

# iWA

# INSPIRING WOMAN AFRICA

EDITION 17, 9TH DECEMBER 2025



## Leadership Redefined

QUOTES FROM SPEAKERS FOR IWASERIES14  
CONFERENCE ON DECEMBER 11TH

# Inspiring Woman Africa Series 14

THEME **Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths To Excellence**

CONVENER



**KEMI AJUMOBI**  
Founder/Group CEO,  
Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA)  
Convenor, IWA Conference

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



**H.E MADAM SAHLE-WORK ZEWDE**  
Former President of the Federal  
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GUEST OF HONOUR



**H.E IMAAN SULAIMAN-IBRAHIM FSI**  
Honourable Minister of Women Affairs  
and Social Development



**MORUF OSENI**  
Managing Director/CEO  
WEMA Bank



**CARLOS ROJAS-ARBULÚ**  
Deputy High Commissioner,  
Embassy Of Canada, Nigeria



**TONYE COLE, MNI**  
Co-Founder, Sahara Group



**OBAFEMI BANIGBE**  
CEO T2



**CHINWE ILOGHALU**  
Acting MD/CEO of NOVA Bank



**AISHAH NDANUSA AHMAD**  
Former Deputy Gov. CBN  
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**DR. NKRU  
OLUMIDE-OJO (PhD)**  
International Corporate Executive  
Founder, The LightHouse Network



**DR. BUSOLA  
TEJUMOLA (PhD)**  
Executive Head,  
General Entertainment  
Channels, MultiChoice Group



**HON. MUNIRA  
SULEIMAN TANIMU**  
Majority Leader  
Kaduna State 10th Assembly



**PATRICIA OBOZUWA**  
Managing Director,  
Nigeria Global Reputation  
Management Project



**FOLAKE SOETAN**  
CEO  
KEJA ELECTRIC

11th December, 2025 | 10AM

Civic Centre, Ozumba Mbadiwe,  
Victoria Island, Lagos



**ABE JAWANDO**  
Executive Senior Sales Director,  
Mary Kay Cosmetics



**CHINYERE OKOROCHA**  
Partner &  
the Overall Head of Sectors  
at Jackson, Etti & Edu



**MC**



**KAYODE OKIKIOLU**  
TV Anchor,  
Channels Television



**UGOCHUKWU OBI-CHUKWU**  
Founder/CEO of Nairametrics



**OZIMIBEZIAKO**  
Executive General Counsel,  
Africa, GE Vernova  
Partner at Genes Family Office

**ABIOLA ADEDIRAN**  
Partner at Genes Family Office

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**HER POINT OF VIEW**

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**FINANCIAL AdviseHER**

**Start Before the New Year:  
Small Steps That Create  
Big Results**





## Kemi Ajumobi

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# Welcome!

Dear Readers,

A beautiful day it is. I trust you are doing well? Isn't that how we ask the question, officially and unofficially? Well, if you ask me now, I will say, I am well but drenched in preparations for Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA) Series 14 Conference...Whoop! Whoop! Guess what? We are just 2 days away, I almost can't believe it is here!!! But it is.

In this edition, we hear what each speaker has to say about the conference and what they are looking forward to. We decided to be creative with their pictures and we completely love it. We hope you do to. We got quotes from them so you can have an idea of what to expect from them on the 11th and they surely did a good job. We applaud them.

I am excited about our theme for this year which is Leadership Redefined, Charting New Paths To Excellence, but most importantly, that our distinguished speakers are looking forward to it too. And the icing on the cake? Our Keynote speaker will be on the Nigerian soil to grace this great occasion.

"I look forward to sharing reflections from my own journey, from diplomacy to the presidency, on how we can attempt to manage building a lasting legacy of collective empowerment and purposeful excellence." She said. She is the immediate past president of Ethiopia, H.E Sahle-Work Zewde. Such an honour, IWA is blessed!

Each speaker is prepared and ready for December 11. We shall return here next week to tell the story.

As usual, we have other interesting articles in this edition that you will find very useful. Very.

Until we come your way again next week, wish us well at our 14th year conference, have a great day!



## Kemi Ajumobi

Founder/Group CEO  
Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA)  
Convener, IWA Conference



*There is a lot to leadership than we know. It means to be on the driver's seat. The question is, where are you driving to? Why should we follow? Why should people hop into your ride? Are you leading aright? If you are able to answer these questions, then the understanding of leadership dwells in you, because to lead, it means you are going somewhere and if you aren't able to articulate and show it, then where are we being led to?*

*More than half of the world's problems will be resolved if leadership is right. Seeking solutions to these and more is what we shall be discussing at Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA) Conference Series 14 themed 'Leadership Redefined, Charting New Paths To Excellence. Our panels are thought provoking and each speaker is ready to unleash. From the importance of transformational leadership to the*

*pursuit of excellence and the commitment to lead, we are going right into the nitty-gritty. These are the type of discussions IWA propagates.*

*In case you are wondering why we chose to focus on leadership, the answer is simple, there is no better time than now.*

*See you on the 11th of December. Clock it!*





# H.E Sahle-Work Zewde

Former President of Ethiopia

“

I am pleased and filled with enthusiasm to join you in Lagos for the Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA) Series 14. This year's theme, **“Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths to Excellence”**, could not be more timely or essential. We are in a season where constituencies are demanding more than mere management, they seek

transitions, champion inclusive agendas like the Women, Peace and Security framework among other things and that is transformational and compassionate. This is a time where collaboration, interdisciplinary and inclusive approaches are needed to solve the current challenges. Leadership is redefined by a practical necessity of collective success.

means wielding influence to mend, mentor, and magnify the voices of others, especially women and youth. I look forward to sharing reflections from my own journey, from diplomacy to the presidency, on how we can attempt to manage building a lasting legacy of collective empowerment and purposeful excellence.

”



