

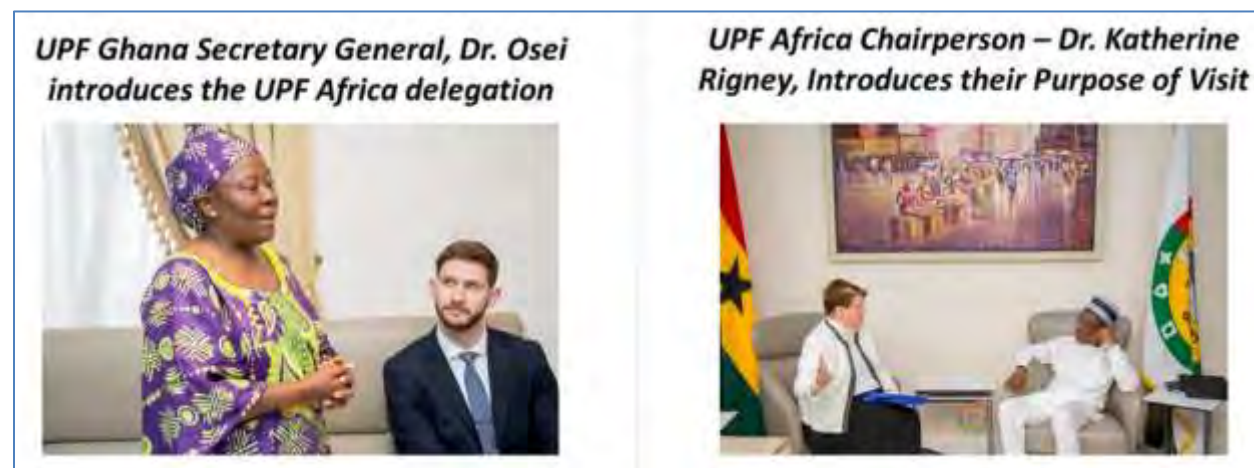
UPF Africa Delegation Meets with Ghana's Speaker of Parliament Alban Bagbin

Katherine Rigney
March 29, 2022



Ghana - The regional chairperson of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) Africa, Dr. Katherine Rigney, together with a high-profile delegation, paid a courtesy visit to Ghana's Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Alban Bagbin, at the Parliament House, Accra - Ghana, on March 29, 2022. The delegation included the president of UPF-Africa, Amb. Adama Doumbia; the vice president, Dr. Paterne Zinsou; and the head of IT Africa, Mr. Fortune Winter. They were accompanied to the meeting by the national chairman of UPF-Ghana, Hon. Frank Fuseini Adongo (former deputy minister of Upper East Region of Ghana, 2017-2021); the UPF-Ghana secretary general, Dr. Helen M. Osei; and the national coordinator of UPF New Associations in Ghana, Rev. Tegha King, Jr.

The meeting was opened by the director of Parliamentary Relations and Protocol, Ms. Sheba Nana Afriyie-Osei, followed by the introduction of the UPF delegation by the secretary general, Dr. Osei. From the Parliament side, we had the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Ghana Parliament, Albin Bagbin; the director of Parliamentary Relations and Protocol, Ms. Afriyie-Osei; a senior Member of Parliament who has just been appointed as the IAPP Acting President, Hon. Della Sowah; and a former MP who is now one of the executives in the Speaker's Office, Hon. Kofi Attor. The UPF delegation was made up as already indicated above.



As the meeting began, the dual delegations deliberated on issues that arose during the just-ended World Summit 2022 and the Think Tank programs in Korea.

Worthy of note is the fact that the Rt. Hon. Bagbin was one of the keynote speakers of the online Think Tank Forum that was held in February, as a preliminary for the World Summit 2022. The Korean government's COVID-19 rigid protocols became a major impediment for not only the Rt. Hon. Speaker, but to several African heads of state as well, who were scheduled to participate in the Summit but could

not.

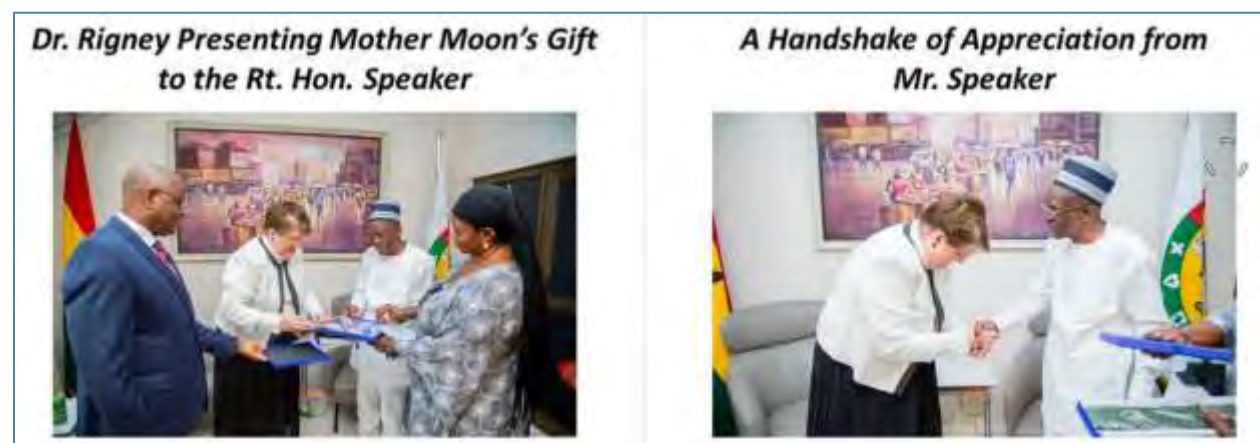
During the deliberations, Dr. Rigney clarified the circumstances that provoked the cancellation of the Hon. Speaker's invitation to Korea. She apologized for the inconveniences this incident may have caused him, his family, his team, and his country.

