

CONSTITUTION OF OGUTA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (USA)

SECTION ONE

Name:

The association shall be known and referred to as the Oguta National Association (USA).

SECTION TWO

Purpose:

The primary objectives of the association are:

- 2.1 To support development efforts aimed at improving lives of people in Oguta and in the U.S.A.
- 2.2 To promote unity among Oguta Ameshi sons and daughters residing in the U.S.A.
- 2.3 To promote, preserve and teach our children Oguta Ameshi traditions and cultures.
- 2.4 To create a forum for celebrating Oguta culture and traditions.
- 2.5 To encourage, promote and assist all regions where Oguta Ameshi indigenes reside to form regional associations.
- 2.6 To assist members in times of need as deemed appropriate by the association.

SECTION THREE

State of Incorporation:

- 3.1 The association shall be registered in Atlanta, Georgia as a non-profit organization.

SECTION FOUR

Membership:

Qualification for Membership

- 4.1 Membership to the association shall be open to Oguta Ameshi indigenes (if either parent is an indigene), by their 18th birthday, by marriage to an Oguta indigene and, open to all who would like to join.

Admission:

- 4.2 There shall be a one-time registration fee paid by all members (at the time of their application for membership). The amount shall be proposed by the executive committee and passed by a majority vote at the general meeting.

Annual Dues:

- 4.3 Annual dues (\$50/individual, \$100/couple) shall be paid by all members 18 years of age and over.

Termination of Membership:

- 4.4 A member may terminate his or her membership of the association in writing to the National President.
- 4.5 A member may also be terminated/expelled from the association for misconduct – engaging in illegal conduct (defined by the US constitution), failure to pay 75% of dues in a calendar year, disruptive behaviors during the association’s business ... etc.

Readmission:

- 4.6 A member may be readmitted based on the recommendation of the executive committee and the approval of the general membership at a general meeting, only if that member was expelled for disciplinary reasons.
- 4.7 In the case of section 4.4, membership shall be reinstated based on the approval of the President when that member satisfies his/her financial obligations prior to termination of membership.

SECTION FIVE

Association Officers:

The association shall elect the following officers to oversee its affairs:

- 5.1 National President
5.2 National Vice President
5.3 National Secretary General
5.4 National Financial Secretary
5.5 National Treasurer
5.6 National Provost
5.7 National Public Relations Director
5.8 National Social Affairs/Protocol Chairperson
5.9 National Auditors (3)

5.10 National Special Project Committee Chairs

SECTION SIX

Election of National Association Officers:

6.1 Any member of the association who is eligible to vote may nominate another member as a candidate for elective office. Not more than three candidates shall be nominated for each position. To be valid, another eligible member must second that nomination. A nominee may decline a nomination only once without explanation and may make a short speech if he/she accepts such nominations to outline his/her agenda for the association. Nominees may be required to answer no more than two questions from members present. Such questions shall be submitted to the chief returning officer prior to the voting. Every election shall be held on Day 2 of the national convention on the election year. One chief returning officer and two assistants shall conduct elections.

6.2 Voting:

Members eligible to vote and present may cast their vote by secret ballot. Each voting member shall cast only one vote for each position. The nominee with the highest number of votes counted shall assume the responsibility of that office.

SECTION SEVEN

Tenure of Office:

7.1 Elected officers shall hold office for a period of two (2) years commencing from the date of the election. The past officers shall ensure that the new administration is handed over power at the close of business on the election day.

7.2 An officer may be re-elected to the same position as many times as possible.

SECTION EIGHT

Removal from Office:

8.1 Any elected official shall be removed from office only by a simple majority vote of no confidence by the general body during a convention. The President shall appoint a replacement pending a general election. In the case of the President, the Vice-President shall assume the responsibilities and duties of the President until the next general election. He/she shall then appoint a replacement for the post of the Vice-President to be approved by a simple majority vote of the executive members.

