

**A WELCOME SPEECH PRESENTED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITY  
FOUNDATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE ROLE OF AFRICAN  
HIGHER EDUCATION IN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY**

The Chairman  
Excellencies  
Their Royal Highnesses - Traditional Rulers  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have the distinct pleasure, honor and privilege to address you on this occasion of the opening ceremony of a three-day symposium that provides a forum to examine the role of African higher education in sustainable community development as well as to furnish a context in which participants discuss key issues relevant to advancing African University in Tali, Cameroon. Your decision to be here today is evidence of the importance you place on education as an instrument of development in society.

I am pleased to say that the symposium is a partnership of African University Foundation in the United States of America and Cameroon. African University Foundation was established to serve and facilitate the development of African University in Tali, Cameroon.

Let me acknowledge two individuals in the audience who travelled from the United States of America to participate in this special event. First is David Williams Russell, Esq. The second person is Dr. Baiyee-Mbi Agbor-Baiyee (David and Baiyee-Mbi, please stand). David is a Corporate Partner in the law firm Harrison and Moberly, L.L.P. located in Indianapolis, Indiana. He serves as the Vice Chairman of the African University Foundation Board of Trustees. Baiyee-Mbi is the President and Chief Executive Officer of African University Foundation. He is also an instructor of Economics at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.

This event is organized as part of a measured and systematic progress from concept toward the implementation of a new international institution of higher education called African University in Tali, Cameroon. If Africa is to fulfill its full potential, it must shift its place in the world from one of dependency on foreign aid to one of self-sufficiency through industry, enterprise and trade with itself in particular and the world in general. Africa will be perceived to be of strategic importance to global affairs when it brings about this change. African institutions of higher education can play a critical role in catalyzing this kind of a shift.

African University has been proposed as a new model of African higher education. As a new focus for African higher education, African University will be a unique international institution that will ensure all deserving students in Africa and abroad the opportunity to acquire an integrated experiential education, develop their talents and transform into leaders of society.

Implementation of community-based programs in the Tali community development area is the critical first step to prepare for the launch of degree-granting programs of the first flagship academic programs of African University. From such community-based programs, the local people will be able to build bridges towards improvement of their lives and communities and involvement of community leaders in the evolution of a curriculum stressing workable health care solutions, sustainable agricultural methods, sustainable development approaches and, from these, the good business principles which inevitably are the basis for the sorts of sound smaller-scale, regionally-appropriate, and community-empowering ventures which can serve as potential springboard for other entrepreneurial businesses throughout Cameroon and the rest of Africa

I believe that it is through discussion and conversation that we can truly plan and build from ground-up a new international university to produce the leadership for a new Africa. It is through discussion and conversation that we can build a university for Africa that we truly own.

Let us build African University in Tali as an academy that lives the values integrity, creativity and excellence. We must build African University not only a center of learning, but also as an inviting and enduring source of beauty, pride and inspiration.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, my gratitude to the Efroymsen Family Fund, a Central Indiana Community Foundation Fund and the Indiana Forum for International Professional Services, Inc., both located in Indianapolis, Indiana for their partial financial contribution. Let me thank the governing boards of the African University Foundation in the United States of American and Cameroon for planning this event. My special gratitude to His Royal Highness Orock Baiyee and the inhabitants of Tali, the Traditional Rulers from surrounding villages who helped to plan this event, His Excellency Enow Tanjong, Chairman of African University Foundation in Cameroon, Reverend Apostle Henry Egbemba Betang, Vice Chairman of African University Foundation in Cameroon and Ms. Elizabeth Tanyi of the Association for the Promotion of Women and Children and Secretary of African University Foundation in Cameroon for your contribution toward the planning of this symposium.

Welcome again and thank you for your kind attention.

Dr. William Agbor Baiyee  
Chairman, African University Initiative  
Tali, this December 28, 2008