



#WOMANIFESTO2019

KEY DEMANDS EXPRESSING WHAT NIGERIAN WOMEN WANT

1.0. PREAMBLE

Whereas the overall situation of women and girls in Nigeria has not significantly improved since the advent of the current democratic dispensation in 1999. Despite few milestones recorded, Nigeria continues to lag behind among comity of nations within the continent and internationally. For instance, Nigeria ranked abysmal low at 23rd out of 52 African countries on the 2015 Africa Gender Equality Index. The AGEI computes gender equality scores in three constitutive dimensions: economic opportunities, human development and laws and institutions ranks. Out of a total score of 100, Nigeria's overall score on gender equality was 54. The situation becomes grimmer when considering the fact that Nigeria did not feature HM among the top 10 in any of the 3 dimensions despite having the highest GDP and largest population in Africa, with abundant natural resources.

Bearing in mind Nigeria's poor global ranking with respect to gender discrimination and human development. The OECD's 2019 Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), ranked Nigeria at 46% out of 100%. In fact, it included Nigeria among the 10 percent of countries worldwide that exhibits the highest levels of gender discrimination. The country was assessed either "high" or "very high" in all of the four evaluated categories of social institutions: (1) discriminatory family code, (2) restricted physical integrity, (3) restricted resources and assets and (4) restricted civil liberties. The most recent UNDP ranking of Nigeria for human development is 157 out of 189 countries persistently placing the country in the low human development category.

Concerned about the mounting barriers to addressing this abysmal national gender and human development profile, including the lack of political will on the part of successive governments since 1999 to pay serious attention to critical issues affecting women and girls in Nigeria.

Determined to push for a Nigeria where women and girls enjoy their human rights and realize their full potentials as citizens of a democratic state notwithstanding their geographic locations, socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnic, religious or other identities.

Recognizing the past efforts of women in Nigeria and women's movements in particular. Notably, Women Organisation for National Conference (WORNACO), a platform convened by Prof Jadesola Akande and other leaders of Women's organisations in 2005, that brought together women from across the nation and sectors of the society to articulate women's demands and aspirations. This demand became what is known as '**Womanifesto**'. Other demands have also been articulated by different groups over the years. Sadly, some of these have either become obsolete or have not had an organized movement pushing for their actualization.

Noting the importance of building a cohesive women's movement that will provide the much-needed platform to speak in solidarity and make demands for the actualization of women's human rights in all spheres of life and endeavor in accordance with regional and international commitments undertaken by Nigerian Governments, especially under the United Nations Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995); and the African Charter's Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Upholding the dream of a Nigeria that protects, respects and remedies violations of women's human rights, gender discrimination, and maintains zero tolerance to sexual and gender-based violence, a group of women-led and women-focused organisations have come together to organize a National Women Dialogue for the purpose of generating a collective agenda towards a common cause around which a movement could emerge. The dialogue was an

opportunity to update the Womanifesto, with the aim of developing a more encompassing plan and strategy. The National Women Dialogue is conceptualized as a follow up to the recently organized feminist meeting, with the theme ‘**The Nigeria Women Want**’ November 27th-29th at the National Center for Women Development (NCWD), where various themes were deliberated upon and strategic objectives adopted for advancing accountability to women and girls.

WE THEREFORE RESOLVE AS WOMEN IN NIGERIA TO ADOPT THIS CHARTER OF DEMANDS TO BE KNOWN AS “WOMANIFESTO” ON THE FOLLOWING:

2.0 OUR DEMANDS

#1: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG)

Women and girls endure physical, socioeconomic, sexual or psychological violence that affect them irrespective of their location, class, religion or ethnicity. Despite existing legal frameworks on violence against women in at least 10 states of the federation, the National Democratic Health Survey (NDHS) 2018 reports that 28% of females have experienced one form of violence or the other.

