

## Peace Club at the Federal Capital Territory College of Education in Abuja, Nigeria

Raphael Ogar Oko  
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**Abuja, Nigeria** -- Over 250 persons attended the formal inauguration of the Peace Club at the Federal Capital Territory College of Education in Abuja on May 3, 2018. The inauguration was attended by the provost of the college, the deputy provost, registrar, chief librarian, deans of schools, heads of departments, directors, staff and students. Also, the Federal Capital Area secretary of education and the traditional ruler of the area of Zuba were represented at the event. The formal inauguration of the peace club organized by the college and UPF-Nigeria featured goodwill messages, lectures on the vision and mission of peace clubs, the as presentation of membership certificates and the commissioning of Ambassadors for Peace.

The idea of establishment of peace clubs in colleges of education in Nigeria began in 2014 with the approval of the proposal from UPF-Nigeria to the National Commission for Colleges of Education. The proposal suggested the need for peace clubs as educational responses to the challenges of violence and conflicts being faced in the country since the colleges are responsible for training of teachers for primary and secondary schools. Following the approval of the proposal by the commission, which listed 43 colleges to participate in the initiative, UPF-Nigeria signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Association of Women in colleges of education for implementation of the initiative. Thereafter, more colleges desired to be included in the initiative. The inauguration of the club at the FCT College of Education is one of the ongoing activities toward reaching out to and establishing peace clubs in all colleges of education and universities in Nigeria.

The program at the FCT College of Education began with the national anthem of Nigeria and was followed by opening prayers. Mrs. Theresa Oluchi Odoemena, one of the college's Ambassadors for Peace, served as the moderator of the program.

The welcoming remarks by the chairperson of the peace club, Dr. Tyoden N. Grace, who is also the college registrar, focused on the importance that the college has attached to the establishment of the club. She welcomed everyone, urged the club members to live up to expectations, and commended UPF for the initiative.

The chief host of the event and provost of the college, Dr. Muhammad Gambo Hamza, was full of praise for the founders of UPF and pledged the commitment of the college to the vision and mission of UPF. He mentioned that when he was informed about the club, he did an independent study of UPF and found that it is a very respected interreligious and international organization educating the world on how to live in peace. He requested not only partnering with UPF but also exchange programs between the college and educational institutions established by the founders in Korea and the United States.

Members of the peace club offered a short drama presentation focused on promotion of interreligious and inter ethnic peace among students. The next item was the keynote lecture on the UPF and College Peace

Clubs Initiative by Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko, secretary general of UPF-Nigeria. He spoke on the founders of the UPF and its activities around the world, which were applauded by the participants. The information on the passing of the founder, Dr. Sun Myung Moon, in 2012 created an atmosphere of silence for about three minutes in the hall. But the testimony of the current leadership of the cofounder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, was applauded by all the participants, with some echoing, "Give women the chance to lead with love toward peace." Each member of the club was told to "be peaceful, establish a peaceful family and utilize your knowledge and resources for peace." Announcements about the 100, 000 youth peace festival in Nigeria and the ongoing Marriage Peace Blessing festival generated keen interest.

Dr. George Ikpot, secretary general of the Professors World Peace Academy in Nigeria, and Mrs. Risa Smart, director of resource development for UPF-Nigeria, performed the Inauguration of the College Peace Club by presenting membership certificate to the club members after they affirmed the UPF peace principles and pledged to strive to establish peaceful families and always devote their resources for peace and activities promoting nonviolence.

After the inauguration of the club, Ambassadors for Peace awards were presented to the following dignitaries:

- Senator Isa Maina, Federal Capital Area secretary of education
- His Royal Highness Alhaji Muhammadu Bello, agoro of Zuba
- Muhammad Gambo Hamza, provost, Federal Capital Territory College of Education

The award presentation was followed by responses on behalf of members of the peace club. Dr. Joseph Akande pledged the commitment of the staff of the college to the success of the club. One of the students spoke on the value they attach to being members of the club and promised that they would be exemplary students.

The closing session featured a vote of thanks by Dr. Odunola Toyibat Bello, one of the College Ambassadors for Peace who facilitated the registration of the club. She thanked all the guests, staff and management of the college as well as students for attending the event and called on them to become good ambassadors for peace. The event ended with group photographs. The peace club members left with the determination to reach out to schools in the community to inspire and mobilize more students to join peace clubs in their institutions. The event was reported nationwide by the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria on its nationwide network news.

