

Women and youth leaders in Nigeria attended a seminar on strengthening interreligious relations, peace building and security consciousness

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Minna, Nigeria - Women and youth leaders in Nigeria attended a one-day seminar on strengthening interreligious relations, peace building and security consciousness.

The seminar, held by UPF-Nigeria jointly with the Christians and Muslims Peace Foundation, took place in Minna, the capital of Niger State, on Dec. 22, 2014.

The focus on strengthening interreligious relations, peace building and security consciousness was timely, as Nigeria is preparing for general elections in 2015.



The more than 300 participants included Professor Musbau Adewumi Akanji, vice chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, who was the meeting's chair; Dr. Aisha Audu Emeje, the former first lady of Kogi State; leaders of several Muslim and Christian organizations, political leaders and members of the Niger State Youth Council. Members and leaders of the Christians and Muslims Peace Foundation, an NGO based in Minna and founded by Ambassador for Peace Hajiya Fatimah Ibrahim, also attended.



The event brought together participants from all the local government areas in Niger State as well as others from Abuja, the Nigerian capital. Dr. Babangida Aliyu, Commander of the Order of the Niger and a representative of the Niger State governor, opened the meeting.



Dr. Raphael Oko, UPF-Nigeria secretary general, called on the participants to become interfaith brothers and sisters. He urged them to support the creation of an interreligious committee in the Niger State House of Assembly and the establishment of a State Interreligious Center, and to endorse and participate in a UPF Religious Youth Service project. In addition, he stated that strengthening marriages and building united families are essential for building a peaceful state and nation.

Her Excellency Dr. Aisha Emeje encouraged the women to work together to create bridges of peace between their families and other families, and to ensure that security issues should not be seen as the

government's responsibility alone. In her words, "in the era of democracy, security of the nation should be based on security of the people, by the people and for the people." She called on the women to learn from UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who has been a shining example of a true daughter, true sister, true wife and true mother.



Several speakers commended the organizers and advised participants to carry the discussions at the Minna meeting to their local communities.

At the closing session, Professor Akanji was presented with the Ambassador for Peace certificate, along with five others, including the provost of the State School of Nursing and Midwifery and several women leaders. His Excellency, Dr. Muazu Babangida Aliyu, governor of Niger State, was presented with a copy of Dr. Sun Myung Moon's autobiography, As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen, as well as a certificate.

The organizing committee is working on extending the campaign to other areas of the state in 2015.

