

**MOGHAMO ELEMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION**

MEDA – USA 10TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

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President's State of the Association Address

By

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President MEDA-USA

His Royal Highness the Fon of Anong,

Our beloved Founding President Ni Sam Nyambi,

Distinguished guests,

Friends, sons and daughters of Moghamo,

Ladies and gentlemen:

Welcome. I greet you all. I feel very honoured addressing you today and I thank you heartily for braving all the pre-convention distractions and for putting first Moghamo and all the children, and mothers, and fathers back home that so much depend on our example, on our leadership and our financial support. Moghamo is certainly a better place, and MEDA-USA is a better and a stronger association with people like you.

The Moghamo Elites for Development Association (MEDA), as it was called, was formed in the late nineties amidst national acclaim and high expectations. It was formed because Moghamoans in the USA recognized the potential of becoming a model in democratic leadership, a unit capable of leveraging our collective effort towards our communal well-being here and towards the economic and social development of our homeland. Alas, after these challenging early years, Moghamoans are still yearning for effective processes, better democratic experience and a defining basic document to match that noble mission.

Indeed, if MEDA-USA must survive and if Moghamoans must enjoy the fruits of a modern organization this is the moment to press on, but in that effort we all must strive at working as a team to ensure a system that can and will improve. That MEDA-USA and its processes will develop and continue to evolve to meet the ever

changing needs of our time, and that *processes and not individuals* shall be the foundation on which we build and sustain our cherished Organization.

My visit home in 2002 after more than a decade in the Diaspora opened my eyes to the desperate realities at home. It reminded me of a people so cheerful, so giving and so desperate for our help and direction on key issues affecting them. It showed me a people so confounded by the realities of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, but at a huge lack of resources, finance or knowledge to confront this problem. This in fact was the sentiment that eventually provided compelling persuasions for my decision to team up with other Moghamoans to seek office. This is the sentiment behind a new and concerted effort to re-orient the priorities of MEDA-USA to focus on the troubling realities at home. Our parents back home gave us all the opportunities to be here today. *We must as true Moghamoans never, ever shy away from our responsibility to support them and to give back to our community.*

In presenting myself as a candidate for the Presidency of MEDA back in 2005, I was acutely aware of the enormous challenges that such a proposition presents. I am however convinced even more strongly today, that what is required to take MEDA-USA to the next level is an *ambitious and sincere leadership* with a vision and a purpose to harness our resources and bring all of our people and the association back to the path of progress with defining clarity.

Democracy certainly has its own inconveniences. Change certainly can be overwhelming to anyone accustomed to a certain way of doing business. But, there is certainly no better way of dealing with change than accepting reality and putting the association far above personal interest. It is the responsibility of every Moghamoan and friends of Moghamo to remain steadfast in ensuring this organization doesn't slide backwards or stagnate. I believe strongly that Moghamo is endowed with highly

competent and capable men and women. I thank you all for your support and resilience through this very defining period in the life of MEDA-USA. Indeed you all here today, deserve to give yourselves a very big applause.

We certainly have good reason to be proud of our accomplishment and the direction of the association today. *We certainly can say today in an unambiguous manner that MEDA-USA has reached out to Moghamo this past year in ways that really matters to those most desperate for our help.* But, whereas we must renew our determination and stay the course of development and progress we must remain vigilant and strong. Our focus should be development, innovation, ideas, possibilities and not personalities. **We must be ambitious and must aspire for a MEDA-USA that treats each an every Moghamoan as an important and equal partner in the development of Moghamo. We all have a stake in the development of Moghamo and the success of MEDA-USA. That is a stake too important to ignore.**

In our spirit of *“unity is strength”* we must continue to reach out to Moghamoans who decided to stay away from this event. It is our communal responsibility to bring every one in the Moghamo family on board, so that together we can make Moghamo a better place to live for our people.

Over the last year the current NEC with the help and support of many Moghamoans here today set out to refine our processes and procedures to reduce areas of friction and contention amongst Moghamoans. We set out to encourage sacrifice, accountability and documentation of our association’s business. We set out albeit with some difficulties to build on initiatives of previous administrations but to be equally innovative. I am very pleased to announce today, that the pledge I made in 2005 that I will ensure MEDA-USA has a functional website that promotes our culture with the ability of Moghamoans make donations and pay their dues online within six months

of my election to office was honoured. We now have a web presence with almost 4,000 hits from 6 continents within the last 5 months alone.