SECTION NINE

Resignation from Office:

- 9.1 An officer wishing to resign may do so in writing to the National President. The President shall in turn appoint a replacement for that position for the remaining period of the term of office.

SECTION TEN

Officers and their Duties:

10.1 National President

- The President, as the chief executive officer of the association, shall preside over the general and executive committee meetings.
- Sign all deliberations before they become laws. The President can veto a bill, which can only be over-ridden by a two-third majority of the House.
- The President has no voting rights but shall cast only the tie-breaking votes at both the executive and general meetings.
- Shall over-see the affairs of the association and may delegate duties to the officers and members of the association.
- The President or his/her nominee shall represent the association at external functions.
- Shall deliver the state-of-the-association report at every general meeting and shall be expected to answer questions about the report from members.

10.2 National Vice President

- The National Vice President shall "preside" over the different committees set up to deal with special projects.
- He/she shall assist the National President in running the affairs of the association.
- In the absence of the National President, the National Vice-President shall assume all the rights, responsibilities, privileges and duties of the National President.
- He/she shall be notified of plans and details of the national convention.
- The Vice President shall report to the National President.

10.3 National Secretary General

- The National Secretary General shall, in addition to keeping the minutes of the association's meetings, also:
- Ensure the accuracy of the association's deliberations.
- Preside over both the executive and general meetings in the absence of the National President and the National Vice-President.
- Maintain current mailing lists of the association membership.
- Ensure that information goes out to members in a timely manner, e.g. general meetings, lottery information, etc.

- Ensure that all non-association related news and correspondences to members and outsiders get the approval of the National President before they are disseminated.
- Monitor the assets of the association by good record keeping.
- Authorize the use or lending out of the association's properties. He/she must give the President a courtesy notification before (or shortly after) the authorization is granted. Any damage to rented/borrowed property shall be the responsibility of the borrower(s).

10.4 National Financial Secretary

- The National Financial Secretary shall collect all funds due and payable to the association and maintain good accounting records of all such transactions.
- Issue receipts for cash transactions, which shall then be forwarded to the National Treasurer.
- Transfer all monies received on behalf of the association to the National Treasurer as soon as possible or within ten (10) working days of such transaction.
- Maintain a good accounting record of all the association's assets and property.

10.5 National Treasurer

- The National Treasurer shall maintain custody of the association's assets.
- He/she shall co-sign all checks issued by the association.
- Prepare an annual budget with the help of the National Financial Secretary to be presented during the general meeting.
- Receive written authorization from the National Secretary General for the use of the association's assets/property before their release and shall notify the National Secretary General when they are returned.

10.6 National Provost

- The National Provost shall ensure that orderly conduct is maintained during the association's meetings and functions, and shall call the meetings to order.
- Shall assist the National President in ensuring that the national convention sites are chosen and authorized, at least, six (6) months before the convention.
- Shall ensure that members or visitors that exhibit inappropriate behaviors during the association's business are escorted out. Such behavior will include but not limited to; unauthorized speeches, interference in the conduct of the association's business and the use of inappropriate and foul language.
- The National Provost must first recognize any member wishing to make a speech during deliberations before that member takes the floor (in the absence of a master-of-ceremony).
- Regional provosts will be under his/her direction of the National Provost during national deliberations.
- He/she shall announce /introduce the National President to the master of ceremony during functions.
- Shall ensure that all fines on members are collected and forwarded to the National Financial Secretary.

10.7 National Public Relations Director

- The National Public Relations Director shall maintain a current list of the association’s membership and endeavor to compile a comprehensive list of all Oguta Ameshi indigenes in diaspora.
- He/she would be responsible for ensuring that the association’s announcements, with the coordination of program planners, are distributed to the association members.
- Shall periodically forward the updated membership list to the National Secretary General.
- He/she shall be the spokesperson of the association on press release issues and communications with the general public.
- He/she shall gather relevant information from the U.S. and Nigeria on development projects in Oguta Ameshi and present his/her findings and recommendations to the executive committee.
- He/she shall be responsible for arranging local newspapers, radio and television media to provide coverage for national events.
- Shall investigate, develop and recommend projects to be handled by the association.
- Shall liaise with the Presidents of local chapters in the U.S. on national issues affecting their chapters and formulate strategies to resolve those issues.

