

Ghana and Nigeria UPF Chapters Hold Peace Conference

Helen N. Osei
October 30, 2015



Accra, Ghana—“Peace, Security and Human Development in Africa” was the theme of a conference attended by representatives of five nations.

The African Peace Conference 2015 was held jointly by the Ghanaian and Nigerian chapters of the Universal Peace Federation in collaboration with the peace organization African Centre for Peace Building Ghana. The conference was held in Accra, Ghana’s capital, on October 29 and 30, 2015.

The African Centre for Peace Building is a Ghana-based peace organization aimed at building sustainable peace in Ghana and Africa through youth development, peace education, poverty reduction, promotion of human rights and health.

The executive director of the organization, Mr. Korsi Senyo, came to know UPF through Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko, the secretary general of UPF-Nigeria. They felt that collaboration between the two organizations was possible as they share a similar vision.

The conference format was designed by UPF-Nigeria, following the formula of UPF International conferences. The objective was to bring together outstanding leaders within and outside Africa whose individual and collective experiences, wisdom and insight could be used to build a new Africa of peace and prosperity for all.

A highlight of the conference was the presentation of African Peace Awards to individuals and organizations/institutions that represent the highest ideals and practices that contribute to a sustainable and lasting peace in Africa. Similar awards were presented by the African Centre for Peace Building some years back.

UPF-Nigeria worked behind the scenes, sending invitation letters to various African countries, while the African Centre for Peace Building and UPF-Ghana met together in Ghana to mobilize the necessary logistics.

Individuals were invited to present papers on the topics of peace, security, education, health, family affairs, religion and politics.

Participants came from Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Brazil. Abstracts for the presentation of papers were received from 10 persons.



Oct. 29: Opening Ceremony / Sessions

UPF-Nigeria Secretary General Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko could not attend the conference. However, several Nigerian Ambassadors for Peace attended. In the absence of Dr. Oko, Mr. Senyo of the African Centre for Peace Building gave an overview of the conference and introduced Rev. Professor Edwin N. Korley of UPF-Ghana, who chaired the conference for the two days. In his acceptance remarks, Professor Korley expressed his appreciation for the honor and called for everyone's indulgence to support him to make the event a successful one.

The first day's program, which ran from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., had six presentations within three sessions as shown below:

Session 1:

"Absolute Love, a Prerequisite for a Peaceful and Harmonious Societal Coexistence—A Case Study for Africa Peacebuilding" by Rev. Professor Edwin N. Korley, Ghana's representative at the Global Peace Council International (speech below)

Session 2

"The Role of Women in Ensuring a Sustainable Culture of Peace and Democracy; Realities and Ambiguities" by Simbarashe Emmanuel Bhasvi and Edwick Madzimore from Zimbabwe

"Peace Education: Lessons from Zimbabwe" by Dudziro Nhengu, program associate on Gender, Peacebuilding and Security, UN Women, Zimbabwe

"An Evaluation of Issues and Challenges Confronting Border Security in Ghana and Its Effects on Internal Peace and Security" by Duah Kwaku Stephen and Thomas Nelson, Ghana

Session 3

"Violence in Senior High Schools in Ghana: A Threat to Peace and Security" by Adul Rahman Abubakar Sadik, Ghana

"Situation of African Refugees in Brazil" by Natalia de Luz, senior journalist/founder of Pordentro da Africa, Rio, Brazil

Oct. 30: Paper Presentations / African Peace Awards

The second day began at 3:30 p.m. with paper presentations and closed at 8:10 p.m. with the awards ceremony.

There were four presentations on the second day within one session as shown below:



Session 1

“Cyber Crime—A Threat to the Peace and Development of Africa” by Assistant Superintendent of Police James Annan, head of publications, Ghana Prisons Service, Accra, Ghana

“The Role of Women in Ensuring a Sustainable Culture of Peace and Democracy” by Ayo Ayoola-Amale, esquire, Faculty of Law, Wisconsin International University College, Accra, Ghana

“Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals—SDGs: Africa’s Stake” by Manfred Tawiah, president, Organization for Strategic Development in Africa, Accra, Ghana.

