Date: 7th March, 2014

Our Ref: GO/DTD/ADM/UNESCO/81/23

The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
unesco
Calabar

Attn: Mr. Ivor Miller

INSCRIPTION OF EKPE ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY

The Department of Tourism Development, Governor’s Office, Calabar appreciates the profound impact the Ekpe ‘Leopard’ society has and continues to have on the historical and socio-cultural formation of the Cross River region. There is no doubt that for the majority of communities in our state, Ekpe is one of our most valued heritage which has widespread impact on the culture and traditions of communities of south east Nigeria and south west Cameroun.

We reiterate our appreciation for your process of selecting Ekpe to be included in the Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and assure you of our support, should for follow-up activities, the award is given. These activities should include participation of Ekpe leaders in cultural festivals which abounds in our state, as well as educational activities to help the general public understand this heritage.

We strongly believe that the promotion of the Ekpe tradition in your list will lead to the international promotion of our heritage, strengthen international friendship and cultural linkages.

Warm regards.

Wilfred Usani
Special Adviser
Tourism Development
UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR
CALABAR, NIGERIA

VICE-CHANCELLOR
Prof. James E poke
B.Sc (Nigeria) M.Sc (London)
Ph.D (Lagos),
E-mail: epokejames@yahoo.com

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

March 10, 2014

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee:

EDUCATION on EKPE HERITAGE at UNIVERSITY of CALABAR

In support of the application to nominate the Ékpè cultural heritage of the people of Calabar, in southeastern Nigeria as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, we write to confirm our interest in hosting educational activities on Ékpè theory and practice at the University of Calabar. Happily, the UNESCO nomination coincides with the creation of the Senator Henshaw Centre for Indigenous Studies at the University. This is an ideal place to organize courses, workshops and conferences on Ékpè and related traditional cultural institutions of the Cross River region.

We are conscious that Ékpè culture is shared by a diverse range of linguistic and ethnic communities in the Cross River region and beyond. Unfortunately, little scholarly attention at the University has been focused on the indigenous cultural history of Calabar, and we are eager to host such a process. In the light of this, we have supported Dr. Ivor Miller’s research on Ékpè history and culture since he arrived to the University as a Fulbright Scholar (2009-2011), where he remains as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History and International Relations. Dr. Miller has been able to research and publish in a collaborative fashion with community-based Ékpè leaders in our area. We are aware that in the process of organizing educational programs, respected Ékpè leaders must be consulted and be active participants at all stages of public activities. We propose an educational program within the University of Calabar that would offer courses in the history, values, symbols, and artistic production of Ékpè traditions. This program would be located in the Senator Henshaw Centre for Indigenous Studies at the University of Calabar.

Rigober O. Ikwun
Special Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor
FOR: Vice-Chancellor

Senator Bassey Ewa Henshaw
18th May, 2011.

Mr. A. B. Ajibola
Deputy Director/Head of UNESCO Division,
Department of Culture,
Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation,
Abuja.

LISTING OF EKPE EFIK AS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE BY UNESCO

Dr. Ivor Miller a researcher in Ekpe Efik gave us your address as the person that will assist us in the listing of Ekpe by UNESCO. He has also guided us as to what to do to meet your requirement all of which we have done and given to him for onward delivery to you.

Nevertheless, His Eminence, the Obong of Calabar-in-Council on 17th May, 2011 directed that this advance copy be sent to you.

Please accept our warm regards and thank you immensely as we look forward to a successful listing of Ekpe Efik as well as hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,

ETUBOM ALEX OTU EDEM
Iyamba of Ekpe Efik Iboku, Ansa Efiom Lodge
(Coordinator)
THRO: Mr. A. B. Ajibola
Deputy Director/Head of UNESCO Divisions - Department of Culture.
Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture & National Orientation.
Abuja

EKPE EFIK AS UNESCO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

We are Ekpe supreme leaders of our Efik tribe/communities and are therefore the authoritative sources of information on Ekpe. Ekpe is our ancient society-esoteric and one of the tripodal arms of Efik Traditional Government in the ancient days. The other two arms being our deities (Ndem) and the third arm, the Efik kingship (Ubong) which the Obong of Calabar reigns as “Rex Maximus Calabarisis” the supreme ruler of all Calabar and its dependencies.

