii) Treasurer
- viii) Legal Adviser
- ix) Auditor
- x) The immediate past Chairman of the Chapter Executive shall be an ex-officio member provided he / she was not removed from office under this Constitution for misconduct.

ARTICLE 13: COMPOSITION OF LEGISLATIVE ARMS OF CONGRESS

(a) The National Convention of Congress shall be composed as follows:

- i) All members of the National Representative Council
- ii) 100 delegates from each Zone of Congress nominated by the Zonal Executive Committee according to the level of participation of the Clans and Communities within the Zone and approved by the Zonal General Assembly, provided that, no Clan which has paid its capitation fee is left unrepresented.
- iii) All members of registered Chapter Executive Committee
- iv) 5 non-executive members appointed by the Chapter Executive Committee subject to the approval of the Chapter General Meeting.

(b) The National Representative Council of Congress shall be composed as follows:

- i) All members of the National Executive Council
- ii) All members of the Zonal Executive Committee
- iii) All Chairmen, Secretaries and Treasurers of registered Chapter Executive Committee
- iv) 3 non-executive members appointed by the Chapter Executive Committee subject to the approval of the Chapter General meeting.
- v) 15 members appointed from each Zone by the Zonal Executive Committee who shall not be members of the National Executive Council / the Zonal Executive Committee, subject to the approval of the Zonal Representative Councils
- vi) All Leaders and Deputy Leaders of Zonal Representative Councils
- vii) All Chairmen and Secretaries of National Standing Committee of Congress
- viii) All Chairmen and Secretaries of duly registered affiliated groups of Congress
- ix) The members of the Council shall elect a leader of the Council and a Deputy Leader from the appointed members amongst them on their inauguration

(c) The Zonal Representative Council shall be composed as follows:

- i) All members of the National Representative Council from the Zone
- ii) All members of Clan Executive Committee within the Zone
- iii) 3 non-Executive members per clan appointed by each Clan Executive Committee in the Zone subject to the approval of the Clan Assembly
- iv) The members of the Council shall elect a leader and a deputy leader from the appointed members amongst them on their inauguration.

(d) The Zonal General Assembly shall be composed as follows:

- i) All members of the Zonal Representative Council
- ii) 5 members each, appointed from each of the Clans comprising the Zone by the Clan Executive Committee subject to the approval of the Clan Assembly

(e) The Clan Assembly

- i) All members of the Zonal Representative Council from the Clan
- ii) All members of Community Executive Committees within the Clan
- iii) 3 non-Executive members each appointed from each of the Communities comprising the Clan by the Community Executive Committee and approved by the Community General Assembly.

(f) The Chapter General Meeting

All registered members of Congress within a Chapter of Congress shall attend the Chapter General Meeting of Congress.

ARTICLE 14: COMPOSITION OF THE CONFERENCE OF IJAW TRADITIONAL RULERS AND ELDERS AND CLAN TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

(a) The National Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders shall be composed as follows:

- i) All Heads of Clans recognized in Article 10 of this Constitution.
- ii) 15 Elders from each Zone all of whom must have distinguished themselves in public or private life nominated by the Zonal Executive Committee and approved by the National Executive Council.
- iii) Any other Ijaw Traditional Ruler that may be invited by the National Council of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders
- iv) No Elder shall be below the age of 60

- v) The National Executive Council shall service all meetings of the National Council of Traditional Rulers and Elders.

(b) The Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders shall be composed as follows:

- i) All Clan / Subclan Heads within the Zone
- ii) 3 Elders appointed by each Clan Executive Committee within the Zone and approved by the Clan Assembly.
- iii) Any other Ijaw Traditional Ruler that may be invited by the Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders.
- iv) No Elder shall be below the age of 55
- v) The Zonal Executive Council shall service all meetings of the Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders

(c) The Clan Traditional Council

- i) All approved members of the Clan Traditional Council
- ii) The Clan Executive Committee shall service all meetings of the Clan Traditional Council

ARTICLE 15: DUTIES OF OFFICERS OF THE EXECUTIVE ARMS OF CONGRESS:

1. Duties of members of the National Executive Council

(a) The President shall:

- i) Cause the summoning of meetings of the National Executive Council and the National Convention of Congress.
- ii) Preside over meetings of the National Executive Council and the National Convention
- iii) Implement the annual budget of Congress according to the fiscal policy for the year as approved by the National Representative Council

- iv) See to the day to day running of the affairs of Congress in conjunction with the other officers of Congress
- v) Present and articulate the Ijaw position on all national issues as approved by the National Representative Council.
- vi) Present at the National Convention of Congress or at such other intervals as the President may deem necessary a state of the Ijaw Nation Address highlighting the achievements, problems, prospects and future direction of Congress.
- vii) Ensure with the assistance of the National Secretary, National Financial Secretary and National Treasurer the efficient and economic use of the assets and resources of Congress through prudent investments, acquisitions and disposals as may be necessary from time to time, subject however, to the approval of the National Executive Council.
- viii) Perform such other duties as may be in the interest of Congress.

(b) The Vice President shall:

- i) Assist the President in the performance of his / her duties.
- ii) Act as President in the absence of the President
- iii) Perform all the President's duties if the President cannot perform due to mental or physical incapacity, absence from the country or for any other reason whatsoever
- iv) Perform such other duties as may be required of him / her by the President or the National Executive Council.

