

## APF Charter of Demands

Following robust deliberations and careful consideration, the Congress of Abasi People Foundation unanimously voted to adopt the document prepared and presented by the Drafting Committee on Charter of Demands.

The global secretariat thanks the Committee for its thorough and painstaking work and hereby approve the forwarding and circulation of the document to Abasi People and stakeholders home and abroad.



**Dr I.S Umoette**  
Secretary General

## CHARTER OF DEMANDS OF ABASI PEOPLE FOUNDATION (APF) AS A STAKEHOLDER IN THE NIGERIAN STATE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

We, Abasi People Foundation (hereinafter referred to as APF), are a family of the seven indigenous people of the Old Calabar Province, namely, Annang, Efik, Ekid, Ekoi, Ibibio, Obolo, and Oro. Particularly known, called and addressed as Abasi People, we occupy the thirty-one Local Government Areas of present Akwa Ibom State, and seven Local Government Areas of Cross River South of present Cross River State. We are a non-partisan organization, and pledge true and unalloyed allegiance to a truly indivisible Nigerian State founded on truth, equity, fairness, justice, and rule of Law. We are registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission

(CAC) in Nigeria, and incorporated in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA).

## 2.0 STATE OF THE NATION

The Nigerian economy today is facing significant challenges on all fronts. The economy is gasping for breath. Naira has lost its value. Healthcare System is virtually decrepit, resulting in unprecedented high mortality rate. Educational System is crippled. Tertiary Education has been terribly battered. Students spend greater part of the academic session at home rather than in the classroom. Teachers are worsted by beggarly teaching environment. Nigeria takes over as world's poverty headquarters. Youths throng the streets in search of hard-to-find jobs, and the few available slots are reserved exclusively for the children of the few rich and well-connected in the society. Insecurity is hitting harder everywhere. Peace-loving Nigerians can no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. Terrorism, insurgency, and banditry have taken over the land. Kidnapping and ransom taking have become preferred trade. As poverty, hunger and insecurity pervade the land, a handful of privileged Nigerians at the seat of power and authority carry on aggressively greedy and grabbing all the wealth of the nation. Corruption takes on added stature in the land. A section of the country assertively strives in pursuit of overall superior right of ownership and possession of the land.

In all of these, the Government at the Centre, in whom resides the power and authority to show leadership and for protection of lives and property, remains largely complicit, or at best helpless. Consequently, the youths of the land have become frustrated at a system that appears to have failed their generation. There are pockets of agitations in the land to reconsider the desirability, or otherwise, of the continued existence of the country in its present state and structure.

Against this backdrop and considering that Nigerians are in the throes of lining out for another general elections in February and March 2023 to vote in a new President and National Assembly members at the Centre, and Governors and States Assembly members in the States, it is compelling that citizens are properly nudged towards making informed voting choices ahead of the 2023 general elections. Abasi People at home and in the Diaspora will troop out en masse, sensitize and mobilize votes for a Presidential candidate and other leaders on the basis of issues of priority importance to Abasi People. We restate that Abasi People will be particularly meticulous in our choice of who becomes our next President and leader. We will not mortgage or sacrifice our well-founded resolve to vote for only the Presidential candidate and other leaders who will not only publicly commit to abide by, but also seen to genuinely commit to the established principles of true Federalism, acknowledgment of and respect for our cherished diversities of sex, tribes, cultures and religions. We will be guided by candidate's understanding of and sincere commitment to sound democratic norms of peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections, good governance founded on fiscal responsibility and accountability. In view of the frustrating and painful experience Abasi People have suffered in the history of this country, the issues highlighted hereunder will not only be our guide in deciding who among the Presidential candidates and other leaders Abasi People shall vote for in 2023, but they constitute our collective demand which we shall continue to pursue as a people deserving of a fair deal in the Nigerian state.

### **3.0 APF CHARTER OF DEMANDS**

In pursuance of peaceful co-existence, equity, and fairness, we the Abasi People of Southern Nigeria, which lies predominantly in the Gulf of Guinea, in the conviction that we deserve more than what the current and the past regimes have offered us wish to table the following demands: -

#### **3.1 Security**

We demand the inalienable right of Abasi People to live, work, and carry out their trades in any part of the Nigerian nation without any fear of threat to lives, property and/or business. Such right shall be seen to be deliberately protected and preserved by the Government of the Federation in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (hereinafter referred to as The Constitution). The activities of non-State actors such as ISIS, Boko Haram and the like pose severe challenges to economic activities nationwide. We earnestly desire a total overhaul of our national security architecture to allow for multi-layer and effective security system at the Community, Local Government, State and Federal Government levels. The new system must be responsive and accountable to command citizens' trust.

### **3.2 Inclusive and Transparent Government**

Abasi People desire a government that is truly "of the people, by the people, and for the people". The equality of the Federating States and nationalities as enshrined in The Constitution and the Federal Character clause must be respected and fully upheld in representations in Governance and general leadership in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the Federation.

