

INTERVIEW

THE FON OF BALIKUMBAT : BAA GAHNYAMNYIN III, SPEAKS !

As a build up to the Annual General Assembly of the Balikumbat Development Organization (BADO), scheduled at the Molyko Omnisport Stadium in Buea on the 27th and 28th of Feb. 2026, the natural ruler of the Balikumbat people: His Royal Majesty Fon Gahnyamnyin III, who doubles as the Mayor of the Balikumbat Council and Patron of BADO, spoke to **BADO VOICE'S** Editor in Chief: Mr Lesigha Isaac. Below are excerpts.

Editor In Chief (EC): Good day Your Royal majesty and thank you for making yourself available to address our worries.

As the Fon of Balikumbat and Patron of the Balikumbat Development Organization (BADO), we are about to witness the holding of the second edition of the AGM of the revamped structure. Are you satisfied with the development structure?

FON GAHNYAMNYIN III (FON G.N. III): *I will like to say I am very satisfied with what has been realized so far. Three years back, we started galvanizing efforts to revamp the structure that was declining, with people losing confidence in our development structure. This was a very big problem to us, given the fact that BADO is the main arm of development in our community. No doubt we have smaller development structures, in a number of Sub Quarters which fall within the ambit of the bigger structure, being BADO. A lot of people have sacrificed to get us to where we are and even though this is the second AGM after the revamp, it is the first for the present executive because last year's AGM that held in Bafoussam was organized by the ad hoc committee that I put in place, during which the present executive was voted into office. I am very satisfied with them for what they have realized so far because they have been able to attain over 90% of the first assignment the community placed in their hands. This is the Lahmissang – Deulu Water Project.*

That aside, they have been able to visit and galvanize almost every nook and cranny from within and without, fishing out sons and daughters of Balikumbat, except the troubled areas. I am quite convinced that even in terms of financial mobilization, we are about realizing the highest amount that BADO has ever succeeded to mobilize in one AGM since its inception. This is no doubt because more and more people are beginning to invest interest in the activities of BADO. This AGM will definitely set the pace for further mobilization as we are so far less than 30% mobilized. We know our population and we know our force.

This Executive has as well concerned herself with issues of peace, harmonious co-existence and cultural aggrandizement. I want to give out a very loud shout of "Bravo!" to the Executive and I urge them to forge ahead, assured of my blessings.

E.C. : Your Majesty, given that the population back at home are the primary beneficiaries of all earmarked projects, are you convinced that their needs are being met?

FON G.N. III: As I earlier indicated, the first project placed in the hands of the Executive was the Lahmissang – Deulu Water Project, and to me, it largely meets the expectations of this community. Here we are talking about water, and whoever talks water, is talking life. The project has been realized beyond what was expected of them as they had to go in for a new catchment at a longer distance and this renders the project more durable. This is a high impact project because it is about water. I want to crave the indulgence of my people to understand that development is a matter of equity and not equality. All the Quarters belong to us and as such people should not only contribute because what is being carried out is in their Quarter. We give to every Quarter at their own turn and it should not be because a quarter has water that one that earlier had water would be asking for water. Every Balikumbat person is free to live or settle in any of the Quarters. Simply put, I will say that this project meets the desired expectation as its impact is not limited to an area.

E.C. : Your Royal Majesty, in your capacity as the Mayor of the Balikumbat Council, what is your relation with BADO? Is it cordial, or rough when it comes to development?

FON G.N. III: Let me say that BADO is working in close collaboration with the Balikumbat Council. However, we cannot yet give a valid judgment in just one year, because as I speak BADO is yet to come up with her Five Year Development Plan, which I prescribed to them in my capacity as Mayor. This is supposed to be done to align with the Council's Development Plan so that we do not duplicate on projects. In the days ahead, we intend to invite BADO for a sit down, as soon as they elaborate their Five Year Development Plan. This will ensure that their areas of intervention do not duplicate that of the Council. For now there is perfect understanding between the Council and the BADO Executive and I have discussed with the President General, exactly what he needs to do. Our relationship is cordial.

E.C. : Your Royal Majesty, already two editions of BADO's AGMs held out of the village. When can the sons and daughters of Balikumbat expect their AGMs back in the village?

FON G.N. III: I will like to say, like any other son or daughter of Balikumbat, that it pains me to the nerves, that we cannot have our AGM at our own backyard. We know that it is cost effective when the AGM holds in Balikumbat, and we know the great

impact this creates. But can we blame BADO for the situation we have on the ground? Surely not. Is BADO capable of guaranteeing the security of every son and daughter of Balikumbat to move to the village and back to their residences? I think surely not. Are other communities holding their own village development meetings at their backyards, and BADO is unable to do same? The answer is still in the negative. We are dealing with an inherited complex security issue that we are not responsible for. All I can say is that we only have to pray that this should be the last AGM to hold out of Balikumbat. We will need every hand on deck, and every son and daughter of Balikumbat to cultivate a culture of peace and to be able to distinguish political spheres from purely traditional or village spheres. BADO needs to be placed in her own context. When we shall be able to understand that the sons and daughters of Balikumbat need to be free to be able to move freely into Balikumbat and out, without any security challenges or form of threats, that is when we will be able to enjoy the excitement of holding our AGM in the village as it used to be before these ugly circumstances we are now going through. It will be our pride if this tendency of BADO's AGMs holding out of the village comes to an end. At the same time it is our pride and responsibility to see into it that every son and daughter of Balikumbat who enters Balikumbat in the name of development should feel safe and secured and leave at will without threats. The moment that this can be guaranteed our people, then we will have our BADO AGMs back to the village. The security of our people is of primary importance because there is no amount of money that we can mobilize that can replace human lives. Can I or any son or daughter of Balikumbat be happy that the AGMs are holding out of the village? Surely, none. However, all of us understand that we have work to do and thus we cannot wait until it is safe for us to move to the village for our AGMs. That is why we are bound to be doing something while waiting, and in a way or place that it may not be sabotaged. This is all I can say. My plea as the Fon of Balikumbat is that every son or daughter should be free to enter and leave Balikumbat freely, as was the case in the past, no matter their occupation or ideology. Balikumbat is for every son and daughter and nobody has the right to deprive another of free entry and exit, irrespective of their occupation and ideology.

*To conclude, I want to encourage the executive to keep nosing out all the areas where they have not yet been to. They have done a great job, but much is still left to be done to get to at least 90% of our population. **I am sending out to all my subjects a message of love, peace and unity, wherever they find themselves.** I pray for success in this year that we have started, for everyone. Good luck to all and may we have a convivial and productive AGM in Buea.*

Long live BADO!

Long live; Balikumbat!

E.C. : Thank you Your Majesty for making out time from your busy schedule to address our worries.

FON G.N. III: *Thank you for giving me the opportunity, Mister Editor In Chief.*

Interviewed by: **LESIGHA ISAAC BUMBEDGHA**

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