



**SOBA AMERICA**  
**2019 SOBA America Convention Minutes,**  
**Hilton Inner Harbor Hotel, Baltimore, MD**

**Nomination of Convention Moderator**

Father Desmond Ndikum was nominated to be the Moderator of the 2019 SOBA America Convention deliberations.

**Introduction of Host Chapter President**

The SOBA DMV President Ekole Fonjungo gave a speech welcoming the delegates to Baltimore Maryland. He promised a unique experience that was going to be different from any other convention, with the first ever one-week convention in SOBA history. He also asked for patience from everyone due to the logistical challenges of hosting such a big group and notified everyone that there may be potential challenges, but he expected to provide a memorable experience for the delegates.

**Life Insurance Presentation – Emeritus Quintus Enow**

Emeritus Quintus described the challenges to the SOBA America Life Insurance program. It initially started with 40, but was now at 20, due to increasing premiums and decreasing face value of the policy. He noted that most members were using SAGI as major insurance because SAGI pays for death benefits if you die in the US. There is a \$80 contribution which will be deducted until money runs out then it is refilled, and the benefit is \$15,000.

**2018 Convention Minutes – Secretary General Mbei**

The Secretary General noted that the 2018 Convention Minutes were posted on the SOBA America membership portal and he put a motion to adopt the minutes as is. The motion to adopt carried unanimously.

**Review of the agenda - SG Mbei**

SG Mbei Enoch went through the agenda items point by point and noted that the GA Should have received a copy as they came in the deliberation hall. He emphasized the need for speed due to time constraints.

The moderator, Father Ndikum interrupted to address the lateness of the delegates

### **Delegate Introductions**

Sobans introduced themselves, their class, chapter, and any Soba related roles. With over 350 Sobans in the hall, it was an interesting introduction process with several bursts of humor. Some notable intros:

Sly Nwosu - Introduced himself with delegates asking, "Is that THE Sly?"

Dr. Enow - Founding member, 2nd national president

Ewane Ambruce - "my class was tested with girls and it failed"

William Mpafe - Convention chairman

1984 Class – The blue wave, all wearing their blue class polos

1988-Golden Jubilee class, in bright yellow class polos

1989-Latino class in bright pink class polos

### **SAGI Presentation - Dr. Njabo**

The next presentation was the SAGI life insurance scheme which makes sure that in the case they of death members pay \$1 to return body to Cameroon.

Due to Cameroonian crisis, the rules were changed to have people buried in the USA in January 2018. Below are some highlights of this presentation:

- Benefit is \$15,000
- \$80 is required to start membership with a \$20 matriculation fee
- Dr. Njabo answered questions on the SAGI court case and how they won and maintain exclusive rights to the name and modus operandi.

### **Brief Address from President of SOBA General, Professor Ephraim Ngwafor**

He noted his efforts to make previous SOBA America conventions, but couldn't due to previous commitments. He acknowledged that Soba America held the premier Soba chapter under the Soba umbrella and that other chapters should learn from them. He also told the members that Soba is number 1, but that it was difficult to remain number 1, and to continue working at it. He told the story of going to Nigeria to relaunch Soba Nigeria which was actually the first Soba chapter. He described facing trials, armed soldiers and dark roads to get to his destination and cautioned us to remain a beacon of light for all other chapters worldwide.

### **2022/2023 Convention bid Soba AZ vs. Soba Tristate**

President Sona Bokassa for Soba AZ made a presentation bid to host the 2022 Soba America Convention. He noted that AZ last hosted in 2011. He described the beautiful landscape, the Grand Canyon, botanical gardens, and promised great food and hot Spanish girls. In conclusion, asked the GA to vote for AZ to host us in 2022.

President Felix Ngassa of Soba Tristate introduced SOBAN Forcha for his presentation to bid for the 2022/2023 Convention. The moderator asked whether there'll be girls for single Sobans in the Soba Tristate about girls in the Tristate and the Tristate promised Arab girls. SOBAN Forcha discussed things to do in Detroit, Michigan the Motor city and its rich automobile history. He also showed a video of several tours available including the Riverboat tours, the zoo, and others.

