**APPRECIATION COMMUNIQUE FROM MRS. CELINE MUKE EDI-MESUMBE LOADER,**

**PRESIDENT OF ExSSA-UK**

My dears,

This is a PS to my earlier communique below:

It's been niggling me that my earlier quickie 'IN SUMMARY' didn't do justice to, or even begin to scratch the surface of, what actually went down in Worcester over the weekend!  I was waiting for someone like Sis EDITH FIELDING who captured, in her special way (a la post-Paris write up), the magic and excitement of our Paris AGM, to do the same for the PURE CLASS, GLAMOUR & INSPIRATION that was our EXSSA UK 2013 Convention!  I could hold no longer, so let me give it my best here below:

STARTING WITH OUR AGM - the financial report that showed we're not doing badly at all; the exciting elections that ushered something new and something old to the NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NEC);  NERISSA's update on our SANITATION PROJECT IN SAKER that saw SISTER KOFO (our newly elected Auditor) flumux the presenter with a question about the price per litre, litre per dosage or was it weight per single dosage and how many dosage per single usage ....of this magical biodegrading product that we have generously supplied to Saker Baptist College (you had to be there! it was pure comic relief, notwithstanding the serious subject matter!).

Later on, the AGM did not shy away from tackling the grapevine rumblings of a possible 'rebellion' from one of our key Regions; it turned to be just a storm in a tea-cup amongst very passionate sisters.  We learned that all issues tackled with love, unity and sisterhood always get resolved with a win-win solution.  We agreed that a little friendly show-show competition between the Regions is a good accelerator for creative energy!  WE ARE ONE! We are still a young growing organization and I'm looking forward to great things from all the Regions this next year, and more regions officially joining the sisterhood!

THEN CAME THE FORMIDABLE 2-MILE 2-HOUR "CHARITY" CLIMB UP TO THE WORCESTER BEACON (e no be easy oh!) - some people valiantly made it to the summit (Lekunze himself would be proud!), some made it only to hut one (and took lots of photos!) and some (I won't mention names!) just plain 'lebbed' behind only to end up spending lots of money in a high brow boutique nearby!  But did EXSSA UK paint the whole of Worcester city GREEN?  Oh yes, we did? And did our dulcet tones reverberate throughout the city, as we sang before boarding the bus, sang on the bus all the way to the hill and sang on the bus all the way back to the hotel?  Well, what did you expect ...??  The bus driver is probably still sporting that permanent grin he had on his face throughout!

OH! THE GLAMOUR OF SATURDAY EVENING! Forget the calf-busting and glute-tightening Worcester Beacon, the real APEX of Saturday came in what can only be described as JAW-DROPPING HIGH OCTANE GLAMOUR!  It began as the beautiful ladies accompanied by GQ-suited CATS paraded on the lush red carpet, complete with the click-click-click of the official paparazzi! PLZZZZZ!!

The sumptuous 3-course meal that ensued was not as spicy to some as we paysans would like it, but oh! The spice did come in bucket loads as the evening rocked on!    Somebody help me!

The creatively named and labeled tables themselves provided some intrigue and conversation starters, until we realized that they were part of MANTINA NJIE NTUBA's plan to get some inter-table puzzle-solving competition going! We played along.

Then came the first ever "EXSSA UK GOT TALENT" show.  I'm sure we all expected the usual singing, but boy! were we in for a surprise!  Where do I start!?  Ably compered by two young and effusive EXSSANs, (HILDA NDOUIE & KAREN TARKE EBOT), who would give Ant & Dec a good run for their money.  The judges - Mr. DENIS TAMBE, Ms ZORA NDENECHO & Mr. JACOB MOKI - were introduced and duly seated, and the performances started streaming in:

1- EXSSA Midlands gave us a medley of tribal dances spanning Cameroon and West Africa - the Bakweri dance was particularly exhilarating and got everyone on their feet clapping and clamouring to take pictures. But Midlanders weren't finished yet! When CYNTHIA ASU-AGBOR donned the familiar white mask of the YouTube best Azonto dancers and re-enacted same dance to spectacular effect,  we were once again, all on our feet applauding, clamouring, open-mouthed with awe!

2- Now, I don't how prepared this next performers were, all I can say is that sometimes IMPROMPTU/SPONTANEITY brings out the best in us.  SISTER MARY MANGA (of 1st Batch), SISTER KOFO ANJORIN (2nd batch) & SISTER FRANCESCA (2nd batch) - lovingly nicknamed "THE DINOSAURS".  Representing the London Region, they took to the floor and magic started to happen!  I swear, SISTER MARY put some young ones to shame with her energetic dance steps, full of spins, slides, twists and impossible balle-a-terres!  If I was concerned about not having an ambulance on stand-by, I kept it to myself!  But there was no need; these ladies simply rocked it with panache and grace!

3- OH DOREEN! DOREEN! DOREEN! All the way from Paris, the only MAL member in the House! No one, I mean, no one, expected that incredible Michael Jackson impersonation! Oohh, how the King of Pop himself must have been smiling whimsically from up there as Doreen threw us all into a frenzy with her scintillating performance, complete with crotch-grabbing, pelvic thrusts, spins and the theatrical sashaying of the bowler hat to the audience.....it was simply awesome!  For me, you won the GOT TALENT - despite stiff competition from the Midlanders and the London 'Dinosaurs'!

THE EVENING WORE ON; we dined, wined, solved puzzles and raised funds.  We thanked our very supportive Patrons, Cats and Sponsors, including distinguished representatives from other sisterhood and brotherhood groups - LESSANS, SHESANS, OPSANS, etc.  And then only one thing stood between us and the eagerly anticipated DANCE DANCEDANCE - it was the rousing speech from our distinguished guest speaker, Dr. STELLA ANYANGWE.  On the theme of TOGETHER TOWARDS TOMORROW, she spun pertinent African proverbs with business management principles, to remind us that together is always better than alone;  we should all ASPIRE not to PHDs (Pull Her Downs) but to LHUs (Lift Her Ups) because - "ALONE, YOU WILL GO FAST, BUT TOGETHER YOU WILL GO FAR".   Yes o!

I HOPE WE ALL DON HEAR WELL WELL! Love, Unity and Sisterhood always!  Even when we disagree, critique or criticize - it must always be in Love!

Oya, over to the DJ and everybody on the dance floor! It was DANCE! DANCE! DANCE! DANCE!  Ol' skool Makossa, Soukouss, Dombolo, all mixed with new African Funk and Azonto!  Whatever your choice, Mr. DJ was on point!

Personally, I hung up my dancing shoes at 3.30am, but left a dance hall still packed with revelers, so don't ask me what happened thereafter or when it all ended! Na you sabi!

THE SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICE took us back to our twin loves of PRAISE & WORSHIP. Despite having decamped to bed only a few hours earlier, the service was packed to capacity.  We sang and sang and the Preacher, PASTOR SUKKI, challenged us to DREAM EVEN BIGGER DREAMS!  At the end, the exit procession by roll call of batches broke the erstwhile solemnity of the service and we were back to JOLITY, EXCITEMENT & FUN.  This was the precursor to the ELEGANT & CLASSY BBQ that followed, accompanied by a LIVE JAZZ BAND!   Beat that!

I dare anyone - EXSSAN, PATRON or SPONSOR - who made it to the EXSSA Convention 2013 to say it wasn't a superlative outing!

Thank you all for making it happen.  Can't wait for next year's show!

Love you all!

CELINE EDI-MESUMBE *épouse* LOADER

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

EXSSA UK