

CONVERGE OF THE TRADITIONAL RULERS COUNCIL/STAKEHOLDERS FROM ANNANG, ORON AND OBOLO ETHNIC GROUPS OF AKWA IBOM STATE.

COMMUNIQUE

The Paramount Rulers, Clan Heads, Village Heads, Family Heads and Mbong Iban of the Annang, Oron, and Obolo ethnic groups in Akwa Ibom State met today October 16th, 2023 at the Ati Annang International Secretariat, Ikot Ekpene and after an exhaustive deliberation on the recently amended Traditional Rulers Law of Akwa Ibom State and other issues in the State and our country Nigeria, made the following resolutions:

1. That we on behalf of the entire people of Annang, Oron, and Obolo ethnic groups and nationalities in Akwa Ibom State heartily felicitate with the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu on the giant strides recorded thus far by his administration in renewing the hopes of Nigerians toward the repositioning of our country to her deserved greatness.
2. We also wish to very specially thank Mr. President for the very warm support and confidence accorded our distinguished son, His Excellency, Dr Godswill Akpabio, CON as the Senate President of the 10th National Assembly.
3. The Converge also thank Mr President for the appointment of our sons, Rt Hon. (Obongemem) Ekperikpe Ekpo as the Minister for Petroleum (Gas) and Rt Hon (Sir) Victor Antai as the Executive Director, Projects at the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). We do not take these appointments for granted and thus assure Mr President that these distinguished sons of ours will not disappoint in their services to the nation.
4. We very warmly felicitate with and congratulate our distinguished son, His Excellency, Dr Godswill Akpabio, CON on his able leadership of the 10th Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the achievements of the Senate and indeed the National Assembly which he is the Chairman and his contributions and support to the President in the process of repositioning Nigeria towards her deserved greatness while renewing the hopes of Nigerians for a better future. We pledge our unflinching support and loyalty to him and his leadership and representation in all ramifications
5. We congratulate our dear Governor, His Excellency, Pastor Umo Eno on his strides in office with his initial steps of peace and inclusiveness without limitations while praying and hoping that his administration shall be one that will lift Akwa Ibom State to greater heights without biases or discriminations

to any person based on ethnicity, gender, place of birth, origin or linguistic affiliation. We continue to pledge our support and loyalty the Government of Akwa Ibom State under his leadership with a hope for a fair, united and egalitarian Akwa Ibom State.

6. The Converge acknowledge the briefings from the Paramount Rulers on the genesis, issues and steps taken so far on the recently amended Akwa Ibom State Traditional Rulers Law.
7. The Converge gladly accept the authorisation and instructions of our people from Annang, Oron, and Obolo ethnic nationalities in Akwa Ibom State to take all necessary legal and constitutional actions against what we all consider a deliberate effort at the obliteration of our ethnic groups as intended by recently amended Traditional Laws of Akwa Ibom State which has suddenly turned a once very peaceful State into a fragmented society built on ethnic blocs with capacity for a breakdown of law and order in the state.
8. As peace loving and law-abiding citizens, and the custodians of our people's culture, customs and traditions, we bring to the entire Akwa Ibom, Nigerian and indeed the global communities, the true facts and position with respect to the recently amended laws of the Akwa Ibom State Traditional Rulers Law.
9. Sometime in May 2023 towards the eclipse of the administration of Mr Udom Emmanuel, he invited all the Paramount Rulers of the 31 Local Government Areas of the State to Government House for a breakfast meeting whereat he introduced the then Governor-elect, Pastor Umo Eno, now the Executive Governor of the State to them. In course of the introduction, he requested for the extension of the same cooperation he had received from the Paramount Rulers to his successor and, in pure passing, also mentioned that there was a proposal to restructure the Akwa Ibom State Council of Chiefs, the details of which Pastor Umo Eno was to provide on his assumption of office in May 2023.
10. On 17th September 2023, the Paramount Rulers and indeed some of our socio-cultural groups received individual invitations from the House of Assembly to a Public Hearing on 19th September 2023 on the proposed amendments to the Traditional Rulers Law, Cap. 155, Laws of Akwa.
11. This was the first time, we the Paramount Rulers of Annang, Oron, and Obolo ethnic nationalities saw the proposals to restructure the State Council of Chiefs barely mentioned by former Governor Udom Emmanuel at the meeting of May 2023 aforesaid. And, promptly, we on behalf of our people, raised memoranda vehemently opposing the passage of the then Bill with outlandishly discriminatory provisions against us on account of our ethnicities and in favour

of our colleagues of the Ibibio ethnic group which the Bill proposed to make supreme.

