

Strong Families Bring Peace and Development, Nigerian Academics Say

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Lagos, Nigeria—"Building Strong Families for National Peace and Development" was the title of a one-day conference organized by the Lagos State chapter of UPF-Nigeria at the University of Lagos, Akoka, on June 4, 2015.

More than 80 participants, drawn from the university community and UPF Ambassadors for Peace, were present at the university's Afe Babalola Auditorium.

The conference was held in partnership with the university's Department of Mass Communication to provide opportunities to discuss UPF principles on the importance of marriage and family to peace and sustainable development.

Professor Ralph Akinfeleye, a professor of mass communication, gave the keynote address on "The Role of the Media in Building Strong Families for National Peace and Development." He emphasized the challenges that the world is facing at this time, with conflicting perspectives on marriage and family life. Media professionals have the potential to do good by clarifying the ideal of marriage and family instead of just reporting the realities around the world, he said.

Mr. Ademola Adeoye, a UPF Ambassador for Peace, led the discussion on the UPF perspective on marriage and family. He urged the participants to study the teachings of the UPF founders, which he called very inspiring and visionary, with the potential to solve all the crises facing families around the world. In his words, if we want to achieve national peace and development, we must build strong families. This goes beyond legislating against same-sex marriages; we must invest in programs that support marriages and families.

A visiting professor from Suffolk County Community College in New York, Professor Wale Awodiya gave a goodwill message and expressed the need for the media to be more proactive in responding to the global family crisis leading to all forms of social vices and criminality.



UPF-Nigeria Secretary General Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko gave a report on the activities of UPF in Nigeria and around the world and introduced the UPF Marriage and Family Blessing initiative as a sustainable strategy for peace and development. Participants commended the UPF founders for their work for world peace and called on leaders around the world to commit to supporting marriages and strengthening families for peace and sustainable development.

Participants endorsed the resolution urging the Nigerian government to protect the present ban on same-sex marriages by implementing the constitutional provision that governments should support marriages for national unity and integration. The coordinator of the Lagos State branch of UPF-Nigeria gave the closing remarks, in which he thanked participants for responding to the invitation and hoped that the partnership with the Department of Mass Communication will lead to the establishment of a UPF chapter at the University of Lagos.

At the end of the conference, five participants were presented with certificates as Ambassadors for Peace in recognition of their work in the area of marriage and family building.