At the end, no vote was taken due to issues with the voting devices. President Itoe indicated that the new administration will ensure that the vote occurs on our membership portal.

### **Financial Reports - Chief JN Fomenky**

Complete financial reports have been posted on the membership portal. The Treasurer introduced the financial report from beginning of the period to the end of the period and went into details of income and expenses.

The Treasurer answered questions from the GA about our financial situation compared to when President Itoe's administration took over.

President Akoh Ferdinand asked to view the current balances supported by Soban Ntang Elad and Chairman Paul Ayah to promote transparency. A motion was adopted to appoint 2 members to help review the SOBAN accounts. Chairman Ayah and SOBAN Tabi were commissioned to review the Soba accounts and report back to the General Assembly.

### **SAFAB presentation by SAFAB Chairman Pierre Kamga**

Chairman Pierre Kamga introduced the SAFAB board members: Elvis Mukete, Amadeus Dzekedze, Alain Taku, Valery Elad, Dr. Kevin Njabo, and SG Mbei Enoh.

Presented the first report on SAFAB Financial Review. This has been posted on the membership portal and it outlines 3 main points:

- SAFAB could not complete their review because of the Treasurers inability or unwillingness to provide the required information
- The current setup of roles for the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer, and
- Provided limited recommendations based on the current financial roles/structure

Chairman Pierre Kamga also presented financial policies and procedures which is a standard operating procedures manual for handling Soba America finances to manage and mitigate risk. This presentation covered how Soba America leadership should handle everything from receiving money, documenting, depositing, authorization, disbursement, paying invoices, managing the bank accounts and transfer of accounts. It also described policies around record keeping, reporting and simplifying the reporting process. A copy of the finalized manual will be posted on the membership portal.

The moderator once again exhorted members to focus on the main speaker and not to

have side meetings and opened the floor for questions.

The first question was from Dr. Ibeagha who asked about adhering to roles for the Treasurer and Financial Secretary. Chairman Kamga replied that once the PPM was adopted it would work better for the association because it will be a violation of the PPM

The 2nd question was from Mr. Akeing Tiku and he asked about the recommendations from Mr. Paul Ayah, and what will change now, almost 2 years after the fact? Chairman Kamga emphasized that this power lies in the hands of the GA. President Itoe added that he recommended that SAFAB be created as an independent body reporting to the GA with full authority to call for an audit at any time.

The 3rd question from Albert Sekoh asked why we didn't have accounting software to which Chairman Kamga answered that we did.

The 4th question was about paying a wage or compensating executives for their work. Chairman Kamga replied that that was a question for the GA.

The final question was about the GA taking responsibility for the financial failures given that the post of financial secretary and treasurer are uncontested.

Two motions were made to adopt the recommendations by SAFAB and implement. An amendment was made by Emeritus Akeing Tiku to review the implementation and recommendations of SAFAB at the next Convention. This was seconded by Emeritus Larry Ekaney. Both the recommendation and the amendment passed by resolution of the GA.

Reporting bank accounts: we have 4 accounts

Bank account: \$9,616

Sasse alumni checking: \$2,708

Business savings: \$27,600

Soba America Inc: \$20,800

\$60,820.98

As of Feb 28th balance was \$96,176 in all accounts

5th account not included in bank statements is Sasse Alumni Association.

### **Presentation from SOBA America Legal Counsel - HRH Maître Fondungallah**

HRH Maître Fondungallah recounted that a few weeks ago, the Soba America President received a letter from one Ms. Jane Doe. During a recent financial reconciliation, several financial transactions were documented from Ms. Jane Doe's credit card and in the letter, Ms. Jane Doe categorically denied ever using or giving authorization to anyone to make those charges. She further made clear her disappointment on this issue and called to question the integrity of Soba America's financial processes.

Dr. Henry Njie asked about why NEC didn't make a decision on the facts? HRH said NEC deliberated but did not want to decide when the GA didn't have the facts.

SOBAN R. Njonguo Class of 2000 asked if the NEC decisions were politically biased due to the language used. HRH Maître Fondungallah said that no decision was taken at this time and the decision was left to be taken by the GA.

