

iwa

**INSPIRING
WOMAN
AFRICA**

EDITION 29, 10TH MARCH 2026



IWD 2026

**CELEBRATING 50 INSPIRING
AFRICAN WOMEN**



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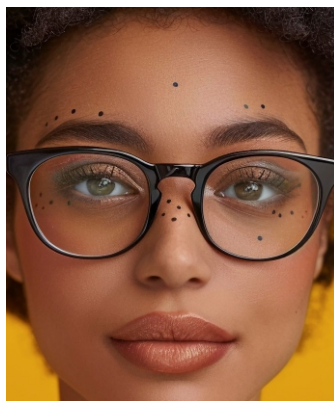
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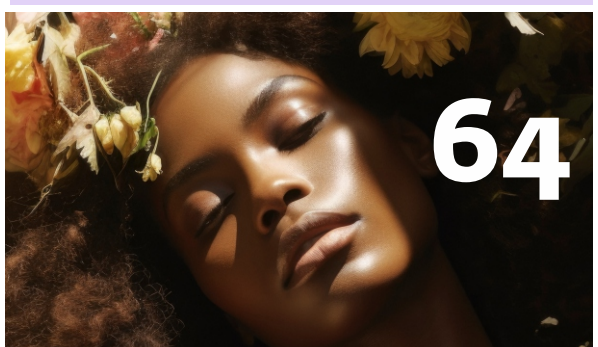
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HER POINT OF VIEW
Visibility in the Workplace:
One of the Fastest Routes
for Career Growth





**Kemi
Ajumobi**

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief, IWA Magazine
Founder/Group CEO, IWA Group
www.theiwagroup.com
✉ contact@theiwagroup.com

Welcome!

Dear Readers,

Happy International Women's Month! I love the theme for 2026 "Give to Gain." This clearly means that when you invest in girls and women, it is for the benefit on the world economically, mentally and socially. This theme also encourages fairness, a better world ensuring every barrier against women is removed.

There is a lot of awareness on this around the world and the impact is evident in the numbers. For instance, in Nigeria, we have more women leading financial institutions than we have ever had before. Women are being given opportunities to lead in different capacities and most of them are key positions. It is getting clearer that if given the opportunity, they will lead efficiently. We aren't completely there in terms of the numbers but the truth is, it has improved and it can only get better.

Here is wishing women a beautiful celebration this month, trusting that our impact shall reach beyond where we are into other areas of leadership and positive influence as we make the world a better place.

We are therefore celebrating 50 Inspiring Women in Africa, shining their light and contributing their quota to local and international development. We trust that their story and journey will inspire us all to dare to dream, and rise to soar!

Here are other articles in this edition:

FINANCIAL ADVISEHER: Financial Literacy Is Not a Punishment. By Sola Adesakin.

HER POINT OF VIEW: Visibility in the Workplace: One of the Fastest Routes for Career Growth. By Chinyere Okorocho.

GENDER INSIGHT: Commemorating International Women's Day 2026. Theme: Give To Gain. By Asmau Benzies-Leo.

HOLISTIC LIVING: Rights, Justice, Action, but also: Restoration, Regulation and Renewal. By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri.

TRIBE WITH THE VIBES: Women now dream different dreams. By Zainab Aderounmu.

WE'VE GOT MEN: Strive Masiyiwa, Founder and Executive Chairman, Cassava Technologies.

Once again, Happy International Women's Month!

Celebrate a woman today, celebrate a woman this month, celebrate a woman always!

Take care!



H.E MADAM SAHLE-WORK ZEWDE

FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT
OF ETHIOPIA



H

.E Madam Sahle-Work Zewde, the first woman to hold the office of the President of Ethiopia. She

served as President from 2018 to 2024. Born in Addis Ababa in 1950, she studied natural science in France before starting her career as a public relations officer at the Ministry of Education.

In 1989, she became the second woman to be appointed as an Ethiopian ambassador, serving in Senegal and five neighboring countries. She later served as Ambassador to Djibouti (1993-2002), Ambassador to France, and Permanent Representative to UNESCO./ 2002-2006. She was also Ethiopia's Permanent Representative to the African Union.

Her extensive United Nations career started in 2009 as the first African woman Special Representative of the Secretary-General-SRSG at the UN peace-building office in the Central African Republic in 2009.

She was appointed Under-Secretary-General and first Director-General of the UN Office at Nairobi in 2011. During that time, she served as mediator in the political crisis in Malawi. She was appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to the African Union. She is fluent in Amharic, French and English.



IBUKUN AWOSIKA

FOUNDER/ CEO,
THE CHAIR CENTRE GROUP,
FIRST FEMALE CHAIRMAN
OF FIRST BANK



Ibukun Awosika is a Nigerian business woman, motivational speaker, and an author. A woman filled with depth

that mere words cannot describe. She just always makes sense...consistently for that matter.

Her presence speaks even before she opens her mouth. Indeed, she is a clear definition of an accomplished career woman and an outstanding transformational leader. Ibukun Awosika gracefully stands tall as a light of optimism and intentional impact, positively challenging norms, influencing ethos, aligning minds and nations to purpose. Her multidimensional life and stanch devotion to positive impact always leaves an ineffaceable mark wherever she goes.

A graduate of Chemistry from the University of Ife, Nigeria; She is an alumna of the Chief Executive Programme of Lagos Business School; the Global Executive MBA of IESE Business School, Barcelona-Spain; and Global CEO Programme of Wharton, IESE and C.E.I.B.S Business Schools. She is Founder/ CEO, The Chair Centre Group, Chairman D.light design INC, Digital Jewels LTD, Non-Executive Director, Cadbury Nigeria Plc., and author of The "Girl"



Entrepreneurs and Business His Way. She is a member of several distinguished corporate boards and was the first female Chairperson of First Bank Of Nigeria. Now, that is how you shatter the proverbial "glass ceiling."

Ibukun is a co-founder and past chairperson of Women in Business, Management, and Public Service (WIMBIZ). She wears her faith on her sleeves and never ceases to declare her truth about God wherever she goes. An

ordained Pastor and founder of the Christian Missionary Fund, Ibukun, through this faith-based organisation, works with hundreds of missionaries spread across Nigeria to change lives through the provision of medical, educational, and other supplies.

She is the Founder of The International Woman Leadership Conference (TIWLC), an initiative of that brings women across Africa and the diaspora together in a place of knowledge, empowerment, and entertainment.



**H.E. CHIEF
DR. JEWEL
HOWARD-TAYLOR**

**FORMER VICE PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
& FORMER PRESIDENT
OF THE LIBERIAN SENATE**

H

.E. Chief Dr. Jewel Howard-Taylor is an accomplished public service professional

with over 27 years of impactful leadership across both the public and private sectors, who holds a diverse skill set encompassing public service leadership, law, governance, strategic decision-making and international

negotiations, peace and security, humanitarian and social affairs.

An experienced public sector manager, trained diplomat and lawyer, proficient in conflict resolution, peace building, gender development and empowerment, humanitarian and social affairs and strategic treaty negotiations. She is recognised for exceptional communication skills, motivational leadership, mentorship and commitment to gender development, advocacy and Pan-Africanism. With a high proficiency in written communications, as well as intercultural group dynamics.

Driven by a relentless commitment to issues of global development, peace, security, gender, development and transformative leadership, Cllr. Jewel Howard-Taylor's career embodies a

passionate dedication to fostering positive change on both national and international platforms, advocating for inclusive policies and championing gender equality, peaceful coexistence, human rights, and economic empowerment.

She was the former Vice President of the Republic of Liberia and Former President of the Liberian Senate from January 2018-January 2024. Key role as deputy to the President; the President of the Liberian Senate, was ensuring legislative passage of laws and policies essential for guiding the implementation of government's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, focusing on poverty eradication, gender equality, SDGs, women's political and economic empowerment, youth development and healthcare.



DR. MONIQUE NSANZABAGANWA

FORMER DEPUTY CHAIR OF
THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION



R. MONIQUE
NSANZABAGA
NWA has 25+
years of
experience in
strategic
leadership.

Former Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, she implemented an institutional and financial reform and led the strategic planning of the Second Implementation Decade of Agenda 2063- the Decade of Acceleration. Twice in Cabinet of Rwanda, as State Minister for Economic Planning and as Minister of Trade and Industry, then Central Bank Deputy Governor, she significantly contributed to economic transformation in her country.

She is a seasoned financial and economic development expert, with track record of leadership of innovation in promoting intra-African trade and investments. Champion of women, youth, and SMEs participation in value and supply chains and in digital economy as a means to accelerating inclusive growth and shared prosperity, she is intentional in framing accountability and transparency around interventions, as exemplified by her initiative “Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion – WYFEI 2030”. She is adept in fostering strategic partnerships,



driving sustainable growth, and implementing effective financial solutions.

Her book, SEED, a legacy to the African Union and an inspiration to the youth, buttresses her thought leadership and commitment to advancing a better world, in which Africa is a powerhouse of solutions, in line with geostrategic mutations and acceleration of Africa's Agenda 2063 & SDGs with tangible achievements on the ground. As G20 Africa Expert

Panel Member, she continues to use global platforms to advocate for unlocking Africa's potential through strategic partnerships on value chains.

Dr. Monique holds a MA and PhD in Economics from Stellenbosch University, South Africa, which also recognised her academically sound policy work and inclusive approaches with an Honorary Doctor of Commerce. Wife and Mother of two sons and one daughter, she is fluent in English and French.



H.E IMAAN SULAIMAN-IBRAHIM FSI

HON. MINISTER OF WOMEN AFFAIRS AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, NIGERIA



Serving as Special Adviser on Strategic Communication and Partnerships to the Minister of State for Education in 2020, she championed the Alternate School Programme, which earned the commendation of the highest policy decision making body in Nigeria – the Federal Executive Council, and continues to be a strategic initiative for reducing the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. In December 2020, Hon Imaan's exceptional leadership was recognised as she assumed the role of Director-General of The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP).

In recognition of her reform expertise, and commitment to national security and stability, she was appointed in August 2023, as a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to the Ministry of Police Affairs (State), making her the First Female Minister of Police Affairs.

As the Minister of Women Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, she is working tirelessly to create a future where every woman, child, and marginalised person in Nigeria can thrive with purpose, equality, and opportunity.

H.E Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim fsi is an international expert and thought leader in security, conflict resolution, humanitarian and disaster management, development and migration governance. She is driven by a passion to tackle critical and legacy issues impacting women, children, and vulnerable populations,

and has dedicated her career to promoting inclusive development, stability, and social equity. Between 2019 and 2023, she served as a member of the Nasarawa State Investment and Economic Advisory Council, where she showcased her policy acumen and strategic insight, contributing significantly to the state's development agenda while supporting efforts that delivered over \$1 billion in investments.



