



17<sup>th</sup> June 2019

## Thank YOU SOBA America-Exit Remarks

Fellow SOBANs,

Like in every great democracy, the peaceful transfer of power from one administration to another is evidence of strong institutions, values and best practices. As an organization, Soba America passed the test with flying colors after a very spirited historic campaign. We witnessed candidates form campaign groups, produce professional campaign materials and videos, websites, Facebook pages, and the use of social media like never before in ways which gripped the attention of not only Sobans worldwide, but Cameroonians as a whole.

While we had perhaps the most talented field ever, we can have only one President at a time hence we must rally behind the new president no matter who we voted for. Elections are over and it is time to bury issues which belong to the past or the campaign and give the new NLT some time to implement the vision the voters approved and mandated with their votes. It is only fair to give them some time before starting to question any shortcomings we find. This has been our tradition and courtesy extended to all our new presidents and administrations over the past 29 years. I can never forget the amazing support I received from President Emeritus Dr. Ibeagha each time we put out a new initiative, program he supported or portions of his vision we incorporated. There is no better compliment you can get than from the praises and encouragement from those you battled against during the elections.

On behalf of the outgoing NLT, I would like to thank you all for the support and confidence you entrusted in us when we asked you 4 years back to trust us on a journey to grow SOBA America, rebrand our organization, improve our structure and functioning and to make us the envy of, and pacesetter for, all alumni Associations in the diaspora. The growth of SOBA America, our brand, image, reputation and influence is evidenced in the attention we have garnered and the respect we command worldwide. We should all take pride in the magic we have built and nurtured together over the past 4 years. We certainly delivered on our commitments to you. SOBA America has led the way in every regard in our SOBA world. We have delivered on several key projects we initiated and have pushed several key initiatives such as SOBA Supreme Governing Council which will ensure our seat at the table when it comes to SOBA issues. Our quiet diplomatic efforts on this major issue have received support from all quarters and will hopefully be a reality soon. This has been one of the key issues we have been working on in addition to other efforts to ensure SOBA unity and growth worldwide.

Brothers, even Rome was not built in one day. While we could not accomplish everything we would have hoped to accomplish due to our very ambitious agenda, we are glad we managed to complete over 90 percent of what I promised in my February 2015 vision for SOBA America. It is now time for the Fote Administration to perfect our shortcomings given the plethora of changes in our structure, functioning and

the programs we have instituted. They can certainly make us more efficient and build on what we have set in motion.

As I have said many times before, SOBA America is now ready for a New Big Vision which can directly impact the lives of SOBANS and their families. Besides our charitable goals, we need an investment vehicle which can improve our lives. A couple of initiatives we could not present such as an updated final goodbye protocol and SOBA America biggest loser initiative will be unveiled in the coming days. In addition to many brilliant new initiatives proposed by President Fote, I am glad to see he has extended a hand to all those who ran for office to come together and share the best elements of each vision they ran on. This will create a hybrid of a vision which will unite us and take us to even more enviable heights. In the interest of unity and cohesion, I encourage all those with proposals on how we can improve as an organization to reach out directly to leadership in private or if done in our forum, should do so in a constructive way. Our tone and messaging after a heated campaign is key in keeping our love, unity and continuous growth intact. SOBA has never benefited from division or divisive rhetoric. Respecting the core values we learned from Sasse brought here and will only take us further.

While time denied me the opportunity to update you on the State of our Union in Baltimore, I am hopeful reading our 2019 Magazine paints a good picture of where we were and how far we have come with your support. As I leave the stage and a new era begins, I pledge to support the Fote Administration, SOBA America and SOBA in every way possible. During our administration, we addressed questions and concerns raised by many members at different times. Our decisions were never based on what will make us popular but what was right for SOBA America, SOBA and Sasse College. Leadership entails making tough decisions which are sometimes unpopular. I will let the history books judge what we accomplished together and not comment further on past events or what happened during my administration. We have a new leader and we should move on, give them a chance and not live in the past. A leader can never satisfy all the people all the time. But we strive to achieve what we promised and satisfy most of the people most of the time even when we differ from their stance. Our body of work and achievements engraved in history will tell our story.

I once more call on all to give the Fote Administration a chance to implement its vision and hold them accountable for their actions and not events of the past or actions of the previous administration. A constant state of campaigning and relitigation of past issues will not serve us well. It is a new day and let us move forward and not live in the past even when proposing changes based on past actions.

To my cousins, family, SOBA Dallas, Emeritus Dr. Ibeagha, Golden Jubilee Class, Chapter Presidents, members of NEC, outgoing NLT members of my Administration, my advisers and most important of all you the members, we will remain indebted to you for the trust and support you gave to us. I can proudly say without fear of contradiction or dissent, **BUT WITH CONVICTION**, that with over 600 members strong, a brand revered by all, new structures, innovations second to none, an image all groups are trying to emulate, 5 new chapters, historic inclusion with over 20 Sobans aged under 21 attending our recent convention, most classes holding reunions at conventions today, our domination of social media and news coverage, and with the largest ever gathering of SOBANS or alumni group at a convention ever, **THE STATE OF OUR UNION IS THE STRONGEST IT HAS EVER BEEN!!!**

Thank you. God Bless SOBA America. God Bless SOBA and our Leaders. Our brightest days are ahead.

May St. Joseph Continue to Guide us ALL.

Sobanly,  
Frederick Itoe  
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Golden Jubilee Class  
President Emeritus, SOBA America.