Our Key Demands:

Federal Government should:

1. Declare by the 8th of March, 2020, a state of emergency on violence against women and girls;
2. Establish and operate ‘shelters’ to support women and girls who are at risk or survivors of violence in each state of the federation by 2023;
3. Commit adequate resources to establish new and support already established SARCs (Sexual Assault Response Centres) across Nigeria;
4. Launch, through the National Orientation Agency, a nationwide campaign to challenge and change negative attitudes towards women and girls;
5. Ensure that laws are compliant with agreed international standards on gender equality, and effectively enforced;

6. Support mechanisms to address sexual and gender-based violence in homes, Internally Displaced Peoples' camps, rural communities, urban areas, educational and health institutions, and workplaces.

#2: WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Presently, women hold less than 6% of elected positions at federal and state levels; Nigeria has indeed regressed in this area in the last few years. For the few women who participate, it is still a long way to the goal of full gender inclusion as women continue to face various factors that obstruct and undermine their career advancement as politicians. In the run up to the 2023 elections, we are concerned about the lack of concerted efforts towards **removing barriers to women's equal participation and representation in the electoral process** – including ensuring 35% *affirmative action for women* in appointive and elective positions as provided for in the **National Gender Policy**.

We also note with growing concern, the limited number of women holding senior positions in government boards, parastatals and other managerial/corporate positions. More specifically, there is a limited number of women in critical sectors of the economy including energy, infrastructure, finance and information technology. Women are conspicuously missing in the following seven major sectors which contribute about 74%¹ of GDP: crop production, trade, telecommunications and information services, crude, petroleum and natural gas; real estate; food, beverage and tobacco; construction; professional, scientific and technical services. The ensuing absence of women's perspectives in decision making and long-term strategic plans will only perpetuate Nigeria's dysfunctional policy making processes with low public impact.

In addition, although women are the major drivers of the crop production and trade sectors, their efforts are not commensurate to the money that accrues to them as individuals. Consequently, they are unable to amass the capital base required for political engagement and mobilization. We hereby seek a firm commitment on the part of government to increasing opportunities for women's entry and growth in critical sectors of the economy where they are currently in the minority. This will aid in fostering a complete and representative approach to national planning and strategy formulation in those areas.

¹ National Bureau of Statistics Q3, 2019

Our Key Demands:

The Federal Government should:

1. Implement the Justice Uwais Electoral Reform Committee Report on women's political representation;
2. Domesticate all treaties and conventions that promote the rights of women and girls to participate fully and equally in politics, decision-making and peace and security processes (e.g. CEDAW, African Women's Protocol, UNSCR 1325, CRA);
3. Create and maintain an enabling environment for ensuring inclusion, equality and justice for all in every sphere of our national life;
4. Provide legal backing to support the implementation of the 35% Affirmative Action for Nigerian women's representation in decision making and in politics;
5. Review electoral law to stipulate mandatory affirmative action such that women comprise at least 35% of candidates presented to INEC for elective positions;
6. Develop and implement sectoral gender policies within all line ministries in order mainstream to a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) approach to public policy in Nigeria;
7. Equip INEC technically and financially to operate a transformative gender policy within the political landscape of the country;
8. INEC should set up mechanisms for strengthening the internal democratic culture and gender responsiveness of political parties in relation to party constitutions, manifestos, and activities, including all leadership selection processes.

#3: WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

Women are important actors within the Nigerian economy whether in the formal or informal sectors. Yet, many of them do not have agency due to inadequate access to knowledge and resources. Women constitute approximately half of Nigeria's population, but empirical research indicates that they work harder and longer than men because, in addition to their formal and informal sector activities, they carry out domestic and maternal functions. Yet,

women are greatly disadvantaged in the types of work they perform and the income they earn because their conditions of employment do not take cognizance of their peculiar triple development roles. It is, therefore, important that remedial action is taken to remove all impediments to women's access to economic opportunities. Affirmative action should be part of an overall strategic plan to maximize national socioeconomic benefits derived from female labour by compensating them adequately for time spent performing family responsibilities. Empirical research suggests that the removal of obstacles and inequalities women face with respect to employment, access to capacity building, and productive assets (such as credit and land), is an important step towards unleashing a previously untapped human resource, and a viable strategy for accelerating exponential economic growth.