When in circa 1472 the first European ship arrived Calabar for trade the Efiks became the middlemen gathering forest produce and tropical spices from the interior and supplying same to the European ships. When trade on human ware was introduced into Calabar Circa 1600 the Efiks were still the middlemen and wherever they went in search of trade wares or items, they went with their Ekpe which was the enforcement arm of the Traditional Government. Consequently, Ekpe Efik spread over the entire Gulf of Guinea and as far interior as the Igbo heartland and even up to the Cameroon and Fernando Po now Equitorial Guinea.

The wealth the Efiks made from the trades helped them to refine, embellish, modernize and transform the Ekpe masquerades/dance steps into totally Efik creation. The Efiks also created and introduced several new Ekpe grades from the 1700 and up to the first half of the 1800 namely: Ebonko(by Esien Ekpe), Isim(by Edem Ekpenyong Eyamba 5th), Okpoho(by Eyo Eyo 2nd), Nkanda(by Eyo Asibong) and the several Murua’s etc.

Ekpe institution has its own specialized body of knowledge and most of its secrets are hidden in Ekpe written language for communication called NSIBIDI - a form of hieroglyphics. It is this knowledge and its value systems that are essential for our cultural identity which we would like to preserve for posterity as well as teach new generations of our people.
By our Culture and Tradition, an autonomous/independent and self-governing entity or community must have its Ekpe Lodge. It is in the Lodge that governance decisions are taken. Thus, when our ancestors (Kings and the Principal Chiefs) invited Church of Scotland Mission in 1843 now Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, the decision was taken at Ekpe lodge. And it was Ekpe drum from the various lodges in their areas of authority that were used by the Town Criers to order people to go to church. And people obeyed because the Ekpe penalty for disobedience is better imagined than experienced. Indeed, a culture with such unique history of facilitating Christianity in the entire South-South/ South-East Nigeria and beyond should not be allowed to die.

Ekpe has its own Founding Fathers and Patriarchs namely Eyo Ema, Esien Ekpe, Asibong Ekondo and Mutaka. The first three are Efiks and the fourth is Efut. Ekpe songs are best sung in Efik language and wherever Ekpe went, it went with Efik language. Southern Nigeria Western Education and Democratic Government started in Calabar and from there spread into all parts of South-South/ South-Eastern Nigeria, even to the Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. Thus, the Efik language became the second language of the elite for communication, education and Christianization of the hinterland in these areas. The one incontrovertible evidence in support of the above facts is that Efik language was the first indigenous African language south of the Sahara into which the Holy Bible was translated - New Testament in 1862 and the whole Bible in 1868.

It is therefore our desire, as much as possible, to teach our youth about Ekpe practices and values which will also keep our Efik language alive. Unfortunately, with increasing modernity and urbanization this is becoming increasingly difficult as youths move away from home to the larger cities. UNESCO inscription will do much to promote awareness of Ekpe’s role in our past and present as well as provide a veritable umbrella for education of ourselves and the larger public about Ekpe culture-performances, masks, music and Efik language being the best language of expression of Ekpe culture and heritage in the entire Cross River Basin and beyond.

As a society that promotes justice, Ekpe was and is used to arbitrate in personal and communal disputes and even war. Ekpe was also used to promote human right and to protect weaker citizens from the excesses of the high and mighty ruling class. Because of these, even the European traders and some Colonial Officers wanted and were initiated into our Ekpe Efik. Some were even given titles. They used the privileges which their membership and titles offered to enhance their trade and Government business. And we hesitate to say more for now.

We are therefore grateful for the effort of UNESCO and hereby give our wholehearted support for this nomination of Ekpe Efik on the Representative List of Humanity by UNESCO.

We also thank Dr Ivor Miller very sincerely for his research interest and for connecting us with the right contact in UNESCO. But we are the most competent persons to speak on Ekpe matters.
We will therefore appreciate your dealing with us directly through the Palace of the Obong of Calabar as shown on our headed paper address on page 1 of this document. We thank you immensely and wish to remain.

Yours Faithfully

1. Obong Iyamba
   Iboku- Ansa Efiom Lodge

2. Obong Iyamba
   Otung- Fyo Ema Lodge

3. Obong Iyamba
   Iboku- Atakpa Lodge

4. Obong Iyamba
   Obutong Lodge

5. Obong Iyamba
   Cobham Town Lodge

6. Obong Iyamba
   Esien Ekpe Lodge, Mbarakom

7. Obong Iyamba
   Adiabo Lodge

8. Obong Iyamba
   Adak Eka Lodge

9. Obong Iyamba
   Mbiabo Lodge

10. Obong Iyamba
    Obom Ibiat Lodge

11. His Eminence the Obong of Calabar
May 12, 2011

UNESCO
Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee

INSCRIPTION OF EKPE ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY

We the members of Efe Nkomo - Akwa Ibom write to support the nomination of Ekpe, our ancestral heritage, for inscription on the representative list of Humanity by UNESCO.

