

URGENT NEED TO RE-INTERVENE ON THE COLLAPSED IKOT MFON - NDIYA BRIDGE TO PREVENT FURTHER LOSS OF LIVES, PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE NEAREST SCHOOL COMMON TO BOTH COMMUNITIES & GENERALLY ASSUAGE THE SUFFERING OF OUR PEOPLE

SPONSOR: HON. (ENGR) UDUAK EKPO-UFOT: Member Representing Etinan State Constituency

CO-SPONSOR: HON. OTOBONG BOB: Member Representing Nsit Ubium State Constituency

Mr. Speaker, Distinguished Colleagues...

This Motion is brought pursuant to Order III, Rule I of the Standing Orders of the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly (7th edition).

Ikot Mfon is a community in Etinan Local Government Area in Akwa Ibom State. This community shares a common socioeconomic, educational, cultural commonalities and other mutual affinities with her neighbour, Ndiya community in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area through a popular bridge known as 'Ikot Mfon bridge' which was first constructed in Nigeria's first republic during the colonial era. This bridge was historically the beginning of a Trunk A road all the way from Calabar to Uyo- Ndiya – Ikot Mfon- Mkpat Enin- Ikot Abasi, terminating on the East West road, towards Port Harcourt.

Mr. Speaker, Distinguished Colleagues, available record has it that these two communities - Ikot Mfon and Ndiya, because of the significance of the bridge, played host to several colonialists and renowned missionaries and engendered economic growth and sociocultural bonds at that time.

Sadly, for the past thirty years, this bridge and the road that leads to it, have remained an eyesore and a death traps to residents of these communities and road users including school children who use rickety boats on a daily to access educational facilities in their neighbourhood.

Unfortunately, from July 2000 when this bridge finally caved-in till date, economic activities across these communities have been halted, travelling out to access healthcare services and educational facilities have equally remained tall tasks, and more unfortunate is the fact that many lives have been lost including that of school children.

This House...

AGREES that education is the best and only veritable tool for state and national development known to man, and that children of these communities have been shot-out from accessing education and healthcare services as a result of the collapse of Ikot Mfon bridge. Some have even been drawn in the process.

ACKNOWLEDGES that this section of Ikot Mfon road and the connecting bridge have remained in

dire state for over two decades, thereby causing death and economic hardship to indigenes and residents.

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGES that my predecessors Rt.Hon Sam Ikon & Rt.Hon Aniefiok Dennis have separately raised this same motion in 2016 & 2020, but with little or no traction or response from the requisite authorities

AWARE that despite the fact that this is a federal road, the impact of its collapse is felt by indigenes of Akwa Ibom State. In any case, the need and appeal for its reconstruction is only timely as it will rekindle hope and bring back that sense of inclusion amongst affected communities.

WORRIED that residents of these communities have been disconnected from the national grid; unable to access healthcare services, market, school and other available social services.

CONCERNED that so much lives, especially that of school children have been lost in their attempts to access education, healthcare and other services.

NOTES that economic activities among residents of these communities have been dwindled due to the collapse of the road and bridge.

RECOGNIZES that it is our duty and responsibility to speak for the interest of our constituents, noting that the executive arm of our state government gives tangible expression to our laws and resolutions through assiduous implementation of policies and programmes in a holistic manner for the benefit of our citizens without necessarily waiting for the federal government.

LET IT BE MOVED AND HEREBY ACCORDINGLY RESOLVED BY THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE: -

1. *That* the relevant government agency be directed to embark on an on-the-spot assessment of this river and communities to better ascertain the plight of the affected citizens.
2. *That* a bridge be constructed across Ikot Mfon/Ndiya River to provide ease of passage by traders, school children and other goods and services between these affected communities.
3. *That* Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA), Federal Ministry of Works should be brought to the notice of urgent need to reconstruct the bridge/road.

My distinguished colleagues & MOST RESPECTFULLY MR. SPEAKER, I BEG TO MOVE.

Hon (Engr) Uduak-Obong Ekpo-Ufot
Member Representing Etinan State Constituency.