Our Key Demands:

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs should:

1. Work with Federal Ministry of Justice and relevant stakeholders to amend the Land Use Act;
2. Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and strategies that address the peculiar needs of women in their roles;
3. Develop policies aimed at reducing poverty among women, the planning of such policies should be done with full participation of women;
4. Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to grants, credit, land, information, adaptive technology, education and training;
5. Facilitate and fast-track access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions for smallholder women farmers and women operating in the informal sectors;
6. Increase farmland security and protection for women and girls in communities where threats exist;
7. Invest in supporting young Nigerians to explore innovations that could help reduce the drudgery of women in the agricultural sector.

#4: SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS (SRHR)

Nigeria still has a long way to go in ensuring the implementation of sexual and reproductive health rights. Nigeria has one of the highest unmet family planning needs in the world; only 15 percent of currently married women use contraceptive methods to space or limit

childbearing. According to the 2013 NDHS, about 20 percent of currently married women have unmet family planning needs. Education is positively correlated with fertility rate, age at the time of marriage and first childbearing, as well as health status of mother and child. These factors in turn have implications for infant and maternal mortality.

Reports suggest that Nigeria contributes about 10 percent of the global maternal deaths even though it constitutes only 1.7 percent of the global population. Nigeria has made some progress in the march towards the reduction of maternal mortality in the urban south. Notwithstanding, the number of maternal deaths is still outrageously high with a national rate of 545 per 100,000 live births. The North East has the highest mortality rate at 1,549 per 100,000 live births. Only 38 percent of pregnant women delivered in a health facility under the supervision of a skilled health worker between 2008 and 2013 (NDHS, 2013). Traditional Birth Attendants provide a large chunk of maternity services to pregnant women during delivery especially in rural areas. Some have been trained as part of the safe motherhood initiative to identify early signs of complications and observance of basic hygiene rules. There are no data available on the compliance of the traditional birth attendants and no information on monitoring and evaluation of their activities.

Our Key Demands

The Federal Government should:

1. Invest more aggressively in promoting the nationwide adoption of effective family planning methods;
2. Support information on contraception education and availability of contraceptives, with the ultimate aim of preventing unwanted pregnancies and avoidable deaths among married women and teenagers;
3. Work with State Governments to increase access to sexual and reproductive health rights information and services at primary healthcare level;
4. Expedite the approval and full implementation of Nigeria's Gender in Health Policy through coordinated activities of the Federal Ministry of Health and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs;

5. Integrate mental health therapies into all healthcare services including family health and sexual and reproductive health services;
6. Provide safe spaces for girls and boys to access support and report all forms of sexual violence;
7. Coordinate the activities of the Federal Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to enhance male responsibility for sexual and reproductive healthcare;
8. Establish collaboration between the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Federal Ministry of Health and private sector companies to provide menstrual products such as sanitary pads to all girls in secondary schools at no cost and at subsidized rates for female citizens in post-secondary institutions.
9. Enact legislation and support practices that address and decriminalize unsafe abortion;
10. Increase access to comprehensive family planning and antenatal services that are gender responsive, inclusive and transformative;
11. Include sexual and reproductive health rights education in school curricula with the aim of reducing the vulnerability and susceptibility of young women to forced or early marriages. This in turn will reduce maternal deaths, especially in the northern part of the country;
12. Strengthen advocacy and public enlightenment in local communities on norms and traditions that negatively affect female well-being and health;
13. Ensure that steps are taken to support legislation and other mechanisms, such as sex education, that will address unsafe abortions.

#5: WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

The year 2020 will usher in the final phase of Nigeria's Action Plan on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 launched in 2017. The document outlines national policies aimed at women's participation in decision making, protection from gender-based violence, conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction. It is on record that Nigerian women and girls have paid a heavy price in the many conflicts within the country over decades. They have endured unprecedented levels of gender-based violence in addition to increased food insecurity and internal displacement.

Ongoing conflicts in Nigeria include those linked to violent extremism in the North East, militancy over economic policy, environmental degradation, and resource distribution; conflicts between farmer herder communities over grazing rights, communal attacks, a thriving kidnapping trade in the Niger Delta and most recently across Nigeria. Women and girls suffer disproportionately during these conflicts; they are victims of sexual violence and preferred hostages by militants. In post-conflict situations, women are usually excluded from participating in peace building processes, camp food distribution, repatriation, resettlement and rehabilitation. Those responsible typically tend to be men. The lack of a solid legal framework presents obstacles to implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Additionally, women's low literacy levels have resulted in their inability to affirm their rights and opportunities. Furthermore, conditions prevailing in conflict prone areas further expose women to sexual exploitation and violence. State institutions, such as the Nigeria Police Force, security agencies and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), have not fulfilled their duty to provide security and justice, and thereby protect women's rights.