DR NGOZI OKONJO-IWEALA

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE
WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION
(WTO)



r. Ngozi's voice is respected, convincing and powerful, a tune that resonates with authority and compassion.

As the Managing Director of the World Bank, she had oversight responsibility for the World Bank's \$81 billion operational portfolio in Africa, South Asia, Europe and Central Asia.

We speak of her at the global level, but like they say, charity begins at home and home is where Dr. Ngozi also proved her mettle. Dr Okonjo-Iweala twice served as Nigeria's Finance Minister (2003-2006 and 2011-2015) where she spearheaded negotiations with the Paris Club of Creditors that



led to the wiping out of \$30 billion of Nigeria's debt, including the outright cancellation of \$18 billion.

Furthermore, she briefly acted as Foreign Minister in 2006, the first woman to hold both positions mentioned.

Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is the seventh Director-General of the WTO, the first woman and the first African to serve as Director-General. Her first term of office was from 1 March 2021 to 31 August 2025, and was reappointed as

Director-General on 29 November 2024. She commenced her second four-year term on 1 September 2025.

Dr Okonjo-Iweala is a recipient of numerous outstanding awards, she graduated magna cum laude in Economics from Harvard University and earned a Ph.D in Regional Economics and Development from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is married to neurosurgeon Dr Ikemba Iweala, and they have four children and beautiful grandchildren.



BEATRICE EYONG

UN WOMEN COUNTRY
REPRESENTATIVE TO NIGERIA



Beatrice Eyong, a Cameroonian national, is the UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria. She

has over 35 years professional working experience in promoting gender

equality and Women's Empowerment. Prior to her current appointment, she was the Resident Representative of UN Women, Mali (office with the biggest UN Women's portfolio in West and Central Africa); Head of UNWOMEN Office in Niger; and she established the Eastern DRC Office in Bukavu. Beatrice has also worked with the Canadian Cooperation Support Office in Cameroon, as a Gender Specialist/Adviser and with UNDP as an agronomist working with the Africa 2000 Network, a UNDP micro-programme in Cameroon. She holds a Master of Science degree in

Agricultural Extension from the University of Reading, United Kingdom; a Diploma in Women, Extension workers and Agriculture from the Larenstein International Agricultural college – Deventer, the Netherlands; and a Diploma in Integrated Rural Development, from the Pan African Institute for Development West Africa, Buea – Cameroon.

**DR.
OLUWAYEMISI
OLORUNSHOLA**
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF
DIRECTORS, WEMA BANK



r. Oluwayemisi Olorunshola is an experienced Supply Chain professional and a business associate with

over 15 years' experience in a multinational organisation and over 10 years as a business manager, She possesses a B.Sc. Education degree in Education & Economics from the prestigious Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, a Master of Business Administration degree from University of Liverpool, UK, and a Doctorate degree in Business Administration from Walden University, USA. She is a well trained professional in various aspects of business management and her work experience spans every aspect of the supply chain including Business & Production Planning procurement, Distribution, Import & Export, and Logistics Services, She is a lover of education. Her widely read publication on small business sustainability strategies was published in the journal of Functional Education FEAcademia), Proquest. com, and Academia.edu, has been referenced by many scholars.

Dr. Olorunshola is a fellow of the International Institute for African Scholars and a chartered member of the Nigerian Chartered Institute of Personnel Management. An ardent believer in community development and in pursuant of this interest, she is a volunteer in many civic activities where she has contributed greatly to the development of her community and other areas of influence.

She joined the Board of Wema Bank Plc. in January 2022, and was recently made the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Bank Directors Association of Nigeria (BDAN).





H.E. JOSEFA LEONEL CORREIA SACKO

AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF ANGOLA



Ambassador Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko is an Angolan engineer and agronomist with 35 years of

experience in agriculture, rural development, environmental governance, and international cooperation. From 2017 to 2024, she served as African Union Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment. During her tenure, she played a crucial role in advancing continental policies on food security, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

Before her election as AU Commissioner, Ambassador Sacko held senior leadership roles in various intergovernmental and national institutions. From 2000 to 2013, she served as the Secretary-General of the Inter-African Coffee Organisation (IACO) in Abidjan, where she managed the coffee economy of 25 African producing countries and advocated for the empowerment of smallholder farmers.

During her tenure, she established Regional Centers of Excellence in Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda, Cameroon, and Zambia, improving African Coffee quality.

She later served as Special Advisor to the Minister of Environment of Angola and acted as Goodwill Ambassador for the negotiations of the Paris Agreement, participating in both COP21 (Paris, 2015) and COP22 (Marrakesh, 2016). Additionally, she



advised the Minister of Agriculture on food and nutrition security and poverty reduction issues and served as the Executive Director of the Fund to Support Agrarian Development (FADA) of Angola in 2016. Throughout her career, she has collaborated with major regional and international institutions, including the African Union (AU), World Trade Organisation (WTO), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), African Development Bank (AfDB), African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), International Coffee Organization (ICO), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

(UNECA), and AUDA-NEPAD.

Ambassador Sacko earned a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science, specialising in Agronomy, with distinction from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University Nigeria), in 1982, and afterwards she worked in an Angolan cooperative of agriculture production. She also holds postgraduate diplomas in Project Management, International Trade, International Relations, and Peace Keeping (Kofi Annan Institute), as well as a Master's degree in General Management from the British Institute for Management.



DR. JUMOKE ODUWOLE MFR

HON. MINISTER, FEDERAL
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, TRADE
AND INVESTMENT, NIGERIA



rior to her current role, she served as the Special Adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, on the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) and Investment (OVP) from October 2023 to October 2024. Under the Buhari Administration, she served first as the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Industry, Trade, and Investment, and subsequently as the Special Adviser to the President on Ease of Doing Business from November 2015 to May 2023. Dr. Oduwole and her team at the PEBEC Secretariat successfully delivered over 200 verifiable reforms across various arms and levels of government.

During her time in public service, Dr Oduwole has worked on various specialised reform committees in the federal government such as AfCFTA implementation Committee and the Tax Policy Reform Committee, and played a key role in the conceptualisation and establishment of the Nigerian Office for Trade Negotiations (NOTN). She Chaired the Technical Working Team on Legislative Imperatives for the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2025.

Recognised as one of Nigeria's leading reformers, she was awarded the national honour of Member of the Order of the Federal Republic (MFR) in May 2023 for her contributions to national development. In 2024, the Most Influential People of African



Descent (MIPAD) awarded her a “Hall of Fame” honour for her decade-long work on Nigeria's business climate reforms.

A policy entrepreneur of some repute, she was appointed as a Senior fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Centre for Business and Government (M-RCBG), Harvard Kennedy School, and as a

Governance Advisor to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Governance Lab in 2022, for her innovation in governance.

She previously served on the Board of Ecobank Nigeria, and she has worked in investment and corporate banking at FCMB and GTBank.



AMAKA ONWUGHALU

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
OF FIDELITY BANK



maka
Onwughalu is
the Chairman of
the Board of
Fidelity Bank.
She is Chief
Executive

Officer of Blueshield Financial Services Limited. Prior to this, she served in executive management positions in different institutions and was the former Group Managing Director of legacy Mainstreet Bank Limited where she led the successful execution of a seamless integration of the bank with Skye Bank Plc where she served as Deputy Managing Director until her retirement in July 2016.

Amaka Onwughalu has over thirty-two (32) years' banking experience including over 10 years in Executive Management positions at various financial institutions, with proven expertise across diverse segments including Commercial Banking, Retail Banking, Treasury Management, Banking Operations and Corporate Banking.

She holds a BSc Degree in Economics from the University of Buckingham, an MSc Degree in Corporate Governance



from Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom and an MBA from the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

She gained further exposure and training at the Executive Business School, INSEAD, France; IMD Business School, Lausanne, Switzerland; Judge Business School, University of Cambridge; and Columbia Business School, USA.

Onwughalu is a Senior Fellow of the Institute of Internal Auditors of

Nigeria; a Fellow of the Institute of Credit Administration (ICA); a Member of the Nigeria Institute of Management (NIM); an Honorary Member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN); and a Fellow of the Institute of Directors (IoD). She is passionate about mentoring the Girl Child and committed to supporting women entrepreneurs/professionals to contribute their quota to stimulating economic development in Nigeria. She is a Paul Harris Fellow and recipient of various prestigious awards.



DR. ADAORA UMEOJI OON

GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR/CEO
OF ZENITH BANK PLC



r. Adaora Umeoji is an alumna of the prestigious Harvard Business School, where she

completed the Advanced Management Program (AMP) and Columbia Business School with a Certificate in the Global Banking Programme. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from the University of Jos, a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, and a First-Class honors in Law from Baze University, Abuja. Additionally, she obtained a Master of Laws from the University of Salford, United Kingdom, and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Calabar. Her academic and professional pursuits culminated in a Doctorate in Business Administration from Apollos University, USA, with research focused on inspirational leadership which has been recognised for its significant contribution to leadership and people management.

Her commitment to continuous learning and professional excellence is demonstrated by her participation in executive management programmes at esteemed institutions worldwide, including the MIT Sloan School of Management, USA, where she acquired a certificate in Economics for Business, Harvard Business School, USA with certificates in Leading Global businesses and the executive program in Strategic Management, and Wharton Business School with a Certificate in the Strategic Thinking and Management for competitive advantage program.



She is a certificated Professional Banker of the Chartered Banker Institute, and a distinguished fellow of numerous professional bodies, including the Chartered Bankers Institute of London, the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, the

Institute of Credit Administration, the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Nigeria, the Institute of Chartered Mediators & Conciliators, and the Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators of Nigeria among others.



AICHA EVANS

CEO ZOOX



Aicha Evans, is a Senegalese business woman leading in technology on a global scale.

She is the CEO of Zoox, an advanced independent mobility enterprise

acquired by Amazon for \$1.3 billion. Zoox combines advanced AI and precise engineering to deliver a safe and comfortable ride, every time. Their mission is to help people move around safely and wonderfully. Their focus is transportation as a service in cities with a fleet of zero emission vehicles conceived from the ground up for autonomous mobility and unparalleled customer experience. Her story from Senegal to the peak in the tech sector is indeed a great inspiration for female Africans around the world.