(c) The National Secretary shall:

- i) Take minutes of all meetings of the National Executive Council, National Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders, National Representative Council and the National Convention.
- ii) Head the Secretariat of Congress and conduct all correspondence

- iii) Summon meetings of all national organs of Congress under the directives of the National President
- iv) Keep a record of and secure all properties of Congress
- v) Be responsible for the recruitment, welfare and discipline of the administrative staff of the National Secretariat of Congress in consultation with the President.
- vi) Write and cause the dispatch of circulars, letters and other correspondence of the National Executive Council and other National Organs of Congress.
- vii) Perform such other duties as may be required of him / her by the President, National Executive or by other National Organs of Congress

(d) The National Assistant Secretary shall:

- i) Assist the National Secretary in the performance of his/her duties
- ii) Act as National Secretary in the absence of the National Secretary
- iii) Perform duties that may be assigned to him / her by the National Secretary

(e) The National Financial Secretary shall:

- i) Compile and keep record of all financial transactions of all National Organs of Congress
- ii) Ensure that all participating registered members of Congress pay their annual subscription to the Congress.
- iii) Render account of such records annually and whenever called upon to do so.
- iv) Prepare and submit to the National Executive Council of Congress an annual budget containing estimated revenue and expenditures of Congress for approval.

- v) Collect and pay all monies of Congress to the National Treasurer not later than three days and keep record of all monies received or due to Congress.
- vi) Advise Congress on the prudent and judicious use of available resources and investment opportunities.
- vii) Perform such other duties as may be required of him / her by the President or the National Executive Council.

(f) The National Publicity Secretary shall:

- i) Conduct the internal and external publicity of Congress.
- ii) Keep a record of all publications concerning Congress and bring such publications to the attention of members of Congress
- iii) Promote a better understanding of the functions of Congress by informing the Ijaws and the general public of the activities of Congress.
- iv) Perform such other duties as may be required of him / her by the President or the National Executive Council.

(g) The National Organising Secretary shall:

- i) Promote the effective operations of Organs of Congress at all levels
- ii) Organize and promote activities of Congress at all levels
- iii) Pursue popular cultural programmes aimed at fostering unity among the Ijaw people.
- iv) Perform such other duties as may be required of him / her by the President or the National Executive Council.

(h) The National Legal Adviser shall:

- i) Advise Congress on all legal matters including the natural and constitutional rights of the Ijaw people.

- ii) Protect and preserve the rights of the Ijaw ethnic nationality within and outside the Nigerian nation state.
- iii) Articulate and pursue legal issues that may concern the Ijaw man and the Ijaw nation in general.
- iv) Defend, uphold and ensure respect for the fundamental human rights of Ijaw people.
- v) Perform such other duties as may be required of him / her by the President or the National Executive Council.

(i) *The National Treasurer shall:*

- i) Receive from the National Financial Secretary all monies collected for Congress or paid to Congress from all sources and pay same into the bank account of Congress not later than three days.
- ii) Keep all monies, cheque books, tellers and other monetary instruments of Congress safely
- iii) Initiate by vouchers all payments to be made by Congress.
- iv) Release money from Congress purse for the running of Congress as approved by the National Representative Council and the National Executive Council.
- v) Render account of such monies annually and whenever called upon to do so.
- vi) Invest the monies of Congress in such investment opportunities as may be approved by the National Executive Council.
- vii) Perform such other duties as may be required of him / her by the President or the National Executive Council.

(j) *The National Auditor shall:*

- i) Audit the accounts of all national organs of Congress annually and whenever called upon to do so.

- ii) Query any money of Congress not properly accounted for by any officer or member of Congress
- iii) Prepare and circulate to every member of the National Executive Council the audited account of Congress for the presiding year.
- iv) Present the auditor's report to the National Convention for approval.
- v) Perform such other duties as may be required of him / her by the President or the National Executive Council.

(k) The National Welfare Secretary shall:

- i) Monitor the welfare and interest of members of Congress
- ii) Bring to the notice of the National Executive Council of Congress any matter concerning the welfare of any member of Congress whether within or outside the Federal Republic of Nigeria with a view to protecting and preserving his /her rights, privileges and welfare
- iii) Be responsible for managing such welfare scheme or programme as may be established by the National Executive Council of Congress.
- iv) Perform such other duties as may be required of him / her by the President or National Executive Council.

2. Duties of members of Zonal / Clan / Chapter Executive Committees;

The Zonal / Clan / Chapter Executive Officers of Congress shall perform the duties as stated in paragraph 1 of this article at their respective levels.

ARTICLE 16: DUTIES OF OFFICERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ARMS OF CONGRESS

(a)The Leader of the National / Zonal Representative Council shall:

- i) Preside over all meetings of the Council.
- ii) Call for debate on any matter brought before the Council.

- iii) Call for resolutions / motions for adoption by the Council during meetings.
- iv) Forward a list of resolutions made and motions passed to the appropriate Organs of Congress for implementation.

(b)The Deputy Leader of the National / Zonal Representative Council shall:

- i) Assist the Leader in the performance of his / her duties
- ii) Act as leader of the National / Zonal Representative Council in the absence of the leader.
- iii) Perform duties that may be assigned to him / her by the leader

ARTICLE 17: FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE ORGANS OF CONGRESS

(a)Executive organs of Congress:

It shall be the function of the National Executive Council / Zonal / Clan / Chapter Executive Committees of Congress to:

- i) Implement the decisions of Congress at their respective levels.
- ii) Uphold and defend the provisions of this Constitution.
- iii) See to the day to day running of Congress at their respective levels.
- iv) Articulate and pursue any policy that will improve and protect the interest of Ijaw people anywhere and at all levels
- v) Take decisions aimed at protecting the Ijaw man and pursue them with individuals, companies, parastatals or any level of government within and outside the Nigerian Nation State.
- vi) Enter into collaborations with individuals, companies, government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the purpose of enhancing the welfare and interest of Ijaw people provided the fundamental interest of Ijaw nation is not compromised.
- vii) The National Executive Council shall service all meetings of the National Convention, National Representative Council and National

Council of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders in any meeting convened at its instance.