Our Key Demands:

The Federal Government should:

1. Work with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and National Bureau of Statistics to set up a systematic data collection process for documenting the implications and impact of insecurity in a gender-disaggregated manner;
2. Ensure that an adequate portion of security sector funds are committed to providing women with participatory opportunities in decision making and psychosocial support;
3. Mandate the attendance and successful completion of training courses in gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and gender, peace and security (GPaS) for all police officers and make this a conditional to their promotion.
4. Increase the recruitment and training of female Police Officers.
5. Promote female police officers to decision making cadres to ensure gender parity
6. Ensure that gender-specific issues, needs and priorities are adequately reflected in published the operational guidelines of all security and law enforcement agencies;
7. Actively recruit and increase the number of women working in Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camps as a way of protecting women from further exploitation;

8. Work through the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and other related agencies to establish a law enforcement monitoring group at national, state, and local government level;
9. Support the provision of means of livelihood and schooling for women and children respectively in IDPs Camps.

#6: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: EDUCATION

Education for everyone is a lifelong pursuit; it is also a reality that for others it seems more like a privilege that remains out of reach. Education impacts human development, enhances the quality of life, and the advancement of individuals and the societies to which they belong. Investing in female education yields exceptionally high social and economic returns. The importance of education in ensuring gender equality and harnessing the power that women possess cannot be overstated. It is important that gender-based discrimination in education is eliminated at all levels and that there is a greater push for eradicating illiteracy among women, increasing access to capacity development, promotion of STEM education, establishment of adult literacy trainings and encouraging other forms of formal and informal education. It is essential to strategize on ways to harness the human capital of women working within the informal sector by building on ways to disseminate information on the availability of grants, loans and capacity building to them.

Our Key Demands:

The Federal Government should:

1. Adopt legislation and put measures in place to eliminate sexual harassment and create gender-friendly environments in educational institutions;
2. Incentivize state government Ministries of Education to ensure increased admission of female students into STEM Education;
3. Work through the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Ministry of Women Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Education to identify private sector organizations capable of setting up scholarship schemes and other forms of support to encourage girl-child interest in STEM;
4. Integrate and educate women on community disaster management plans, reforestation plans targeted at the mitigation of deforestation, disaster preparedness and disaster

recovery plans, community resilience plans and any other plans devised to mitigate the results of climate change;

5. Provide capacity building training for women in peacebuilding and advocacy skills to mitigate the incidence, prevalence and negative effects of conflict among and between diverse communities;
6. Provide technical and information management training on infrastructure maintenance, safe water, sanitation, sustainable farming practices and affordable energy.

#7: CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

We also demand unequivocally for a reform of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) so as to integrate gender perspectives in all aspects of national policy, planning and development. Our elected representatives in the House of Representatives and Senate are ready to work with government and we remain available to dialogue with government on the achievement of these objectives.

Our Key Demands:

1. Initiate, as a matter of agency, an inclusive constitutional reform process that will deliver a peoples' constitution through the participation of diverse representatives of Nigerian populace; this process should reflect the gender composition of our country.
2. Implement existing constitutional reform agendas to support an all-inclusive gender responsive constitution that will reflect the aspirations of women, youth and people with disabilities, among other marginalized and minority groups.

Conclusion

Nigerian women will continue to press on for our demands for social justice, accountability and increased participation to be met in all spheres of our country's development. We remain available to discuss the ways and means of implementing these demands. We will work on the full report on the Womanifesto Summit, which will provide more information and set out a framework for periodic review of these demands.

The demands presented above are a summary of the key agreements by women and girls at the meeting held during the three-day dialogue from 27–29 November 2019. They represent our aspirations and visions for our country, as well as our role in achieving them. A comprehensive report will be submitted subsequently.

Signed by Conference Chairperson:

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