## H.E Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim fsi

Honourable Minister of Women Affairs  
and Social Development

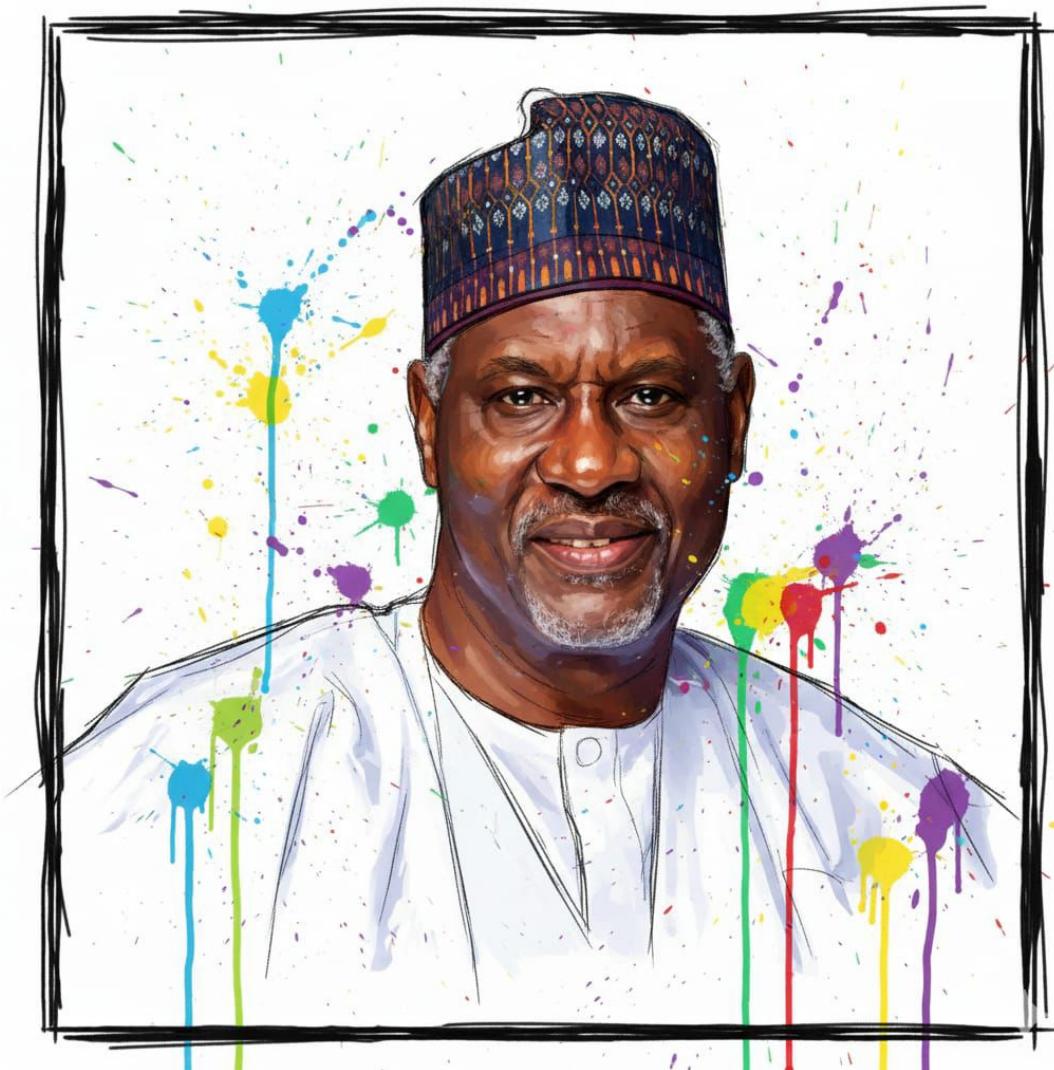


*The theme speaks to the power of leadership and how as leaders, we must chart courses that leave the trail of excellence. Excellence in our words, excellence in our actions, excellence in our homes, work, nation and the world. The theme is also revelatory of how charting the right path can lift women to greater heights by courage, direction and optimism. Excellence is achievable and I know that at IWA14, we will dissect ways to achieve this*

*through the impactful sessions we shall be having. The truth is, to achieve excellence, there are barriers, especially for women and girls, it is why the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence we are wrapping up for 2025 will always need to be at the front burner but with the collective effort of women around the world, supported by society and institutions, this message will one day yield the fruits*

*we all hope for and put an end to violence against women and girls. As I look forward to IWASeries14, I believe the inspiration we need as leaders will flow through the stories of the distinguished speakers as we all work together to better our lives as individuals and our country as a whole. Excellence is achievable. Together we can and we should.*





## Mohammed Mustapha Bintube

Chairman, Farinruwa Power Limited



*The theme "Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths to Excellence" captures the critical urgency of our current moment. True excellence today cannot rely on inherited or rigid frameworks; it demands courage, radical adaptability, and a purpose that fundamentally transcends immediate returns. Our panel, "Visionary Leadership in Transformative Times," will explore how this redefined leadership acts as the indispensable engine of change.*

*A truly visionary leader doesn't just manage the present; they anticipate the future, proactively building resilient, integrated systems and forging cross-sector partnerships; be it across banking, energy, or governance that accelerate transformation. The discussions at IWA are incredibly timely because the complex challenges facing our economies and institutions require leaders who are not merely reactive but architects of sustained value*

*creation. We stand at a pivotal moment where synthesising diverse, high-level experience is paramount to unlocking equitable and sustainable growth. The insights shared will not only challenge conventional thinking but also provide practical blueprints for leaders to align their teams, embrace necessary accountability, and achieve genuine, long-term excellence for the continent. This is about building a legacy, not just running an operation.*





## **Carlos Rojas-Arbulu**

**Deputy High Commissioner,  
Embassy of Canada, Nigeria**



Through the years in various capacities I have served, I have seen clearly how leadership manifests in different cultures and territories. Transformational leadership recognises the need for change, the type that encourages us to rise above all limits and embrace optimism and

results that speak. Leadership is about listening and learning, growing and gathering, gathering information that will transform one's life, then the people, communities and by extension, nations. It is about positive collaboration for better results. I trust that the Inspiring Woman

Africa Conference's 14th edition will shed more light on this and that the conversations we shall be having on the 11th of December will bring long lasting results that will better our nations and who we represent.





**Tonye Cole, mni**  
Co-Founder, Sahara Group



There is no better time to talk about leadership than now, and as leaders we all must lead with empathy, precision and intentionality. The theme for this year **'Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths to Excellence'** gives an opportunity for us all to share our experiences and opinion on the theme.

Transformational leadership is beyond words, it means you are at the fore of igniting change that must transcend you, oftentimes from the midst of adversity. Co-Founding Sahara Group was the decision that has impacted the sector greatly. But what was truly transformational was rising from the

abyss of bankruptcy very early in our history to remolding the company to what it is today. It began from the place of purpose where we agreed on the changes we want to see but above all it took teamwork and unshakable faith in God.





## Obafemi Banigbe

CEO, T2



*Leadership Redefined speaks to the moment we find ourselves in as a nation; one where traditional leadership models are no longer sufficient. Over the years, I've learnt that effective leadership is not anchored in position, but in the ability to create clarity, build systems that endure, and inspire people to rise to their full potential. In these times, Nigeria needs leaders with resilience, agility, and the courage to chart new paths forward.*

*As I join the panel on Visionary*

*Leadership in Transformative Times, I look forward to engaging with an exceptional group of leaders whose experiences cut across diplomacy, finance, enterprise, and other critical sectors. Their diversity mirrors the multifaceted challenges and opportunities before Nigeria today. These are voices who understand that transformation requires both strategic discipline and a willingness to rethink old assumptions.*  
*What I hope our discussion contributes is a more focused*

*leadership mindset, one that values collaboration, embraces innovation, and is grounded in integrity and service. If we can help strengthen the culture of leadership across business and public life, even incrementally, the ripple effect on Nigeria's growth and stability could be profound. My personal commitment is to continue championing the kind of leadership that builds, unites, and positions our nation for a more competitive and equitable future.*





**Chinwe Iloghalu**  
Acting MD/CEO of NOVA Bank



*As a woman in leadership, I embody excellence in action. I am committed to lead by example, inspiring younger women to forge their paths and strive for greatness. Our stories can be powerful role models, motivating others to pursue leadership roles and challenge traditional expectations.*

*Let's instil confidence in one another, no matter where we are on our journeys. It's never too late or too early to start anew. Nigeria is positioned to become a major power in Africa; it is clear that women will continue to contribute significantly to nation building in the years to come.*

*Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA) presents an excellent opportunity and platform to ignite the spirit of leadership and action required to achieve sustainable development in Africa.*





**Aishah N. Ahmad, CFA, OFR**  
 Former Deputy Governor, CBN  
 Soniya Asusu Nupe



Leaders across Africa are navigating an unprecedented moment of change, uncertainty, and possibility—economic shifts, new technologies, and rising expectations from citizens and institutions alike. In this environment, *Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths to Excellence* is a timely call to reconsider how we show up as leaders in a period of transformation unlike anything our generation has

witnessed. It urges us to move beyond traditional models toward a style anchored in clarity of purpose, courage, and service.

