

UPF-Nigeria commemorates the 2017 UN Global Road Safety Week

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Abuja, Nigeria -- UPF-Nigeria commemorated the 2017 UN Global Road Safety Week by convening a Road Safety for Peace Assembly.

Participants came from several road safety sectors in Nigeria, including drivers, transport companies, government agencies like the Federal Road Safety Corps and the Federal Emergency Road Management Agency, the National Association of Road Transport Owners, as well as some privately owned companies.

Discussions at the May 11 meeting focused on the 2017 theme chosen by the United Nations: "Save Lives: Slow Down." UPF-Nigeria used the occasion to launch the Peace Drivers Initiative and the Peace Road Initiative to mobilize stakeholders in the road sector to work together to contribute to road safety and world peace.

The assembly featured a special recognition of outstanding drivers, transport companies that promote road safety practices and several government agencies. Participants commended UPF-Nigeria for the initiative and pledged to support the activities of the organization.

UPF-Nigeria Secretary General Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko opened the Road Safety for Peace Assembly by giving the following address.

1. The UN reports that there are about 7.5 billion people who are living on the earth now, in different places and doing different things at different times. Yet they all have a common intention for all that they do or seek to do. This is also applicable to the several trillions of people who have lived in the past and will be applicable to those who shall live in the future to come. Everyone without exception is seeking for happiness in life in everything that they do. Happiness in life is the underlying quest for all thoughts, words and actions of human beings.
2. Happiness is attained when desires are fulfilled. When the desires of the mind (invisible) are in harmony with the actions of the body (visible) centering on goodness, happiness is realized. Human beings therefore attain happiness in life through the utilization of the resources (spiritual, human and material) in the world.
3. The resources required by all 7.5 billion people to attain happiness in life are available in the world but in different places and forms. Consequently, human beings seek to have access to and utilize the resources in the world to attain happiness in life. This is the fundamental reason for the desire for movement of people from one location to another.
4. Therefore, the desire for happiness involves moving from one location to another in order to utilize the opportunities and resources that exist. The journey of life is the search for happiness. Transportation of people, services and goods from one area to another is crucial to the realization of happiness in life by all.
5. The most affordable and widely used means of transportation is the road. Therefore, road safety is fundamental to achieving happiness in life. When people embark on journeys in the quest for happiness, the usual wish is "Safe journey." This means that everyone traveling from one location to another desires a safe journey. The expectation, as we are greeted with "Safe journey" wishes, is that we should achieve a safe arrival at our destination. The movement from safe journey to safe arrival requires safety on the road to achieve happiness.

6. Unfortunately, not all "Safe journey" wishes lead to safe arrivals at the destination, due to challenges on the roads involving road mishaps and crashes. Therefore, there is the need for policies and programs to ensure that all journeys are safe, from commencement to destination, in order to attain happiness.

7. Yet, the inability to achieve safe arrivals at destinations is caused by unsafe practices on the road which include the following:

- a. Human factors (drivers, road users, road safety enforcement and security officers, etc.)
- b. Vehicular factors (quality of vehicle, speed, state of usage of vehicle, etc.)
- c. Environmental factors (road, weather conditions, etc.)

8. To attain happiness in life, which human beings desire through movement from one location to another, road safety is essential and should be the collaborative effort of all stakeholders. Therefore, we need to address the core factors that prevent safe arrival at one's destination and the attainment of happiness in life from traveling.

9. Most crucial among the three factors (human, vehicular and environmental) are the human and environmental factors, as vehicles depend on human beings and the environment. This is why UPF, in seeking to address these challenges, is promoting the launch of two key initiatives, namely the **Peace Drivers Initiative** and the **Peace Road Initiative**.

10. As we commemorate the 2017 United Nations Global Road Safety Week, there is the need to renew our commitment to improving the situation of human factors in the road safety sector. UPF emphasizes the need for intensive formal road safety education for drivers and road users. In particular, drivers' education needs to be intensified and should include education in attitude, knowledge and skills of driving. We need to improve education in regard to attitude toward driving, colleagues and other road users as well as toward vehicles, etc. We need to update drivers and road users on knowledge of driving and road safety practices, and we need to effectively develop the skills of safe driving and safety on the road.

11. The Peace Drivers Initiative is a new program by UPF-Nigeria to ensure that drivers are properly educated in character, citizenship and creativity to have the right attitude, knowledge and skills. Peace Drivers are drivers who have been found worthy in character and career and confirmed to have the right attitude, knowledge and skills for safe driving to save lives and contribute to the realization of world peace. The second aspect of the initiative is the Peace Road Initiative, which involves education on the environmental factor (road education) including road design issues, road construction and connectivity, road utilization and maintenance as well as a road use fund.

12. UPF-Nigeria, through this first Road Safety for Peace Assembly, is seeking to bring together all critical stakeholders to discuss the issues raised here and to understand the global vision of peace as espoused by the UPF founders, Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon. I urge all participants to contribute to the issues and the theme of this year's assembly, focused on "Save Lives: Slow Down." Father and Mother Moon are people of great vision, and their ideas cover every aspect of life. Please take the time to study their teachings and learn more about their vision for world peace.

13. I have no doubt that you will consider joining UPF in this effort and work together in harmony with all stakeholders to ensure that our roads are safe, our safe journeys lead to safe arrivals and provide us opportunities to attain happiness in life. Let us all contribute to ensuring that road safety leads to peace.

Let us drive safely and ensure that we save lives. Let us realize that God is our original driver. God should drive our mind, our mind should drive our body, and our mind and body together should drive vehicles safely on the safe and peaceful roads for happiness in life. I pray that you will find inspiration in this assembly and open up opportunities for us to work together to address the fundamental factors contributing to unsafe journeys and unsafe roads and ensure that we all do what is needed for road safety for the sake of peace and the salvation of humankind. Thank you and God bless you, your family and establishment, and our dear nation. Congratulations for attending this assembly.