In celebrating 7 years of the company, she recently appreciated her crew for their hard work and dedication. "Without you, Zoox wouldn't exist. Thank you to Jesse for another year of partnership and camaraderie. Thank you to our partners at Amazon for your continued support and belief in our mission." She said. "Thank you to the leaders, regulators, and communities who trusted us to bring Zoox to their streets, and thank you to YOU - our followers and believers, for your excitement and encouragement." She added.



ALICE RUHWEZA

PRESIDENT, AGRA



Alice Ruhweza is a values-driven global thought leader and systems thinker with nearly 30 years'

experience working at the nexus of environmental, economic, and social development policy and practice. She has deep knowledge and understanding of international development; nature and wildlife conservation environmental sustainability & diplomacy, food systems, sustainable finance, climate change and interrelated issues. She also has a firm grasp of the social, economic, and political landscapes in which these issues manifest.

She is the President of AGRA, a proudly African-led institution focused on scaling agricultural innovations that help smallholder farmers towards increased incomes, better livelihoods, and improved food security. They understand that African farmers need uniquely African solutions to the environmental and agricultural challenges they face, enabling them to sustainably boost production and gain access to rapidly growing agricultural markets.

As a Systems Thinker, Alice is interested in interconnections and multiple layers, identifying missing pieces, and connecting the dots between People, Planet, Peace and Prosperity.

She has led teams in government, the private sector, the United Nations, and large international NGOs across multiple continents.





CECILIA AKINTOMIDE

CHAIRPERSON, THE SANITATION
AND HYGIENE FUND



Cecilia Akintomide is an experienced non-executive director with a demonstrated history of working in the financial services industry and development finance.

Africa expert, skilled in strategy, development finance, international law, project finance, and corporate governance. Champion of women and girls empowerment. Member of the Nigerian Bar and the New York Bar.

Cecilia Akintomide is a seasoned executive with expertise in Development Finance, Corporate Governance, Law, and General Management. She is an Independent Director on the Boards of CcHUB Growth Capital, SWAgCo, an agricultural sector investment company; and Ondo State Development and Investment Promotion Agency (ONDIPA).

She was also an Independent Non-Executive Director on the Board of FBN Holdings Plc. She has served in senior roles including Vice President Secretary General of the African Development Bank (AfDB). Cecilia also served as Head of Public and Private Sector Projects and Policy, in the General Counsel & Legal Department of the AfDB.

Cecilia practiced law in Lagos, Washington D.C., and New York, at the law firms of O. Thomas & Co.; Thompson & Co.; and Weil, Gotshal & Manges, with a focus on Business Reorganisations, Corporate Law and Commercial Law.



DR AWELE ELUMELU OFR

CHAIRPERSON AT TRANSCORP
HOTELS, AVON HEALTHCARE LIMITED,
AND HEIRS INSURANCE BROKERS



r. Awele V.
Elumelu, OFR is
an African
business leader,
dedicated to
transforming
healthcare and

fostering entrepreneurship across the
continent.

She is the Chairperson of Avon
Healthcare Limited, Nigeria's leading
health insurance provider, and Avon
Medical Practice, a growing network of
full- service clinics and medical
centres, driven by her commitment to
improving access to quality healthcare
in Nigeria, Africa's most populous
nation.

Dr. Elumelu's organisations and
advocacy are tackling challenges
around healthcare infrastructure, while
championing access to affordable
medical insurance and effective
healthcare services.

In 2018, Dr. Elumelu was appointed as
the Private Sector Champion for
Immunisation in Africa by Gavi, the
Vaccine Alliance. She also sits on the
Advisory Board of the Yale Institute for
Global Health.

Dr. Elumelu serves as a founding
Director on the Board of Heirs
Holdings, a family-owned investment
company committed to improving lives
and transforming Africa. She serves as
the Chairperson of Heirs Insurance
Brokers, the brokerage arm of Heirs
Insurance Group, a subsidiary of Heirs
Holdings.



As the Co-Founder of The Tony
Elumelu Foundation, the philanthropic
arm of Heirs Holdings, committed to
empowering entrepreneurs across
Africa, she advocates extensively for
gender inclusion and youth
entrepreneurship across the continent.

Dr. Elumelu holds a Bachelor of
Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery degree,
from the University of Benin, with
advanced executive and professional

certifications from International
Institute for Management
Development, Switzerland, the Indian
School of Business, the London School
of Economics & Political Science, and
City University of London. Her career
as a medical doctor includes
experience with the Lagos University
Teaching Hospital, in Nigeria, and
Grantham and District Hospital,
Grantham, in the UK.



SYLVIA MULLINGE

CEO AT MTN UGANDA



Sylvia Mullinge is the CEO of MTN Uganda, which provides a diverse range of voice, data, digital, fintech,

wholesale and enterprise services to approximately 16 million subscribers.

She is a purposeful and impact driven leader who is passionate about

transforming customers lives using technology as an enabler of positive change that impacts communities and empowers women.

Previously, she served as the Chief Consumer Business Officer at Safaricom PLC where she was instrumental in increasing brand equity metrics for Safaricom, making it the most loved Brand in Kenya. She also spearheaded the growth of Consumer Business revenue resulting in revenue market share growth of 86% between 2018 to March 2022.

Over the last 22 years, Sylvia has developed a strong track record in strategic thinking, brand building, new business development, commercial

execution, as well as people growth and development in the Telecommunications and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sectors.

Representing Africa in the Meta EMEA Client Council, Sylvia is part of a group of leaders from influential brands and agencies across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Sylvia is the recipient of several awards and holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Nairobi where she graduated with the highest distinction of First-Class Honours.

Sylvia is a certified executive coach and mentor in both her personal and professional life.



MAGATTE WADE

FOUNDER, SKIN IS SKIN



M

agatte Wade is a Senegalese entrepreneur, the champion of 'Prosperity, Not Poverty' and

Senior Fellow at Atlas Network, the leading organisation of African free-market think tanks. She is the founder of Skin Is Skin, a luxury skincare company rooted in African botanical traditions.

Magatte has been listed as a Forbes "20

Youngest Power Women in Africa," a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, and a TED Global Africa Fellow. She is the bestselling author of *The Heart of A Cheetah* (magattewade.com/book) and host of *The Magatte Wade Show*.

She's spoken at the United Nations, Aspen Institute, Harvard, Oxford, Stanford, Yale, MIT, and the TED mainstage. Her work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian*, the BBC, CNN, *Fast Company*, *Fortune*, and the

Huffington Post. She has appeared on both Lex Fridman and Jordan Peterson's podcasts (where she was among the most popular guests), with over 10 million views.

Magatte's passion for the role of free markets in creating prosperity and the power of enterprise to tackle social issues and promote entrepreneurial education make her a sought-after speaker and thought leader at major conferences, events, and universities around the world.



FATIMA DANGOTE

GROUP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS



atima Aliko
Dangote is
Group Executive
Director
Commercial
Operations at
Dangote

Industries Limited (DIL). In this role, she is responsible for driving commercial operations across the various Dangote Business units and oversees the development and delivery of the Holding Company's commercial brand and communications, strategic procurement and general administration.

Previously, she has worked as the Executive Director, Commercial at NASCON Allied Industries Plc (NASCON), a Technical Specialist in the Strategy Unit and Executive Assistant to the Group Executive Director, Business Development and Portfolio Management at Dangote Industries.

She is a Member of the Nigerian Bar and was previously an Associate at Banwo & Ighodalo. She has also previously run her own independent confectionary business and real estate company. Fatima is passionate about philanthropy and is actively involved in the work of the Aliko Dangote Foundation.

She holds a law degree from the University of Surrey, United Kingdom and has attended leadership executive programs at Columbia University, Wharton School, and Cambridge University.





OLAITAN MARTINS

GROUP EXECUTIVE,
CORPORATE BANKING,
FIRSTBANK



Olaitan Martins is currently the Group Executive, Corporate Banking. Prior to this

appointment, she served as the Executive in charge of the Transaction Banking Division, leading the digitisation and automation of the Trade and Cash management system of the wholesale business of the Bank.

Olaitan has over 25 years' work experience in various financial institutions, including Investment Banking & Trust Limited, Intercontinental Bank Limited, IBTC Asset Management Limited and Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc, where she held various leadership positions. She currently serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of FirstInsurance Brokers Limited and as a Director of FirstBank Gambia.

Since joining FirstBank in 2014, Olaitan has recorded remarkable achievements instrumental to the re-positioning of FirstBank's Transaction Banking and Corporate Banking businesses as a credible industry player. She brings her deep market and customer-facing experience to bear in the Corporate Banking Business.

Olaitan has a wealth of experience across Cash Management, Trade Services, Product Development, Relationship Management, Business Development, Risk Management,



Wealth and Portfolio Management, Investment Banking, Treasury and Foreign Exchange Management amongst others.

She is currently the Chairperson of the FirstBank Women Network, where she lends her voice to encourage all-round inclusion for women in the workplace. She is a pioneer of change who uses her leadership skills to act as a mentor, sponsor, and advocate for women.

Olaitan is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) with a Doctorate degree in Business Administration (DBA) from the University of Durham, United Kingdom, with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Manchester Business School, United Kingdom, and a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Lagos, Nigeria.



ANTA BABACAR NGOM DIACK

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT,
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SENEGAL



Anta Babacar Ngom Diack is an entrepreneur and political party leader. She is currently serving as a

Member of Parliament at the National Assembly of Senegal, contributing her experience in governance and leadership. She brings deep expertise in project management, business strategy, and change management to support impactful decision-making and national development.

With extensive leadership experience at SEDIMA GROUP spanning over a decade, she also contributed to strategic planning, business development, and organisational transformation in the food production industry. Also, she combines a commitment to effective governance with a focus on driving sustainable growth and innovation. Sedima is Senegal's largest poultry company and KFC's official partner in the country.

According to Tidiane Sow, Associate Director at Lead Consulting, who also worked with Anta on the same team, "Anta was a MAESTRO, known for her focus mindset and her results oriented attitude. That's how she brought an ambitious idea to life and elected a President." He said.





DZIGBORDI KWAKU-DOSOO

FOUNDER/CEO, THE DCG GROUP



zigbordi Kwaku-Dosoo is the Founder/CEO, The DCG Group. She works with executives,

founders, and senior leadership teams who understand that technical competence may get you into the room but human skill mastery determines who controls the room. At DCG Group, they design and implement transformation programmes that move organisations from potential to performance, not through hype, but through structure.

As a Commercial Leadership Strategist and Executive & Founder Advisor, she helps leaders convert human skills into measurable commercial advantage, revenue growth, influence positioning, decision clarity, cultural alignment, and authority at scale.