Efe Nkomo is a socio-cultural organization engage in the promotion of Ekpe cultural society and related cultural organizations heritage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: we give our free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of the Ekpe society to UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage program. We are authorized to speak on behalf of Akwa Ibom community, but we also recognize that Ekpe is our ancestral system in many Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States of Nigeria. Ekpe is the primary institution of traditional leadership and rally in these communities; its expression and specialized knowledge are essential to our cultural identity. Ekpe lodges are located in several communities in Akwa Ibom State with Uruan Local Government Area as prime reference centre in Nigeria. These lodges are community centres where important decisions on the advancement of Ekpe culture are made. Efe Nkomo undertake to teach, educate and counsel our youths about Ekpe practises and values, especially practises and values that uplift youths culturally and socially, but with increasing modernity this is becoming increasingly difficult as youths in the cities readily embrace city culture. UNESCO inscription will do much to promote awareness of Ekpe’s role in our past and present and would be an umbrella for us to educate ourselves and the larger public about Ekpe’s vibrant performances of marks and music and about shared culture of all communities with Ekpe in Akwa Ibom State. As a society that promotes justice, Ekpe was used by our ancestors to promote human rights, mutual respect, and shared stewardship of our cultural heritage. Ekpe embodied the autonomy of our communities and was used to protect citizens from wrongdoings.

We are grateful for your efforts and remain solidly behind this nomination.

Signed

Etubom Aloysius Okon Edet
Adaidaha Oku Akama and Spokesperson Efe Nkomo - Akwa Ibom
INSRIPTION OF EKPE ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY

I, on behalf of all the members of Ekpe Society in Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area, do hereby write to support the nomination of Ekpe, our ancestral heritage, for inscription on the representative list of humanity by UNESCO.

As the custodian of Ekpe rites in my community, I give, on behalf of others, free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of the Ekpe Society of UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Program. By virtue of my status in Ekpe Society in Ibiono Ibom, I can speak on behalf of my community but we also recognize that Ekpe is an ancient system widespread throughout this region. Ekpe is the primary institution of traditional leadership in our communities. Its expressions and specialized knowledge are essential to our cultural identity, and our lodges are community centers where important decisions are made.

We do as much as possible to teach our youth about Ekpe practice and values, but with increasing modernity, this is becoming increasingly difficult as youth move away to the larger cities. UNESCO Inscription will do much to promote awareness of Ekpe’s role in our past and present, and would be an umbrella for us to educate ourselves and the larger public about Ekpe’s vibrant performances of masks and music, and about the shared culture of all communities with Ekpe in the Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area. Akwa Ibom State. As a society to promote, Ekpe was used by our ancestors to promote human rights and mutual respect. Ekpe embodied the autonomy of our communities and was used to protect citizens from wrongdoings.

We are grateful for your efforts and remain solidly behind this nomination.

Signed: __________________________
HRM OKUKU (DR) IME UDOUSORO INYANG
May 18, 2011

To the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee:

**INSCRIPTION OF EKPE ON THE PREREPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY**

We are the Ekpe members of the Council of the His Highness Etebom Sylvanus E. Okon (NDM) JP, Clan Head of Offot Ukwa, Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

I, the Iyamba Ekpe in Offot Ukwa Clan, Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State feel delighted with the paramount Ruler of Uyo Local Government Area, HRM Edidem (Surv.) Edem S. Akpan, FNIS (JP) for appointing me to say something about Ekpe culture on behalf of the people of Uyo Local Government Area to UNESCO.

Ekpe is one of the Ancestral cultures used to protect the community and it is mainly for adults who are members and not for children because of its rules. Those who are not members are not allowed to participate in or to go near it except on ceremonial functions.
Before one becomes a member of Ekpe he has to pass through certain processes and Oath taking and when the elders of "Ekpe" culture are satisfied with the process. They will then formally induct you to Ekpe and show you its face.

On outing, those who know how to play the instrument very well and the singers will be there to handle it for Ekpe masquerate to dance.