10.8 National Special Project Committee Chairs

- The National President shall appoint Special National Project Committee Chairs, as needed, with the approval of the national executive committee.
- These Special Project Committees shall investigate project proposals, projected cost, accountability issues, etc. and report back to the President.
- All projects to be embarked on by the national association shall be approved by a simple majority vote at the general meeting.

10.9 National Social Affairs/Protocol Chairperson

- He/she shall be responsible for coordinating and planning of all social matters of the association.
- This office shall be responsible for the coordination and implementation of the national convention programs.
- Shall submit a budget to the national executive committee prior to the national convention for their review before presenting it to the House for final approval by a simple majority vote.
- This office shall liaise with the local convention sites for his/her approval of plans for the convention.
- All revenues raised at the national convention shall go to the National Financial Secretary after this office certifies the report within ten (10) days of the national convention.
- Three members of this office would be volunteers selected by the Chairperson and approved by the National Vice-President.

SECTION ELEVEN

11.1 Language(s) of Communication:

The language(s) of common shall be English or Ugwuta languages. However, the minutes of the meetings shall be kept in English.

SECTION TWELVE

12.1 Political Affiliation:

This association shall not participate in any political activity, shall not endorse a candidate for political office, and shall not become affiliated with any political party.

SECTION THIRTEEN

13.1 Fiscal Year:

The financial year of the association shall be from September 1st to August 31st of the following year.

SECTION FOURTEEN

14.1 Audit:

- A team of three (3) auditors selected at a general meeting shall serve for a two-year term.
- They would be responsible for examining the association's financial records every ten (10) months and present their report to the House no later than sixty (60) days after their investigation.
- Their authority and mandate come from the association membership. No member of this team is subject to sanctions by the executive body and may not hold any other office/responsibility during their term.

SECTION FIFTEEN

15.0 National General Meetings:

15.1 General Meeting Location:

The National Secretary General shall announce the venue for general meetings during the convention or by mail, at least six months before the convention.

SECTION SIXTEEN

16.0 Quorum:

16.1 A general meeting shall begin thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled time, with, at least, ten (10) members plus five (5) elected officers present. The highest-ranking officer present shall call the meeting to order in the absence of the National Provost and the

National President and begin proceedings. He/she shall appoint interim officers pending their arrival. All decisions made shall be binding to one and all.

SECTION SEVENTEEN

17.0 Executive Meetings:

These meetings shall be held within twenty-four (24) hours prior to a general meeting. Fifty percent of the executive committee members shall constitute a quorum.

17.1 Other executive meetings shall be held on an ad hoc basis to deal with emergency issues. It could be a conference call type meeting. The National President shall call such meetings, if needed.

SECTION EIGHTEEN

18.0 Finance:

18.1 Annual Budget

The National Financial Secretary and the National Social Affairs/Protocol Chairperson shall prepare an annual budget and present it to the executive committee for review and final approval at the general meeting.

Signatories of Checks

For checks less than \$300 only one signatory is required. Either the National Treasurer or the National Financial Secretary may sign. For checks greater than \$300 two signatories are required; the Treasurer, the President and/or the Financial Secretary.

Amendments

Articles of the constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3)-majority vote by the House. Any article for amended must be put in writing and signed by, at least, twenty (20) eligible members before it is presented for consideration and debate.

This constitution was adopted on the 2nd day of September in the year Two-Thousand and One (09/02/2001).

Viktor Nzeribe
National President

Obika C. Nwobi, Ph.D.
National Secretary General