12. Of greater import to the opposition, the Bill stratified the citizenship of Nigeria in Akwa Ibom State into three broad classes purely on the basis of ethnicity in its provision in Clause 5 for the permanent position of a President-General of the then proposed Supreme Council of Traditional Rulers to be occupied by "the Oku Ibom Ibibio, representing the largest ethnic group in the State" and Vice President I and Vice President II secondarily and permanently reserved for "the Akwa Akuku Annang, representing the second largest ethnic group in the State" and "the Ahta Oro, representing the third largest ethnic group in the State" respectively. In other words, every other Traditional Ruler in the State from any non-Ibibio ethnic group is permanently prohibited and disentitled by statute from ascending to or occupying the position of the President-General of the new Supreme Council of Traditional Rulers, such prohibited Traditional Rulers not being of Ibibio, the purported largest ethnic group in the State.
13. Despite opposition at the Public Hearing stated above, the House of Assembly hurriedly passed the Bill into Law in the evening of September 22nd, 2023 and it was quickly assented to by Governor Umo Eno on the night of the same September 22nd, 2023
14. In the morning of September 23rd, 2023, Paramount Ruler of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area and the Oku Ibom Ibibio was immediately sworn into office as the first permanent President-General of the Supreme Council of Traditional Rulers.
15. Before this obnoxious and vexatious law, and for the past 36 years, the Traditional Rulers Law provided for a State Council of Chief with the Chairmanship fairly and equally rotated among the Paramount Rulers of the Local Government Areas of the State, first on yearly basis and, under the tenure of Governor Udom Emmanuel, biennially.
16. Apart from the infringement of sections 15, 17, 24, 42 of the 1999 Constitution and Articles 3, 19, 22 and 28 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification & Enforcement) Act, two quick questions, *inter alia*, arising from the above scenario, and which the general public may wish to take notice of especially given their wider implications are:
 - a. Can the citizenship of Nigeria be stratified into classes on the basis of ethnic origin as the amended Traditional Rulers Laws of Akwa Ibom State seeks to do?

- b. Can the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly competently legislate on the citizenship of Nigeria in infringement of the legislative competence of the National Assembly, citizenship being item 9 in the Exclusive Legislative List?
17. The Convergence observed that the Law as passed has already caused serious disaffection, disunity, divisions, protests, tensions and lack of trust amongst indigenes of our various ethnic groups and even the Traditional Rulers of the State and has the propensity to further cause more tensions, protests, confrontations and unintended attendant break down of law and order, with the possibility of loss of lives and properties of our citizens in our much beloved peaceful State, and therefore should be repealed immediately.
 18. The Convergence observed that that the esteemed traditional stools in the country such as the Sultan of Sokoto, the Oni of Ife, the Oba of Benin, the Oba of Lagos, the Emir of Kano to mention but a few which the amended law is seen to equate the Oku Ibom Ibibio with are hereditary and dates back to hundreds of years of self-evolution. They were not legislated into existence by any law. The contraption of Supreme Council President General called Oku Ibom Ibibio belongs to one tribe and has no bearing to our history and traditions.
 19. Further, it is pertinent to state here that the so-called throne of the Oku Ibom Ibibio is only for the Ibibio tribe in the State which is found in 14 Local Government Areas out of the 31 Local Government Areas in the State. Hence the people and the Local Government Areas of the Oron tribe (5 LGAs), Annang tribe (8 LGAs), Ekiadi tribe (2 LGAs), the Obolo tribe (2 LGAs) were and are NEVER part of the territories under the Oku Ibom stool.
 20. For the continuous peaceful and harmonious coexistence of our people and their brothers in Ibibio and for the greater interest of Akwa Ibom State as witnessed in the last 36 years, the Convergence appeal to His Excellency, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Umo Eno to kindly recall this vexatious and obnoxious Law and represent it to the House of Assembly for reconsideration of the areas of complaints highlighted in this Communique and various written and verbal representations to him from our people with a view to redressing same. His Excellency should note that this law as assented to by him has already caused much disaffection and disharmony amongst the different ethnic groups of Akwa Ibom State under his leadership to prevent avoidable deterioration of the foisted protests in our dear State.
 21. That the Traditional Rulers Council and indeed the good people of the Annang, Oron, and Obolo Nationalities both at home and in the diaspora refuse to recognise and accept the permanency and supremacy of the President General