“UPF Character Education Initiatives—Educating the Head, Heart, Hand, Centering on Three Basic Life Goals” by Dr. Helen M. Osei, secretary general, UPF-Ghana

The PowerPoint presentation from UPF-Ghana brought the conference to a close. There was no panel discussion, as time was running into the award ceremony. So Mr. Senyo of the African Centre for Peace Building promised that the organizers would collate all the papers presented, with all comments, and forward them to the participants. It was also promised that the materials would be published in *Awake African*, a magazine that is affiliated with the African Centre for Peace Building.

In conclusion, the following points were put down for review.

Stakeholders in the conference must immediately come together and form an active African Peace Alliance for an effective implementation of the consensus to be reached.

The alliance must take immediate steps to make sure that this kind of conference is organized yearly and should be rotated among African countries.

Materials when published should be made available to rural dwellers to close the communication gap between the rich and the poor.

Peace education must begin from early childhood for effective results.

Economic peace should be considered very necessary if we must achieve peace in Africa.

To bring the conference session to a close, the chairman, Rev. Professor Edwin Korley, thanked all participants for the wonderful moments together.

He called on young African leaders to note that we all are responsible for the peace of Africa ourselves. “Nobody else,” he reiterated, “because we see the people around us each day.”

The African Peace Award were presented in various categories to nine deserving persons and one institution from the African Centre for Peace Building, the initiator. There were four awards for Youth Service; one for Humanitarian Services; one for Leadership; one for Interreligious Peace; two for Media Achievement, and the grand peace prize for an African Peace Icon. Three Ambassadors for Peace of UPF-Ghana were awarded: Rev. Professor Edwin Korley, rector of Manna Bible Church International, received the Interreligious Peace Award; Dr. Donald Agumenu, CEO, International Association for People and Performance Development, received the Leadership Award; and Nana Yaw Osei-Dakwa, CEO, Youth Icon Ghana, received the Youth Service Award.

One of the awardees, Mr. Morgan N. Adjatia, told of his growing up without home or food and selling sachet water on the street to enable him go to school. Today he has risen to the level of estate developer. The secret, he said, was sharing every little thing he had with others. He urged everyone to “please share whatever you have; it will not be in vain.”

Representing all the awardees, Dr. Donald Agumenu expressed his gratitude, pledging their determination as vibrant young people to take the issue of peace in Africa very seriously.

Closing the occasion, the chairman of the award ceremony, Professor John Aheto, a lecturer at the Central Pentecost University College in Accra, thanked the organizers for giving him the honor. He congratulated the award recipients and expressed his joy in seeing efforts made by young people toward peace. He asked the stakeholders to be relentless in their peace drive, even in the face of difficulties.

In conclusion, Mr. Senyo of the African Centre for Peace Building thanked all the conference participants, partners, sponsors, awardees and everyone who contributed in small or big ways to make the event a huge success.



Absolute Love, a Prerequisite for a Peaceful and Harmonious Societal Coexistence—A Case Study for Africa Peacebuilding

**Presented at the African Peace Conference on Peace, Security and Human Development in Africa
October 29, 2015, Accra, Ghana
Rev. Professor Edwin N. Korley
Professor of Theological Studies and Christian Education**

Highly respected ladies and gentlemen on the High Table, my honorable colleagues who will be presenting papers today, distinguished 2015 African Peace Awardees, organizers of this two-day program, gentlemen of the press, ladies and gentlemen:

I consider it an undeserved double honor being bestowed on me during this great and highly profiled 2015 African Peace Conference. Apart from being given the honor and opportunity for this paper presentation, I have equally been gracefully mandated to occupy the chair for the two-day program. At this juncture I humbly and most sincerely crave the indulgence of the wonderful people present to help place greater value on teamwork and cooperation for the realization of the intended goal of this historic conference. God bless you. I feel highly honored and privileged to be considered part of the success story of this two-day program by being given the opportunity to deliver a paper. I am exceptionally grateful.



Synopsis

Sociology brings out the fact that the bedrock of every society is the family. In that way, husband, wife and their procreative dividends—the children—constitute the family. Societies, communities and even nations are the offshoots of the said systematic relationship of family units.

The modus operandi that has the propensity of promoting unity, peace and harmonious coexistence of a larger society in a nation is absolute love. The absence of such God-centered love breeds avarice, hatred, greed, cheating among societal entities and, for that matter, within nations; thereby denying them the much needed peace to enhance sustainable developmental programs.