Ekpe had its leaders; among them are Obong Iyamba, Obong Nkanda, Obong Oku Akama, Obong Nyankpe and Obong Mboko Ekpe to mention but a few.

Ekpe is a culture with respect and honour because it is used to settle so many disputes in the community such as land dispute. Our fore-fathers used to introduce their male children to the culture when occasion demanded while some villages in Ibibio land if the Family Head or the Village Head is not a member of Ekpe, people will not regard him as a complete Obong.

Finally, since Ekpe is a cultural society with high moral respect I am advising people to go ahead with it and get it enshrined for posterity. I whole heartedly recommend the nomination for inscription on the representative list of Humanity by UNESCO.

Signed:

Iyamba His Highness Etebom Sylvanus E. Okon (NDM) JP,
The Clan Head of Offot Ukwa, Uyo L. G. A.
To the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee:

**INSCRIPTION OF ÉKPÈ ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY**

As the Paramount Ruler of Itu Local Government Area, I write to appreciate the intention to nominate the Ékpè 'leopard' society, which is our cultural heritage, for inscription on the Representative List of Humanity by UNESCO. The Ìyàmbà (administrative head) of our local lodge, Ëfé Ékpè Ayàdèhè, and other Ékpè chiefs are signatories to this letter. We have inherited Ékpè from our ancestors since time immemorial, and we are passing it on to our children as an instrument of traditional justice as well as cultural identity.

Ékpè, one of our most valued heritages, has had profound impact on the culture and traditions of Nigeria and Cameroon. Because Ékpè traditions have spread in Africa and the Caribbean for the past two centuries, making our culture globally recognized, we assert the need for a linkage between the two worlds in Africa and the Diaspora, and we believe the UNESCO nomination will aid this purpose.

We assure you of our support for the selection of Ékpè to be included in the Representative List of Humanity. We strongly believe that the promotion of the Ékpè tradition in your universally acknowledged list will lead to the international promotion of our heritage, strengthen international friendships and cultural linkages.

We therefore authorize you by this letter to go on with your proposal. We give our free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of Ékpè.

H.R.M. Edidem Edet Akpan Inyang
Paramount Ruler of Itu L.G.A.

Chief Asuquo Okon Umoh
Ìyàmbà of Ëfé Ékpè Ayàdèhè
Mobile: 0806-111-1479

Chief Dan Efe
Ëfé Ékpè Ayàdèhè
Mobile: 0806-255-6608
We there for authorize you by this letter to go on with your proposal. We give our free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of Ekpe.

Sign:  

HRH Etubom Essien Ekpenyong Efiok,  
Obong Ebonko  
Efe Ekpe Efik Iboku Esit Edik, Adak Uko,  
Creek Town.

ALL CORESPONDENCE IS ADDRESS TO:  
OBONG EBONKO,  
HRH ETUBOM ESSIEN EKPENYONG EFIOK,  
C/O KING EYO NSA HOUSE COUNCIL,  
ADAK UKO, CREEK TOWN.  
ODUKPANI L.G. AREA. CROSS RIVER STATE.

Email address: efiokhonesty@yahoo.com

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To the UNESCO Intangible Culture Heritage Committee:  
INSRIPTION OF EKPE ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY

We the Ekpe title holders and members of Ekpe Efik Iboku Esit Edik, Adak Uko, Creek Town write to appreciate the intention to nominate Ekpe which is our cultural heritage for inscription on the representative list of humanity UNESCO.

We honestly present the fact that Ekpe is one of our most valued heritage which has widespread impact on the culture and traditions of Nigerians and the Cameroons. The spread of Ekpe traditions in Africa and the Caribbean's has over the years reaffirm the need for a linkage between the two worlds in Africa and Diaspora, except that very little effort has been made to consolidate the ties.

We appreciate your effort in selecting Ekpe to be included in the representative list of humanity and assure you of our support for the action you intent to take. We on our part, will do everything possible to provide the much needed materials such as photographs, videos clips and documents that will be required for the purpose. We strongly believe that the promotion of Ekpe tradition in your universally acknowledged list will lead to the international promotion of our heritage, strengthen international friend ships and cultural linkages.
To the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee:

**INSCRIPTION OF ÉKPÈ ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY**

We, the leaders of Etara Clan, write to appreciate the intention to nominate the Ékpè ‘leopard’ society, which is our cultural heritage, for inscription on the Representative List of Humanity by UNESCO. We have inherited Ékpè from our ancestors since time immemorial, and we are passing it on to our children as an instrument of traditional justice as well as cultural identity.