ARTICLE 18: STANDING COMMITTEES

1) The following Standing Committees of Congress are hereby established:

- i) Reconciliation Committee
- ii) Human Rights Protection Committee
- iii) Environmental Committee
- iv) Ijaw National Fund Committee
- v) Women Affairs Committee
- vi) Ijaw Cultural Committee
- vii) Business and Economic Development Committee
- viii) Research and Publications Committee
- ix) Committee on Good Governance
- x) Oil, Gas and Mineral Matters Committee
- xi) Manpower Planning and Development Committee
- xii) Youth Affairs Committee
- xiii) Health and Population Committee
- xiv) Information Technology Committee

(a) For the avoidance of doubt, the aforementioned Standing Committees shall operate and be recognized as administrative organs of Congress at the National level.

(b) Membership of Standing Committees:

Every Standing Committee of Congress shall be constituted by the National Executive Council on the recommendation of the Zonal Executive Committees as follows:

- i) Chairman
- ii) Secretary
- iii) 5 other members provided that the Zone not having Chairman or Secretary should have three members

2) Duties of Standing Committees:

(a) RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE:

- (i) To entertain, arbitrate and settle disputes between Clans, Subclans or Communities in Ijaw land with a view to ensuring peaceful resolution of all such disputes and reconciliation of the parties.
- (ii) To represent the Ijaw nation in disputes between Ijaw and non-Ijaws.

(b) HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION COMMITTEE

- i) To defend and champion the legal rights of Ijaw people within and outside the Nigerian state through appropriate legal actions.
- ii) To defend, protect and seek enforcement of the legal rights of individual Ijaws or groups facing acts of oppressions, domination or injustice from Governments, Government agencies, Corporate organisations or individuals.

(c) ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

- i) To study, monitor and appraise the level of environmental degradation in Ijaw land and to proffer solutions thereto.

- ii) To formulate and articulate strategies for the long-term preservation, improvement and regeneration of the environment of the Niger Delta Wetlands.
- iii) To establish a multi-disciplinary body and carry out a complete study of the Niger Delta wetlands and mangrove swamps as well as the outlying territorial waters of the Exclusive Economic Zone.

(d)IJAW NATIONAL FUND COMMITTEE

- i) To harness and mobilize the financial resource of the Ijaw people and create a fund which shall be known as the Ijaw National Fund (INF) which shall be a pool of developmental finance for the Ijaw nation.
- ii) To receive excess funds from all Committees and Organs of Congress and to invest such funds with the approval of the National Executive Council.
- iii) To raise funds by any means approved by Congress for funding the activities of Congress and its Organs and Committees.

(e)WOMEN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- i) To formulate policies and stimulate actions to improve women's civil, political, socio-cultural and economic status in the Ijaw Nation, within and outside Nigeria with particular regard to:
 - Accelerating the pace of women education at all levels;
 - Increasing the quantity and quality of selective job placements for women;
 - Eradicating social and cultural practices against women in the areas of marriage, inheritance, divorce and taxation amongst others;
 - Protecting the rights of women in matters of family planning and reproductive health;
- ii) To promote the full utilization of women in the development of human and material resources, and bring about their acceptance as full

participants in every phase of national development in the Ijaw Nation within and outside Nigeria, with equal rights and corresponding obligations.

- iii) To establish an institute of Women Studies in the Ijaw Nation, charged with the responsibility of undertaking multi-disciplinary studies on women with special emphasis on:
 - The current social, cultural and traditional practices of the various Clans of the Ijaw Nation with a view to documenting them, testing their historical validity, their impact on the development or otherwise of Ijaw Nation and making appropriate recommendations on the desirability or otherwise of such practices.
 - The "status" of the Ijaw women vis-à-vis their counterparts in Nigeria, Africa and the world, and maintain an up-to-date bank on the status of the Ijaw women.

(f) IJAW CULTURAL COMMITTEE

- i) To establish a language centre primarily for carrying out research into Ijaw dialects.
- ii) To develop and establish a common orthography for the Ijaw Nation.
- iii) To establish an Ijaw National Institute, and build an Ijaw National Theatre and Museum with branches in Zones, Clans etc. as appropriate in order to carry out research into Ijaw arts and culture geared towards reviving, refining, sustaining and propagating the culture of Ijaws in all its ramifications.
- iv) To establish a performing Troupe to be called the Ijaw National Troupe together with other organs of dissemination for the purpose of propagating Ijaw culture within and outside the country.

(g) BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- i) Establish a circuit of markets in the Ijaw Nation.

- ii) Establish at least one major industrial estate in each zone of Congress and encourage the development of new towns in the Ijaw land.
- iii) Facilitate and encourage the establishment of branches of reputable banks in major Ijaw towns and cities.
- iv) Encourage and facilitate the establishment of Ijaw Cooperatives in recognized industrial fields in major Ijaw towns and cities.
- v) Encourage and facilitate the establishment of Commercial banks, Merchant Banks and at least one Community Bank in each Clan of Congress all owned and controlled by Ijaws.
- vi) Encourage, empower and sponsor Ijaws;
 - To participate in the running of strategic industries in Nigeria.
 - To take equitable control of the commanding heights of the national economy of the Nigerian Federation.
- vii) To encourage and organize the establishment of common economic activities, transport links, and high frequency interactions between Ijaw persons and Clans.

(h)RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

- i) To initiate, monitor, address and respond to all national discuss on and issues affecting Ijaw Nation.
- ii) Organize research into the history and anthology / ethnography of Ijaw Clans with a view to authenticating and documenting a common history for the Ijaws and in particular, carry out studies into areas where Ijaw Clans are in conflicts with other ethnic nationals with a view to obtaining favourable decisions at any point when such conflicts come for resolution.
- iii) Publish or encourage the publication of literary works and other source materials by Ijaws about Ijaws.

(i) MANPOWER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- i) To ascertain the actual level of manpower / human resources available in Ijaw land and the extent of their utilization.
- ii) To encourage, facilitate and agitate for the establishment of tertiary institutions and training centres in Ijaw land.
- iii) Influence and facilitate the admission of Ijaw sons and daughters into institution of higher learning within and outside Nigeria.
- iv) Create more avenues for the employment of Ijaws in Industries and corporate organizations within and outside Nigeria.
- v) Create and maintain a manpower data bank for the Ijaw ethnic nation.

