

## UPF Nigeria marked Day of Families by holding a Family Leadership Summit

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Abuja, Nigeria—UPF marked International Day of Families 2016 by holding a Family Leadership Summit to focus on strengthening marriages and families.

The summit, which was organized by UPF together with the Nigerian chapter of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an affiliated organization, included a Family Peace Blessing ceremony.

The program was held on May 17 at the National Merit Award House, located in the Maitama District of the capital, Abuja. Participants included the Peace Corps of Nigeria, Police Officers Wives Association, Global Initiative for Harmony in Nigeria, the Eket Community Union of Nigeria, the Tiv community in Abuja, Ambassadors for Peace and other citizens from across the country.



The summit recommended the immediate nationwide mobilization of couples and families to participate in Blessing ceremonies in order to empower parents and strengthen families to cope with the emerging challenges facing the nation. The summit also re-emphasized the call on the government to create a

Ministry of Family Affairs with a national directorate for marriage and family affairs and a national marriage and family fund.

Representatives of the two major religious groups in Nigeria, Islam and Christianity, offered the opening invocation, which was followed by all participants singing the national anthem. The summit moderator, Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko, secretary general of UPF Nigeria, gave an overview of the summit program of activities, while Dr. George Ikpote, UPF Nigeria director of international affairs, gave the opening and welcome remarks. He emphasized that “we are here today not only to commemorate the event as a UN program but also to celebrate the first and the most important institution of all times, the family.”

The official message on International Day of Families 2016 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the UPF statement on families were read to the participants. A talk given by UPF Founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, “God’s Model Ideal Family and Nation and the Peace Kingdom,” was distributed to all participants. A cultural group from Benué State in central Nigeria added flavor to the opening session with its dance steps.

Rev. George Marcus Ogurie, national president of FFWPU, gave the keynote address, focusing on the Family Peace Blessing. He gave a background of the founding of FFWPU and explained the Blessing as an initiative to bring all people together as one global family connected to God. He urged the participants to take the Blessing seriously and to strive to establish unified families to save the nation.

The keynote speaker also explained the UPF Principles of Peace by which blessed couples should strive to live as a family code of conduct.

This inspiring session was followed by an overview of UPF Nigeria activities in 2016, which included the participation of over 3,000 couples in Family Blessing Programs in the Yala local government area of Cross River State, as well as follow-up activities such as the formation of blessed family associations and literacy programs for couples who attended the Blessing program. Another highlight of 2016 was the participation of Nigerian delegates at the International Leadership Conference in Korea in February, with emphasis on the launch of the Parliamentarians for Peace initiative. UPF Nigeria has made efforts to launch Parliamentarians for Peace in Nigeria’s national assembly in June 2016.

The Blessing was officiated by Dr. George C. Ikpote and his wife, Carmella Ikpote. After the Blessing session, the UPF Nigeria secretary general announced the formal commencement of the UPF Nigeria Directorate of Marriage and Family Affairs, which will provide marriage and family support services to families, family-focused organizations and marriage registries throughout the country. Dr. Oko expressed the determination of the organization to offer marriage preparatory and family building programs at the state level.

Certificates of recognition were presented to some couples who have been married for over 30 years. Upon the recommendation of the Police Officers Wives Association, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Iwodi, Mr. and Mrs. James Habila, and Mr. and Mrs. Manasseh Michael received the exemplary couple certificate. Other couples were recommended by the Eket Community Union of Nigeria. Certificates were also presented to several distinguished Nigerians as Ambassadors for Peace for their commitment to family peace programs.

The event received news coverage from the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Kapital FM 92.9 Abuja and the National Association of Women Journalists.