In this paper, an attempt will be made to look at the ramifications of peace. The economic and developmental agenda of the continent of Africa also will be surveyed and appraised. Efforts will then be made to humbly put together some considered useful suggestions on absolute love that can move Africa forward in terms of security, peacebuilding and human developmental programs and projects for our future leaders – the youth in Africa.

Looking at Peace at Its Face Value

The definition of peace from the perspective of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) is so unique and fully embracing. Peace is not simply the absence of war; neither is it a term that is applied only to the relationship between nations. Peace is possible in all relationships. Whenever there is peace, all related entities experience value, joy and happiness. In effect, peace may be defined as a state of harmony, cooperation, freedom, happiness, security and co-prosperity among all people.

However, without God-centered absolute love, peace cannot stand the test of time. It will be taken over by hatred, avarice, greed, corruption and cheating. These qualities are not conducive to the harmonious and peaceful coexistence of society.

The Importance of Unity to Africa

Our founding fathers in Africa placed great value on the efficacy of unity. This was informed with the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on May 25, 1963, with its headquarters at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; several nations in Africa gained their independence under the auspices of the OAU.

On May 26, 2001, Africa Union took over the responsibilities and functions of the OAU in a higher dimension. Indeed that unity has yielded and continues to yield multifaceted dividends for Africa. The AU has made coups d'état in Africa unattractive.



Africa at a Glance

Population: Africa has a population of over 1.053 billion, of whom 41.2 percent are 15 years and younger, with nearly 2,500 ethnic groups on the continent.

Economy: Only a few economies in Africa have seen progress in the past 50 years, although Africa retains a vast wealth of natural resources. The good news is that Africans in diaspora, some of whom are ready to invest in the economy of Africa, are approaching 150 million in population.

However, many struggles still exist as a result of some key factors, including:

Low investment in agriculture and development of viable methods of food production.

Despite governmental efforts in various countries in Africa in their search for educational and manpower development of the middle class, such dreams are yet to be fully activated. Every year 20,000 university-educated professionals emigrate—a huge loss, when the illiteracy rate of 40 percent makes such people all the more vital to retain.

Worrying statistics show that an estimated 25 percent of Africa's combined national income is lost through bribery and corruption by some self-centered rulers and officials.

Our leaders must be reminded that any called responsibility goes with sociological principles: status, role, norm, value and sanctions.

In all, value has to be placed on faithful and result-oriented service to one's nation and the people.

Sustainable Human Developmental Agenda for Africa

With the properly planned human developmental programs, such as teaching youth on steps to financial security, entrepreneurship, investment and private-public partnership, the graduate unemployment situation will be reduced.

Middle-class professionals will be motivated to venture into business and be self-employed citizens.



Enhancing the Godly Moral Development of the Citizenry

In an attempt to answer the question “What will be the future of the generation after our generation?” a high value must be placed by various governments on character education. Citizenry from the grass-roots education must be exposed to normative and meta-ethical truth that can instill in them that absolute love and sacrifice for society and their nation. The fact still remains that peace without absolute love is hoarse.

Conclusion – There Is Hope for Africa

Despite all odds, there is hope for Africa. Africa can boast of living legends, icons who have affected their generation internationally—great men and women of integrity like Kofi Annan of Ghana (two times the United Nations secretary-general), Nobel Prize laureate Professor Wole Soyinka of Nigeria and many more. There are up and coming vibrant and radical Africans like Professor P.L.O. Lumumba of Kenya, Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai of Nigeria and many more who need commendation.

National economies are now picking up. Nigeria, for instance, has added 89 percent to its GDP, new worth \$510 billion, and has soared past the previous leader, South Africa, whose worth is \$370 billion.

Africa can and must be developed by Africans. It takes the creation of that awareness and empowerment by the intervention of governments, NGOs and private organizations that have the passion for peace and development in Africa.

At this juncture, with a high level of respect and honor, I humbly bow to the organizers of this august program—the Africa Centre for Peace Building and other proactive partners like UPF and others who have ensured the capturing of a success story for the two-day program in Ghana. You have done a great job.

God bless you all.