Dr. Ibeagha asked if Maître Fondungallah and Maître Tate were acting as NEC members or lawyers and if Chief JN Fomenky had a chance to give his side of the story. Maître Fondungallah replied that he was acting as legal counsel, and that Chief JN Fomenky had a chance to present information on his behalf.

Sr Soban Augustine Agbor suggested that these were personal matters which shouldn't be mixed with political discussion.

SOBAN Okala recommended a point of order that because these are legal recommendations, the GA cannot amend them, but needs to vote on them and move on.

Chief JN Fomenky was given 3 minutes to speak to rebut the allegations. He noted that he was appalled and attacked HRH Maître Fondungallah's impartiality.

Finally, a vote was taken on the recommendations that the legal counsel, Maitre Ernest Tate and HRH Maître Fondungallah in the order shown below. The moderator Father Desmond suggested that the votes be counted by the Campaign managers of each of the 4 presidential campaigns.

A motion was proposed to adopt the report of the legal counsel and it was adopted by popular vote. Below are the recommendations and results of the votes on the floor:

Recommendation 4 - Chief JN Fomenky be required to produce the names of the members whose dues were paid using Jane Doe's card so that they can be contacted to regularize their status.

151 Yes

58 No.

Recommendation adopted.

Recommendation 3 - Treasurer Fomenky should be declared ineligible to run for office.

35 Yes

51 No

Recommendation is not adopted

Recommendation 2 - Soba America should refund the amount in question to Jane Doe

37 Yes

47 No

Recommendation is not adopted

Recommendation 1 -Soba America should issue an apology to Jane Doe

27 Yes

92 No

Recommendation is not adopted

### **Introduction of the Independent Presidential Debate Commission**

Founder - Soban Chibili Nkeze

Soban Ako Asa'na

Chairperson Dr. Lisa Ekole

Soban Dr. Ibeagha

A word from the Chairperson

Dr. Lisa Ekole is a renowned consultant with a double doctorate in pharmacy and in leadership. She highlighted all the work that had been done in the background for the first ever Independent Presidential Debate Commission. Dr Lisa Ekole advised the candidates to do their best and let the voters make their choice. Finally, she exhorted the candidates to respect the results of the election and work together to help Soba America maintain its status as the premier African alumni association.

The candidates were introduced as follows:

Candidate Ekole Fonjungo

Candidate JN Fomenky

Candidate Bertrand Fote

Candidate Akoh Ferdinand

Guidelines for the debate:

2 minutes opening and 3 minutes for closing.

1.5 minutes to answer questions and for rebuttals.

The total debate was projected to last 1 hour.

### **Opening statements**

President Ekole said his campaign is all about Soba. That the image and character of Soba are bigger than all of us. Most importantly he said his goal is reconciliation and bringing Sobans together.

Chief JN Fomenky talked about his decision to run. He said his decision was about outreach, financial accountability, growth and continuity. He mentioned his part in the outreach efforts that have increased membership from just over 100 to over 600.

Dr. Fote talked about his life changing event which has pushed him to a life of service. He talked about vision, integrity, commitment, competence and respect. He also stated that if Soba America is better than it was 4years ago, then he is the candidate of choice.

President Akoh Ferdinand took credit for the blue wave, the class of 1984, which he claimed has contributed 34% of the delegates at Soba events. He also talked about the necessity for some changes which are necessary for the organization's survival.

**The first question was about Soban unity due to the crises in Cameroon and in the UK. If you lose do you pledge to support the next president and continue to work with whoever is elected?**

All candidates said yes.

**The next question was about the election process and whether any reforms were necessary.**

Candidate Ekole talked about reducing the cost of absentee ballots. He also said he wanted to extend the time for new members to be eligible to vote to 1 year.

Candidate Akoh and Fote asked for more participation from the GA

**The next question was on Soba culture and whether it is an elitist group?**

Candidate Akoh claimed that there is an establishment in SOBA America that causes presidents to be selected and not elected. He said that time for change had come and challenged the other candidates to show transparency.

Candidate Fonjungo denied that Soba is elitist

Candidate Fomenky said yes Soba is an elitist organization because it costs over \$1,000 to attend conventions. However he said that we should strive to be elitist like other alumni associations like Harvard and Yale.