of the Supreme Council of Akwa Ibom State Traditional Rulers as presently constituted with the Oku Ibom Ibibio as the occupant in perpetuity except such is amended to give equal opportunity to all ethnic nationalities and on a rotational two (2) years period as it was before now.

22. The Convergence directs that no member of the Traditional Rulers Council from the Annang, Oron, and Obolo Nationalities shall attend any meeting, event, function of any sort presided over by the Oku Ibom Ibibio as the President General of the Supreme Council of Akwa Ibom State Traditional Rulers. Whoever that flouts this resolution shall be traditionally sanctioned in accordance with our customs and traditions.
23. The Convergence acknowledges the invitation of His Excellency, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State of 14th October 2023 to all Paramount Rulers for a meeting to be presided over by him at the Executive Council Chambers in the Governor's office on Tuesday 17th October 2023. We commend the Governor for this invitation which we view as an act of good faith and responsiveness, and, in reciprocation of good faith, therefore pray our Paramount Rulers to honour the invitation steadfastly armed with the position of the Annang, Oro and Obolo ethnic Nationalities expressed in various written and verbal representations to the Governor vehemently rejecting the amended Traditional Rulers Law and the permanency of Oku Ibom Ibibio as the supreme head of the traditional rulers in Akwa Ibom State. The Convergence further insists and impresses upon our royal fathers that on no account shall they negotiate away the destinies of millions of their subjects of the Annang, Oron and Obolo nationalities at the meeting by, in whatever form, acceding to the imposition, recognition and/or legitimisation of the obnoxious and vexatious Traditional Rulers Law in its imposition of the Permanent Presidency of the Oku Ibom Ibibio on the Supreme Council of the Traditional Rulers Council.
24. The Convergence commended the efforts, support, encouragement and steadfastness of notable Ibibio and pan-Akwa Ibom patriots who have expressed their support to us in their solid opposition to the divisiveness in the new law, and the men, women and youths of the Annang, Oron, and Obolo Nationalities for their commendable roles in the struggle and fight for the rights of their people. We also salute all men and women of goodwill across Nigeria who have shown support and solidarity to this struggle.
25. The Convergence also commend the efforts of some members of the House of Assembly members who stood their grounds despite all odds to oppose the passage of this law. This is the hallmark of effective representation. However, the Convergence condemned in its entirety the actions and or inactions of some


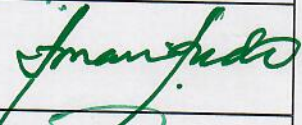

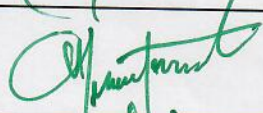
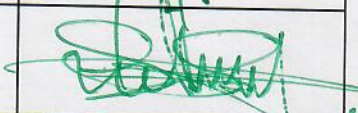
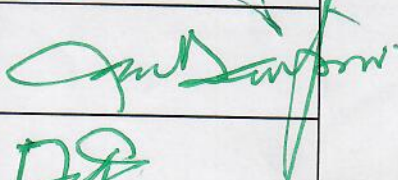


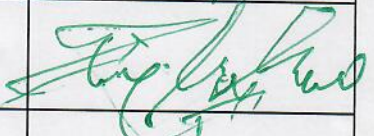

of the House of Assembly members from our ethnic Nationalities in aiding and abetting the passage of this obnoxious and vexatious law against their people. This is the epic of misrepresentation and the Converge request that they immediately find ways to redress themselves and ensure the repeal of this law in line with the yearnings of their people and constituents.

26. We call on all our citizens to remain calm and law abiding as we seek all legitimate ways of reversing this obnoxious and modern-day slavery law. We assure them of our determination to ensure that justice and equity is not just done but seen to be done as we have not yet lost faith in the capacities of the State and Federal Governments to protect the minorities in the terms of the 1958 Willink Minority Commission Report.