She is the architect of the Human Skills Transformation Architecture™, a structured framework designed to help organisations build the human capabilities AI cannot replace: executive presence, strategic communication, influence systems, cultural intelligence, and leadership gravity.

For over 30 years, she has advised corporate leaders, boards, founders, and growth-stage organisations across industries and continents, helping them strengthen leadership architecture, elevate influence ecosystems, and align human capital with strategic performance.





OLORI ATUWATSE III

QUEEN CONSORT, WARRI KINGDOM



he Queen
Consort of the
Warri Kingdom,
is the epitome of
a Modern
African
Queen—a

dynamic and transformational leader celebrated for her unwavering commitment to community development, cultural preservation, and global advocacy. As a lawyer, philanthropist, and SDG ambassador, she embodies the perfect blend of grace, heritage, and contemporary influence, leading with vision and purpose.

Her role as a global advocate for women's empowerment, founder of Elevate Africa, and social entrepreneur has established her as a prominent voice in advancing education, entrepreneurship, and faith-based leadership. A passionate philanthropist, Olori's initiatives focus on addressing critical societal challenges, creating equitable opportunities, and driving sustainable development in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Deeply rooted in her Christian faith and cultural heritage, Olori's leadership transcends borders. Her ability to balance tradition with modernity has positioned her as a powerful advocate for gender equity, youth empowerment, and Africa's global relevance.





ADIBA IGHODARO

INDEPENDENT NON-EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, STANDARD CHARTERED
BANK NIGERIA LIMITED



diba Ighodaro
was appointed
to the Board of
Directors of
Standard
Chartered Bank
Nigeria Limited

as an Independent Non-Executive
Director in April 2021.

Prior to her appointment, she was a founding member and Partner of Actis, a Global Private Equity Firm, where she established and managed both its Nigeria and US offices. Ighodaro has a strong track record in international markets and finance with over 30 years' experience in legal structuring, development finance, private equity origination, investment and fundraising. She received the 2019 Private Equity Africa special recognition award for being one of the top women deal makers and fundraisers in the industry, recognising leadership over the previous decade and positive impact on women. Adiba is an advocate for diversity and inclusion. During her time at Actis, she initiated the firm's D&I agenda and was a founding member of Actis' D&I committee.



Ighodaro also established and chaired the Actis Female Network. Her board expertise spans the UK and Africa with board positions in UK FTSE 100 & 250 companies and pan-African businesses.

Adiba Ighodaro holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from King's College London and a Diploma in Accounting & Finance from the ACCA. She is also called to the Nigerian Bar and the English Bar (Gray's Inn).



HALIMA ALIKO DANGOTE

GROUP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
DANGOTE FAMILY OFFICE &
INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS IN
DUBAI AND LONDON



rior to her most recent role, she was Group Executive Director, Dangote Industries

Limited. She also served as Executive Director of Dangote Flour Mills, where she led the successful turnaround and recent sale of the business. Prior to then, she served as Executive Director of NASCON and continues to serve as a Non-Executive Director of NASCON.

She is currently the Board President of The Africa Center (TAC) in New York, a Board member of Endeavour Nigeria and a member of the Women Corporate Directors (WCD). Halima Aliko Dangote started off her career as an Analyst at KPMG and has over 13 years of professional experience, holds a Bachelors' Degree in Marketing from American Intercontinental University, London, and a Master of Business Administration from Webster Business School.

She is a Trustee of the Aliko Dangote Foundation and is happily married with children.



MARIYA DANGOTE

**BOARD EXECUTIVE,
DANGOTE CEMENT**

M

ariya Dangote
leads
commercial
strategy for the
cement business.
She also oversees

strategy for the group's food operations
across markets.

She was Executive Director, Operations
for Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc. Prior
to the announcement on July 2023, she
was the Director Strategy/BIP Support
with several years' experience in Risk
Management and Business Strategy.

Mariya holds a Bachelor Degree in Law
from the Bayero University, Kano, and
a Master Degree in Business
Administration from the Coventry
University, United Kingdom.

She was a Group Strategy Lead,
Dangote Industries Limited a position
she held until her redeployment to
Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc in 2019.

Mariya also serves on the Board of
Dangote – Peugeot Automobiles
Nigeria Limited (DPAN), Dangote
Cement Limited and Al-Ummah
Development Foundation amongst
others.

She is a fellow of the National Institute
of Credit Administration, has attended
many local and international
professional training programmes on
Leadership, Business Development and
Law.





ABENA OSEI-POKU

MANAGING DIRECTOR -
ECOBANK GHANA & REGIONAL
EXECUTIVE, ECO BANK



Abena Osei-Poku is a transformational corporate leader with extensive experience in risk management, governance, strategy, client coverage, business and change management. She has multifaceted board experience in sectors including telecommunications, banking and commerce.

Currently, she is the Chairperson of Ghana Stock exchange and College of

Health sciences and Council member of Ghana Association of Bankers and National Banking College. Abena is fluent in English, with a working knowledge of French.

She believes that financial inclusion must go beyond access...it must lead to impact. "At Ecobank Ghana, we are proud to be demonstrating what that looks like in practice: affordable digital accounts, microloans for mobile users, youth ambassadors shaping the future, and women entrepreneurs growing with Ellevate." She said.



DAGMAWIT MOGES BEKELE

DIRECTOR, AFRICAN UNION PEACE
FUND SECRETARIAT, AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSION



agmawit Moges Bekele is an African optimist — driven by purpose, grounded in

service, and deeply committed to building systems that move the continent forward and deliver lasting impact. By day — and with immense pride, she leads the Peace Fund Secretariat at the African Union Commission, a role she wakes up every morning grateful to fulfill. Alongside a dedicated team, she is working to fully operationalise one of Africa's most ambitious peace financing instruments. Their mission lies at the intersection of diplomacy, resource mobilisation, fund management, investment and institutional transformation — anchored in a powerful belief: Africa can, and must, own its peace and security agenda.

Previously, she had the honour of serving as Ethiopia's Minister of Transport and Logistics, where she led transformative initiatives to modernise a sector vital to national development. Dagmawit also served as a cabinet



member of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and as a member of Parliament, bringing citizen-centered policymaking into the heart of governance.

She believes leadership should be human, that progress is born of community, and that Africa's future belongs to those who dare to dream boldly and act practically. Across every stage of her career, she has been

committed to cultivating excellence, learning continuously, and unlocking opportunity through meaningful collaboration.

She is a graduate of Public Administration and Development Management from Addis Ababa University, a Master's degree holder in Public Management and Policy from Addis Ababa University.



MO ABUDU

CEO EBONYLIFE GROUP

Mosunmola Abudu, 'Mo Abudu', is the CEO of the EbonyLife Group, one of Africa's leading media conglomerates. The group comprises EbonyLife Media, creators of original African content, EbonyLife Place, a luxury entertainment resort, and the EbonyLife Creative Academy, a film school in Lagos designed to accelerate filmmaking skills.

Mo began her career in HR, later owning her own recruitment firm and developing the Protea Hotel, Oakwood Park - Nigeria's first new-build hotel of its type. She then launched her media career with Inspire Africa, an edutainment company designed to inspire, educate, motivate and entertain. The company's anchor project was Africa's first syndicated talk show, Moments with Mo, presented and produced by Mo.

In 2013 Mo launched EbonyLife TV, a Pan African entertainment channel on the DStv network, driven by a belief to uplift Africa's imagine in the media. The channel produced a string of aspirational series and was featured as a Harvard Business School case study in 2021. The EbonyLife brand grew to include EbonyLife Films and EbonyLife Studios with eight blockbusters under their belt.

Mo Abudu has received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Babcock University in 2014 and one in 2018 for her contributions to the broadcasting industry in Nigeria by the University of Westminster in London.

She is highly sought after for her knowledge of the African and global



creative industry. She has been invited to join the Academy of Motion Arts and Sciences in the Producer membership category, making her the first Sub-Saharan African woman to join the Oscars. Forbes Magazine described her as 'Africa's Most Successful Woman', and in 2021, named Abudu as one of the 'World's 100 Most Powerful Women'. 2021 was rounded off with Abudu also being counted amongst the Variety500 2021,

the benchmark of influencers shaping the global entertainment industry.

Mo has signed deals with partners including Sony, Netflix, AMC, Will and Jada Smith's Westbrook Studios, Will Packer Productions, Starz and Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson along with Lionsgate TV, as well as the BBC, to bring original and progressive African stories to the global stage.

VICTORIA KWAKWA

FORMER VICE PRESIDENT,
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA
AT THE WORLD BANK



s the World Bank
Regional Vice
President for
Eastern and
Southern Africa,
Victoria Kwakwa

led relations with 26 countries—of
which 17 qualified for IDA financing,
seven for IBRD financing, and two
qualified for a blend of both—and
oversaw an active portfolio of 313
operations totaling \$58 billion.

Under her leadership, the Bank
provided vital support to countries
facing complex, multifaceted
challenges, including the COVID-19
crisis, climate shocks, food- and
energy-fueled inflation, rising debt,
and eroding trust in governments. Her
priorities include financing projects
that boost human capital and
strengthened health systems, increase
agricultural productivity and food
security, build resilience to climate
change, promote regional integration,
improve access to infrastructure, and
support private sector development.
Intensifying assistance for fragile and
conflict-affected states, promoting
gender equality, and providing
economic opportunities for youth are
core to achieving these goals.

Prior to joining the Eastern and
Southern Africa region of the World
Bank, Dr. Kwakwa served as the Vice
President for Corporate Strategic
Initiatives from September 2021-June
2022, working to enhance the World
Bank's operational delivery and
impact. She also served as the Vice
President for East Asia Pacific from
April 2016-August 2021, where she led
the Bank's engagement with 23 diverse
clients ranging from countries on the



cus of high income, established
middle income, to lower middle-
income countries.

In addition, she has extensive
experience in Africa, including in
Nigeria where she led the Bank's
economic work from 2001-2006 and
Rwanda where she was the Country
Manager from 2007-2009.

Dr. Kwakwa has deep knowledge of
Bank Group operations and strong
experience working on issues related to
debt and macroeconomic resilience,
reforms for economic competitiveness
and growth, and fiscal decentralization.
She has a track record of putting

people at the center of her work,
listening to beneficiaries, and striving
for good outcomes for clients and their
citizens. She has built enduring
partnerships with private sector, civil
society and other international actors
and has demonstrated her ability to
mobilize these diverse stakeholders
behind shared interests.

Dr. Kwakwa began her career at the
World Bank in 1989 as a Young
Professional. She holds a bachelor's
degree in economics and statistics from
the University of Ghana and a master's
degree and PhD in economics from
Queen's University in Canada.