The panel on *Visionary Leadership in Transformative Times* speaks directly to this reality. Vision today is less about predicting the future and more about shaping the systems, choices, and partnerships that enable better futures to emerge. It demands leaders who can navigate disruption with

steadiness, communicate with honesty, and mobilise people around solutions that are both ambitious and humane.

Having led across the private, public, and non-profit sectors, I look forward to offering perspectives that may resonate with leaders grappling with similar questions: how to strengthen institutions, widen opportunity, and ensure innovation and reform that genuinely improve people's lives.

These conversations matter for the future of our societies and the communities we serve.

My hope is that the discussions at IWA14 sparks a renewed commitment to purposeful leadership—deepening collaboration across sectors and inspiring a generation of leaders, especially women, to guide our country and continent with wisdom, clarity, and resolve.





## Dr. Nkiru Olumide-Ojo (PhD)

International Corporate Executive  
Founder, The LightHouse Network



*Leadership redefined, to me, is about clarity of purpose and courage of conviction. It is about recognising that in today's world — especially across Africa — excellence isn't born in hierarchy, but in how we empower others to think, act, and grow.*

*Having led teams across diverse markets, I've seen that the best leaders are those who find a good balance between the head and the heart, listening deeply but interrogating the data before them, those who create spaces for others to shine.*

*Leadership is no longer about being the loudest voice in the room, but the one that sets direction, builds trust, and delivers consistent value for collective progress.*





## Dr. Busola Tejumola (PhD)

Executive Head, General Entertainment  
Channels, MultiChoice Group

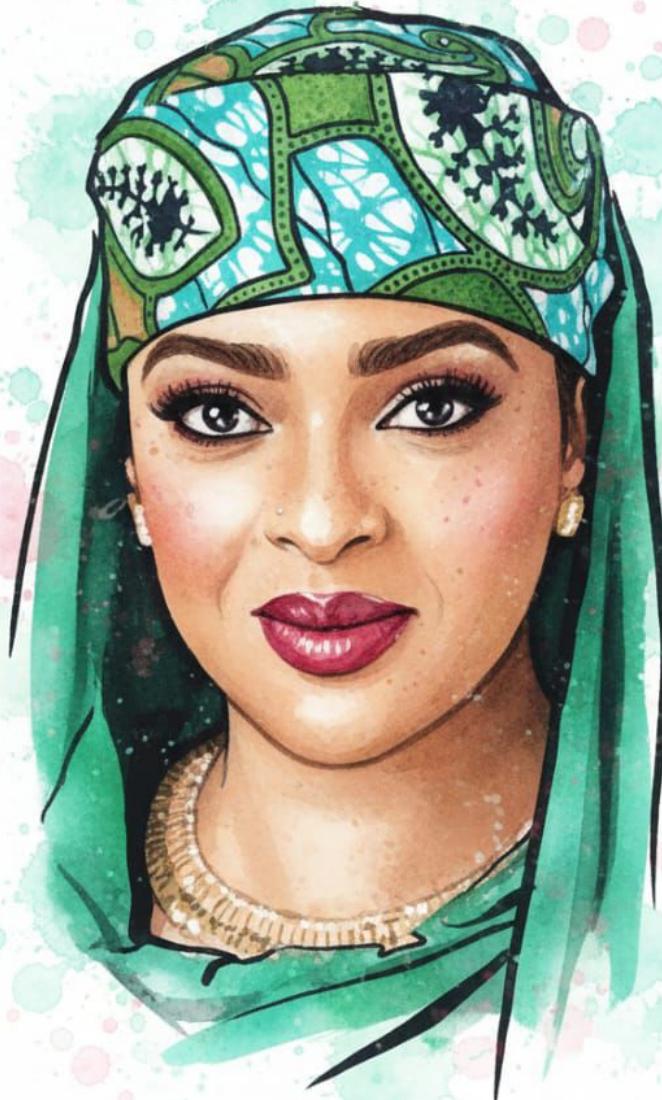


Redefining leadership is not merely about imagining new possibilities, it is about the courage to live them out. The moment I made the commitment to lead, I committed to embodying excellence through my actions, my choices, and the impact I intend to leave behind. I have learnt that true leadership requires both vision and execution: the ability to rethink old models, and the discipline to consistently deliver outcomes that uplift others. Excellence, in this sense, becomes

more than a goal, it becomes a daily discipline. It is the commitment to show up with integrity, to make decisions that elevate others, and to intentionally nurture environments where people and ideas can thrive. Leadership is ultimately an act of responsibility, one that demands consistency, accountability, and heart. As we convene at the 2025 Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA) Conference, I am excited about the shared insight, strength, and purpose that emerge when African women gather. My hope

is that our conversations will move beyond inspiration and lead to tangible shifts – fostering bolder leadership, strengthening our institutions, and influencing policies that improve outcomes for Nigerian women, businesses, and communities. Truth is, if we succeed, the ripple effect will be felt far beyond this room. We will help shape a Nigeria where excellence becomes a collective culture, and leadership is transformed in ways that truly serve the next generation.





## **Hon. Munira Suleiman Tanimu**

**Majority Leader Kaduna State 10th Assembly**

“

I am very much endeared to the theme of IWA SERIES 14, Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths To Excellence. Of particular importance to me is the theme of my panel: **EXCELLENCE IN ACTION, I COMMITTED TO LEAD.** How apt. Being the Majority Leader of the Kaduna State 10th Assembly, the sole female representative in Kaduna State House Of Assembly and the entire North West, serving the people of Lere East Constituency in Lere Local Government in Kaduna State clearly

shows that indeed, I am committed to lead. I am tempted to say the IWA team had me in mind when they chose this.

Breaking the proverbial glass ceiling as a woman from Northern Nigeria takes courage and commitment. Of course it does come with its challenges, but I use challenges as stepping stones to achieve the goals I promised my people I would deliver to them.

I am humbled to be on this path but more women are needed in leadership, so that together we can chart this

course that permeates through barriers, and goes beyond gender into hearts that understand that this is a responsibility of the collective, which is to impact lives, lives of men, women, boys and girls and the society at large.

I have no doubt in my mind that IWA Series 14 is going to lead a shift that will inspire the desire for a higher level of growth of our beloved country Nigeria.