Ékpè is one of our most valued heritages which has widespread impact on the culture and traditions of Nigeria and Cameroon. The spread of the Ékpè traditions in Africa and the Caribbean for the past two centuries has made our culture globally recognized, and thus reasserted the need for a linkage between the two worlds in Africa and the Diaspora.

We reiterate our appreciation for the selection of Ékpè to be included in the Representative List of Humanity and assure you of our support for this action. We strongly believe that the promotion of the Ékpè tradition in your universally acknowledged list will lead to the international promotion of our heritage, strengthen international friendships and cultural linkages.

We therefore authorize you by this letter to go on with your proposal. We give our free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of Ékpè.

H.H. Ntufam Brian Nta Ifere (Member, Council of Chiefs)

Ntufam Honorable Patrick O. Okang (Ntoe Ribu of Etara Ékpè)
To the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee.

INSCRIPTION OF EKPE ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY

We the Ekpe members of Idua Clan Council in Oron write to appreciate the intention to nominate Ekpe which is our cultural heritage for inscription on the representative list of Humanity by UNESCO.

We confirm that Ekpe is one of our most valued cultures which has widespread impact on the heritage and traditions of Nigeria. The spread of Ekpe traditions in Africa and the Caribbeans has over the years reassured the need for a linkage between Africa and the Diaspora, except that very little effort has been made to consolidate the gains.

We reiterate our appreciation for your selecting Ekpe to be included in the representative list of Humanity and assure you of our support for the action you intend to take. We, on our part, will do all it takes to supply the much needed materials viz photographs, video clips and documents that will be required for the purpose. We strongly believe that the promotion of the Ekpe tradition in your universally acknowledged list will lead to the international promotion of our heritage, strengthen international friendships and cultural values.

Idua therefore authorize you by this letter to go on with your proposal. We give our free, prior, and informed consent to the nomination of Ekpe.

Signed by the underlisted leaders of Ekpe.

His Highness Obong Edet N. Ekeng - Mkpoto Idua IV
Clan Head

Iyamba Etim Edet Okon

Obong Okon Etim Atanang
TO THE UNESCO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE:

The Ekpe society is as old as the Agoi-Ibami community, which is centuries old. Any traditional chief must be a member of Ekpe to have authority. Every seven years the people of Agoi-Ibami perform a community-wide event with the participation of all age grades, male and female, as well as the traditional women's society. This two week event confirms our history and identity while teaching the next generation about our values so that there is continuity with the past. The event brings the entire community together to confirm our cultural heritage so that all have a sense of belonging and knowledge about the cultural genius of their ancestors.

Before the colonial justice system, Ekpe was the traditional police used to protect community members from abuse, where any community matter could be taken before the Ekpe chiefs for adjudication. Ekpe protocol is still used for the administration of peace and justice in our rural community, even though we also have a police station. The cultural expressions of Ekpe include a variety of body-masks, percussion ensembles and song, dances, and the esoteric Nsibidi writing system indigenous to our region. All of these ancient expressions emerged in response to the forest environment that surrounds our community. The symbols of Ekpe include the leopard whose skin is used only by our Clan Head, and whose roaring Voice mystically emerges from each of the three lodges in our community during important events. Another symbol is the palm tree, whose leaves are used to proclaim Ekpe injunctions during land disputes, and whose raffia is woven to make the body-masks. Ekpe has several sacred spaces in Agoi-Ibami. Each of the three lodges is located on the spot where a founding father arrived during migration to the area and placed their staff of authority.
In addition, there are other sacred Êkpè places around the village and in the bush, used for specific gatherings and the training of Êkpè specialists away from the public eyes so that the esoteric lore of Êkpè can be passed on to the next generation.

As Êkpè leaders of Agoi-Ibami, we give our free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of the Êkpè society to UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage program. We are authorized to speak on behalf of our community, but we also recognize that Êkpè is an ancient system widespread throughout this region. We believe that nomination of Êkpè through UNESCO will lead to good things like the international promotion of our heritage so that the world will know that our ancestors created something of value to defend truth and justice.

Chief Awo Egong,
The Iyamba (Chairman) of Ibiniden Ekpe Lodge, Agoi-Ibami

H.H. Attah Charles Ikum Ujong
Clan Head of Agoi-Ibami Clan, Yakurr Local Government Area.
To the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee:

INCRIPITION OF ÈKPÈ ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY

We the Èkpè members of the Efut Ekondo Community write to appreciate the intention to nominate Èkpè which is our cultural heritage for inscription on the representative list of Humanity by UNESCO.