Opening to the world certainly comes with new opportunities and new challenges. It comes with new expectations that as an association we must live up to; and how we do this is also very important. MEDA-USA takes no interest in micro managing Moghamo's economy. MEDA-USA as a preferred option will partner with community groups, local chapters and established institutions to implement joint development programs. In the last year MEDA-USA focused on primarily in the areas of health care (anti HIV/AIDS initiatives), women empowerment, education, culture and the refining of MEDA-USA processes to meet the challenges of a democratic, open and transparent association.

Anti HIV/AIDS initiatives:

Under the direction of our very illustrious brothers the pharmacist, philanthropist, journalist *Ni Moses Njei Timah*, - MEDA-USA's Health Coordinator, Cameroon - and *Dr. Fergus Akwa* the Chair of the Health Committee, MEDA-USA engaged in **anti-HIV/AIDS initiatives** in Moghamo, with a stated purpose to support a massive anti-HIV sensitization campaign, to explore the possibilities of having HIV testing centres at the Batibo District Hospital and possibly other local Health centres, to subsidize HIV treatment for the very needy patients and to ensure that all children orphaned by HIV/AIDS have basic elementary education. This certainly is a very tall order and we still have a long way to go in our fight against HIV.

Last year, sixty-five Moghamo children mostly orphans or children from HIV Infected parents were screened for HIV, 10 adults were sponsored for pre-therapeutic workup tests, and one moghamoan, a young girls rescued from a herbalist, is alive

today because MEDA-USA intervened. The one millions francs (1,000,000 CFA), invested in the MEDA-USA anti-HIV/AIDS FUND now has a balance of just 194,000FRS CFA. It is my hope this noble assembly shall replenish and double its funding for the Moghamo anti-HIV initiatives. As Ni Moses Timah very aptly puts it in his message to MEDA-USA, on behalf of the many beneficiaries of this project, they *“...I can only encourage all MEDA-USA members to continue to support and sustain this project. The AIDS crisis in Moghamo area is about to overwhelm us. I trust you guys will not allow that to happen without putting up a fight. Accept thanks from the voiceless aid recipients. You are putting a smile on their faces”*.

In the coming year, MEDA-USA’s goal is to expand this initiative through a massive sensitization campaign and the HIV testing of at least 500 at risk Moghamoans.

Women Empowerment Initiatives:

Women empowerment initiatives were also an area of interest this past year. Following the successful fund raiser for women initiatives back in Houston 2005, MOWOCUDA president Ma Maggie Mbahndam gave MEDA-USA a list of possible projects that MEDAUSA could sponsor. We picked the Poultry Project which was written in funding phases to ensure accountability. This project never materialized due to some administrative bottlenecks back home and the advent of the bird flu which changed a lot of opinions about poultry in Cameroon. Another project plan for a Piggery Project has been done. I hope MEDA-USA supports this project.

To support Women Empowerment initiatives MEDA-USA will partner with the MOWUCUDA, the Moghamo Women’s Cultural and Development Association and this NEC has made a \$10,000 pledge to be paid over 5 years, at an annual rate of

\$2000 a year to support women empowerment initiatives. I hope every MEDAN firmly supports the empowering of the Moghamo Woman.

Education and Culture:

Scholarships and back to school initiatives also took place over the last year. All Moghamoans granted scholarships by the previous administration received their stipends. **In all 10 students received their annual stipend of 60,000 FRS.** To make this process more transparent the *Education and Culture Committee Chair Dr. Tezock has since formalized the scholarship application process for all potential beneficiaries. Application forms are now available online at the MEDA-USA website www.moghamo.org. The scholarship program now has clear application guidelines and eligibility requirements.*

The **Orphans project** designed to ensure children orphaned by HIV/AIDS get basic elementary education was also started. Through our partner Shaping Destiny MEDA-USA has sponsored 5 children back to school and will ensure their dreams come true. Anwei Milaine 5 years old, Njei Eric Ndam, 12 years old both from Oshum village are now back to school thanks to MEDA-USA, and so is Atud Franco, 9, Tebong Clinton Muwud, 8, and Muwud Orlando 11, all from Bessi. These children of now have a chance to make their dreams come true, and I am calling on this noble Assembly to support and to expand this initiative to give hope to 5 more children of Moghamo.

