

UPF, WFWP and YSP Accra, Ghana celebrate The UN International Day of Peace

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Accra, Ghana -- The UN International Day of Peace was celebrated in Ghana on September 21, 2018, by the Ghana branches of the Universal Peace Federation and Youth and Students for Peace (YSP), in collaboration with the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) and the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), Ghana chapters.

The program commenced in the morning with a Peace Road activity. Participants walked from the Ghana Military Hospital in Accra through El-Wak Stadium to the Trade Fair Company Limited, singing songs of peace and waving the Peace Road flags. Efforts to mobile bicycle riders proved abortive. In the Trade Fair Auditorium, the Peace Road message was delivered by the national president of FFWPU, Rev. James Aidoo.

The second phase of the event was the symposium "Peace and End of War in Africa" which was meant to pre-launch the "Guns Down Africa 2020" campaign, an initiative of YSP in collaboration with UPF-Ghana.

The president of the Ambassadors for Peace Network-Ghana, Bishop Ezekiel Goodman Anim chaired the second phase event, which had two distinguished speakers, namely: Mr. David Namorny, Volta regional executive secretary of the Ghana National Peace Council; and H.E. Prince Akere, the Southern Cameroon ambassador for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region.

Both speakers stressed the importance of silencing the guns in Africa and commended YSP and UPF strides to support the African Union. Their presentations were followed by a panel discussion that was coordinated by the president of Ghana Print Media, Ambassador Dan Selassie. Mr. Selassie asked

pertinent questions on peace and security in Ghana and on the recent crisis in Cameroon, where there is a massacre of the Anglophone minority as the rest of the world remains in "silence and mute." The most important point worthy of note in all of the discussions was that the African Union will not be able to achieve the vision of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020 if the civil sector stays aloof. The good news however, was that UPF and YSP were already taking some necessary strides to sensitize the civil sector on the vision.

The Guns Down Africa 2020 project hopes to mobilize the youths and the civil sector in Africa to support the "African Union's Road Map to Silence the Guns" by 2020; aiming at ending wars and ushering in an era of sustainable peace in Africa.



In her keynote address, the secretary general of UPF-Ghana, Dr. Helen Osei, remarked that the International Day of Peace was established in 1981 but was celebrated for the first time in 1982. She then measured it unimaginable that peace has been celebrated for 36 years with very little to show on peace. In the case of genocide taking place in Cameroon presently, Dr. Osei reiterated that coincidentally, 1981 was the very year Mr. Paul Biya, the president of Cameroon, was sworn in as the new president of that bilingual nation. After 36 years at the helm of governance, many Cameroonians are of the opinion that very little has been achieved to better the lives of the citizens of that country, especially the marginalized English-speaking minority. "Unfortunately, instead of giving peace a chance at this critical point in time." Dr. Osei stated, "the nation is plunged into a chaotic order, never been experienced in Africa for many years. We have motion pictures of soldiers killing their citizens as though they were chickens. Villages are being burnt down with vulnerable aged and ailing people in their homes. The United Nations talks of more than 160,000 displaced people. Some 50 thousand are refugees now in Nigeria and hundreds of asylum seekers are also in other parts of the globe, including Ghana. Amnesty International talks about prisons that are filled with political prisoners, and those in deplorable situation. The situation is degenerating into a human crisis at the watch of the world. International peace organizations, international media and many who should speak for peace just seem to remain quiet as if to say that those who are dying are cheaper than those dying in other parts of the globe. Without the news media, the world would have never known of the human atrocities committed in this nation in the 21st century on innocent women and children. I am sure you have watched the video of a woman who was shot with her two kids

(babies) by the government soldiers. A few months ago a Ghanaian pastor was also summarily executed after being mistaken as one of the English-speaking Cameroonians."

"On this 36th International Day of Peace, she continued, "together with the free and righteous people of the world, we must stand straight without compromise of standards and condemn the atrocities that are taking place in Cameroon right now. We are in Ghana and may not know the number of Ghanaian students, children, women, and men who are affected by the crisis there. It is unethical to classify any tragic event that is taking place in Cameroon or in any other part of the globe as a 'far distant problem' with no concern."

Dr. Osei also touched on wars going on in other parts of Africa including the war of Boko Haram in Nigeria, the crisis in Libya, Egypt, South Sudan, DR Congo, and so forth. She emphasized that the world has tried with guns for centuries and it never worked. Since the human heart is not stone, she advised, we should put the necessary heart measures in place, so as to win even the war on terrorism.

On the Guns Down Africa campaign, the Secretary General told her audience that UPF-Ghana and her sister bodies read through the Road Map to Silence Guns, a beautiful project of the African Union that was designed in 2013 and was excited to see how much intellectual prowess was exhibited in the article. Unfortunately, since 2013, she noted, very little has been achieved in respect to that road map. And so she advised: "If we are to be sincere to ourselves, we would tell the world clearly that, the vision to end wars by 2020 will be practically impossible if the civil sector, the youths and religious leaders of Africa remain dormant, in understanding the state of Africa as a continent and what has to be done to support the African Union with the goal. It means that the AU must open up to organizations that have something to bring on board to help them achieve this goal."

The event was spiced with the revelation of the "face" of the Guns Down Africa 2020 project. It was a time to show to the audience and media, who will embody the Guns Down Campaign in Ghana. The revelation unveiled a 20-year-old philanthropist, Marcus Love N. Anafu, who is considered as the youngest philanthropist in Africa. Mr. Marcus Love N. Anafu will represent the Guns Down in the media and at other events. He will speak as an Ambassador of the Guns Down Campaign from Ghana. It is hoped that Mr. Anafu's popularity and personality will pull many youths into the project and help mobilize one million people to sign the "Guns Down Accra Declaration by 2020," a milestone towards the herculean task of ending wars in Africa and opening up the continent toward Vision 2020 of the African Union and Vision 2020 of FFWPU, under the strong and able Leadership of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

Two dignitaries were decorated with the Ambassadors for Peace award, and it happened that Mr. Marcus Love N. Anafu was one of them. The second awardee was a Finland-based young Ghanaian lady, Ms. Yvonne Ben-Kane, who was honored as Ghana's Ambassador for Peace in the diaspora for her sacrificial lifestyle. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Ben-Kane, received the award on behalf of their daughter.

Over 80 people were in attendance, mostly prospective stakeholders from age 18 and above who will actively work with both organizations to realize the Guns Down dream.

The event ended with photo-shoots and signing of the two banners: one for the Peace Road and the other for Guns Down Africa 2020.

It is no exaggeration that the International Day of Peace 2018 in Ghana was an exceptional event. From a humble beginning, it is hoped that the Guns Down project will draw the nation closer to understanding the dream of UPF's founders, the vision of "One Global Family Under God".