



**OFFICE OF THE
SENIOR SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE
AKWA IBOM STATE GOVERNOR ON DIASPORA MATTERS**

**Inaugural Healthcare Dialogue of Akwa Ibom Diaspora &
Home-based Healthcare Professionals-Government**

November 3, 2024

Official Communique:

The Dialogue shall be held quarterly, following the successful outcome of its inaugural session on November 3, 2024, and this is a collaboration of the Office of Senior Special Assistant on Diaspora Matters to the Akwa Ibom State Governor/Akwa Ibom Healthcare Professional at Home and in the Diaspora and Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Health.

Focus: Emergency Medical Services in Akwa Ibom State

Objective: To reexamine opportunities for collaboration between Diaspora Healthcare Professionals with Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Health to strengthen healthcare development in the state on a global scale with reforms, external aid, and investment

1. Representatives of the Akwa Ibom Healthcare Professionals in the Diaspora (AHCPD) and their counterparts at home and the Honorable Commissioner for Health, Akwa Ibom State, as well as representatives of businesses/professional health bodies in Akwa Ibom State and Chairman, Akwa Ibom Investment Corporation, AKICORP, met on Sunday, November 3, during the Inaugural Diaspora-Government Healthcare Dialogue. Their meeting was to enhance collaboration between healthcare professionals and government as well as discuss in-depth and adopt measures to introduce emergency medical services in Akwa Ibom State. This is in line with the Federal Ministry of Health National Emergency Medical Service and Ambulance System (NEMSAS) to enable Nigerians call for help in emergency situations.

2. An interactive meeting, facilitated by renowned international healthcare consultant, Nsikak Akpakpan, MD, PhD, the inaugural dialogue started with opening remarks by Hon. Linda Akon Umoh, Senior Special Assistant on Diaspora Matters/State Diaspora Focal Point Officer (Akwa Ibom State). The keynote address was given by special guest, Hon. Dr. Augustine Umoh, Commissioner of Health, Akwa Ibom State, which elicited further suggestions and contribution of ideas by representatives of the Nigerian Medical Association, the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives, the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria,



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the Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists, the Health Insurance Board, and other such professional bodies in Akwa Ibom State. Others who ideated on issues raised include Ide Owodiong-Idemeko, Chairman AKICORP and participants representing a broad range of healthcare and other professions. Several questions were raised and resolutions made on how to achieve the objective of the dialogue.

3. The keynote address of the Honorable Commissioner for Health and details of his slide presentation, provoked discussions on a broad range of requirements that need to be met for the successful introduction, organization, funding, management of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Akwa Ibom State. The Dialogue also acknowledged the role of diverse sectors of the healthcare industry and concluded with specific recommendations on manpower development and training along with strong private sector component to make EMS run successfully in the State in compliance with Federal Government regulations.

4. In his post-keynote remarks, the Honorable Commissioner for Health, who comprehensively dealt with every question raised during the Dialogue, pointed to the sincerity and willingness of government to partner and collaborate with the Diaspora, healthcare professionals and their respective professional bodies, as well as the private sector in support of emergency health services in Akwa Ibom State.

5. As a frame of reference for the next step, having achieved operational imperatives, the Dialogue further emphasized the need to strategize on which of the ideas identified in the dialogue should take a high priority. It finally agreed to discuss the administrative format the Diaspora Professional association should adopt – such as non-government organization, public benefit start-up medical company, etc.

6. Furthermore, the Dialogue, while acknowledging the promise of cooperation with the private sector, the prospect of extending ambulance services to riverine communities via speed boats, and the contribution of ImaBride Africa, a faith-based charity, to make their ambulances available to the State EMS, agreed to put a collaboration proposal together for further discussion with the Ministry of Health, subject to ratification by AHCPD.

7. Noting the importance of retraining and professional development, as well as program monitoring, feedback and evaluation as necessary requirements for an effective and



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functioning EMS, the Dialogue identified both as an area of priority for government to consider. The interest generated by the inaugural Dialogue and the thought provoking questions raised by participants both reflect the genuine desire of Akwa Ibom Health Professionals for a transformative change in the way health services, particularly EMS are delivered in Akwa Ibom State. The detailed and thoughtful responses to questions raised at the Dialogue provided by Prof. Umoh, Hon. Health Commissioner reflect his appreciation for the Diaspora and their anticipated collected role in the implementation of EMS in Akwa Ibom State.

8. In appreciation, the Dialogue expressed sincere gratitude through the Hon. Sr. Special Assistant on Diaspora Matters and the Hon. Commissioner for Health to His Excellency, Pastor Umo Eno, PhD, for his support and approval of the Dialogue, as well as the participants for the thoughtful and constructive comments and contributions.

Signed:

****Executive Committee for Diaspora Healthcare Professionals/Homeland Counterparts**

****Hon. Linda Umoh**

Sr. Special Assistant on Diaspora Matters/State Diaspora Focal Point Officer

****Hon. Prof. Augustine Umoh**

Commissioner for Health, Akwa Ibom State

Adopted November 6, 2024