(j) OIL, GAS AND MINERAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

- i) To ascertain the actual rate / volume / value of crude oil extracted from Ijaw territories from beginning to date and relative to other ethnic nations in Nigeria by the Federal Government of Nigeria.
- ii) To ascertain the volume of oil and other mineral deposits located in the territories of Ijaw Nation.
- iii) To assess and determine the cumulative damage done to the Ijaw ecosystem and environment by oil exploration and exploitation activities and to determine the identity of the Government agencies and corporate entities responsible for such damage.
- iv) To develop and articulate long term solutions to the environmental degradation and hazards occasioned by the exploration and exploitation of oil and gas within Ijaw Nation and to formulate preventive measures against future degradation of the environment arising from the exploration and exploitation of oil and gas in Ijaw land.
- v) To develop strategies geared towards facilitating and ensuring the full participation of the Ijaws in the Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria.

- vi) To ascertain the level of compensation payable to communities / clans and the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality as a whole for the damage occasioned to their environment by Oil and Gas exploration and exploitation by companies and government in accordance with National Legislations and International law and practice, UN Resolutions and International Conventions.
- i) To develop, formulate and articulate a post petroleum survival strategy for the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality.

(k) COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

- i) To ensure that Ijaws who hold public offices in trust for the Ijaws conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the pride and dignity of the Ijaws and the Ijaw Nation.
- ii) To serve as a watchdog over the Ijaw Nation and in particular, over those who hold public offices in the Ijaw land.
- iii) To monitor the operations of Government, its agencies as well as individuals at all levels of government with a view to evaluating performances, encouraging good conduct and exposing inefficiency and abuse of office.
- iv) To ensure that developmental contracts and projects awarded in Ijaw land are executed according to specifications for the overall benefit of Ijaw people.

(I) YOUTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- i) To register all youth bodies and affiliates that operate Pan Ijaw Organizations and whose aims and objectives conform to the aims and objectives of Congress
- ii) To encourage the participation of young persons in the activities of Congress.
- iii) To educate Ijaw youths on the aims and objectives of Congress.

- iv) To encourage programmes and activities aimed at promoting the cultural heritage of Ijaw people among Ijaw youths.
- v) To encourage the celebration of major events in Ijaw land among Ijaw youths under the umbrella of Congress.

(m) HEALTH AND POPULATION COMMITTEE

- i) To take steps to create awareness among Ijaws on National and international policies, trends and practices on population with a view to enhancing the quality of life of Ijaws.
- ii) To enlighten the Ijaws and embark on programmes on modern family planning in collaboration with National and international agencies for that purpose.
- iii) To embark on enlightenment programmes designed to facilitate the prevention of diseases in Ijaw land.
- iv) To embark on programmes designed for combating and controlling outbreak of diseases, in particular, communicable diseases in Ijaw land.
- v) To take measures to create a clean and disease free environment with a view to enhancing the health of the people.
- vi) To ensure that the Ijaw Nation benefit from National and International health programmes

(n) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

- i) Organize enlightenment programmes designed to sensitize Ijaw sons and daughters on the need to acquire skills in Information Communication Technology (ICT).
- ii) Organize training programmes and workshops on ICT.
- iii) Enter into working relationship with manufacturers and marketers of ICT products with a view to providing them to Ijaw sons and daughters at affordable prices.

- iv) Open, operate and run ICT centers to provide training on ICT to Ijaw sons and daughters.

ARTICLE 19: FUNCTIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ORGANS OF CONGRESS

(a) The National Convention shall:

- i) Elect officers of the National Executive Council at a general election.
- ii) Ratify the removal of a member of the National Executive Council as made in accordance with this Constitution.
- iii) Elect a member to fill any office which is vacant in the National Executive Council.
- iv) Receive and adopt the annual report of the National Executive Council
- v) Make recommendations on improvement to the report where there is need.
- vi) Ratify amendments of the Constitution of Congress as proposed by the National Representative Council.
- vii) Appoint, retire, and remove members of the Board of Trustees of Congress on the recommendation of the National Executive Council when the need arises.

(b) The National Representative Council shall:

- i) Provide fora for deliberations on all matters of interest to the Ijaw Nation.
- ii) Approve the annual budget of Congress.
- iii) Monitor and appraise the implementation of the annual budget by the National Executive Council.
- iv) Summon any officer of any national organ of Congress to explain any matter connected with his / her efficiency or loyalty in the performance of his / her duties.
- v) Remove any member of the executive arm of Congress as provided for by this Constitution.

- vi) Recommend worthy Ijaw sons and daughters who have distinguished themselves in various fields for Ijaw National Honours.
- vii) Approve the programme of activities of the National Convention for each year.
- viii) Discuss and adopt resolutions on any matter of urgent interest to the Ijaw Nation.
- ix) Initiate issues and mandate any organ of Congress to tackle such issues in the interest of all Ijaws with anybody or group of persons or governments, parastatals and companies within and outside Nigerian.

(c) The Zonal Representative Council shall:

- i) Provide fora for the exchange of ideas and the articulation of the position of Ijaws within the Zone on all issues.
- ii) Approve the annual budget of the Zone and monitor / appraise the implementation of same by the Zonal Executive Committee.
- iii) Monitor and appraise the implementation of Congress projects cited within the Zone
- iv) Initiate issues and mandate any arm, or organ of Congress to tackle such issues with anybody at any level or arm/organ of government within the Zone in the interest of all Ijaws.
- v) Identify problems facing communities in the Zone with a view to solving them where possible or passing information to the national organs of Congress for action.
- vi) Remove a member of the Zonal Executive Committee as provided for by this Constitution.
- vii) Approve the programme of activities of the Zonal General Assembly for each year.
- viii) Recommend appointment of persons into organs of Congress as may be authorized by this Constitution.

