

Benin Conference and Aid Project Embody Humanitarian Spirit

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Cotonou, Benin – UPF-Benin celebrated World Humanitarian Day with a conference on restoring trust in communities, and a humanitarian donation that enabled poor families to pay their overdue hospital bills. Both activities were met with deep appreciation.

A conference featuring a panel discussion was held on August 19, 2026, in the renovated hall of the Bourse du Travail in Cotonou. The conference, organized jointly by UPF-Benin and UPF-Africa, addressed the theme “Restoring Trust: What Can Be Done Now for Sustainable Peace and Humanity?”



The event brought together 50 participants from various sectors, including representatives of important public institutions, former government ministers, leaders of institutions and organizations, academics, Ambassadors for Peace, and other invited guests.

The ceremony began with an opening address by the representative of the president of the Economic and Social Council of Benin. This was followed by a brief keynote presentation by **Dr. Paterne Zinsou**, secretary general of UPF-Africa, who explained the spirit and purpose behind this initiative, focusing on

trust as a necessary condition for sustainable peace and humanitarian engagement.

Then the panel discussion began. The panelists included **Hon. Marie-Laurence Sranon**, honorary minister responsible for family and social affairs; **Prof. Jean Bio Tchabi Orou**, retired professor of physics and former minister of education; and **Dr. Paterne Zinsou**, secretary general of UPF Africa.



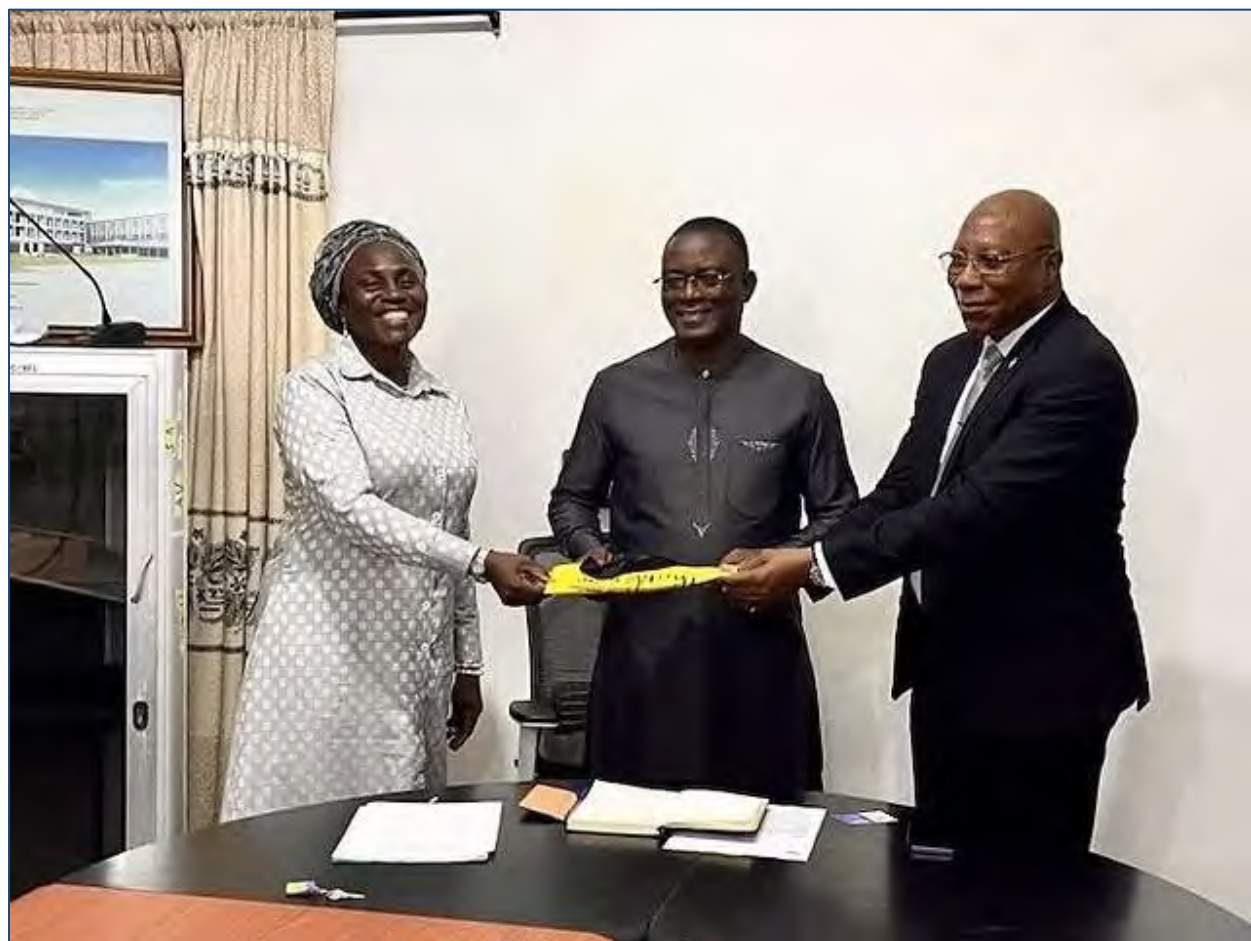
The discussion was moderated by **Dr. Kenneth Balogun**, lecturer and researcher at the Faculty of Law of the University of Parakou, and Africa regional coordinator of the International Association of Academicians for Peace.

