

International Day of Peace Observed in Nigeria

Raphael Ogar Oko
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Abuja, Nigeria—UPF-Nigeria observed the 2015 UN International Day of Peace with special programs in the capitals of two states.

Uyo

In Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State, UPF convened a Special General Assembly of 80 Ambassadors for Peace from the state.

The assembly, which was held on September 18, 2015, at the Governor's Office Annex, featured discussions on the theme of the 2015 International Day of Peace, “Partnerships for Peace—Dignity for All.”

In addition, the inauguration of the Ambassadors for Peace State Executive Council was held, including the induction of new members. Participants were assigned responsibilities to fulfill as their demonstration of commitment to the founding ideal of the UPF as Ambassadors for Peace.

The assembly endorsed a resolution to focus on strengthening partnership with strategic stakeholders through establishing structures for peace.

Rev. Williams S. Williams, UPF-Nigeria zonal coordinator for the states of Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Abia, gave the opening remarks, in which he emphasized the need to move from a focus on establishing a culture of peace to creating structures for peace in Nigeria.

Dr. George C. Ikpot, UPF-Nigeria director of international affairs, spoke on the significance of the UN International Day of Peace and the content of the UN secretary general’s message.

UPF-Nigeria Secretary General Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko gave an overview of UPF-Nigeria activities in the previous year. He emphasized the need to empower Ambassadors for Peace to become the core leaders of UPF in all 36 states of Nigeria and the federal capital territory. Dr. Oko called on the Ambassadors for Peace to make a stronger commitment to facilitating the vision and mission of UPF and to supporting all efforts being made by UPF Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon to raise a peaceful nation under God by the year 2020.

After the general interactive session by the Ambassadors for Peace and UPF leaders from the national office in Abuja, Dr. Oko explained the need for the establishment of the State Executive Council. This was followed by the appointment of Ambassadors for Peace who have been screened to serve in various capacities in the state for a one-year period. After reading out the names of the new executive members,

which was followed by a voice vote of support by all the participants, the appointed leaders of the UPF took the oath of office which was administered by the UPF Nigeria secretary general. In this oath of office they affirmed the universal peace principles, pledged to follow the teachings of the UPF founders and to work to create peaceful families and a peaceful state.

The members of the executive council who were inaugurated include the following:

Engineer Udo Wills – state coordinator/chair
Offiong E. Akpan – state deputy coordinator
Victor Dickson – vice chair (Eket Senatorial District)
Pastor Godwin Williams – state deputy secretary general
Elijah Udom – state director of membership
Princess Victoria Umoh – state director of partnership/public relations
Rev. Dr. Emmanuel F. Udoka – state director of interreligious affairs
Mrs. Esther Udom – state director of family affairs
Mrs. Margaret E. Ekpe – state deputy director, women’s affairs
Mrs. Stella Etuk Akpan – state director of governmental relations
Edidiong Uyouko – state director of industrial and economic affairs
Barr Victor Nesfield – state director of legal and parliamentary affairs
Ifot N. Ifot – state director of humanitarian and emergency relief services
Rev. Henry Bassey – state director of local government affairs.

Mrs. Arit E. Okpo, permanent secretary, Akwa State Ministry of Rural Development, and other Ambassadors for Peace assigned other responsibilities will be formally inaugurated during the inaugural meeting of the council in October.

Responding on behalf of the appointed leaders of the Ambassadors for Peace, Engineer Udo Wills thanked the UPF founders for their visionary leadership and for providing them with the opportunity to serve their communities as Ambassadors for Peace. He pledged their determination and commitment to strengthen membership, develop partnerships and programs as well as explore ways of inspiring members to commit their personal resources to peacebuilding.

The assembly ended with the induction of new members as Ambassadors for Peace and presentation of certificates to newly appointed leaders who will coordinate the Ambassadors for Peace in the state until September 2016.



Port Harcourt

In Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, UPF marked the International Day of Peace by convening a Special General Assembly of Ambassadors for Peace from that state. The program took place on September 21, 2015, at the Police Officers Mess in the Old GRA (Old Government Reserved Area, a neighborhood of Port Harcourt).

The assembly resolved to focus on promoting partnership between UPF-Nigeria and other relevant stakeholders in the country with the hope of realizing a peaceful Nigeria.

Ambassador for Peace Prince Tonye Jeminimiema, Rivers State coordinator of UPF-Nigeria, welcomed the participants to the assembly and thanked the Ambassadors for Peace for honoring the state with their esteemed presence. Tonye called on the state government to take advantage of this year's International Day of Peace theme – "Partnerships for Peace, Dignity for All" – to explore sustainable ways of partnering with the Universal Peace Federation and its network of Ambassadors for Peace. He called on Rivers State and the federal government of Nigeria to make a more serious commitment toward establishing a national peace college in Nigeria to implement the teachings of the UPF founders as a way to realize a peaceful Nigeria.

The message of the United Nations secretary-general was presented by Dr. George Ikpot, UPF-Nigeria director of international affairs, while the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Mrs. Justina Jumbo, who represented the deputy governor of Rivers State, commended UPF-Nigeria for hosting the International Day of Peace event in Port Harcourt. She pledged the commitment of the Rivers State government to promoting the ideals of peace which UPF teaches and thanked the Ambassadors for Peace for their support of the government. A goodwill message was sent by the Rivers State commissioner of police, who was represented by A. Mohammed, the assistant commissioner of police in charge of operations. The chairman of the event, Dr. Reason Onya, spoke on the need for Ambassadors for Peace to build and strengthen partnerships for peace in Nigeria and called on the government to support the activities of UPF as a partner for peace.

His Royal Highness King Suanu T.Y. Baridam emphasized the need to engage traditional leaders in peacebuilding efforts. He called for the launch of Kings for Peace Initiative, in which traditional kings are mobilized to work for peace in their communities, making their communities into peace kingdoms as well as mobilizing resources for the establishment of a national peace palace in Nigeria.

UPF-Nigeria Secretary General Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko spoke on some of the initiatives to mark the UN International Day of Peace 2015, which include the designation of selected senior lecturers in universities to serve as UPF Ambassadors for Peace at the university and the need for them to create UPF chapters on campus to promote peace in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. In addition, he announced the initiative to select the most peaceful local government area in Rivers State and the most peaceful state in the Niger Delta region. After exhaustive deliberation by Ambassadors for Peace based on the guidelines, Bonny Local Government Area of Rivers State was selected as Most Peaceful Local Government Area in Rivers State while Cross River State emerged as the Most Peaceful State in the Niger Delta region.

Receiving the award on behalf of the people and government of Bonny Local Government Area, Hon. Ibietonye Benjamin, caretaker committee chairman of the Bonny Local Government Area, expressed his appreciation to the Ambassadors for Peace for their unbiased decision and called on the people of the area to continue to live in peace as a model for other local government areas in the state. He declared that Bonny Local Government Area will continue to work with UPF until every citizen in the area becomes a peaceful citizen. He emphasized the need for the people of the Bonny Local Government Area and multinational companies to continue to work together to ensure peace in the area, with the request to UPF to consider developing a program on industrial peace by which community members can be trained as industrial peace officers to work with the companies in the area.

Certificates of Ambassadors for Peace were presented to some distinguished Nigerians at the closing session.