(d) National / Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders / Clan Traditional Council shall:

- i) Act as an advisory body to the National / Zonal / Clan Executive Council / Committee
- ii) Consciously work for the preservation, sustenance and promotion of Ijaw culture and heritage.
- iii) Work for the peaceful co-existence of the Ijaws and their neighbours.
- iv) Appoint the members of Electoral Committees on the recommendations of the National / Zonal / Clan Executive Council / Committee as the case may be.
- v) Settle disputes arising from elections.
- vi) Consciously defend the inalienable rights of Ijaws to their territories / homelands; *and that No Ijaw Traditional Ruler / Elder shall have the right to concede any portion of Ijaw land to anybody or group of persons; for they hold the portion of Ijaw land under their Clans and Subclans only in trust for the Ijaw people as a whole.*
- vii) Advise the National Executive Council and all other organs of Congress on matters relating to the cultural heritage and good governance of Ijaw people.
- viii) Liaise with other Traditional Rulers / Elders within the Nigerian Nation State to influence decisions in Nigeria in the interest of Ijaw people.

(e) The Zonal General Assembly / Clan Assembly / Chapter General Meeting

- i) Receive briefing on the activities of the different organs of Congress at their respective levels.
- ii) Elect officers of their respective Executive organs.
- iii) Receive and adopt the reports of the Zonal / Clan / Chapter Executive Committees.
- iv) Transact any other business as may be expedient.

ARTICLE 20: QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT INTO ORGANS OF CONGRESS

A member of Congress shall be eligible to be appointed or elected into organs of Congress provided:

- i.) He / she have not been officially adjudged to be bankrupt.
- ii.) He / she have not been convicted for an offence involving dishonesty by a court of competent jurisdiction in Nigeria and abroad.
- iii.) He / she has not been removed from office by the National Convention
- iv.) He / she is not insane.
- v.) In addition, he / she shall fulfill the following conditions:

(a) National Executive Council:

- i) Must have been a participating member of Congress for at least twelve (12) calendar months before election
- ii) Must have attained at least 40 years of age at the time of election provided that the participating member is not a member of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC)
- iii) Must be sponsored by the Zone or Chapter where he / she is a registered member
- iv) Must be presented for election by at least thirty (30) participating members from each Zone.
- v) Must have had senior school certificate or its equivalent.
- vi) Must fulfill all other requirements laid down by the National Electoral Committee of Congress.

(b) Zonal Executive Committee

- i) Must have been a participating member of Congress for at least twelve (12) calendar months before election

- ii) Must have attained at least 35 years of age at the time of election provided that the participating member is not member of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC)
- iii) Must be sponsored by the Community where he / she is a registered member.
- iv) Must be presented for election by at least ten (10) participating members from each Clan comprising the Zone.
- v) Must have had senior school certificate or its equivalent.
- vi) Must fulfill all other requirements laid down by the Zonal Electoral Committee of Congress.

(c) Clan Executive Committee

- i) Must have been a participating member of Congress for at least six (6) calendar months before election
- ii) Must have attained the age of 25 years of age at the time of election
- iii) Must be sponsored by the Community where he / she is a registered member.
- iv) Must be presented for election by at least ten (10) participating members of Congress from each registered Community within the Clan.
- v) Must fulfill all other requirements laid down by the Clan Electoral Commission of Congress.

(d) Chapter Executive Committee

A member of Congress who has fulfilled his / her financial obligations to Congress shall be qualified to hold any office or position of Congress at the Chapter level.

(e) National / Zonal Representative Council:

To be qualified for appointment or election into these bodies, a member:

- i) Must have been a participating member of Congress for at least Twelve (12) calendar months.
- ii) Must have attained the age of 35 years of age at the time of appointment / election
- iii) Must be sponsored by the Zone / Clan where he / she is a registered member.

ARTICLE 21: ZONING

- i.) The composition of the National Organs of Congress including the Standing Committees and adhoc committees of Congress at the national tier of Congress and the conduct of the affairs of Congress at the National Level shall be carried out in such manner as to reflect the character of Congress as comprising of three Zones and the need to promote the unity and cohesion of Congress and thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from any particular Zone in the National organs of Congress including its Standing and Adhoc Committees.
- ii.) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph "i" of this Article, every National Organs of Congress shall have at least one member from each Zone of Congress.
- iii.) The President or Chairman of the Executive Organ of Congress under this Constitution shall not come from the same Zone or Clan with the Leader of the Legislative Organ of Congress established under this Constitution.
- iv.) The President and Vice President, President and National Secretary or Vice President and National Secretary of the National Executive Council of Congress as the case may be shall not be produced by the same Zone at any election under this Constitution.

- v.) The Leader of the National Representative Council and the National Secretary of the National Executive Council of Congress shall not be produced by the same Zone at any election under this Constitution.
- vi.) The Chairman and Vice Chairman, Chairman and Secretary or Vice Chairman and Secretary of the Zonal Executive Committee of Congress shall not be produced by the same Clan at any election under this Constitution.

ARTICLE 22: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

A member of Congress shall be guilty of gross misconduct if he / she:

- i) Refuses to perform duties assigned to him / her by any arm, organ or body of Congress without a reasonable explanation.
- ii) Conducts himself / herself in a manner likely to cause a breach of the peace or disaffection among members during any meeting of any Organ of Congress.
- iii) Make false representation to obtain favour from any Organ of Congress or from any other body, government or its agencies in the name of the Congress.
- iv) Fails to pay any of the prescribed fees of Congress for six (6) consecutive months or six months after they fall due for payment
- v) Fails, refuses or neglects to pay any money collected on behalf of Congress within a reasonable time without a reasonable explanation.
- vi) Holds a meeting purported to be a meeting of any Arm, Organ or body of Congress without complying with the provisions of this Constitution.
- vii) Forms a rival Ijaw Organization to the Congress or belongs to such a body.
- viii) Sells out the secrets of Congress to anybody or group of persons with a view to sabotaging Congress.