Long live the Annang, Oron, and Obolo Ethnic Nationalities!

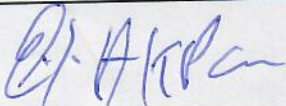



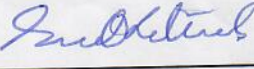



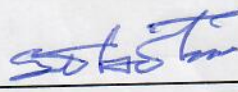

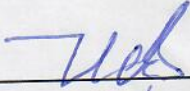




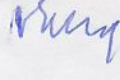
Long live Akwa Ibom State!



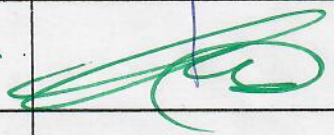

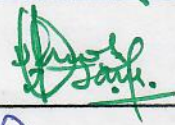

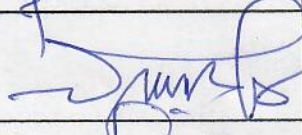
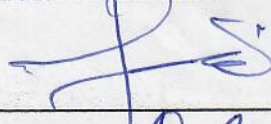



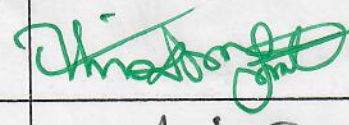
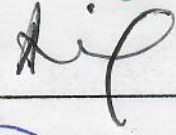

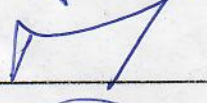
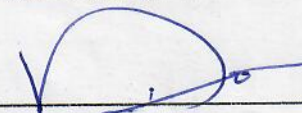
Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

| S/N | NAME | POSITION | SIGNATURE |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1 | HRM Cosmas Abaka | Parsons, Rivers, Essien |  |
| 2 | HRM Prof Aman | Etim Ekpo |  |
| 3 | HRM J. J. OBOBI | Omlc Anam |  |
| 4 | HRM Ukut | Ukut Ekpene |  |
| 5 | HRM S. Udofia | Abak |  |
| 6 | HRM Amos Akpan | Ukanjoku |  |
| 7 | HRM J. Okosi | IK9 |  |
| 8 | HRM Umo Achida | Obot Akang |  |
| 9 | HRM Uwanakwo | Uru Effiong |  |
| 10 | HRM Owing (Prof) Effiong | Bono |  |








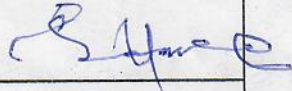





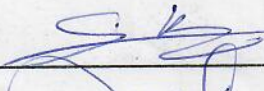
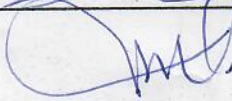

B. Archibisi (JP)



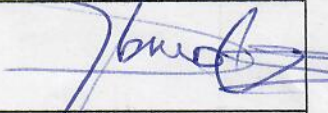
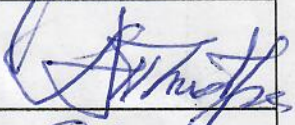
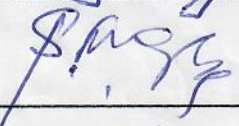