The panel addressed questions related to the restoration of trust within families and among citizens. Participants also reflected on the role of teachers, as well as religious and spiritual leaders, in preventing conflicts and promoting a culture of peace. The event was conducted in a solemn but warm atmosphere that gave everyone present a stronger awareness of the importance of trust, individual responsibility, and collective action in building sustainable peace and responding to humanitarian challenges.



The final part of the program included the appointment of new Ambassadors for Peace and the

presentation of certificates of recognition to personalities and institutions that have made substantial contributions to peace and have supported the work of UPF in Benin. The event concluded with highly positive feedback from participants, and strengthened the prospects for greater collaboration between UPF-Benin and key national institutions.



On the same day, UPF-Africa and UPF-Benin organized a project to assist vulnerable mothers and newborn babies at the Mother and Child University Hospital Center Lagoon (CHU-MEL) in Cotonou. Unfortunately, many mothers who go to the hospital to give birth find themselves unable to cover their medical bills, prescriptions, or other expenses before they can leave the hospital and return home. UPF decided to help resolve some particularly difficult cases by providing the necessary funds to settle their bills.

A delegation composed of Dr. Paterne Zinsou, Prof. Jean Bio Chabi Orou, several Ambassadors for Peace and UPF staff members, was received by **Mr. Raymond Sourou Kintomonho**, director general of CHU-MEL, members of his staff, and the head of the Social Services Department. The meeting took place in the hospital's conference room and was conducted in a warm, positive and highly cordial atmosphere.

Dr. Zinsou explained that UPF wished to assist families and individuals within the local community who were facing serious difficulties and deserved attention and support, a category that included the mothers and newborn babies at CHU-MEL.

The hospital director expressed appreciation for UPF's initiative. He explained the hospital's policy of providing necessary care before requiring patients to settle their financial obligations. He noted that UPF's contribution would enable several families to settle their hospital bills and return home.

Prof. Orou acknowledged the emotional and humanitarian challenges involved in dealing with such situations, and expressed his admiration for the hospital staff and social services personnel who work directly with vulnerable mothers and newborns. He also shared several ideas and suggestions with the hospital administration on possible ways to mobilize additional resources and raise funds to provide greater assistance to vulnerable patients and families.

The donation from UPF covered the outstanding hospital bills of eight mothers who had recently given birth, and eleven babies who had remained at the hospital for weeks or months, because their families were unable to settle their debts. Thanks to UPF, they were able to leave the hospital and return to their families.