- ix) Receives gratification from anybody, group of persons, governments or their agencies in Nigeria or abroad in the name of the Congress without disclosing same to Congress.
- x) Betrays the aims and objectives of Congress as contained in this Constitution.
- xi) Diverts Congress money or property to personal use without authorization.
- xii) Conducts himself / herself in a manner likely to split or factionalize Congress.
- xiii) Neglects, refuses or fails to act efficiently in the conduct or performance of the duties of an office which he / she holds in Congress.
- xiv) Fails to resign after taking up a position in a political party.

ARTICLE 23: SANCTIONS FOR GROSS MISCONDUCT

Any member of Congress who is alleged to have breached any of the provisions of Article 22 of this Constitution if found liable shall be:

- i) Suspended from all activities of Congress for a specified period or
- ii) Barred from holding any office in any arm of Congress for life or indefinitely or for a period not less than three (3) years or
- iii) If such a member is holding any office as a member of an organ of Congress at any level he / she shall be removed from that office.

ARTICLE 24: REMOVAL OF A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE FROM OFFICE

A member of the Executive Arm of Congress shall be removed from office when he / she is found to have offended any of the provisions of Article 22 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 25: PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL OF A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE FOR GROSS MISCONDUCT

(a) A member of the Executive Organ of Congress shall be removed from office if he/she is found guilty of gross misconduct as defined under Article 22 of the Constitution as follows:

i) A petition in writing stating the allegations against the officer signed by at least five (5) participating members of Congress (or in the case of a Zonal Officer by three (3) participating members of Congress) shall be forwarded to the Leader of the National Representative Council or Zonal Representative Council as the case may be.

(b) Without prejudice to Article 25(a)(i), if the members of the Executive Council of Congress believe that an officer of the Executive has committed acts that amount to gross misconduct, the Executive Council shall.

(i) Set-up an ad-hoc Committee to look into the acts and the Committee shall report back to the Executive within seven days.

ii) If satisfied that gross misconduct has been established, a letter listing all the allegations against the Officer shall be forwarded to him / her requesting the Officer to respond to the allegations and show why he / she should not be disciplined within seven days.

iii) Where the Officer fails to respond or his / her response is not satisfactory, the Executive Council, by 2/3 majority of members sitting, may pass a resolution to suspend the officer pending the outcome of the National Representative Council's determination under (b)(iv) of this Article.

- iv) The National Executive Council shall forward the letter stating all the allegations as a petition to the National Representative Council for action.
- v) Without prejudice to Article 25 (c) (i-x), the National Representative Council may approve the suspension / removal of the Executive member if 2/3 majority of members are satisfied with the petition of the National Executive Council.

(c) On receipt of a petition,

- (i) The Leader of the National / Zonal Council shall within 21 days of receipt of the petition set up an investigating panel made up of not less than five members to investigate the allegations.
- ii) The investigating panel shall forward a copy of the petition to the member in question requesting for a response thereto within seven days.
- viii) The investigating panel shall then forward letters to all concern informing them to appear before it on a specified date with all necessary evidence.
- iv) The investigating panel shall take evidence from all concern and make a report back to the National/Zonal Representative Council within 60 days from the date of Constitution of the investigating panel.
- v) If the officer against whom the petition is made refuses to appear before the panel on proof that he / she was given notice of the sittings of the panel, the panel shall take evidence and make its report in his / her absence.
- vi) The National /Zonal Representative Council shall consider the report of the investigating panel and take a decision within 28 days of receipt of the report whether the officer appears before it or not.
- vii) The decision of the National /Zonal Representative Council shall be by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of members present and voting.

- viii) If the officer so removed is the National President / Zonal Chairman, the Vice President / Vice Chairman shall act as President / Chairman pending the election of a President / Chairman by the National Convention / General Assembly next holding after ratifying the removal.
- ix) If the officer so removed is any other member of the National / Zonal Executive Council / Committee, the National President / Zonal Chairman shall appoint any member of the Executive Council / Committee to perform the duties of the vacant office until the vacancy is filled by the National Convention / General Assembly next holding after ratifying the removal.
- x) Any officer elected to fill a vacancy shall only complete the remaining term of his / her predecessor in office.

(d) *Clan / Chapter Executive Committees:*

A member of a Clan / Chapter Executive Committee of Congress shall be removed from office:

- i.) When a petition containing the allegations against him / her is delivered to the Clan Assembly / Chapter meeting.
- ii.) The Clan Assembly / Chapter General Meeting shall deliberate on the allegations and take a decision on the matter within 14 days.
- iii.) The decision taken by a simple majority of members present and voting shall be final.

ARTICLE 26: REMOVAL OF A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL / ZONAL REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

A member of the National / Zonal Representative Council of Congress shall be removed from office, if the member:

- i) Offends any of the provisions of Article 22 of this Constitution.
- ii) Absents himself / herself from three consecutive meetings of the Representative Council without a reasonable explanation
- iii) Conducts himself / herself in a manner that will disqualify him / her from holding a post in the National Executive Council / Zonal Executive Committee of Congress.
- iv) The procedure for removing a member of the Executive Council shall be adopted in removing a member of the Representative Council.

ARTICLE 27: REMOVAL OF A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL / ZONAL CONFERENCE OF IJAW TRADITIONAL RULERS AND ELDERS

A member of the National / Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders shall hold office for life unless:

- i.) He / she is found guilty of any of the provisions of Article 22 of this Constitution by the National / Zonal Representative Council.
- ii.) He / she resign voluntarily.
- iii.) He / she refuse to show interest in the activities of Congress.
- iv.) He / she is lawfully dethroned as a Traditional Ruler.

ARTICLE 28: TENURE OF OFFICE OF ORGANS OF CONGRESS

(a) The following shall be the tenure of office of members of Organs of Congress:

- i) National Executive Council – 4 years.
- ii) Zonal Executive Council – 4 years.
- iii) Clan / Chapter Executive Council – 3 years.
- iv) National / Zonal Representative Council – 3 years.
- v) National / Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders – for life.
- vi) Standing Committee – 4 years.