With your support the **Moghamo Names dictionary** initiative was started. It entailed collecting all Moghamo names, their meanings and the circumstances under which a child can be given a name. More than 200 names were collected from Moghamoans all over the world, and this process is still ongoing. They will be made available as soon as they are verified and their meanings ascertained.

The last but not the least in this area is the **Public Library Project**. This project started with a goal to renovate and modernize Moghamo's first and only Public Library, the GUZANG Public library. But when the disturbing pictures of the current state of the library started to surface, it became apparent to this NEC, that this goal cannot be achieved through a simple renovation. **Only a renovation and expansion of the current Library structure will ensure Moghamo has a library that can open doors to our less privilege folks back at home. It is our hope that once completed, this project will not only be a proud accomplishment of this association, but will create new opportunities for every Moghamoan living at home.** To support and bring this initiative to fruition MEDA-USA will partner with the GUDA-USA, the Guzang Development Association in the USA. **MEDA-USA will channel resources towards this project through GUDA and this NEC has made a \$10,000 pledge to be paid over 5 years, at an annual rate of \$2000 a year. I hope every Moghamoan firmly support this initiative.**

A completed list of all MEDA-USA current initiatives is available on the Moghamo website at www.moghamo.org. I hope you all visit this site, and do so frequently to keep up with the updates.

Refining and documenting MEDA-USA processes to ensure the association is based on processes and not individuals have also been a preoccupation of the current executive. In keeping with the resolutions of the Houston 2005 convention, the Constitutional committee will be presenting for your ratification a revised constitution that clears our basic document of all ambiguities and strengthen our association. It is my hope that this will provide for an easy and more efficient transfer of power from one executive to another. It is also my fervent belief that this is the best way of ensuring continuity.

But, beyond the many good things that we can and should do for our people back home, now more than ever is time for some introspection. We must look at ourselves especially the many new immigrants from Moghamo trying to find their feet in this new and complex society of ours, the USA. MEDA-USA should be a source for educational, financial and social guidance. We must support Moghamo owned businesses, promote their interest, and ensure that all Moghamo initiative get our maximum support and publicity. The success of any Moghamoan is our communal success. Supporting our own is the least we can do.

I'll be remiss if I end this speech without a very special thank you on behalf of MEDA-USA to our HIV/AIDS coordinator in Cameroon *Ni Moses Njei Timah* for making a lot personal sacrifices toward the HIV/AIDS initiative. I'll also like to thank *Dr. Peter Ndifon* of Cameroon for running the MEDA-USA Scholarship program over the years, and for providing us with the necessary documents on this program when we needed it most. More words of thanks to all committee chairs especially *Dr. Mat Tezock* of the education and Culture Committee, *Mr. Tadoh Munji* of the Projects committee, *Dr. Fergus Akwar* and *Ni Joe Ndamukong* of the HIV/AIDS committee, *Ma Irene Ngwa*, *Ni Paul Tendoh*, *Ni George Timah*, *Sister Helen Kem-Bumbala* of the convention planning committee, *Ni Matti Ngwa* of the Constitution Committee, *Mafor Jane Mbah* of the Women Empowerment committee, the resilient MEDA-USA NEC, for remaining united and strong in the face of challenge and controversy, and above all, the residents of Washington DC for making this convention happen.

As we look on to the future let us as true Moghamoans never relent in our effort to put Moghamo first. Let us be ambitious, proud and innovative. Let us never give up on any genuine program that supports those who so much depend on us back home. Let us keep self-serving and disruptive politics out of this cherished association. Let us as one people **never** fail to vehemently condemn, or make excuses for acts of

sabotage against this organization. We are stronger as a united people, and our unity is our strength. Iforti yah Kah.

Long live MEDA-USA

God bless MOGHAMO.

Emmanuel Ndamukong

President MEDA-USA

A Moghamo Cultural and Development Association