”



*The theme of IWA14 'Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths to Excellence' speaks deeply to me in this moment. It is a call to move beyond traditional notions of authority and embrace a model of leadership rooted in clarity, courage, and collective impact. And the panel I will be speaking on, 'Empowered for Excellence: I Am Driving Change' reinforces something I believe strongly. Excellence is not accidental.*

*It is built through intentional action and the confidence to lead from wherever we stand. As I prepare for IWA14, I look forward to conversations that are honest, forward-looking, and solutions-driven. Conversations that move us from highlighting problems to spotlighting the extraordinary strength, creativity, and innovation that Nigerians demonstrate every day. I hope our dialogue inspires more*

## Patricia Obozuwa

Managing Director, Nigeria Global Reputation Management Project

*women and young leaders to step forward, to claim their space, and to understand that true leadership is defined by actions and the impact on others.*

*Ultimately, the impact I hope these discussions will yield is a renewed understanding that Nigeria's path to excellence will be shaped by the leaders we cultivate today. If we can ignite confidence, align our collective strengths, and empower more people to drive change, then the ripple effect on our institutions, our economy, and our global reputation will be transformative for our country.*





# Folake Soetan

CEO Ikeja Electric



*'Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths to Excellence' resonates with me because genuine leadership in Nigeria's power sector cannot rely on inherited playbooks. Progress demands the courage to rethink long-accepted norms and rebuild the systems that no longer serve our aspirations. Excellence becomes meaningful only when it reshapes how we work, serve, and deliver value to the millions who depend on us every day.*

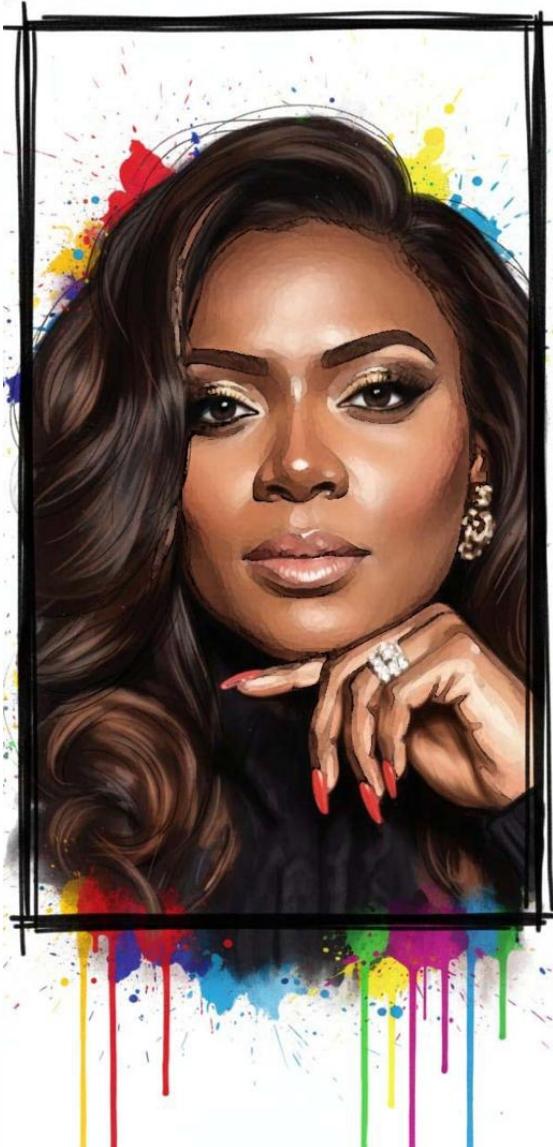
*With that in mind, the panel theme, "Empowered for Excellence, I am Driving Change" captures the*

*personal commitment that has shaped my journey. When I joined the sector, my first goal was to understand it for myself. The complexity, gaps, and opportunities pushed me to lead with intentionality rather than assumption. True empowerment comes from knowledge, competence, and the willingness to act decisively, even when the environment is uncertain. At Ikeja Electric, those values influence how we build resilient teams, strengthen our processes, and uphold a service culture anchored in responsibility.*

*Consequently, I approach IWA14 with*

*high expectations. The conversations ahead should go beyond celebrating leadership; they should challenge us to elevate the standards we set for our institutions and ourselves. Nigeria needs leaders who think boldly, communicate honestly, and execute with discipline. If our discussions inspire that level of commitment, then the outcome will extend far beyond this conference. It will drive a shift towards greater accountability, improved service delivery, and a more confident nation ready to demand and deliver excellence at every level.*





# Abe Jawando

Executive Senior Sales Director, Mary Kay Cosmetics



*This theme speaks directly to my lived experience. For me, leadership has never been about gathering followers but about developing people who can stand on their own feet, see with their own eyes, lead with their own conviction and multiply impact long after their season with me. Charting New Paths to Excellence is my commitment to build structures and systems so strong, so intentional*

*and so enduring that those coming behind me will go further because I went first.*

*I'm looking forward to the kind of conversations that stretch thinking, elevate standards and remind us why leadership must evolve. I'm excited to connect with leaders who are ready to redefine and also model what excellence looks like.*

*I hope these conversations will help us*

*create a leadership culture in Nigeria that is inclusive, ethical and future-focused. I would like to see our discussions translate into stronger systems, gender-inclusive leadership and a new cadre of leaders who understand that their influence must extend beyond personal success to national transformation.*





# Chinyere Okorocha

Partner & the Overall Head of Sectors  
at Jackson, Etti & Edu



**Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths to Excellence** is a theme that speaks deeply to me, because it calls us to move beyond slogans and truly rethink how we support women to rise.

*“Empowered for Excellence, I Am Driving Change”* captures my personal commitment. Being empowered, to me, means giving every woman the tools she needs not just to survive, but to thrive. Too often in the corporate world we treat women as

one-size-fits-all, but our realities are very different. The priorities of a young unmarried woman, a mother with small children, and a woman whose children are grown are not the same.

Empowerment is not preferential treatment. An empowered woman will deliver results. It is less about how late she stays in the office and more about the quality of her contribution, the impact she makes, and whether she is supported to bring her best self to the

table.

I am looking forward to honest, practical conversations at IWA14 that recognise women's different strengths and seasons, and show how organisations can create room for all of us to excel. My hope is that these discussions become a roadmap for more inclusive workplaces and, ultimately, for a stronger, more prosperous Nigeria.





# Ozim Ibeziako

Executive General Counsel,  
Africa, GE Vernova



*'Leadership Redefined: Charting new paths to excellence' for me means re-evaluating how we lead, learn and inspire others to be better versions of themselves, breaking out of traditional moulds. It evokes in me, an excellent mindset to deliver efficiently, cutting*

*out waste, and fuelling growth. Reflecting on the panel that I am moderating: EXCELLENCE IN ACTION, I COMMITTED TO LEAD, I see intentional commitment in leading for posterity. For me, it is also the courage to be vulnerable, recognising*

*our humanity when we miss the mark, knowing that it is not a call to perfection, but rather, a charge to show up with the best version of yourself, prepared to give it your best shot, such that your impact would still linger, long after you are gone.*





# Abiola Adediran

Partner at Genea Family Office



*'Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths to Excellence' speaks deeply to me because it mirrors the journey I've lived across consulting, wealth management, and family business advisory. True leadership is no longer about titles or hierarchy; it is about vision, stewardship, courage, and the ability to create structures that outlive us. In my work with entrepreneurs, executives, and business families, I have seen that leadership fails when it is self-serving — and thrives when it is rooted in purpose, integrity, and impact.*

*That is why the panel I'm moderating,*

*'Empowered for Excellence: I Am Driving Change', is so important. It reflects my core belief that every woman carries the capacity to shift systems, build enterprises, and influence generations when she steps into her power with clarity and intention. Excellence is not an event; it is a culture. And empowerment is not what we receive — it is what we decide to embrace.*

*My expectation for this conference is that it will spark honest, transformative conversations that challenge outdated mindsets and elevate a new generation of African*

*women leaders. I hope our discussions move beyond inspiration into practical frameworks that help women lead boldly, manage wealth wisely, build sustainable institutions, and contribute meaningfully to nation-building.*

*If we get this right, Nigeria will benefit from stronger businesses, more ethical leadership, and women who are confident architects of the future. This is the kind of leadership I stand for — and the future I am committed to shaping.*



**HER POINT OF VIEW**

# Why I Took My Breast Pump to London

**Chinyere Okorocha**


It's funny now, but at the time it was anything but. There I was, striding through Heathrow Airport in my suit and heels, carrying

my handbag, laptop bag — and a rather conspicuous breast pump. No, it wasn't a fashion statement. It was survival.

