Speech delivered by Dr Claret Onwutalobi the President at the Anambra State Association Europe Cultural Carnival 2018

Protocol

Igbo kwenu! Nigeria kwenu! Africa kwenu! Anambra people kwezuonu!

Good morning one and all!

Today is a proud day for all the ASA Finland & Europe members. This is the Afternoon we have all been waiting for! It's our annual Cultural carnival, another feather in Anambra State Association Finland's hat.

Today I am extremely happy to welcome all of you.

Today's special invitees are Our Chief guest of honour Mr Jaakko Niinistö, the deputy mayor of Vantaa who is with us despite his busy schedule. Hope you will thoroughly enjoy the day.

Our Governor, Chief Dr Willie Obiano could not be present with us today because of his other engagement, but he sent his warm regards.

Let's welcome also welcome, Mr Adeyemi Oyetade, the head of the chancery from the Embassy of Nigeria, who is here in the capacity of representing our Ambassador, His excellency Mohamed Musa who could not be unavoidably absent, you are highly welcome sir.

Another important person in our midst, who came all the way from Nigeria yesterday evening to grace this occasion is nobody but the Deputy inspector general, Barrister, Joel, Azubuko, Uda, He is the Enyi 1 of Abia, Barrister Uda is the initiator of Amnesty Nigeria, he is retired deputy inspector general, in charge of administration, barrister you are highly welcome.

And the chairman of the occasion, Mr Michael Nwakile all the way from Oslo Norway, you are highly welcome.

Our Able president of Anambra State Association Europe, Mr Christian Onuorah from the United Kingdom, I greet you, sir.

All the ASA Europe delegates and member countries, that are fully represented today, are highly welcome.

Our very own Igbo union Finland and all our sister associations are present today-we appreciate you all.

Nana Ekuoba Gyasi Gyimah, the king of Asanteman kuo Finland, welcome

And all those who got their visas so late that could not make it today, people like Dr Chukwuemeka Ezeife, Nollywood Super actor Mr Bob-Manuel Udokwu and many others. We thank you.

Your excellencies,

The Chairman,

Representatives and delegates from all Igbo, Nigerian, and African Associations,

Our special guests of honour,

Members of the high table,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good afternoon to everyone!

1. I am delighted to welcome you to this Anambra State Cultural carnival 2018, making the first time the Anambra State Association Finland is facilitating such an event in Finland in collaboration with Anambra State Association Europe and other organizations. In this vein, let me congratulate Anambra State Association Finland and Europe for the insightful initiative
2. The theme of the event is aptly captured as: “Harnessing Culture for Competitive Advantage.” It is aimed at promoting cultural ties between Africans and Finland as well as the provision of opportunities and platforms for the exchange of information, ideas and interaction in multicultural Finland.
3. Arts and culture from the core of a people’s being and the essence of their existence. It is also an extension of their human expression. The role of Arts and Culture as catalysts to progressive multiculturalism is gaining more recognition, while artefacts open our eyes to our historical existence.
4. Our cultural heritage keeps our memories alive of how beliefs and cultural expressions have contributed to the development of society.
5. Africa is a land of rich artistic heritage and endowed with an abundance of creativity dating back to over 2000 years. African cultural riches are well demonstrated through art, dance, literature, folklore, music, crafts, food, dressing style, and languages.

6. The continent of Africa is believed to be the cornerstone of culture and every year, thousands of people from all over the world visit most of the countries in Africa to witness the beautiful culture, history and other amazing natural phenomena which Africa is blessed with and which it cherishes, for instance, our dance, food, songs, costumes just to mention a few. Just as we are going to witness on this very day.
7. This event is about commemorating our culture and other cultures beyond our borders and our continent. It must be well understood that preserving our culture doesn't mean disrespecting other peoples' cultures. Cultures create and develop identities.
8. Today, and now, I highly call all Africans to try our level best to love and feel proud of our culture. This is because it is believed that you will not know the importance of things unless they are taken away from you.
9. Today's Festival is uniquely mesmerizing. We have lined out a series of activities to make today's event a memorable one. Our sensational cultural dance troupe will be at its best. New faces of our Mmanwu masquerade will be on display. You will all see an explosion of colour and an explosion of culture
10. As immigrants in Finland, we have over the years enriched the cultural mosaic of the Finnish populace through our creativity, artistry and skills. We are therefore happy to see you all who give us confidence that Cultural diversity is supported and encouraged.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cannot finish this address without appreciating and commending the immense effort and support of my fellow members and our wives.

My thanks also go to my hard-working colleagues on the Executive Board who have been toiling with me day in and day out to keep the flag of this association flying high and the Vantaa community for the maximum support.

Kiitos!

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you all for honouring our invitation and wish you journey mercies back home afterwards.

Thank you.

Igbo birikwanu!!! Igbo muo nu!!!Igbo Zuo nuoooo