

Nigerian Ambassadors for Peace at U.S. Embassy program on 2016 election

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Abuja, Nigeria -- Ambassadors for Peace were among more than 100 Nigerians who were invited to the U.S. Embassy for a program on the 2016 U.S. election.

The program, which was held on January 12, 2017, at the Ekiti Hall of the embassy compound, provided opportunities for some Nigerian observers, including members of civil society, politicians and journalists, to speak about their experiences and discuss highlights of the election process with key lessons for Nigeria.

Issues covered by the presentations included U.S. citizens' patriotism, respect for the electoral system, electoral college, election financing, voting options, accessibility and utilization of technology, the role of the media and the inclusiveness of diverse groups, including the aged and the disabled.

Presentations were given by embassy staff and by Nigerians who had been sponsored by the embassy to observe the elections, which took place in November 2016.

Discussions focused on the core lessons of the elections for Nigeria, with participants mentioning the need for transparency in the election process, adequate database of citizens, funding of election campaigns, involvement of citizens as election volunteers, issue-based campaigns and the several voting options provided to meet the diverse needs of the citizens.

One of the key issues, and one that divided opinions, was the U.S. electoral college, which led to Donald Trump becoming the president, even though his opponent, Hillary Clinton, had received more popular votes. Some participants called for the review of the electoral college system, claiming that it denied the power of citizens' votes, while others recommended that the system be adopted in Nigeria.

The general consensus was that Nigerians should learn from the U.S. elections and ensure that elections are free and fair and that candidates' campaigns should be issue-based.

Ambassadors for Peace who attended the event were Dr. Mrs. Gloria Laraba Shoda, the national president of the National Council of Women Societies; the Rt. Hon. Ogana Lukpata, a member of the Cross River State House of Assembly; Mrs. Theresa Oluchi Odoemene of the Federal Capital Territory College of Education located in the town of Zuba; Mrs. Victoria Ogun; engineer Isaac Ogwuche; Mrs. Linda Orokpo Ochagla; Chief Sobo and Ms. Andrea Obata. Others who were present were UPF-Nigeria Secretary General Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko, Dr. George Ikpot, Bernard O. Ochelebe and Clement Agori.

UPF-Nigeria is one of the NGOs that receive invitations to embassy programs from the Cultural Affairs Unit of the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section, and UPF-Nigeria has consistently honored these invitations.