I had been invited to London for an important client meeting. The kind that could open doors, strengthen

relationships, and maybe even redefine my career path. There was just one complication: I had a four-month-old baby at home.

Most people thought I was crazy to accept. "You just had a baby," they said. "London will wait." But I knew it wouldn't. Not

because I was desperate to prove anything, but because saying yes meant something more profound ... it meant honouring both sides of who I was becoming: the mother and the professional.

So I packed my baby's photo beside my business suits, tucked my breast pump



carefully into my luggage, and boarded the plane. I remember the security officer's face when he pulled it out of my bag. "What's this?" he asked. I smiled. "My secret weapon," I said.

Between meetings and late-night calls, I lived by a new kind of schedule. I'd find myself sitting in my hotel bathroom, the steady hum of the machine filling the air, while I rehearsed presentations in my head. It was chaotic, unglamorous, and incredibly grounding.

There was one moment that still stands out. I was standing in front of the mirror, dressed sharply for a meeting, when I caught sight of myself reflection in the morrow, and almost broke down...

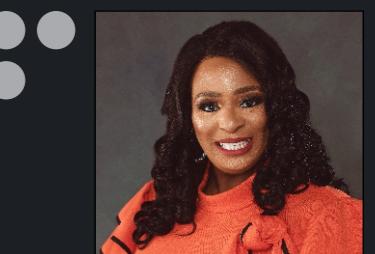
I realised that the breast pump represented more than determination; it represented possibility. Proof that I didn't have to choose. That I could be both ambitious and nurturing, strategic and soft, professional, and deeply human.

When the trip ended, I once again looked at that breast pump sitting quietly in my suitcase and smiled. It had become my companion, my reminder, my symbol of balance.

That trip changed me. It taught me that balance isn't perfection, it's harmony. It's doing your best in the moment you're in, even when the world expects you to pick a side.

Every woman has her own version of that "breast pump moment." It might be deciding to go back to school after forty, launching a business while raising children, or stepping into leadership when it feels safer to stay small. These moments test us, stretch us, and ultimately shape us.

So yes, I took my breast pump to London and yes I'd do it again. Because it wasn't just about milk. It was about meaning. About reminding myself and hopefully, every woman reading this that we are capable of carrying all the things that matter, even when our hands feel full.



## Chinyere Okorocha

Partner in the Law Firm of JACKSON, ETTI & EDU

With over three decades of experience as a trailblazer in the legal profession, Chinyere Okorocha has established herself as a leading voice in law, leadership, and career growth for women. As a partner in one of the most prestigious law firms in the country, she has not only navigated the complexities of a competitive industry but has consistently broken barriers to become a sought-after leader, mentor, and advocate for women in the workplace.

Chinyere's career journey is a testament to her resilience, vision, and versatility. She has held numerous leadership positions, served as a director on multiple boards, and is widely admired for her strategic thinking and ability to inspire teams toward excellence. Beyond her professional accomplishments, she has also graced stages as a speaker, sharing insights on leadership, career growth, and the unique challenges women face in their professional lives.

A devoted wife and proud mother of three, Chinyere understands firsthand the challenges of balancing the demands of a thriving career with a fulfilling personal life. Through her own experiences, she has mastered the art of work-life integration, demonstrating that women can achieve extraordinary professional success without sacrificing the joys of family and personal well-being.

Her career development platform, Heels & Ladders, is dedicated to mentoring and guiding women who aspire to redefine success, achieve career mastery, and lead with purpose. Whether you're navigating leadership challenges, striving for balance, or looking to amplify your influence, Chinyere's expertise will help you transform ambition into achievement.


**WOMAN EXECUTIVE**

## The Invisible Boardroom: Why Influence Beyond Title Matters

**By Wola Joseph-Condotti**

In every organisation, there are two boardrooms.

The visible one: with the formal agendas, rotating chairs, and documented minutes. And the invisible one: where decisions are influenced long before they are voted on. Where reputations speak before resumes. Where who you are often matters more than what you say.

As women climb the leadership ladder, we are taught to pursue titles, attain qualifications, and prove we deserve a seat. And yes,

those are important. But over the years, I have learned that the most transformative leadership does not always wear a title, it builds influence.

► **Influence Is Often Silent but Supreme**  
Some of the most powerful decisions are made before the boardroom doors ever open. Over dinner tables. In strategic WhatsApp chats. In the whispered "Who do you trust?" moments behind closed doors. And in these invisible spaces, it is not your title that speaks first. It is your credibility. Your consistency. Your

character. Influence is not bestowed. It is built. And often, it is built when no one is watching.

► **Why Soft Power Is the New Executive Muscle**

The most effective leaders understand the power of soft capital. The ability to move outcomes through trust, alignment, intuition, and relational insight. They understand how to shape culture not just through policies, but through presence. In a world where knowledge is everywhere, and hierarchy is flattening,

people follow leaders who are: Emotionally intelligent, Quietly strategic, Culturally aware, Spiritually grounded. This is especially important for women. Many of us have led initiatives without titles, commanded respect without fanfare, and stabilised teams simply by being trustworthy. That is not weakness. That is relational governance in action.

► **Network Capital > Nameplates**

I often say: Your real boardroom is the room where your name is spoken in your absence. Reputational capital is not built

overnight. It is deposited over time through how you show up, how you handle loss, how you empower others, and how you handle power when it is yours.

Too many women wait until they are "in position" to speak. But your position is not your permission. You do not need to be the chair to influence a direction. You just need to be present, prepared, and principled.

**Cultural Fluency Matters**

Leadership is not just about KPIs. It is about reading the room, understanding the unspoken codes, and knowing when to speak and when to seed.

This is the difference between a smart leader and a wise one. Smart leaders bring answers. Wise leaders bring timing, tone, and trust.

We must teach younger leaders that leadership is as much about relational dexterity as it is about domain expertise.

► **Esther Was Queen, but Influence Preceded Her Crown**

Esther did not change a nation because of her crown. Her influence began before she had formal authority. It was in her preparation, her character, her restraint, and her discernment. She understood access was a stewardship. She did not wield it loudly. She wielded it strategically.

And through her courage and timing, a nation was saved.

That is the power of influence. It transforms outcomes without announcing itself.

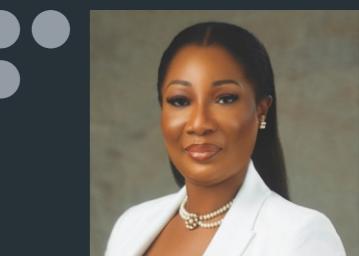
**Final Thoughts**

Titles open doors, but influence builds rooms. Every woman in leadership must begin to value her invisible leadership muscles as much as her visible ones. So ask yourself:

How do people experience me when I am not "on"?