We proudly present the fact that Èkpè is one of our most valued heritage which has widespread impact on the culture and traditions of Nigeria and Cameroon. The spread of the Èkpè traditions in Africa and the Caribbeans has over the years reasserted the need for a linkage between the two words in Africa and the Diaspora, except that every little effort has been made to consolidate the ties.

We reiterate our appreciation for your selecting Èkpè to be included in the representative list of Humanity and assure you of our support for the action you intend to take. We, on our part, will do all it takes to supply the much needed materials—vix photographs, video clips, and documents that will be required for the purpose. We strongly believe that the promotion of the Èkpè tradition in your universally acknowledged list will lead to the international promotion of our heritage, strengthen international friendships and cultural linkages.

We therefore authorize you by this letter to go on with your proposal. We give our free, prior, and informed consent to the nomination of Èkpè.

Signed by the underlisted leaders of Èkpè

[Signatures]

Highness (Obong-Ebonko) Muri Joseph Bassey Anating – Edem VI

Iyamba Ndabu Patrick Effiom Edet Ene

Obong Mura Ndabu Joseph Effiom Okon Amanang
Ojor Ekpe Village Assembly

Ojor, EKPE Village Assembly

Date: January 31, 2011

to the UNESCO Intangible Culture Heritage Committee:

Inscription of Ekpe on the Representative List of Humanity

We the Ekpe members of the Ojor community write to appreciate the intention to nominate Ekpe which is cultural heritage for inscription on the representative list of humanity by NESCO.

We proudly present the fact that Ekpe is one of most valued heritage which has widespread impact on the culture and traditions of Nigeria and Cameroon. The spread of Ekpe traditions in Africa and the Caribbean has over the years reasserted the need for a linkage between the two worlds in Africa and Diaspora, except that very little effort has been made to consolidate the ties.

We reiterate our appreciation for your selecting Ekpe to be included in the representative list of humanity and assure you of support for the action you intend to take. We, on our part, will do all it takes to supply the much needed materials viz photographs, video clips and documents that will be required for the purpose. We strongly believe that the promotion of the Ekpe tradition in your universally acknowledged list will lead to the international promotion of your heritage, strengthen international friendships and cultural linkages.

We therefore authorize you by this letter to go on with your proposal. We give our free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of Ekpe.

Signed by the under listed leaders of Ekpe

Obol Asuquo Akom Onwo (Obong Obio Village Head)

Chief Ayang Ime-Obio (Iyamba of Ojor)

All Correspondence is Addressed to the Village Head - Ojor
To the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee:

**INSCRIPTION OF ÉKPÈ ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY**

Calabar Mgbè is a multi-ethnic assembly from the Cross River region, whose membership is by Ékpè (or Mgbè) lodges, of which there are hundreds in the region, each one signaling the existence of an autonomous community (i.e., clan or principality). The term Mgbè is Ejagham for leopard, while Ékpè is Efik for leopard. Ekpe is the traditional government in the region, and from the 16th to 20th centuries served to regulate trade networks throughout the region, even into Cameroon and Fernando Po. Enslaved Cross River peoples taken to the Americas established in Cuba a variant of Ékpè called Abakúa. Being an ancient, multi-ethnic and regulatory fraternity, Ékpè is an effective vehicle to address issues related to the identity, history and culture of this trans-Atlantic community.

Calabar Mgbè grew out of the experience of organizing the International Ekpe Festivals in Calabar, and specifically in reference to the contact with Cuban Abakuá members in 2004, whose culture is descended from Mgbè. The group was formally organized in early 2007 in response to the invitation by the Musée Quai Branly to perform with Cubans in Paris.

The Constitution of Calabar Mgbè explains our mission, which includes reunion with all Ekpe in the world, including the Abakuá in Cuba. The constitution is published on line at: http://www.afrocubaweb.com/abakwa/calabarmgbe.htm.

We the members of Calabar Mgbè appreciate the intention to nominate Ékpè which is our cultural heritage for inscription on the representative list of Humanity by UNESCO.

We proudly present the fact that Ékpè is one of our most valued heritages which has widespread impact on the culture and traditions of Nigeria and Cameroon. The spread of the Ékpè traditions in Africa and the Caribbeans has over the years reasserted the need for a linkage between the two worlds in Africa and the Diaspora, except that very little effort has been made to consolidate the ties.

