

## Assemblies in Abuja, Port Harcourt and Lagos marked 2016 UN Day of Peace

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Abuja, Nigeria -- Assemblies in Abuja, Port Harcourt and Lagos marked the 2016 International Day of Peace by discussing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ambassadors for Peace convened special general assemblies in the three cities under the theme “Sustainable Development Goals: The Building Blocks for Peace.”

They called on the United Nations and UPF International to facilitate the convening of an international summit to formulate the World Peace Goals (WPGs) with specific targets, indicators and a timeline.

In Abuja, Nigeria’s capital, more than 100 participants, including Ambassadors for Peace, women and youth leaders, traditional rulers and representatives from government agencies, attended the event and unanimously endorsed the call.

The event MC, Mrs. Maria Duada Jev, coordinated the program’s activities, which began with an opening invocation and recitation of Nigeria’s national anthem and the Cheon Il Guk anthem.

Ambassador Babatunde Adegbesan gave the welcoming remarks and opened the discussion on the relationship between development and peace. “We thank the United Nations for leading the process from the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) to the SDGs. We should be hopeful that world leaders will work together to ensure that by 2030 our world will become a globally developed world. I am aware that not all developed nations are peaceful but most peaceful nations are likely to become developed nations. So, in addition to the SDGs, we should urge world leaders to also consider convening an international peace summit to formulate the World Peace Goals that can inspire peacebuilding initiatives around the world too,” Ambassador Adegbesan said.

UPF-Nigeria Secretary General Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko spoke on the correlation between peace and development and urged participants to reflect seriously on the need for the articulation of the World Peace Goals. He suggested that the goals should harmonize with the three basic life goals and focus broadly on religious harmony, regional integration, and resource development and utilization. “Let us use this opportunity to inspire discussions on the need for the ‘3Rs’ goals for world peace with Religion, Regions and Resources as a broad framework for world peace. Let us ensure that the goals focus more on what we shall do for peace and not what we shall do against war,” Dr. Oko said.

Others who spoke on the need for peaceful nations as the basis for global development included the traditional ruler of the local government area of Kwali, HRH Dr. Shaaban Nizazu III. The Etsu Kwali emphasized the need to promote interreligious peace and spiritual development if the world hopes to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. He used the opportunity of the gathering to announce the willingness of his community to offer a portion of land to UPF and the Ambassadors for Peace for an international peace village project.

Professor Chimele Abengowe, a consultant cardiologist with the State House Clinic in Abuja, and Rev. Zeal Festus of UPF-Anambra State offered congratulatory messages. Dr. George Charles Ikpot, UPF-Nigeria director of international affairs, read the UPF International statement on the 2016 International Day of Peace.

During the general discussion, participants emphasized the need for the formulation of World Peace Goals with a call on UPF International and the United Nations to facilitate the process to the articulation of inclusive goals for world peace. It was resolved that “at this critical time in human history, there is a need to formulate the World Peace Goals (WPGs) which will inspire worldwide action toward a peaceful world in measurable ways.”



The UPF event in Rivers State was held at the Presidential Hotel in Port Harcourt with a focus on peace in the Niger Delta and a call on the Niger Delta Development Commission to work with the Ambassadors for Peace for the creation of the Niger Delta Peace Council and the articulation of clear peace goals for the Niger Delta. Some VIPs were presented with certificates as Ambassadors for Peace at the event, which also featured the Miss Universal Peace Beauty Pageant.

In Lagos, Africa’s largest city, the UPF chapter for Lagos State held an event at the University of Lagos with a discussion focused on the theme of the Day of Peace and an appeal to scholars and students with educational institutions to make a greater commitment to ensuring that educated persons contribute to the realization of world peace. The Lagos event ended with a call for the establishment of a UPF chapter at the University of Lagos.

At the events in Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt, excerpts from the autobiography of UPF founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, were read aloud to the participants, as well as the following inspiring words from two Ambassadors for Peace in Nigeria.

“As Ambassadors for Peace, we are ‘born again’ citizens of the world who have said goodbye to all negative forces that make human beings hate each other. Being Ambassadors for Peace, you have embraced universal peace as your religion and to be disciples of Father and Mother Moon.” -- *Senator Ibrahim Nasir Mantu, Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic, chair of UPF-Nigeria and former deputy president of the Senate*

“I see UPF as God’s plan for Nigeria. God has brought this great people and planted them in many countries of the world from different tribes and religions. Their languages are different, but they have one voice and that is for a proclamation of peace. I pray that Nigerians listen to us. Let us pursue peace. Remember that we are a people before religion came. We should love each other and live together in peace. May God help us to understand this.” -- *Ambassador Odili Onyekaba, Ambassador for Peace in Anambra State*

The International Day of Peace event in Abuja also featured the presentation of a Certificate of Completion in Universal Peace Education to one of the Ambassadors for Peace, Ms. Andrea Obata. At the UPF Peace Education Center in Abuja she completed the study course covering a general introduction to UPF, the fundamental principles of peace, the root causes of conflict, and the principles of conflict resolution and reconciliation. Ms. Obata is also studying Peace and Conflict Resolution at the Open University of Nigeria. She testified to the quality of the UPF Peace Education and recommended it to her colleagues if they wish to gain a deeper insight and understanding beyond a mere academic exercise. She pledged to continue to work with UPF-Nigeria to promote the Peace Education program to others.