Who trusts me when I am not in the room?

What decisions am I shaping through presence, not pressure? Because long after the title fades, it is your influence that remains.



**Wola  
Joseph Condotti**

Group MD/CEO of West Power & Gas Limited

Wola is the Group MD/CEO of West Power & Gas Limited, the parent company of Eko Electricity Distribution PLC (EKEDP) and six other affiliate companies with interests in both conventional and renewable energy sectors. In addition to this role, she serves as the Director of the Power and Renewable Division at the Women in Energy Network (WIEN) in a non-executive capacity.

Prior to her current role, Wola was the pioneer Chief, Legal & Company Secretariat at EKEDP. During her tenure, she also held multiple key positions simultaneously including Head of Regulatory Compliance, Chief Human Resources and Administration Officer, Supervising Chief of the Customer Service Department, and Data Protection Officer. Her previous experience includes roles as General Counsel/Company Secretariat Lagoon Home Savings and Loans, and Legal Associate at Banwo & Ighodalo.

Wola holds a law degree from the University of Ibadan, an LLM in International Finance Law from Harvard Law School, and an MBA from INSEAD Business School. She is also an International Finance Corporation (World Bank) Board Evaluation Certified Professional and Corporate Governance Trainer.

Wola's achievements have earned widespread recognition. Most recently, she received the inaugural Leadership Excellence Award of the Year at the Legal Era Africa Awards 2024, becoming the first-ever recipient of this category. The award celebrated her historic transition from General Counsel to Group MD/CEO, a milestone applauded for redefining leadership pathways in the legal profession.

She is a member of the Institute of Directors and the Society for Corporate Governance Nigeria. Additionally, she is an associate member of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria, and Women in Management, Business, and Public Service.

## Start Before the New Year: Small Steps That Create Big Results

By Sola Adesakin



Edition 17, 9th December, 2025

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December carries a special kind of energy. As the year winds down, reflection rises, and so does the quiet pressure to reinvent ourselves in January. But year after year, we've seen how that story often goes: the motivation is high, the resolutions are bold, and by mid-February, many of them are forgotten.

The truth is simple: transformation doesn't begin with the calendar; it begins with a decision.

This December, skip the vague resolutions. Don't wait for fireworks before you take your first step. Instead, choose one or two clear goals and start easing into them now. Not with dramatic leaps, but with quiet, consistent baby steps that gently shift your life in the right direction. Because when it comes to growth, small moves create big results.

Here are five simple habits you can begin today: habits that require no dramatic lifestyle overhaul, just steady intention:

### 1. Read for one hour a day

The fastest way to reshape your mindset is to reshape your intake. One hour of reading daily, whether it's personal finance, leadership, personal development, or industry-related topics compounds in ways your future self will thank you for. By the end of a year, that's over 300 hours of wisdom, insights, and clarity poured into your life. Imagine how different your decisions would be with that level of knowledge.

### 2. Review your finances weekly

You can't improve what you don't monitor. A 20-minute financial check-in every week helps you understand your spending patterns, track your obligations, plan ahead, and cut waste before it grows into a bigger

problem. Think of this as a weekly meeting with your money — a simple ritual that increases your control and reduces anxiety.

### 3. Take one online course

You don't need to scramble for a brand-new version of yourself on January 1st. One online course, just one, taken in December is enough to spark momentum. Choose a course in an area you want to expand: career skills, entrepreneurship, investing, personal development, or even a new hobby. Growth is not about speed; it's about direction.

### 4. Walk for one hour

A walking habit is one of the simplest ways to boost your mental clarity, physical energy, and emotional resilience. No gym membership, no equipment, just movement. Walking helps you reset your mind, reduces stress, and boosts creativity. It's often during long walks that new ideas take shape and old problems find solutions.

### 5. Start planning for 2026

Most people wait until January to start drafting goals, and by then, they're already overwhelmed with busyness and obligations. December is quieter, clearer, and gentler. It gives you space to reflect on what worked, what didn't, and what needs to change. Start from your desired outcomes for 2026; the life you want to live, the money you want to earn, the relationships you want to nurture, then work backward into simple action steps.

This time of year naturally invites reflection, but it also offers the unique advantage of early momentum. Beginning now gives you a head start, mentally, emotionally, and financially. It positions you to enter 2026 with clarity rather than confusion, direction rather than pressure, and confidence rather than chaos.

You don't need a new year to become a better version of yourself. You only need a decision, followed by a small, consistent step.

Start now. Start small. Start where you are. Because your best year won't happen by accident, it will happen by intention.



### By Sola Adesakin

Founder and Lead Coach,  
Smart Stewards

Sola Adesakin is a highly respected wealth coach and chartered accountant with over two decades of transformative impact in the finance industry. As the visionary founder of Smart Stewards Financial Advisory Limited and Smart Stewards Advisory LLC, she has revolutionized the financial wellbeing of countless individuals and businesses across 40 countries. Her methodical approach to 'make-manage-multiply' money principles has elevated many from financial stress to prosperity, and mediocrity to exceptional achievement.

Sola is a strong supporter of SDG5 and SDG10, as she seeks to close the gender gap and reduce inequality through financial education, financial technology, and access to funding. Sola's dedication to achieving gender equality and reducing inequality is evident in her work as an alumna of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs, an initiative of the US Embassy in Nigeria, and the Cherie Blair Foundation's Road to Growth Program. She is also an alumna of Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women program and a member of the Select Global Women in Tech (SGWIT) Mentorship Network of the United States of America. Through the FRUIT Foundation, which she serves as Founder and CEO, she has partnered with the US consulate in Nigeria to champion the economic empowerment of women, assisting them to start and scale their business ventures.

Her impressive academic credentials include a BSc and an MBA degree from Oxford Brookes University and Edinburgh Business School, respectively. She is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants of the United Kingdom (ACCA), and a member of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA). In addition to her impressive credentials, Sola Adesakin is also a Certified Financial Education Instructor™ and a member of the Personal Finance Speakers Association.


**WOMAN AT THE HELM**

## Dr. Odiri Oginni, CFA, DBA

CEO - United Capital Asset Management Ltd

**D**r. Odiri Oginni is a corporate executive, investment professional, and thought leader with over 19 years of experience in financial services, specializing in investment management, financial advisory, and business strategy.

She is the CEO of United Capital Asset Management Limited, overseeing 1 trillion+ in assets under management and driving market leadership in Nigeria's investment landscape.

Previously, Odiri served as Group CFO at United Capital Plc, where she led financial strategy and operational excellence for a publicly listed financial services group. Her career also includes leadership roles as CFO of a boutique investment bank and as an auditor at Deloitte, where she conducted audit engagements

for leading financial institutions.

A recognised voice in the finance industry, Odiri is a Forbes Finance Council member, regularly publishing insights on investment behaviour, financial decision-making, and closing the gender investment gap. She serves on the Executive & Governing Council of the Lagos Business School Alumni Association and is the Vice President of the CFA Society Nigeria. She also contributes to the NGX Product Advisory Committee, shaping the evolution of equity markets and financial products.