NDIDI NWUNELI

PRESIDENT/CEO
OF THE ONE CAMPAIGN



ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli is the President/CEO of the ONE Campaign. She has over 27 years

of international development experience.

Nwuneli started her career as a management consultant with McKinsey & Company in Chicago. She returned to Nigeria in 2000 to serve as the pioneer executive director of the FATE Foundation. In 2002, she established LEAP Africa to inspire, empower, and equip a new cadre of principled, disciplined, and dynamic young leaders in Africa. She also established NIA to support female university students in Nigeria to achieve their highest potential.

Between 2008 and 2023, she has focused exclusively on transforming the African agriculture and nutrition landscape through her work as the co-founder of Sahel Consulting Agriculture & Nutrition - West Africa's leading agrifood ecosystem consulting firm and AACE Foods.

Ndidi serves on the boards of the Rockefeller Foundation, Chanel



Foundation, Stanbic IBTC Group, Forum of the Young Global Leaders, & the Bridgespan Group.

She holds an M.B.A. from the Harvard Business School and an undergraduate degree with honours from the Wharton School of the University of

Pennsylvania. She was a Senior Fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business & Government at the Harvard Kennedy School, an Aspen Institute New Voices Fellow, and the McConnell Visiting Scholar at the Max Bell School of Public Policy at McGill University.



NABOU FALL

CEO, AGENCE VIZEO



Nabou Fall is the CEO of Agence Vizeo. She is also the founder of Nabou Fall Akademy – an

academy of leadership coaching and transformational communication.

She spent the essential of her career as an executive at several telecommunications companies such as MTN in Côte d'Ivoire and Congo Republic for 15 years.

These experiences have allowed her to develop critical leadership skills such as efficient communication, team management and empathy. Her cross cultural experience has fostered strong adaptability and agility in the way she handles professional issues.

Nabou Fall is a sought-after public speaker as well as a renowned personal development coach, TEDx speaker, author and mentor in various women's empowerment NGOs. She collaborates with several magazines due to her commitment to the empowerment of her African sisters.

She holds a master's degree in Finance and Management from the ISG Paris and is also an Engineer specialised in information systems and networks from the École Supérieure de Génie Informatique de Paris.



She also obtained a leadership certificate from Harvard Business School, a Boardroom Africa certificate from IOD London, as well as a Women Investors certificate from idep and CEA.

Nabou is a Certified Personal Branding Strategist (CPBS), a Certified Digital Branding Strategist (CDBS), an ICF coach and a certified certified Emotional Intelligence & DISC practitioner.



DR. ANINO EMUWA

FOUNDER OF 100 WOMEN
@ DAVOS



r. Emuwa is a Board Director and Chair who convenes private executive and Board-level

dialogues at Davos and other global forums, operating at the intersection of business, policy, and emerging technologies.

Anino is the Founder of 100 Women @ Davos, a global platform established in 2019 that brings senior leaders together alongside the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, and other international convenings. The platform facilitates closed, high-trust conversations among decision-makers across sectors, with a focus on leadership, governance, and long-term value creation.

In her Board roles, Dr. Emuwa advises on governance, leadership effectiveness, and strategic oversight, supporting organisations as they navigate complexity, innovation, and structural change. Her work centers on strengthening decision-making at the highest levels and aligning leadership systems with future-facing organisational priorities, including AI and emerging technologies.

With over 25 years of international experience working with senior



executives, Boards, and founders, she is frequently engaged to support executive-level discussions on leadership, governance, AI, and institutional readiness. As a trusted convener, she facilitates discreet, peer-level exchanges that help leaders coordinate effectively during high-stakes global forums.

Dr. Emuwa's work is grounded in the belief that organisations perform best when leadership systems are designed for the future rather than inherited from the past. She is regularly invited to speak at private and institutional forums globally.



DAMILOLA OGUNBIYI

CEO AND UN SRSG FOR
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL,
CO-CHAIR OF UN-ENERGY



Damilola
Ogunbiyi is the
CEO and Special
Representative of
the UN
Secretary-

General (UN SRSG) for Sustainable Energy for All, and Co-Chair of UN-Energy. She was recognised in the 2024 TIME100 Climate list as one of the 20 titans in climate; she is the recipient of the First Class Order of Zayed II from the UAE President in recognition of her contribution to the success of the climate conference, COP28; she also received the Global Female Leadership Impact (GFLI) Award in 2024 and the Energy Institute President's Award for 2023, in recognition of her continued role in solving critical global issues. She has been recognized as a trailblazer in her field by Reuters' Trailblazing Women in Climate and Reuters' Trailblazing Women in Energy, among others.

With Ogunbiyi at the helm, Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) has entered into working relationships with over 200 partners, supported over 90 countries globally, and secured commitments of more than \$1.4 trillion in energy finance.

Through her leadership, SEforALL has grown its global influence and country support providing clear pathways to accelerate progress towards universal



energy access, ending energy poverty, and advancing the global just and equitable energy transition.

Prior to joining SEforALL, Mrs. Ogunbiyi was the first female Managing Director of the Nigerian

Rural Electrification Agency where she initiated the Nigerian Electrification Project, a \$550 million facility which is a joint World Bank and African Development Bank programme that to date has provided energy access to over 8 million people across Nigeria.



ZEINAB AYAAN ADAM

CEO, AFC CAPITAL PARTNERS



einab Ayaan Adam is the CEO of AFC Capital Partners. It is the 100% owned Asset

Management Subsidiary of AFC, created to mobilise and manage third party funds thereby unlocking new sources of capital to fund the African infrastructure investment gap – estimated at US\$170 billion annually.

Zeinab brings 27 years of visionary leadership and a strong track record in emerging markets investment, asset management, private equity, infrastructure and climate change-related financing products, with a particular focus on African and Asian Markets.

Most recently, she headed the private sector arm of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), established within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Based in South Korea, she played a key role in building the mandate of the GCF Private Sector Facility and rapidly scaling its portfolio to US\$2.1 billion in three years across Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Previously, she was CDC Group's Managing Director of Africa Funds and had a 17-year career with the



International Finance Corporation, serving as a Chief Investment Officer among other roles. US-born and raised in Somalia and Tanzania, Adam holds a Master of Business Administration

(MBA) from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management, and a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics, Summa cum laude from Clark University.



Lucy is Managing Director and Head of Transformation for Global Transaction

Banking at Barclays.

She is an accomplished strategic business leader with extensive experience in financial services and telecommunications. She believes in collaborative leadership, creating room for people in her teams to succeed together and thrive as they deliver business results. She serves on the boards of INSEAD Business School, CSquared, and Margins ID Group.

She served as Managing Director and Global Head of Firm Resilience at Morgan Stanley, where she led the bank's Business Continuity, Operational Resilience, 3rd party resilience, Disaster Recovery and Governance functions.

Prior to this, she was the Global Head of Change for Technology Transformation at Morgan Stanley.

She started her financial services career at the Royal Bank of Scotland after her MBA at INSEAD, working in Operations.

She has served as a telecom CEO for Airtel, and held leadership roles at Vodafone and Millicom International Cellular. Early in her career she worked at Ford Motor Company.

Lucy is a chartered electrical and electronic engineer with a first-class honors degree from the University of



LUCY QUIST

MD/HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION FOR
GLOBAL TRANSACTION BANKING,
BARCLAYS

East London. She speaks French as a second business language.

Her experience in strategy, organisational development, business transformation and growth, combined with her board expertise, make her a valuable asset to the organizations she serves.

She is the author of the book, The Bold New Normal, and Convenor of the annual conference of the same title.

Lucy is passionate about giving back and has written several articles sharing insights on career advancement and leadership.



FUNKE AKINDELE

NIGERIAN ACTRESS, LAWYER,
FILMAKER



Funke Akindele is a multi-award winning Nigerian actress, filmmaker and lawyer. She is also a content creator and realtor. She is best known for her role as "Jenifa" in the hit movie Jenifa and the TV series

Jenifa's Diary. She is a record-breaking producer, with films like 'Behind The Scenes' grossing over N2.7billion, making it the highest grossing movie of all time and all-time highest cinema admissions. Another is 'A Tribe Called Judah' which made her the highest-grossing film of 2023 and 2024 with N1.349 Billion.

Funke launched the Creative Blueprint Masterclass to empower women in the industry. According to Funke, the Masterclass is her way of creating a space where women in Africa's creative industry can gain practical business

knowledge, mentorship, and the tools needed to build lasting careers.

For Funke, creativity is not just about expression, it is also about ownership, structure, and building something that can grow beyond you. She is having another one on the 19th of March.

Funke is also the founder of Funke Akindele Network (FAAN. FAAN represents a 360-degree approach to filmmaking and production, as well as providing PR solutions for films. FAAN is the powerhouse behind her record-breaking films.



OMONI OBOLI

PRODUCER, DIRECTOR,
ACTRESS AND SCRIPTWRITER



moni Oboli is a producer, director, actress and scriptwriter. She is a multilingual

French Language Graduate from the university of Benin who has produced and directed several groundbreaking Nollywood movies including

blockbusters like LOVE IS WAR, MOMS AT WAR and the WIVES ON STRIKE movies which were box office's successes. Her movie, OKAFOR'S LAW, was part of the official selection for the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) and the Stockholm International Film Festival in 2016. She was also an ambassador for the TIFF Share her journey program. Omoni has won several local and international awards for acting, writing and filmmaking.

Omoni Oboli is a 2018 Archbishop Desmond Tutu Leadership Fellow. Her YouTube channel Omoni Oboli Tv which was started over a year ago has garnered over 1.8 million subscribers in that time and over 448 million views. She is the YouTube Nigeria content creator of the year and also Silverbird Man Of The Year Tarilblazer awardee. Omoni has made her mark in both big and small screen and keeps conquering territories.



BUSIE MATSIKO

BOARD TRUSTEE
AT BERKELEY COLLEGE

Busie Matsiko is a Board Trustee at Berkeley College. She also advises top tier CEO's and C-Suite

Executives who could be great additions to your boards. The ultimate compassionate dot-connector, she combines strategic C-level executive networking skills with her professional background in finance and business, active listening skills topped off with a flair for fashion and marketing to deliver boutique consultancy services in the local and international space. Busie has over a decade of management experience working with established, top-tier financial firms and leading economic development organisations such as Smith Barney, Citigroup, Citibank, Oppenheimer & Co. Inc, SEEDCO and SFS (leading National Economic Development Corporation with a micro-lending arm).