Candidate Bertrand Fore attacked Candidate Akoh's notion of selection because each a Soban has a single vote.

Candidate Akoh rebutted and accused Candidate Fote for not taking responsibility for our finances.

**What issue if our Soba constitution would you fix if you had a magic wand?**

Candidate Fomenky and Fonjungo said they don't think any Soban should be banned.

Candidate Akoh said he didn't like Article 13-26 which gives overarching powers to the Soba General President to do as he pleases.

Candidate Fote said Soba America needs to have an equal voice in Soba General through a Supreme Council.

**Do you recognize Professor Ngwafor as the president of Soba General?**

All candidates said yes.

**Would you propose changes to NEC which is generally known as an Old Boys Club?**

Candidate Fonjungo said he would dramatically restructure NEC.

Candidate Fomenky said he will dissolve NEC completely.

Candidate Akoh and Fote said that they will restructure NEC.

**What reform will you bring to the project implementation in Sasse?**

Candidate Fote talked about an office of alumni affairs to oversee projects for better accountability.

Candidate Akoh talked about the necessity of giving back, but with better project management.

Candidate Fomenky talked about project management and better communication with the proprietor of the school.

Candidate Fonjungo talked about revamping NEC to improve coordination between chapters and classes for projects

**What is your favorite team?**

Candidate Akoh - Cameroon National team. He told the story of meeting Mbou Mbouh Emile and Victor Ndiparah-Akem in Buea

Candidate Fomenky- PWD Kumba

Candidate Fonjungo- Tiko United

Candidate Fote - Manchester United

**Which Soba America President/former President do you admire the most?**

Candidate Akoh, Fote, Fonjungo said all the past presidents

Candidate Fomenky said Emeritus Nobert Kong.



## **Closing statements**

Candidate Akoh called for true leadership, owning your mistakes and being transparent. He thanked the members for their support and pledged to be a partner to all members.

Candidate Fote talked about trust and being a representative for Soba. He spoke of one candidate who has only been taking notes. He talked about another candidate embroiled in financial scandal and yet another candidate who admitted that he wasn't ready to run. He concluded that he was the best candidate because of his record and that they should vote for him.

Candidate Fomenky spoke about how Paul Biya has been too long in power and likened it to Candidate Bertrand. He said that an SDO of a small town like Ekondo-Titi couldn't be President and he likened that to Candidate Akoh. He also said the leader of a small town like Tiko that smells of rubber could not be President and he likened that to Candidate Fonjungo. Finally, he said someone with the skills of outreach, leadership and the tallest candidate, should be the one voted president to thunderous applause.

Candidate Fonjungo claimed to be a child of Destiny. He said he never planned to be either sacristan, Class prefect, SG of Soba DMV, or President of Soba DMV but he ended up in those leadership positions as because it was his destiny. He said he is a uniter and not a divider. He talked about his promise in Houston to have more than 100 members in the DMV chapter and now they are at 200+. He told the crowd that if they believed that this is the best Soba Convention ever, they should vote for him, and with that he dropped the microphone to thunderous applause.

On that strong note, the debate was over and everyone gave a standing ovation to the candidates and the Independent Voting Commission.

The final item on the agenda was voting which was overseen by Honest Ballot, an independent company that had been hired by SOBA America to conduct the voting. They brought their electronic voting devices and voting booths. The results were released physically to those present and electronically on Telegram around 9 pm ET that evening.

Pursuant to the SOBA America Inc./Sasse Alumni Association Inc. elections on May 25th, 2019 in the city of Baltimore, MD, and by the power vested in the General Assembly, a total of seven new officers were elected to serve a two-year term as officers of SOBA America. They are:

President: Dr. Bertrand Fote

Vice President Professor Felix Ngassa

Secretary General: Mr. Divine Tange

Treasurer: Mr. Rudolf Inoni

Financial Secretary: Mr. Edwin Atem

Organizing Secretary: Mr. Paul Forbang

Publicity Secretary: Mr. Njukang Asong

This concludes the minutes of the 2019 Soba America Convention.