Her contributions have earned her multiple recognitions, including being named among the Top 100 Leading Ladies Africa – Women in Finance Edition (2025), Top 100 Career Women in Nigeria (2021), and Top 50 Women in Management Africa (2022). Under her leadership, United Capital

Asset Management was recognised as one of the fastest growing investment firm by IFC and an Innovative Fund Manager by Banks & Other Financial Institutions (BOFI).

Odiri holds a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) from Lagos Business School, an MBA from Strayer University, and a First-Class degree in Accounting from Babcock University. She is also a CFA Charterholder and a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (FCA).

Beyond her corporate leadership, Odiri is passionate about mentoring female finance professionals and empowering women to make informed investment and career decisions. Through research, writing, and advocacy, she is committed to advancing financial literacy and inclusion, ensuring more women confidently navigate the world of investing.



WE'VE GOT MEN

## Victor Okoronkwo

GMD/CEO, Aiteo Eastern Exploration &amp; Production Company Ltd

Victor Okoronkwo was appointed to deliver transformative leadership to lead the company's growth agenda in Nigeria and beyond, repositioning the organisation as the leading indigenous oil-producing company in Nigeria, lifting production levels and reducing asset downtime.

Investing in stakeholder relations and disciplined commercial growth, he has implemented a new enterprise-wide strategic direction to ensure the effective management of multiple commercial partners, substantially increasing the total JV production outputs contribution to the nation's crude production. Today, He continues to provide leadership to a team of over 500 direct and indirect workforce spanning technical, operations and commercial

disciplines, engaging with over 100 host communities, multiple regulators and managing relations with joint venture partners and consortium of lenders as well as multiple service providers.

With more than two decades of experience as a senior executive in the international oil & gas industry, Victor's mission is to translate tomorrow's potential into today's value.

Building a career in leadership from a technical foundation, he benefits from long standing hands-on experience across the oil & gas value chain (downstream and upstream) and power, and across all aspects of organisational leadership, including business development, commercial management, operations management, transformation, and advocacy.

Victor is a leader who values strategic vision and thrives on innovation, building the breadth and depth of capability needed to ensure consistent sustainable results delivery.

Over the years, he has demonstrated the ability to harness complex, interdependent networks and drive rapid change in an environment that is highly regulated and constantly evolving. He is a skilled relationship builder who collaborates with senior stakeholders and opinion leaders to overcome challenges, focusing on business evolution while engineering efficiency and productivity at all levels of business. He is an active protagonist in the energy transition and specifically, in establishing Nigeria as a major player in the global energy market.

**HOLISTIC LIVING**

# Unplug to Reconnect: Finding Peace and Presence in a Hyperconnected World

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri

**O**ur lives now orbit around glowing screens. The day begins with a notification and ends with a scroll. Phones are our alarm clocks, our entertainment, our companions and sometimes, our captors. We're constantly connected yet increasingly disconnected from ourselves.

Technology has given us convenience, but at a cost, our calm. We move through the day overstimulated and under-centered, our minds buzzing with alerts, our focus fractured into fragments. We are "on" all the time, yet rarely present.

A digital detox isn't about abandoning technology; it's about reclaiming control. It's a gentle rebellion, a conscious act of saying, "My peace matters more than my pings."

Our attention has become the new currency. Every notification, ad, and algorithm are designed to compete for it. The more distracted we become, the more profitable the system grows. But while they collect our clicks, we lose something far greater, our clarity, our creativity, our calm.

When was the last time you sat in silence without reaching for your phone? When did you last watch a sunset without the urge to capture it? Many of us have forgotten the simple art of being.

**Boundaries: The Modern Form of Self-Respect**  
Creating boundaries around technology



isn't deprivation — it's self-respect in digital form.

Start by protecting sacred spaces: your bedroom, your dinner table, your morning routine. Make them "no-screen zones." Let your eyes rest on faces instead of feeds. Replace late-night scrolling with something nourishing — journaling, prayer, or simply closing your eyes in gratitude. At meals, keep your phone away. Taste your food, listen to your company, let conversation flow without

interruption. Connection feels different when no one is half-present behind a screen.

## The Power of the Pause

We don't realize how often we reach for our phones out of habit, not need. Try this: before unlocking your device, pause and ask yourself — "What am I looking for?" That moment of awareness can be transformative. Sometimes, what we're craving isn't information — it's comfort. But no

amount of scrolling can soothe the ache for real connection or rest.

## Let Your Devices Serve You — Not the Other Way Around

Not all screen time is bad. The key is intentionality. Ask yourself: does this app drain me or develop me? Replace endless scrolling with meaningful engagement, a language lesson, an audiobook, a guided meditation. Use digital tools that help you grow instead of those that keep you glued.

Technology should be a servant, not a master.

## The Art of Rest, Play, and Real Connection

**Rest:** True rest isn't found in sleep alone — it's found in stillness. When we swap late-night browsing for meditation or reflection, we give our minds a chance to exhale. Rest means stepping away from constant input to hear your own thoughts again.

**Play:** Somewhere along the way, adults forgot how to play. We confuse entertainment with joy. Play isn't passive — it's active, freeing, and creative. It could be dancing in your living room, cooking something new, or walking barefoot in the grass. Play revives the parts of your screens can't reach.

**Connection:** Social media gives us likes but not belonging. Real connection happens eye-to-eye, not emoji-to-emoji. It's found in shared laughter, unfiltered conversation, or sitting in silence with someone who understands you.

## The Small Rituals That Make a Big Difference

**1. Try the 20-20-20 rule:** Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. It's a micro-reset for your mind and eyes.

**2. Take digital Sabbaths:** One evening a week without screens. Let your senses wake up again: the sound of real laughter, the feel of paper, the smell of rain.

**3. Turn off notifications that don't serve you.** The fewer interruptions, the more intentional your days become.

**4. Rekindle offline joy:** Read physical books, garden, draw, play board games. Let boredom make you creative again.



**Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri**

Psychiatrist-In-Chief at Pinnacle Medical Services

Dr. MAYMUNAH YUSUF KADIRI (aka DR. MAY) popularly referred to as "The Celebrity Shrink," is a multiple award winning Mental Health Physician, Advocate & Coach. She is the convener of "The Mental Health Conference" and the Medical Director and Psychiatrist-In-Chief at Pinnacle Medical Services, Nigeria's leading and foremost Psychology and Mental health clinic prominent in the application of innovative clinical approaches in the management/treatment of a wide range of psychological, emotional, and behavioral related disorders.

Dr. Kadiri is a dynamic Consultant Neuro-Psychiatrist and a Fellow of the National Post Graduate Medical College of Nigeria (FMCPsych) with almost 20 years' experience as a practicing Physician. She is a trained and certified Rational Emotive and Cognitive Behavioural Therapist from Albert Ellis Institute, New York, USA. She is also a certified Trauma Counsellor and Neurofeedback Practitioner.

Dr. Kadiri has wide experience in psycho-therapeutic techniques and has perfected her skills whilst in private practice and whilst working for a variety of organizations. She is a recognized radio and television guest Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist. She also contributes to articles published in magazines and newspapers.

She is the only Nigerian with the 14Ps....Physician, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Practitioner (NLP, BFB, NFB), Public Speaker, Published Author, Producer (movies), Proficient Coach, Parent, Philanthropist, People oriented, Public Health Advocate and Passionate about God and life.