We reiterate our appreciation for your selecting Ékpè to be included in the representative list of Humanity and assure you of our support for the action you intend to take. We strongly believe that the promotion of the Ékpè tradition in your universally acknowledged list will lead to the international promotion of our heritage, strengthen international friendships and cultural linkages.

We therefore authorize you by this letter to go on with your proposal. We give our free, prior, and informed consent to the nomination of Ékpè.
To the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee:

INSCRIPTION OF ÉKPÈ ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY

We the Ékpè members of the Ikom and Nsosang communities write to appreciate the intention to nominate Ékpè which is our cultural heritage for inscription on the representative list of Humanity by UNESCO.

We proudly present the fact that Ékpè is one of our most valued heritage which has widespread impact on the culture and traditions of Nigeria and Cameroon. The spread of the Ékpè traditions in Africa and the Caribbean has over the years reasserted the need for a linkage between the two worlds in Africa and the Diaspora, except that very little effort has been made to consolidate the ties.

We reiterate our appreciation for your selecting Ékpè to be included in the representative list of Humanity and assure you of our support for the action you intend to take. We, on our part, will do all it takes to supply the much needed materials viz photographs, video clips, and documents that will be required for the purpose. We strongly believe that the promotion of the Ékpè tradition in your universally acknowledged list will lead to the international promotion of our heritage, strengthen international friendships and cultural linkages.

We therefore authorize you by this letter to go on with your proposal. We sincerely thank you for this gesture.

Signed by the underlisted leaders of Ékpè

Ntufam Mathew Ojong (Ntufam Iyamba of Egagh)

Chief Ogbor Ogar (Ntui Ribo of Ikom)

Ntufam Mbe Egom (Chief of Rib, Nsosang)

Ntufam Oku Okang (Ribu of Etara, Southern Etung)
THE UNESCO INANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE

INSCRIPTION OF EKPE ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY

We, the bonafide members of Ekpe of Esit Eket extraction in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, write to support the nomination of Ekpe, our most cherished and enduring ancestral heritage, for inscription on representative list of humanity by UNESCO.

It is a thing of pride to state in this letter that Ekpe is the primary institution of traditional leadership in our communities, every aspect of our life, political, social, economic and religious is permeated by it; Its expressions and specialized knowledge are essential to our cultural identity. Little wonder therefore that it is currently re-asserting Itself with great vigour.

Please accept our profound commendation for considering it a worthwhile exercise to select Ekpe for inclusion in the representative list of humanity at this time when immense interest in the institution is soaring even beyond the shores of Nigeria. Be rest-assured that on our own part, we will furnish you with the necessary paraphernalia and documentation that will be material to the success of this laudable undertaking, while assuring you of our unflinching support at all times.

It is largely on the foregoing score that we authorize you by appending our signatures to this letter to proceed without any hesitation with this unexceptional proposal, as we, in one accord and unison give our free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of Ekpe.

27th January, 2011
Signed by the underlisted leaders of Ekpe:

SENATOR IYAMBA ETANG UMBOYO

IYAMBA IJIMI UDOYO

IYAMBA BASSEY MKPONG

CHIEF OKON EKAIKO

ETEIDUNG E. O. EDIGHYONG
Date: 7th March, 2014

Our Ref: GO/DTD/ADM/UNESCO/81/23

The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
unesco
Calabar

Attn: Mr. Ivor Miller

INSCRIPTION OF EKPE ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF HUMANITY

The Department of Tourism Development, Governor’s Office, Calabar appreciates the profound impact the Ekpe ‘Leopard’ society has and continues to have on the historical and socio-cultural formation of the Cross River region. There is no doubt that for the majority of communities in our state, Ekpe is one of our most valued heritage which has widespread impact on the culture and traditions of communities of south east Nigeria and south west Cameroon.

We reiterate our appreciation for your process of selecting Ekpe to be included in the Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and assure you of our support, should for follow-up activities, the award is given. These activities should include participation of Ekpe leaders in cultural festivals which abounds in our state, as well as educational activities to help the general public understand this heritage.

We strongly believe that the promotion of the Ekpe tradition in your list will lead to the international promotion of our heritage, strengthen international friendship and cultural linkages.

Warm regards.

Wilfred Usani
Special Adviser
Tourism Development