

Report of the 4th Annual Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti memorial lecture & the launching of the Professor Ransome-Kuti Trust Fund

The 4th annual Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti memorial lecture held on Tuesday; June 2 2009, at the Civic center, Victoria Island, Lagos. The event started with an opening prayer led by Pastor Daniel Folayan. In his welcome address, the BOT Chairman of WHARC, Dr Abel Guobadia, thanked the participants at the event and commended their support to the Ransome-Kuti family. He enjoined everyone to contribute generously to the Trust Fund. The occasion was chaired by Chief Femi Otedola, MD/CEO of Zenon oil Nig Plc, who was represented by Mr. Philip Akinola. In his remark, he stated that Zenon Oil will support the initiative of the Women's Health and Action Research Center to uphold the legacies of Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti in perpetuity.

Among the dignitaries who graced the occasion were: the Chief Host, His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Lagos State who was represented by Dr. Toyin Hamzat, Special Adviser on health to His Excellency; Professor Wole Soyinka, Guest lecturer; Dr Adhiambo Odaga, Ford Foundation representative for West Africa; Prof (Mrs.) Adenike Grange, former Minister for Health; Prof Akin Osibogun, CMD LUTH, who represented the Honourable Minister for Health, Dr Lekan Pitan, former Lagos State commissioner for health, who represented Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu; Prof & Mrs. Babs Fafunwa, former Minister for Education; Chief Kayode Samuel, who represented the Ogun State Governor; Hon Justice Ifeyinwa Nzeako, BOT president of the Society for Family Health; Mr. Bright Ekweremadu, MD Society for Family Health; Dr Ore Falomo, special guest; Dr & Mrs. Abel Guobadia; Professor Cyril Mokwenye, Deputy Director of WHARC; Mrs. Sonia Ransome-Kuti, wife of Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti; Ms Yemisi Ransome-Kuti; and Prof Muriel Oyediran.

Dr Eddy Erhagbe, Dean of Students' Affairs of the University of Benin, gave the citation of the guest lecturer, Professor Wole Soyinka. According to him, Professor Soyinka, Nobel Laureate for Literature in 1986, is currently President's Professor at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, USA, and Professor Emeritus, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, He is active on various human rights and cultural organizations including UNESCO, of which he is a Goodwill Ambassador. Professor Soyinka has written in various genres-the novel, drama, essays, poetry and autobiography. He was born on July 13, 1934.

Professor Soyinka delivered the guest lecture titled 'Ethics, Bioethics and Environment in Healing Designs'. According to him, 'the mind and technology

appear to create less contention than mind and nature'. Involvement with nature range from ecological respect to others that once belonged more in the realm of science fiction, but which also come closer everyday as realizable objectives of scientific enquiry. In his lecture, Professor Soyinka brought to discourse, the ethical concerns in medicine ranging from abortion to contraceptive usage. He eschewed sycophancy and enjoined professionals to braze up to the ethical concerns in the medical practice. According to him, 'ethical questions go beyond abstraction'.

A major feature of the event was the launching of the Professor Ransome-Kuti Trust Fund in Primary Health Care and Reproductive Health. The Executive Director of WHARC, Professor Friday Okonofua, in his remark stated that the Ford Foundation graciously funded the Ransome-Kuti Policy and Leadership Development (RPLD) Program until 2008. The Trust Fund was established to sustain the RPLD Program in perpetuity. He therefore enjoined participants to donate generously to the Trust Fund, in order to sustain the program. Donations to the ton of ₦1, 543,000 (One million five hundred and forty three thousand naira) was realized from the launch. This comprised of pledges, cash and cheque donations.

Dr Adiambo Odaga, Ford Foundation Representative for West Africa, delivered her goodwill message. According to her, the Ford Foundation will explore the possibility of providing additional Funds to the RPLD program. She encouraged participants to support WHARC in her efforts to promote the legacies of Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti.

The vote of thanks was given by Ms Yemisi Ransome-Kuti. The representative of the Chairman of the Occasion, Mr. Philip Akinola gave the closing prayer. Guests were treated to lunch afterwards.