She currently offers executive business development and strategy guidance for global thought leaders and influencers, including event curation, celebrity outreach, healthcare advisory, philanthropy advisory, community outreach, diversity and inclusion advisory, and coaching consulting. Having expanded her business vision to create a better world, she also utilises her expertise to drive private sector engagement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



SEIPATI ASANTE MOKHUOA

FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE
CHAIRPERSON OF STRATEGIC
AFRICAN WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
(SAWIL)



Seipati Asante Mokhuoa is an accomplished business executive and leadership development

expert with over 20 years of working experience, 15 of which were in the financial service industry. Currently, she is the Founder and Executive Chairperson of Strategic African Women in Leadership (SAWIL) and is responsible for Strategy and Innovation at HD Afrika.

With her comprehensive understanding of the local, continental, and global business frameworks, Seipati leads efforts to engage and work with diverse stakeholder groups to systematically address the digital divide across the African continent. Recently, under her leadership, the company launched Africa's largest startup ecosystem - the HD Innovation Hub.

Seipati is a philanthropist who is passionate about the development of the African Continent, with a particular focus on women and youth. She is committed to contributing to Africa's growing startup ecosystem as an Angel Investor and Ecosystem Builder. The youth and women entrepreneurship, according to Seipati, represents a unique and untapped opportunity for the continent.

Her areas of interest include gender equality, diversity & inclusion, governance & boards, leadership, entrepreneurship development,



startups, innovation, & angel investing.

As a former Senator for South Africa at the World Business Angels Investment Forum (WBAF), she is well-versed in international business and entrepreneurship. Her invaluable insights into gender equality, parity, diversity, and inclusion have inspired many people.



BEATRICE MENSAH TAYUI

FOUNDER & CEO,
CYBELE ENGINEERING LTD



Beatrice Mensah Tayui has owned and operated oil and gas exploration and production services

businesses under the Cybele name since 2011, initially focusing on West Africa. She later founded Cybele Engineering Ltd., dedicated to exploring and developing Guyana's historic oil and gas fields. Under her leadership, Cybele Engineering Ltd. was awarded the operating license for Block S7.

Cybele Energy is at the forefront of developing low-risk, high-potential oil and gas Assets through strategic partnerships with global energy and technology leaders. Their exploration and production (E&P) activities are driven by a commitment to excellence, innovation, and sustainable growth.

Cybele Energy is committed to delivering best-in-class engineering solutions through strategic partnerships with highly innovative technical companies. Their engineering services focus on providing integrated oilfield and production enhancement solutions that drive operational excellence and maximise value for their clients.



Cybele Aqua consults and delivers projects in defense, oilfields, engineering, and water resources across Sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, and beyond.

Before founding Cybele, Beatrice held leadership positions at leading pharmaceutical companies, including

Pfizer, Hoffmann-La Roche, and Johnson & Johnson.

She holds a Bachelor's in Economics and Business Administration from Roosevelt University in Illinois and splits her time between Chicago and Ghana.



TEGLA LOROUPE

OLYMPIC ATHLETE,
WORLD RECORD HOLDER



egla Loroupe is a former Kenyan long-distance track and road runner. She was the first African woman to win the New York City Marathon. She won twice, once with the highest temperature recorded for the New York Marathon, once with the lowest temperature recorded. She has held many world records.

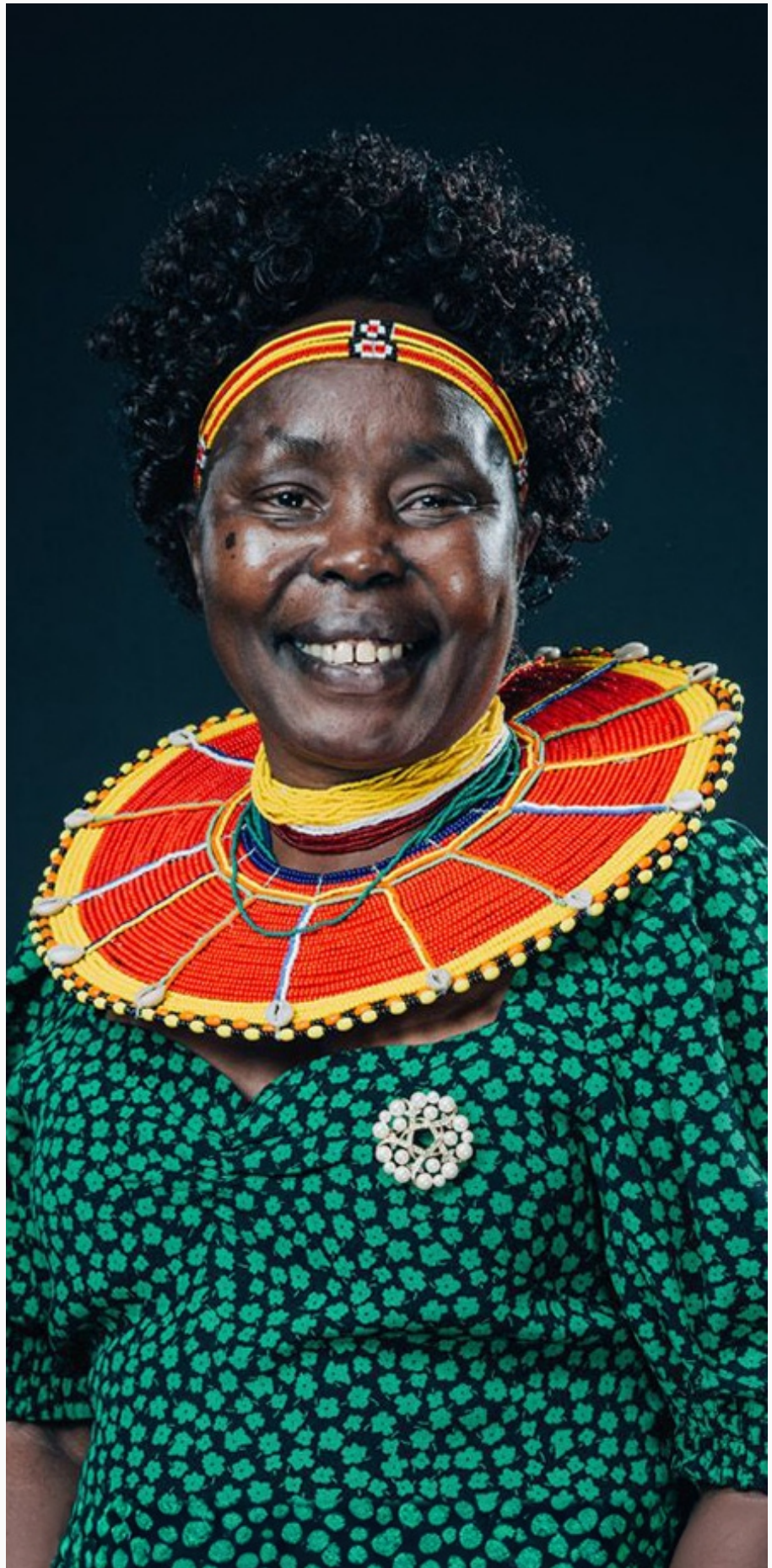
In 2003, Loroupe founded the Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation and has been an active advocate for peace. She has been successful in bringing members of warring tribes together in conflict areas in East Africa.

In 2006, she founded the 10km Peace Race, which included 2,000 warriors from six different tribes, who put down their weapon to run in peace in Kapenguria, Kenya. Loroupe said the motivation for the race was to use her fame to help bring about greater harmony.

In 2006, the Secretary of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, named her the United Nations Peace Ambassador, together with Roger Federer, in the United Nations Year of Sport.

She is also a member of the 'Champions for Peace' a group of athletes seeking to use the power of sport to bring about peace.

She is a role model and has helped many women widen their horizons and enter new fields in peace-making, education, and sports.





UCHE PEDRO

FOUNDER/CEO
BELLANAIJA



Uche Pedro is an entrepreneur, founder and CEO of BellaNaija, a media brand that has been in

existence for 20 years (And thriving). They have done excellently well in that space. BellaNaija is Africa's leading media tech company with digital media superbrands focused on lifestyle, entertainment and advocacy.

As CEO, Uche ensured that BellaNaija's social footprint expanded to include BellaNaija.com, BellaNaija Weddings and BellaNaija Style. With more than 200 million impressions each month, the BellaNaija brand is focused on consistent progress. In March 2019, Uche was honoured with the Forbes Woman Africa New Media Award for her innovative impact on media in Africa. She is a recipient of several other outstanding awards.

BellaNaija is a leading online platform that focuses on inspiring, informing and entertaining Nigerians, Africans and the world. As a game changer and trailblazer in tech media, they are charged with the responsibility to show the new Africa to the world.

Uche is passionate about progress of youth in Nigeria and across Africa. Uche holds a Bachelors degree – Honours Business Administration (HBA) from the Ivey Business School at Western University in Canada where she graduated with distinction.





AMINATA KANE

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
GROUP COUNTRY MANAGER WEST
AND CENTRAL AFRICA, VISA



efore Visa, Aminata Kane was the CEO of Orange Money Group, the Fintech arm of Orange in Middle East and Africa. She oversaw mobile money, banking and fintech activities across 17 countries, and was the Chairman of Orange Bank Africa from September 2024-October 2025. From 2018 to 2022, she was the CEO of

Orange Sierra Leone and the Chairman of the Board of Orange Mobile Finance Sierra Leone. Under her leadership, Orange Sierra Leone became the market leader, significantly improved its growth and profitability, and has established itself as a key player in innovation with the launches of mobile money microcredit, Orange energy and e-Education.

Prior to this appointment, she was the Chief Marketing Officer for Orange Money in Senegal, a business that has grown exponentially and become profitable in the past two years. From 2009 to 2011, she was a strategy consultant with McKinsey & Company

in France and Africa, designing strategies and operations for telecommunication and technology providers, banks, and consumer goods manufacturers in Europe and West Africa.

She is a graduate from HEC Paris, earned her MBA from the MIT Sloan School of Management and is a MIT Legatum fellow. In 2017, she was named Young Leader of the French African Foundation, and in 2019 Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum. In 2020, at 36, she won the Africa CEO of the Year Award organised by the AfricaCom / AfricaTech Festival.



YVONNE MANZI MAKOLO

CEO OF RWANDAIR



Yvonne Manzi Makolo is an accomplished business leader serving as the CEO of RwandAir,

Rwanda's national flag carrier, since 2018. She is an aviation professional with a strong commercial background gained in the ICT and telecommunication sector in Rwanda and Canada. A senior executive with

proven ability to provide innovative and forward-thinking leadership.