Government must remain fully accountable to the people. Era of impunity must be gone totally. Abasi People must be allotted equal representation as of right in the Federal Executive Council (FEC) and other Federal organs and institutions as is applicable to other Federating nationalities.

### **3.3 Employment**

We earnestly yearn for dignified jobs for our teeming youths. We demand open competitive job openings for all Nigerian youths irrespective of sex, tribe, or religion. The syndrome of man-know-man must not be tolerated in job placement in the land. Government must create enabling environment for gainful

engagement of our youths. Government must take immediate steps to reactivate the moribund Nigerian National Newsprint Manufacturing Company (NNMC) at Oku Iboku. Whatever issues exist between Government, Assets Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), and NEGRIS must be resolved forthwith. Its 1975 technology and technical components must be upgraded to its contemporary system. Abasi People must be accorded equitable representation in all levels of its manpower up to, and including Management. APF must be granted equity holding in its ownership.

Whatever legal, or otherwise, issues encumbering the operation of Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria (ALSCON) at Ikot Abasi should be sorted out forthwith. The Plant should be upgraded to its latest global technology and restored to full operation. Abasi People must be accorded equitable representation in its workforce up to and including Management. APF must be granted equity holding in its ownership.

The Export Processing Zones (EPZs) at Calabar and Ikot Abasi must be upgraded and restored operational. Abasi People must be accorded equitable representation in their workforce up to and including Management.

### **3.4 Economy and Ease of Doing Business**

Government must come up with revolutionary measures to restore investors' confidence, locally and internationally, in Nigeria's economy. Immediate steps must be taken to improve on Nigeria's Ease of Doing Business rating now put at 131 among 190 global economies.

Our public power system must be made to work efficiently. The existing Aba - Calabar 330kv Power line should be stepped down and upgraded to 132kv Substation at Ikot Ekpene for power distribution to the Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District to relieve the pressure on supply from the existing Uyo Senatorial District. Another 132kv Substation should be stepped down and upgraded at Itu to feed Itu and its environ rather than feeding Itu from Aba as at present. Transmission

Company of Nigeria (TCN) should ring Akwa Ibom State with 132kv Line to connect Eket, Oron and Uyo.

Government must give urgent attention to the Dualisation of Calabar - Itu - Ikot Ekpene - Aba Highway, and the Completion of the Construction of East - West Road through Oron right up to Calabar for free flow of Trade and Commerce between North and South Nigeria. The Federal Government must equally give urgent attention to Reconstruction of the present deplorable Ikot Ekpene - Umuahia Road for ease of Trade and Commerce in the zone.

Attitudinal change in the Regulating and Licensing Authorities should be seen to be above board to encourage business investment and attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows.

### 3.5 Education

Education must be accorded pride of place in our National Development Plan. Deliberate plans must be put in place and positive measures taken to restore our Education System to global standard. Our Educational institutions must be upgraded to provide conducive learning environment for the student and teaching environment for the teacher. Management and headship of our Education Ministry should be assigned to seasoned educationist, not career politicians. Government must increase its education budgetary allocation from the current 7% to the UN recommended 20% in order to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 – *‘universal, inclusive and equitable basic education for all school-age children by 2030’*; funds should be channelled to specific skills that are relevant to the country's industries. This will result in producing employment ready graduates with desired skill-sets to fill vacancies in all sectors.

Strategic and economic importance of crude oil in today's world is well appreciated by all. This singular resource is in abundance in Akwa Ibom State and southern part of Cross River State, yet there is no single institution in this area dedicated to train the needed manpower in this sector. Abasi people therefore demand the

immediate creation of **School of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Studies** at University of Calabar and University of Uyo with concessional priority accorded to the citizens during admission rounds. This School should be able to train the needed manpower requirements for the sector from Artisans up to Management cadre.

### 3.6 Health

World Health Organization (WHO) figures for 2021 show that world life expectancy for 2021 stands at 75.60 years and 70.80 years for female and male, respectively. This is in stark contrast to that of Nigeria's 56.75 years and 54.80 years for female and male, respectively. This low life expectancy is concomitant to the dearth of functional healthcare delivery system in the country. Lack of diligent commitment of successive governments to funding this all-important sector is of serious concern to Abasi People, especially when weighed against the toxic environmental pollution because of oil exploration in the region. Investment in the health sector must be treated as a priority with focus on preventive approach. A pursuit of collaboration with Health Authorities in the Diaspora and attractive international investment packages for investors in the health sector covering Primary and Secondary healthcare systems must be a deliberate and concerted effort of the government in power. Training and Retention of health and allied personnel within the sector must be accorded deserved priority. To achieve the above, budgetary allocation to the sector should meet the UN recommended 15% of the national budget.