When given the floor to expound on UPF's role in today's world, Amb. Adama Doumbia, the current president of UPF-Africa, emphasized the vision and mission of the organization, pointing to its relevance in building a world of lasting peace, and the essence for which Mother Moon has declared Africa, "A Heavenly Africa." He summarized the dynamism and flexibility of UPF, especially the organization's various associations and several programs such as Rallies of Hope, the World Summits and the Think Tank series.



Dr. Zinsou, who serves as the UPF Africa's vice president and as the Africa regional coordinator of IAPP, delved into UPF's ideals, viewed within the scope of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace. He also conveyed to the Hon. Speaker a message of felicitation for his excellent speech during the online Think Tank Forum from Hon. Dan Burton, coordinator of IAPP International and former member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1983 to 2013.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker, in turn, thanked the delegation for the visit while applauding the global peace initiatives of the UPF. He commended Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's leadership drive and made allusions to the emotional intelligence that women are well endowed with, underscoring that it is a natural skill that has been ignored for far too long, especially within the political spectrum. He stressed that the world would be a better place if more women were educated and if many were allowed to hold top leadership positions.



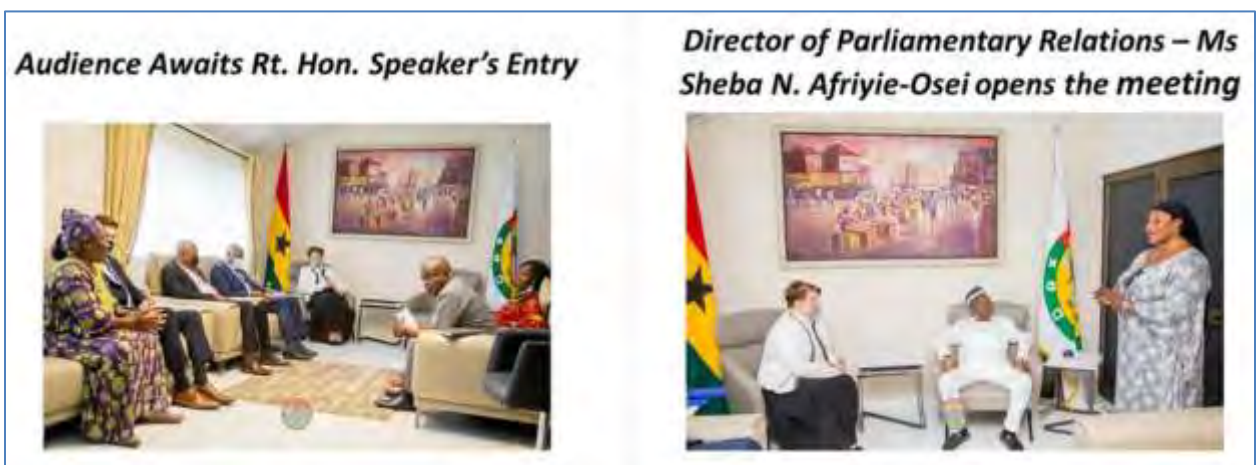
The Rt. Hon. Speaker clarified his stance on the UPF's intention to launch the IAPP in Ghana and stressed that, as a peace-loving political leader, he would give his maximum support to make the launching and the running of the association a great success.

During the exchange of gifts, Dr. Rigney told Hon. Bagbin that the gift handed to him was directly from the UPF Co-Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon (affectionately called Mother of Peace). She stated that the gift was a symbol of Oriental cultural heritage that projects the year of the black tiger as a year of good fortune (according to Eastern mythology, 2022 is the year of the Black Tiger). Mother Moon wished heavenly fortune to the Speaker's family and nation.



Interestingly, Ghana's national male soccer team, the Black Star, was playing against the Nigerian team on that very day, March 29, 2022, and the Hon. Speaker had mentioned to the UPF delegation how significant the game was to the nation. It was indeed a critical match, a determining tournament that could lead Ghana to be part of the upcoming World Cup, due to take place in Qatar in November 2022.

Fortunately, the game ended with a tie, enabling Ghana to qualify for the global contest. It is hoped that this would connect and resonate well with the emblematic meaning of the gift and leave a good impression in the mind of Hon. Bagbin. He, in return, presented a special gift to be given to the Founder of UPF, Mother Moon: high-quality Kente material, used mostly for royal embroidery.



Before the meeting came to a close, the UPF Africa chairperson, Dr. Rigney, introduced one of the delegates, Mr. Fortune Winter, an IT person currently in Africa as a missionary, who has offered free IT training to African youth willing to learn. On the spot, the director of Parliamentary Relations and Protocol signified to Dr. Osei that her son should be enlisted immediately.

The meeting was one of a kind. It certainly left positive impressions on both sides of the aisle with tangible hopes of enduring cooperation between the Ghana Parliament and the Universal Peace Federation, which may kick off in the not-too-distant future.