- (b) No member of the National Executive Council, Zonal / Clan / Chapter Executive Committee shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office under this Constitution.

ARTICLE 29: MEETING OF CONGRESS

The organs of Congress shall meet as follows:

- i.) National Executive Council shall meet at least once a month.
- ii.) Zonal Executive Council shall meet at least once a month.
- iii.) Clan / Chapter Executive Committee shall meet at least once a month.
- iv.) National Representative Council shall meet at least four times a year.
- v.) Zonal Representative Council shall meet at least four times a year.
- vi.) National /Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders shall meet at least twice a year.
- vii.) Clan Assembly shall meet at least 2 times a year.
- viii.) Chapter General Meeting once a month.
- ix.) National Convention once a year
- x.) Zonal General Assembly once a year.
- xi.) All organs of Congress shall hold emergency or special meetings whenever necessary.

ARTICLE 30: FINANCE

Congress shall raise funds from the following sources:

- i) Identification, participation and subscription fees from members.
- ii) Capitation dues from Zones, Clans and Chapters.
- iii) Donations.
- iv) Profits from investment by Congress.
- v) Proceeds from fund raising activities.
- vi) Any other sources as may be approved by the National Convention or Zonal / Clan Assemblies or Chapter General Meeting.

ARTICLE 31: BANK ACCOUNT

(a) The following organs of Congress shall operate bank accounts each as approved by their legislative organs:

- i) The National Executive Council
- ii) Zonal Executive Committees
- iii) Clan Executive Committees
- iv) Chapter Executive Committees
- v) All Standing Committees

(b) Signatories to Account:

- i) The President / Chairman and the Secretary or the Treasurer shall be signatories to bank accounts.
- ii) In the absence of the President / Chairman, the Secretary together with the Treasurer shall sign all cheques.
- iii) The Chairman and Secretary of a Standing Committee shall be signatories to Committee bank accounts.

ARTICLE 32: ELECTIONS, DISPUTES AND RESIGNATION

(a) Elections into organs of Congress shall be conducted as follows:

- i) Elections into the National Executive Council shall be conducted by an eleven-member National Electoral Committee appointed by the National Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders.
- ii) At the Zonal level by a seven-member Electoral Committee appointed by the Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders.
- iii) At the Clan level by a five-member Clan Electoral Committee appointed by the Clan Assembly.
- iv) At the Chapter level by a three-member Electoral Committee appointed by the General Meeting.

- v) The National / Zonal / Clan / Chapter Electoral Committees shall stipulate and have their legislative arms approved guidelines for elections each year elections shall hold.

(b)Disputes

All disputes arising from elections shall be resolved as follows:

- i) National / Zonal Executive Council / Committee – by an ad-hoc Committee of 5 members of the National / Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders set up for that purpose by the Conference on receipt of a petition to that effect and that the decision of the ad-hoc Committee shall be final.
- ii) Clan Executive Committee – by an ad-hoc Committee of 5 members of the Clan Traditional Council set up for that purpose by the Traditional Council on receipt of a petition to that effect and that the decision of the ad-hoc Committee shall be final.
- iii) Chapter Executive Committee - by an ad-hoc Committee of 5 members set up for that purpose by the National Executive Council on receipt of a petition to that effect and that the decision of the ad-hoc Committee shall be final.

(c)Resignation:

A member of Congress holding any office may resign by delivering a letter of resignation to the head of the organ of Congress in which he / she is serving. In the event of the head of the organ wishing to resign, he / she may deliver the letter to the Secretary.

ARTICLE 33: INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL / ZONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A new National / Zonal Executive of Congress shall be inaugurated as follows:

- i) The Electoral Committee shall send out letters of invitation to all persons concerned 7 days after the election.
- ii) The letter shall state that the inauguration shall take place on a date not later than 30 days after the elections.
- iii) The inauguration shall be conducted by the National / Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders, the National / Zonal Representative Council and members of the immediate past Executive Council / Committee.
- iv) The inauguration meeting shall be presided over by one of the Traditional Rulers present chosen by the Traditional Rulers and Elders.
- v) The oath of office shall be administered on the Executive members-elect by the traditional ruler presiding.
- vi) Members of the outgoing Executive Council or Committee shall brief and hand over all properties of Congress to their successors not later than 7 days after inauguration.

ARTICLE 34: POWER TO ESTABLISH INSTITUTIONS

Congress shall have the power to establish in Ijaw land the following institutions:

- i) Educational, social and cultural institutions at all levels.
- ii) Economic and commercial institutions of all kinds.
- iii) Agricultural and industrial institutions of all types.
- iv) Media organs.

ARTICLE 35: POWER TO ACQUIRE LANDED PROPERTIES

Congress shall have the power to own, lease or acquire landed properties to achieve its aims and objectives anywhere in Ijaw land and in and outside the country.

ARTICLE 36: AFFILIATION

(a) Congress may be affiliated to any

- i) Similar organization(s) within the country.
- ii) Similar organization(s) in Africa.
- iii) Similar organization(s) in the Commonwealth.
- iv) Relevant Agencies of the United Nations Organization.
- v) Body or bodies or organizations established for the preservation and protection of human rights, the environment and mankind anywhere in the world.

(b) Other organizations within the Ijaw nation which share the aspirations of Congress shall be deemed to be affiliated to Congress if they:

- i) Apply in writing to the National Executive Council of the Congress.
- ii) Collect and fill all relevant forms designed by the National Executive Council for that purpose.
- iii) Pay all affiliation fees prescribed by the National Executive Council.
- iv) Obtain the prescribed Affiliation Certificate duly signed by the President and National Secretary.