The founder of Pinnacle Health Radio, African's #1 online health radio and a non for profit organization, "Pinnacle Medicals SPEAKOUT Initiative" which is geared towards creating Mental Health literacy in Nigeria and beyond.

The Executive producer of award winning movies, Pepper soup (focused on drug abuse) and Little Drops of Happy (focused on depression, postpartum depression and suicide) and creator of the most innovative mental health app in Africa, HOW BODI.


**TRIBE WITH THE VIBES**

# Jacinda Ardern: A Case for Women's Visibility

By Zainab Aderounmu

**I**magine lighting a candle and then placing it beneath a black table. The room remains dark, not because the light doesn't exist, but because it's been hidden. That is what happens when a woman who holds a leadership role chooses to remain unseen and unknown.

In today's male-dominated workplaces, it can feel easier for a woman to stay in the background. Her ideas are often talked over, her contributions overlooked, and any woman who dares to be visible is often labelled as "too ambitious." Yet the cost of staying invisible is far greater than the discomfort of being labelled ambitious. Visibility isn't just personal, it shapes possibilities for every woman who comes after. Imagine if leaders like Jacinda Ardern and Michelle Obama chose not to tell their stories, leaving the world to fill the silence with assumptions. Their voices shaped narratives that would have otherwise been defined by others.

Take Jacinda, for instance. She refused to let public commentary overshadow

her own account of her time as Prime Minister. The documentary Prime Minister offers a fuller picture. It chronicles who she was before stepping into office, the moments leading up to her accepting the role, her campaign journey, and the realities of leadership along the way.

During her tenure, she was called many unflattering names and mischaracterized in ways that could easily have become the dominant story if she had stayed silent. By owning her narrative, she not only countered those misconceptions but also created a powerful blueprint for other women. She provided an example of what a high-achieving woman in leadership looks like, something that's still far too rare in society.

#### **Breaking the Jinx**

How can you move from unseen to visible without compromising your values? The first step is to define what visibility means to you and what you want it to achieve. For Jacinda, visibility meant preserving her story as Prime Minister in her own words, rather than allowing a distorted public narrative to take its place. That should be the

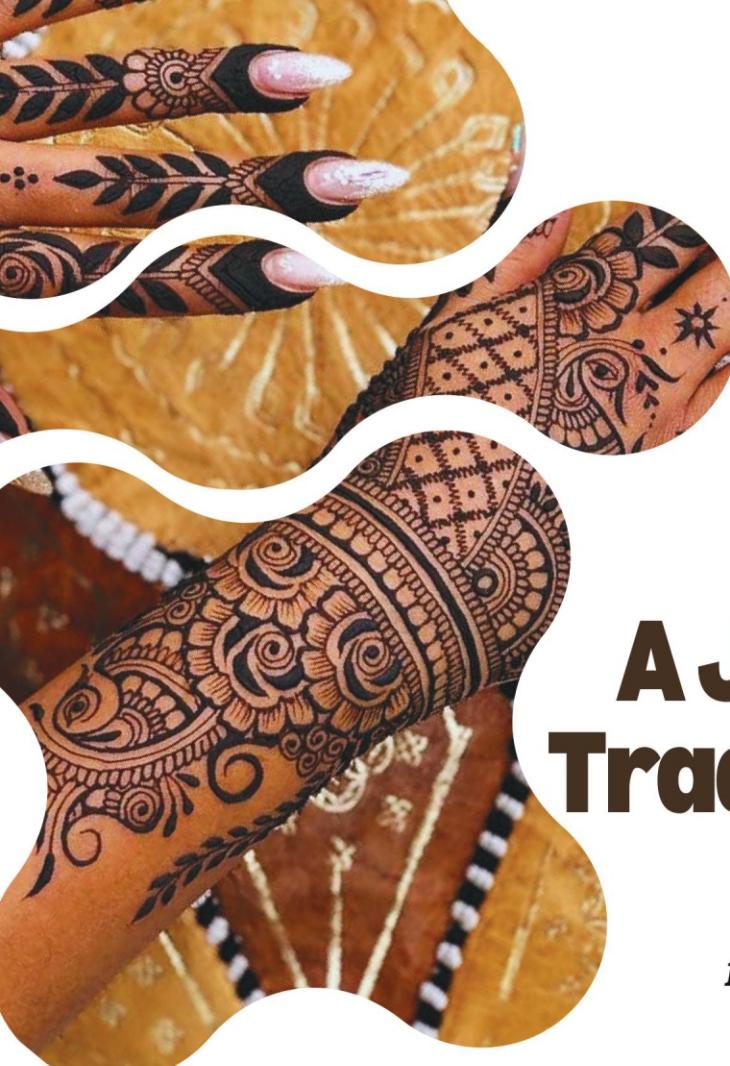

**Zainab Aderounmu**

Zainab Aderounmu A. W. is a First Class graduate of English Language and the Overall Best Graduating Student from the Lagos State University, Lagos Nigeria. She's a professional Master of Ceremonies, known as The Hijabi Compere, a public speaking coach and Communications Professional. She is currently a Youth advisor to the European Union where she doubles as the Spokesperson and Head of Communications & PR for the Youth Sounding Board.

foundation for anyone seeking authentic visibility; if you don't tell your story, someone else will, and their version may be far from the truth.

Then, show up strategically and intentionally. It's about inspiring with your story rather than impressing. Show up intentionally, and document important moments. Jacinda knew her story would matter afterwards, so she intentionally granted interviews, recorded her thoughts during strategic moments in real time instead of trying to look back.

Finally, visibility is about authenticity and alignment, not perfection. Seeking professional support and delegating the operational work can make the process easier, just as Jacinda's husband recorded many of her behind-the-scenes moments. But ultimately, being intentional about capturing key experiences, documenting your growth, and weaving those pieces into a compelling personal narrative is what ensures your story is told accurately and powerfully. It's how you leave a record that reflects who you truly are, not who others assume you to be.



# A Journey Through Traditional Beauty & Flavor

**Inside Clay Food Shop & The Henna Place**

“Together, Clay Food Shop and The Henna Place offer more than services. They offer belonging. A place where tradition is not just preserved, but honored, elevated, and shared”

## Clayfoodshop

Clay Food Shop is more than just a restaurant, it's a cultural experience. Known for its traditional elegance and modern interpretations of Northern Nigerian cuisine, Clay is a destination for food lovers who seek authenticity in every bite.

From their signature ram suya to rich native sauces, tigernut juice, and wholesome masa, every meal evokes the comfort of tradition.

 [@clayfoodshoplagos](https://www.instagram.com/clayfoodshoplagos)  
: +234909 554 4990

## The Henna Place

Established in 2014, The Henna Place is Nigeria's leading traditional spa, bringing centuries old Moroccan, Northern Nigeria and Arab beauty rituals into the general wellness market. Specializing in Moroccan hammam treatments, sugar waxing, herbal hair care, and intricate henna designs, the spa provides a deeply relaxing and culturally rich self care experience.

With multiple branches across Nigeria, including three branches in lagos, The Henna Place has become a go-to destination for brides, beauty lovers, and women seeking intentional, soul-restoring care from head to toe, it's a place to cleanse, unwind, and reconnect with yourself the traditional way.

 [@Thehennaplace](https://www.instagram.com/thehennaplace)  
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