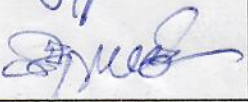




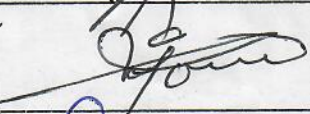

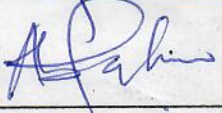
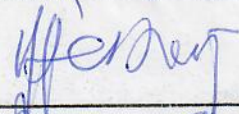
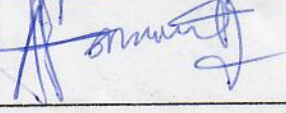
| S/N | NAME | POSITION | SIGNATURE |
|-----|----------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 11 | Hrm Edidem Obay Harry Etebor | Eastern Obobo LGA | |
| 12 | Hrm Ita Okoko | Okobo | |
| 13 | Hrm O.A. Abay | Mbo | |
| 14 | Clan Head H.H. Andrew C. Okon | Essien Udin | |
| 15 | H.H. Ehin A. Udoekoye | Clan Head Ikpe Anang Essien Udin | |
| 16 | Ezekiel Iwofe Obong | Clan Head Ikpe Anang | |
| 17 | H.H. Obong Sunday Udoetok | Clan Head Adesa Essien Udin | |
| 18 | H.H. Obong Bassy J. Akpan | Clan Head Okon Essien Udin | |
| 19 | H.H. Okuku Siso Jacob Udoim | Clan Head of N/E Edina Obokere | |
| 20 | H.H. Obong Augustine Akpan | Clan Head Alahq, Essien Udin | |
| 21 | H.H. Akpan Jackem Bangs | Clan Head of Abule Mudi Oruko Annan | |
| 22 | H.H. Okuku Emmanuel Umanah | Ikpe Anang Clan Obot Akem | |
| 23 | H.H. Usen Okon Udo | Clan Abasi Head | |
| 24 | H.H. Obong Sunday Umah | Clan Head of Edeme, Abek | |
| 25 | H.H. Akpan Symanus Ekanem | Clan Head Uans West | |
| 26 | H.H. Obong Onetha Ukpong | Clan of Akpan Ikpe | |
| 27 | H.H. Obong Samuel Onoboo | for Oron Paramount ruler Clan head Udoim in Oron LGA | |



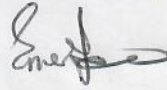



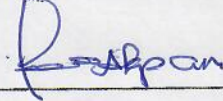
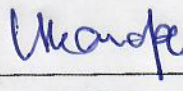
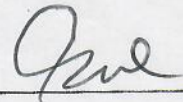
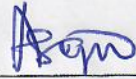
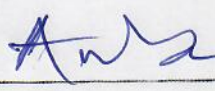
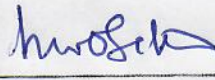

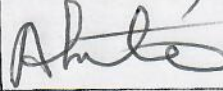


| S/N | NAME | POSITION | SIGNATURE |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| 27 | Obong Ezekiel Iwoka | Clan Head, Ikona Etimo Ekpa |  |
| 28 | Obong Emmanuel Lazarus | Clan Head, IKor Abia, Ogot Akara |  |
| 29 | H/H Okuku Andrew C. Okon | Clan Head, UKang East, Essien Uchim |  |
| 30 | Obong Etim Akpan Udekoray | Clan Head, Ikpe Anonoy, Essien Uchim |  |
| 31 | H/H Offiong Edele W Okutu | Clan Head, UKwong Limo Ekpa |  |
| 32 | H/H Obong Okon Udele Okutu | Clan Head, Limo Ekpa |  |
| 33 | H/H Okuba Sunday Paul | Clan Head Obodo Ita Essien Uchim |  |
| 34 | H/H Obog Jonathan I. Ukpouelle | CLAN HEAD ACHAN - ICA |  |
| 35 | H/H Okuku Sylvanus O. Udekoray | UKana West Essien Uchim |  |
| 36 | Edidem Sunday Umoh | Clan Head, Ediene, Abak |  |
| 37 | Uson Okulele | Clan Head, Abia Abia LSA |  |
| 38 | H/H Samuel Onob | Clan Head of Oron LSA |  |
| 39 | H/H Obong Akpan Ofong | Clan Head, Ukon Clan, Ikor Ekpa |  |
| 40 | H/H Obong mfon Jimmy Udu | Clan Head, Nnony IKor, Oruku Anam |  |
| 41 | H/H IFA Ostoria | AFako Udele MBO LSA |  |
| 42 | R/H ASUQUO Etim Umom | Clan Head of Obodin, Urua ofong Uruka |  |