### 3.7 Science & Technology

Technology is the fulcrum that propels almost every activity globally. At the moment, Nigeria cannot boast of a technology hub that can birth world-class innovation. Investment in technology by the Federal Government should be

substantial. Abasi People are blessed with their strategic location which made it the sole choice of where the 5G network by Google is hosted when it emerged from the Atlantic Ocean through the Gulf of Guinea.

The ravines should not be counted as a loss of land. Turkey has shown that it is possible to build houses and roads down and up the ravine and thus stop the erosion. This needs to be investigated and, where possible, incentives made to encourage foreign inputs. Areas could be set up for Smart Homes Development by private developers under Private Investment Initiatives (PII). Smart Homes are built using renewable energy so electricity supply would be uninterrupted.

The ravine could also be invested in as potential areas for solar farm to generate and store clean energy.

The nation must invest initially in power supply underground to industrial terminals and then, over time, to the public. This will cut out the unsightly views of power lines in the air and reduce incidences of illegal tapping of power and incessant collapse of high-tension poles with its attendant loss of human lives.

### 3.8 Human and Peoples' Rights

Nigeria, being a signatory to African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, must truly recognize and uphold the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in the Charter. APF demands that the Federal Government of Nigeria shall not only commit, but also be seen to be committed to truly respect, uphold, preserve, and protect the inalienable rights of Abasi People to enjoy fully the rights and freedoms as encapsulated in Part 1 Chapter I of the said Charter.

### 3.9 Foreign Policy

We recognize that Nigerian Foreign Policy has been:

- Dedicated to the Vital National Interest of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; and
- Promotion of African Integration and Unity, International Co-operation for the Consolidation of Global Peace, Security, a just World Economic Order and



Democratic Values, through the formulation, articulation, and Implementation of Nigeria's Policy Objectives for the benefit of the Nation and her Citizens by building the capability to be a major role player in World Affairs, earning the respect of the People of Africa, and the larger International Community. Abasi People demand that in the discharge of this Policy, the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should apply the Doctrine of Reciprocity in view of recent unfriendly treatment of Nigeria and Nigerians by some countries. The current practice by most countries where proceeds of fraud and financial crimes belonging to the Nigerian Federation is used to fund investigations into such cases with little or no consultations with the rightful owners of the money (Federal Government of Nigeria) is completely outside international conventions on handling of stolen goods/funds and proceeds of crime. The costs of investigation should not be arbitrarily claimed by the government that hosts the crime proceeds.

### **3.10 Restructuring of the Nigerian Nation**

We, Abasi People, hold that the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 is fraudulent, defective, and was deliberately skewed to marginalize Abasi People. When it was crafted and written by the Military Authority of the time, Abasi People who are an integral part of the Nigerian Nation were never given any opportunity to participate or make any input whatsoever in its production, even though it is fraudulently ascribed to "we the people of Nigeria". The participation of Abasi People in the Drafting of a Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria would have ensured that equity is enshrined in the control and management of our natural and/or mineral resources in our land as is obtainable in other parts of Nigeria where gold, tin, and other metals are ceded to the Federating Units where those resources are found.

In the 1999 Constitution under reference, Sharia is mentioned 73 times, Grand Khadi 54 times, Islam 28 times, Muslims 10 times. But there is no single mention of Christ, Christianity, Church or Christian which are the predominant and

historical foundation of religion of Abasi People. This deliberate and ill-intentioned relegation and marginalisation of Abasi People has given room for misconception in certain quarters that the Nigerian Nation is an Islamic State.

Abasi People demand the restructuring of the Nigerian Nation with a view to addressing the obvious imbalance in the top-heavy concentration of power and authority at the Centre. We call for a deliberate pruning down of the Exclusive List and principled enlargement of the Concurrent List with elaborate devolution of more powers to the Federating States and Local Governments.

Restructuring through a peoples' Constitution will address and emphasize equity in sharing of Infrastructure, Representation, and Governance.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Nigeria is an ethno-religious pluralistic society at a decisive point of its history. It is in dire need of bold and visionary leadership to steer it towards desirable national growth and advancement. It needs a leadership that must be committed to leading, uniting and working for the overall collective best interest of all the component nationalities, devoid of ethnic or sectional obsessions. Abasi People have unanimously resolved to stand by its Charter of Demands as contained in this document. Anything short of this, would be totally unacceptable for our people. Starting with the forthcoming 2023 General Elections, The APF believes that this is the only pathway to enthrone equity, fairness, inclusion, and unity as cardinal State policy.

In view of the dire straits in which the nation is at present and considering our not too pleasant experience in the several Nigerian political dispensations, Abasi People will cast votes for candidates, particularly the Presidential Candidate that will openly personally demonstrate commitment, with definite timelines of fulfilment, to our Charter of Demands as enumerated herein.

Long live Abasi nation!