With a rich professional background, she embarked on her journey with RwandAir in April 2017, initially joining as the Deputy CEO in Charge of Corporate Affairs. Before her tenure at RwandAir, Yvonne held prominent roles at MTN Rwanda, the largest telecommunication company in the country, where she notably served as the Chief Marketing Officer and briefly acted as the CEO.

Yvonne's expertise is further strengthened by her educational background, including a Post Graduate

Diploma in Applied Information Technology. With over 11 years of valuable commercial experience, she has proven her aptitude for strategic decision-making and driving organizational growth.

As a visionary leader in the aviation industry, Yvonne Manzi Makolo continues to guide RwandAir towards new heights, ensuring its prominence as a symbol of national pride and excellence in Rwanda.

Yvonne currently serves as the 81st Chair of the IATA Board of Governors marking the first time a woman has taken on this role.



WINNIE BYANYIMA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNAIDS



innie Byanyima, a grass-roots activist, human rights advocate, senior

international public servant, and world recognised expert on women's rights, is currently Executive Director of UNAIDS.

Born in Uganda, Byanyima was elected for three terms and served eleven years in the Ugandan Parliament. A world

recognised expert on women's rights, she founded the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), a leading NGO in Uganda and has served at the African Union Commission and at the United Nations Development Programme as Director of Gender and Development. She was Executive Director of Oxfam International from 2013 to 2019 before joining UNAIDS.

Byanyima is a signatory to her country's 1985 peace agreement and has helped to broker and support women's participation in peace processes in several African countries. As part of her drive to bring women's perspectives into core development

issues, she co-founded the Global Gender and Climate Alliance and chaired UN-wide task forces on gender aspects of the Millennium Development Goals and climate change.

Winnie Byanyima has served on numerous global boards and commissions and is currently a member of the Executive Board of the International Centre for Research on Women. She holds a M.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering in Energy Conservation and the Environment (University of Cranfield, UK), and a B.Sc. in Aeronautical Engineering (University of Manchester, UK).



IRENE BIRUNGI MUGISHA ATEENYI

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AT PRESIDENTIAL CEO FORUM



rene Birungi
Mugisha Atenyi,
The CEO:
Presidential CEO
Forum, Former
Principal Private
Secretary to His

Excellence the President of Uganda. Birungi serves in several capacities as a mother, sister, employee, employer, and wife. Her dedicated faith in God serves as a pillar in her journey. She believes that we are all purposed to be someone who makes a difference and make an impact that will forever be one's footprint. She is a seasoned journalist and broadcaster who is nurturing her passion to make a change wherever she is destined.

A publisher in the dailies and as a civil servant, serving her country in a position of influence that has inspired her school of thought in servant leadership.

She is a Co-Founder and Director to a successful PR & Communications Firm in Uganda that boasts of 14+ years of existence providing loyal customer service.



She is the Founder of the Presidential CEO Forum an initiative that links the private sector with government. Her years of continued service under different backgrounds from the private sector to the public sector shaped her thought process into an excellent hard-working personality with an agenda to thrive using her experience as a strategist and lobbyist.

She is the author of the book titled – The CEO in You a Change Maker.

Irene, in her line of career, prides herself on strategically transforming organisations through customised corporate solutions.

She is driven by what she does as a leader, with humility, intentional living, integrity, and trade-offs.

Birungi Irene a Ugandan married to Maurice Mugisha Herbert and a mother to three wonderful children.



ARUNMA OTEH

ACADEMIC SCHOLAR,
SAÏD BUSINESS SCHOOL,
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Arunma Oteh served at the World Bank as Vice President and Treasurer from September 30th, 2015 to

November 30th 2018. As Treasurer, she led a team that manages assets totalling USD200 billion for the World Bank Group, 60 central banks, sovereign wealth funds and other official institutions. She and her team also maintained the World Bank's global reputation as a prudent and innovative borrower in over 50 currencies by executing well-prepared transactions and carefully coordinating credit rating and capital market relationships for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). She was also responsible for an extensive financial advisory business for World Bank clients and cashflows of over \$7 trillion.

Prior to joining the Bank, she served as Director General of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Nigeria from 2010 to 2015. During this period, she rebuilt the Nigerian capital markets after the global financial crisis and served on Nigeria's Economic Management team. Prior to joining



SEC Nigeria, she worked at the Africa Development Bank for 17 years, including as Group Vice President, Corporate Services (2006 to 2009) and as Group Treasurer (2001 to 2006).

She started her career at Centre Point Investments Limited, Nigeria in 1985. She has served on several Boards during her 33 year career, notably, the International Organization of Securities Commissions (2010 to 2015), which regulates 95% of the

World's securities markets and the pioneer Board of the International Financing Facility for Immunisation (2006 to 2011). She has also previously served on the World Economic Forum Agenda Council on Institutional Governance, and the Africa Advisory Council for World Women's Banking. She holds a Masters degree in Business Administration from Harvard Business School and a First Class Honors Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Nigeria Nsukka.



OLATOWUN CANDIDE-JOHNSON

FOUNDER/CEO, GAIA AFRICA



latowun Candide-Johnson is a lawyer with thirty+ years' experience in corporate and commercial law and in business development and governance of multinational corporations. During the course of her career, she worked in Law Practice, Shipping, & Oil and Gas. Whilst working with the Total Group, she worked in different divisions including three years at the New Business (Affaires Nouvelles) Division in the Paris HQ. Before taking early retirement, she held the roles of

General Counsel, Executive General Manager, Management Services Division (incorporating Legal, Audit, Insurance and Anti-Corruption Compliance) and Chief Compliance Officer for the Total Upstream Companies in Nigeria.

In 2016, she obtained a Global Executive MBA awarded by LSE, NYU Stern and HEC (Paris), known as the TRIUM Global Executive MBA. After many years in corporate life, she turned her sights to an entrepreneurial pursuit and challenge to open an exclusive space in Lagos to help bridge the "business connections" gap experienced by leading Women in Nigeria.

Olatowun is Chairman of African Delivery Technologies (ADT), parent company of Kwik.delivery, a French

start-up which aims to become the first platform for last-mile delivery in urban areas in Nigeria. She is also a Founder Parent of Lagos Preparatory School, Ikoyi, one of Africa's leading British curriculum preparatory schools in Lagos; Member of the board of directors of the Nigerian-Norwegian Chamber of Commerce; "Expert" – African Women on Board (AWB); Member of the Committee on Tourism & Hospitality of the Institute of Directors (IOD).

She is also an angel investor and a member of Rising Tide Africa – a network of female business angels investing in entrepreneurs across the African continent. Olatowun is Wines & Spirits Education Trust (WSET) Level 2 certified, and Dame Chevalier de l'Ordre des Coteaux de Champagne (2017).



ISI IGENEGBA

CO-FOUNDER
STROM GLOBAL SERVICES LTD



si Igenegba co-founded Strom Global Services Ltd with her husband, Adolphus Bobby Igenegba, to bridge the gap between

industry needs and innovative solutions in the oil and gas sector.

With Isi's background in geology and experience with BG Group, coupled with Adolphus's success in petroleum trading, the company was established to provide high-quality products and

cutting-edge services to both local and international clients.

From its inception, Strom Global Services Ltd has specialised in bulk importation, distribution, marine support services, and skilled manpower. The company quickly grew into a leading engineering, procurement, and construction firm, expanding its operations into Canada and the United States.

As Director of Strategy, Isi played a key role in broadening the company's services and enhancing its reputation. The growth of Strom led to the establishment of METSCO Africa, in response to the critical power challenges faced by Nigeria. Recognising the need for advanced

technical expertise in building efficient power systems, Isi Igenegba and her team expanded their operations beyond the oil and gas sector to tackle the energy crisis.

Apostle Isi Igenegba is also a visionary leader and minister dedicated to advancing God's Kingdom. Known for her dynamic leadership and transformative impact, she empowers individuals and organisations through various initiatives. Her ministry work focuses on raising leaders and driving societal change, embodying a commitment to both spiritual and practical growth. She leads People Of Influence Network, The Mantle Of Deborah Global and she is Founder, Isi Benedicta Institute.

GENDER INSIGHTS

Commemorating International Women's Day 2026. Theme: Give To Gain

Asmau Benzies Leo



Every year on March 8, the world pauses to celebrate the achievements, resilience, and

transformative power of women. The history of the International Women's Day (IWD) dates back to 1908, when women garment workers in New York marched to demand better working

conditions and voting rights. The first National Women's Day was observed in the United States in 1909. By 1911, the celebration had spread across Europe following advocacy by leaders such as

Clara Zetkin, who proposed an international observance to advance women's rights. In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations officially began commemorating March 8 as International Women's Day, cementing its global recognition as a rallying point for gender equality and social justice.

Beyond March 8, the entire month of March is globally recognised as Women's Month in many countries, a period dedicated to reflection, advocacy, celebration, and renewed commitments toward advancing women's rights and leadership. Throughout the month, governments, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and private sector actors organize rallies/walk, dialogues, policy engagements, mentorship programmes, media campaigns, community outreaches, and award ceremonies that spotlight women's contributions and address persistent gender gaps.

The 2026 theme, "Give To Gain," is both a call to action and a philosophy for sustainable progress. It emphasises generosity, collaboration, and shared advancement equally recognising that when we invest in women, their opportunities expand, systems are strengthened, and societies thrive. "Give To Gain" is anchored in the principle of reciprocity. When women are given access to education, economic resources, leadership opportunities, healthcare, and justice, the benefits extend far beyond the individual. Families are strengthened. Communities become more stable. Economies grow more inclusive.

Giving to women should not be seen as charity rather a strategy, a deliberate investment that yields measurable social, political, and economic returns.

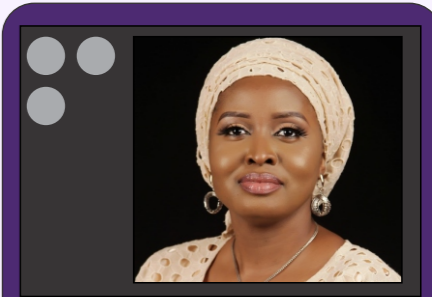
For the Nigerian woman, this theme carries deep significance. Nigerian women are pillars in agriculture, entrepreneurship, governance, peace-building, academia, and community development. Yet many still face structural inequalities, limited access

to finance, underrepresentation in decision making, and exposure to gender based violence. "Give To Gain" challenges institutions and policymakers to intentionally dismantle these barriers and create enabling environments where women can thrive. When Nigeria invests in its women, the nation gains innovation, stability, and inclusive growth.