| S/N | NAME | POSITION | SIGNATURE |
|-----|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 43 | Sr. Eneam Akpan | Mi Amang foundation Boi Chairman |  |
| 44 | Rt. Hon. Sunny Udou | Former Member House of Reps |  |
| 45 | Rt. Hon. Uko Idig | Former chairman Ukara group |  |
| 46 | Hon. Mbet Okpariete | Stakeholder |  |
| 47 | Hon. Uduet Jack | Former chairman |  |
| 48 | Sir Uduak Isobare | Stakeholder |  |
| 49 | Hon. Victor Udoji | Former chairman Essex |  |
| 50 | Imifusk Akpan | Youth leader |  |
| 51 | Mfon /WOK | STAKEHOLDER |  |
| 52 | IMA IBOKETE | STAKE HOLDER |  |
| 53 | Idorwim Essex | YOUTH LEADER |  |
| 54 | Comr. Emmanuel Anama | SA forum |  |
| | Hon A. Abraham | Stakeholder - O/Aran |  |
| 56 | Hon. Uboasong Umo | Stakeholder, Ukanafun |  |
| 57 | Barr Aniekan Akpan | Stakeholder, Ukanafun |  |
| 58 | Barr. Diamond Akpan | Stakeholder, Ibese |  |

59 Imacypus Adolphus Stakeholder Ehin Ekepo Ht - - -

| S/N | NAME | POSITION | SIGNATURE |
|-----|-------------------------------|--------------|---|
| 59 | Akuku Ability Sampson | Edin Ekpo |  |
| 60 | Akuku Aniefok Udo Akpan | Essien Udoin |  |
| 61 | Akuku Anietie Udotin | Essien Udoin |  |
| 62 | Akuku Joseph Sunday | ✓ ✓ |  |
| 63 | Akuku Godwin Augustin | ✓ ✓ |  |
| 64 | Akuku Ehin Akona | ✓ ✓ |  |
| 65 | Chief Sunday Oron Umamah | Okobo |  |
| 66 | Chief Sunday Thompson Esuk | ✓ |  |
| 67 | Chief Edet Anderson | ✓ |  |
| 68 | Chief Victor Ehin | ✓ |  |
| 69 | Chief Edet James Ukpong | ✓ |  |
| 70 | Prince STEPHEN Aniedi | ABAK |  |
| 71 | Prince Peter Egassien | Abak |  |
| 72 | Sunday John | Ibano |  |
| 73 | Francis Akene | Okobo |  |
| 74 | Chief Gabriel Uboro | Abak |  |

| S/N | NAME | POSITION | SIGNATURE |
|-----|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| 75 | Aboum EEP 21MATA | Afe Anney |  |
| 76 | Rt hen for wood | stakeholder |  |
| 77 | Pat Amy Ibouf | stakeholder |  |
| 78 | H.M. Obang ^{Awaka} | Stai Afe Anney |  |
| 79 | Eld-Simmon / Stai | PROVOS, Afe Anney |  |
| 80 | Bishop James A. Agyem | stakeholder |  |
| 81 | RT. HAN SUNNY URSUM | stakeholder Afe |  |
| 82 | RT. Am. Uko Idiong | stakeholder |  |
| 83 | Mbet Okongko | stakeholder |  |
| 84 | Hon. Ukwat Jee | stakeholder |  |
| 85 | CHIEF SUNDAY IBANGA | ANIMANG LEADER |  |
| 86 | Obang Danice Okon Udo | Community leader |  |
| 87 | Siv Uduak Isoban | stakeholder |  |
| 88 | Anelkan Abakan | stakeholder |  |
| 89 | Cyrl Essien | stakeholder |  |
| 90 | Linnamund Amann | stakeholder |  |

| S/N | NAME | POSITION | SIGNATURE |
|-----|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 91 | Chief M. Ekanem | Village Head |  |
| 92 | HRH. ISAIH OKONKO | CLAN HEAD |  |
| 93 | Chief Ernest Eke | Village Head West Akpan NTA |  |
| 94 | Chief Sam Billy Ekong Mendue | Village Head IKA |  |
| 95 | AKpan | Village head |  |
| 96 | Chief Monday | Village Head |  |
| 97 | Chief Effiong Jim | Family Head |  |
| 98 | Ukara Peter | Village Head |  |
| 99 | Chief Akpan Moses | Village Head |  |
| 100 | Asuquo O ABIA | Family Head |  |
| 101 | Effiong S. Amba | Family Head |  |
| 102 | Chief Ine Okorie | Village Head |  |
| 103 | Chief Sunday Benson | Village Head |  |
| 104 | Chief Edet Anto | Family Head |  |
| 105 | Chief Anthony Ehir | Village Head |  |
| 106 | Chief Akpan Ure | Village Head |  |