ARTICLE 37: QUORUM FOR MEETINGS

The quorum for meetings of all organs of Congress shall be as follows:

- i) National Executive Council $\frac{1}{2}$ of total membership.
- ii) Zonal Executive Committee $\frac{1}{2}$ of total membership.
- iii) Clan / Chapter Executive Committee $\frac{1}{2}$ of total membership.
- iv) National / Zonal Representative Council $\frac{1}{2}$ of total membership.
- v) National / Zonal Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders $\frac{1}{3}$ of total membership.
- vi) National Convention $\frac{2}{3}$ of total delegates.
- vii) Zonal General Assembly $\frac{2}{3}$ of total delegates.

- viii) Clan Assembly ½ of total delegates.
- ix) Chapter General Meeting ½ of total membership.

ARTICLE 38: BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- (a) There shall be established for Congress a Board of Trustees of 9 members made up of 3 members from each Zone nominated by the National Executive Council and approved by the National Convention.
- (b) A member of the Board of Trustees shall hold office for life unless the member:
 - i) Retires as a Trustee Voluntarily.
 - ii) Is officially adjudged bankrupt.
 - iii) Is convicted for an offence involving dishonesty by a court of competent jurisdiction in Nigeria or abroad.
 - iv) Becomes insane.
- (c) The Trustees shall be registered under part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Decree 1990.
- (d) Functions of Board of Trustees:
 - i) The Trustees shall apply to be registered under the Companies and Allied Matters Decree 1990, and shall upon registration be known as the Registered Trustees of the Congress.
 - ii) The Trustees shall become a body corporate by the name described in the certificate, and shall have perpetual succession and a Common Seal.
 - iii) The Trustees shall have the power to sue and be sued in the corporate name as Trustees and shall hold in trust, and acquire, transfer, assign or otherwise dispose of any property or interests therein belonging to, or held for the benefit of the Congress in such manner and subject to

such restrictions and provisions as the Trustees might without registration, hold or acquire, transfer, assign or otherwise dispose of the same for the purposes of the Congress.

- iv) Where the Congress is desirous for changing or altering its name or objectives or any of them, the Trustees shall apply to the Corporate Affairs Commission in the prescribed form setting out the alterations desired and attaching a copy of the resolution approving the change and duly certified by the Trustees.
- v) The Trustees shall not earlier than 30th June or later than 31st December each year (other than the year of registration) submit to the Corporate Affairs Commission a return showing, among other things, the name of the Congress, the names, addresses and occupation of the Trustees, and members of the National Executive Council, particulars of any land held by the Trustees during the year, and of any changes which have taken place in the Constitution of the Congress during the preceding year. If the Trustees fail to comply with this section, they shall be liable to a fine of ₦5.00 for each day during which the default continues.
- (e) Subject to the provision of this Constitution, the National Executive Council shall forward to the Trustees as it shall deem fit and proper, issues affecting the Congress for their consideration and advice.
- (f) The powers vested in the Trustees shall be exercised subject to the directions of the National Executive Council or National Convention.

ARTICLE 39: THE COMMON SEAL OF CONGRESS

Congress shall have a Common Seal which shall be:

- i) Round and circular in shape with the inscription "Ijaw National Congress" written in Capital letters.
- ii) Embedded at the centre with the symbol of the Congress.
- iii) The Common Seal shall be in the custody of the National Secretary.

- iv) The Common Seal of Congress shall be caused to be affixed unto every important document signed by the Congress.

ARTICLE 40: IJAW NATIONAL HONOURS

- i) The National Executive Council of Congress shall on the recommendation of the National Representative Council and the National Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders confer Ijaw National Honours on worthy Ijaw sons and daughters who have distinguished themselves or excelled in any field of human endeavour in a way that must have benefited the Ijaw Nation.
- ii) The Honours shall be bestowed on Ijaw sons and daughters at National Conventions.

ARTICLE 41: IJAW NATIONAL DAY

The National Executive Council shall on the recommendation of the National Representative Council and the Conference of Ijaw Traditional Rulers and Elders set aside one day in the year as Ijaw National Day which shall be celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the Ijaw Nation.

ARTICLE 42: POWER TO MAKE RULES AND REGULATIONS / STANDING ORDERS

- i) All organs of Congress shall have the power to make rules and regulations or formulate standing orders to regulate their proceedings.
- ii) Such Standing Orders / Rules and Regulations shall not supersede or detract from the objectives of Congress or this Constitution and that where there is conflict, the Standing Order / Rule shall be null and void.

ARTICLE 43: POWER TO ESTABLISH AD-HOC COMMITTEES

- i) All organs of Congress at all levels of administration shall have the power to establish committees to look into or perform specified duties.
- ii) Such committees shall stand dissolved at the completion of their assignments.

ARTICLE 44: AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

An amendment of any Article of this Constitution shall be made when:

- i) A proposal stating reasons for the amendment and the proposed amendment signed by at least 30 members from each Zone of Congress is forwarded to the Leader of the National Representative Council.
- ii) The Leader of the Council shall forward the proposal to the National Secretary of Congress who shall cause adequate copies of the proposed amendment to be distributed to all members of National Representative Council.
- iii) The proposed amendment shall be fixed in the next agenda of the National Representative Council for consideration.
- iv) A resolution to the effect that the proposed amendment be made shall be passed by a 2/3 majority of members of the National Representative Council present and voting.
- v) The National Convention next holding shall ratify the amendment and pass a motion to that effect by simple majority.

ARTICLE 45: CITATION AND COMMENCEMENT

This Constitution being the Constitution of the Ijaw National Congress 1993 as amended by resolution of the Patani Convention of Saturday, February 10, 1996 and as further amended by the resolution of the Yenagoa Convention of Saturday, January 10, 2009 which shall be cited as **The Constitution of Ijaw**

National Congress, 2009 and shall be deemed to have come into effect on 10th January, 2009.

PROFESSOR KIMSE OKOKO

President, Ijaw National Congress (INC)

Z. ADANGO ESQ.

National Legal Adviser /
Secretary Constitution Review
Committee, Ijaw National
Congress (INC)