Throughout March, many Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and women-led networks will actively commemorate the International Women's Day with impactful activities. Organisations such as the Centre for Nonviolence and Gender Advocacy in Nigeria (CENGAIN) and HERizon Women's Network, alongside numerous others, will mark the month by participating at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) in Newyork and other activities as leadership dialogues, mentorship engagements for young women, policy advocacy sessions, skills development workshops, and community outreach initiatives. These activities embody the spirit of "Give To Gain" by translating the theme into practical action, giving time, knowledge, platforms, and resources to empower women and girls.

At the same time, the 2026 theme speaks directly to women ourselves. It calls us to embrace a culture of giving and one of the most powerful ways we can embody "Give To Gain" is by intentionally investing in the younger generation. Young girls and young women need guidance, role models, protection, and opportunity. When we invest in them today, we gain visionary leaders, ethical professionals, innovative entrepreneurs, and compassionate nation builders tomorrow.

Finally, as we mark International Women's Day 2026 and Women's Month globally, let us all commit to giving intentionally, our time, influence, resources, and voice. In giving to women and girls, we do not diminish ourselves; we multiply impact. When women give and society invests in women, we all gain a stronger, fairer, and more hopeful future.



Dr. Asmau Benzies Leo

Executive Director, Centre for Nonviolence and Gender Advocacy in Nigeria (CENGAIN)

Dr. Asmau Benzies Leo is a development practitioner with extensive national and international expertise in gender equality, peace-building, governance, and humanitarian action.

She holds a PhD in Public Governance and Leadership, a Master's degree in Conflict Management and Peace Studies, and executive certifications from leading institutions including Howard University, Harvard University and Glasgow Caledonian University.

As Executive Director of the Centre for Non-violence and Gender Advocacy in Nigeria (CENGAIN), she has led ground-breaking advocacy initiatives on women's political participation, gender-based violence prevention, and security sector reform across multiple World Bank, UN and EU-supported projects.

Internationally, Dr. Leo has represented civil society at the United Nations, contributed to regional dialogues on Women, Peace and Security, and partnered with global networks advancing gender justice and inclusive governance.

She is a UN Recognised Global Ambassador on Women, Peace and Security. Her expertise bridges grassroots action with policy advocacy, making her a respected voice in advancing gender equality and sustainable peace in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Financial Literacy Is Not a Punishment

By Sola Adesakin



The moment someone mentions a money class, some people behave as

though their joy has just been cancelled. As if financial literacy means a life of deprivation, no fun, no flavour, no freedom. Let us clear something up. Financial literacy is not a punishment. It is not a vow of poverty. It is not a command to stop living. It is simply the ability to understand how money works so it does not work against you.

There are a few common misconceptions that quietly keep people from engaging with financial education. And in this season where more people are earning, investing, and building, we need to correct them.

Misconception 1: Financial literacy means "don't spend money."

Spending is part of life. You are not meant to live like a monk. You have bills. You have preferences. You may even have a love for good food, good shoes, and good holidays. Financial intelligence is not about not spending. It is about spending intentionally.

There is a difference between spending on purpose and spending on impulse. The first builds peace. The second builds regret. The goal is not restriction. The goal is control.

Misconception 2: Money-conscious people do not enjoy life.

There is this picture that financially literate people sit at home hugging calculators and rejecting joy. In reality, financially disciplined people often enjoy life more because they plan for enjoyment. Their holidays are funded, not financed with anxiety. Their celebrations are thoughtful, not followed by months of recovery. Trips feel different when they are paid for, not cried for. Planning does not remove pleasure. It protects it.

Misconception 3: Always think about the future and ignore today.

Some people assume that financial wisdom means sacrificing all present happiness for a distant tomorrow. No.

The future is built from how you handle today. If your present is chaotic, your future will inherit that chaos. Financial literacy teaches balance. Handle today responsibly so tomorrow becomes easier. You can enjoy now and still prepare for later. They are not enemies.

Misconception 4: I do not earn much, so this does not concern me.

This one is costly. Financial literacy is not for rich people. It is for anyone who handles money. Whether it is fifty thousand or five million, the principles

remain the same.

In fact, the earlier you learn, the less expensive your mistakes. Small money mismanaged trains you to mismanage big money. Small money handled well prepares you for larger capacity.

Money does not suddenly become easier when it increases. Discipline must already be in place.

Misconception 5: Investing is for experts and "big boys."

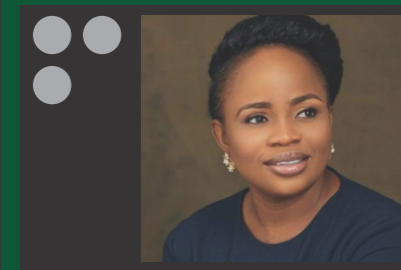
Investing is not reserved for the elite. It is for ordinary people who understand that money left idle quietly loses value. You do not need to be a market analyst. You need to start small, ask questions, and stay consistent. Mutual funds, treasury bills, exchange-traded funds, equities, real estate investment trusts, these are tools, not mysteries. The goal is not to gamble. It is to participate in growth.

Misconception 6: Money conversations are greedy or unspiritual.

This one is especially common in environments where ambition is sometimes confused with pride. Money is a tool. It amplifies who you already are. Understanding it does not make you greedy. It makes you responsible. Avoiding money conversations has never made anyone richer. Silence has not protected anyone from inflation, poor decisions, or debt. If you pray for breakthrough, you must also prepare for stewardship.

Misconception 7: Financial literacy will make life too serious.

On the contrary, it makes life calmer. When you understand your numbers, you sleep better. When you know your goals, you spend confidently. When you understand risk, you invest wisely. When you have a plan, you are less shaken by noise. Financial literacy is not about living in fear. It is about living with clarity. The truth is simple. Financial education does not take life away from you. It gives you options. It gives you margin. It gives you peace. And peace is far more attractive than performance. So the next time someone mentions a money class, do not behave as though your life is over. It might just be beginning, on better terms.



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 InstructorSM and a member of the Personal Finance Speakers Association.

HER POINT OF VIEW



Visibility in the Workplace: One of the Fastest Routes for Career Growth

Chinyere Okorochoa

Visibility simply means the state of being seen. Yet, for many female professionals, the idea of being visible at work triggers discomfort. We are often conditioned to believe that self-promotion is immodest, that excellence will speak for itself, or that quietly doing our jobs well is enough to guarantee progression. As a result, many talented women choose to fade into the background, adopting a passive approach to their careers. Unfortunately, research and lived experience tells a different story.

Visibility is not optional. It is a critical ingredient for career growth. And contrary to popular belief, visibility does not require loud personalities or aggressive self-promotion. It requires intention.

Over the course of my career, I have observed a recurring pattern in organisations. We often wonder why

certain individuals are repeatedly chosen for high-profile assignments, strategic roles, and leadership opportunities, while others, sometimes more technically competent, remain overlooked. The difference is rarely talent alone. More often than not, those who rise have mastered the art of being visible. They have positioned themselves deliberately to be seen, remembered, and trusted.

In today's workplace, visibility matters more than ever. With the evolution of professional services, the rise of remote work, and the explosion of digital platforms, being hardworking is no longer enough. Competence is now the baseline. If decision-makers do not know who you are or what you bring to the table, opportunities will pass you by, quietly and repeatedly. This reality is particularly harsh for women.

Many women assume their managers will advocate for them. Experience has shown

that this is not always the case. Even the most supportive boss cannot promote what others cannot see. This makes personal responsibility for visibility non-negotiable, especially in hybrid or remote environments where physical presence is limited.

Sarah's story illustrates this clearly.

An internal promotion opportunity opened up in Sarah's organisation, one of the leading banks in the country. The role aligned perfectly with her skills and experience. She was shocked when she was not shortlisted, particularly when she learned that a less experienced colleague had been selected.

When Sarah asked her manager why she had been overlooked, his response was telling. He had put her name forward, but the panel said they did not know who she was. He could not convince them that she was the right fit.

Sarah's story is not unique. Whether at entry, mid, or senior level, many women

will recognise this experience. The uncomfortable truth is this: it does not matter how good you are at your job if the right people do not know who you are. Visibility determines access, to opportunities, influence, and advancement.

In my over three decades of professional experience, I have learned something important: it is better for people to have an opinion about you, positive or even critical, than to have no opinion at all. At a certain level, lack of visibility becomes a career ceiling. Leadership and visibility skills begin to matter more than technical competence alone.

The impact of visibility is powerful and self-reinforcing. Visibility attracts opportunities. Opportunities build experience. Experience deepens expertise. Expertise increases visibility. I often describe visibility as becoming an opportunity magnet.

Beyond internal benefits, visibility also creates external recognition. When you are known for something, within and beyond your organisation, you begin to build a niche. This requires intentional personal branding. External visibility can unlock opportunities you never planned for:

board appointments, speaking engagements, career pivots, and leadership roles.

Yet many women resist visibility because of limiting beliefs. "I don't want to brag." "It's immodest." "My work should speak for itself." "The system is fair." "If it's meant for me, it will come." These beliefs are comforting, but costly. Confidence gaps, imposter syndrome, and self-doubt often keep women hidden, even when they are highly capable.

This is where personal branding becomes essential.

Personal branding is simply being intentional about how you are perceived. Jeff Bezos famously said, "Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room." If senior leadership were discussing key talent today, what would they say about you? If someone searched your name online, what would they find?

Personal branding differentiates you. It ensures that when opportunities arise, your name comes up. Tools such as thought leadership, speaking engagements, articles, professional bios, digital platforms, and industry participation all play a role. Visibility is no longer accidental, it is designed.

To become more visible, you must act deliberately. Build relationships across levels and departments. Contribute meaningfully in meetings. Develop expertise in a specific area. Volunteer for cross-functional roles. Offer solutions, not just observations. Strengthen your relationship with your manager and support their success. Ask for opportunities. Represent your team confidently. And yes pay attention to your appearance. Presence still matters.

In today's workplace, the playing field is no longer level. Talent alone is not enough. Visibility ensures that your contributions are recognised, your voice is heard, and your career progresses. If you want accelerated growth, visibility is not optional, it is strategic.



Chinyere Okorochoa

Partner in the Law Firm of JACKSON, ETTI & EDU

With over three decades of experience as a trailblazer in the legal profession, Chinyere Okorochoa 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.



WE'VE GOT MEN

Strive Masiyiwa

Founder and Executive Chairman, Cassava Technologies

Kemi Ajumobi

Strive Masiyiwa is a telecommunications and technology entrepreneur, investor, and philanthropist. In nearly four decades as an entrepreneur, he has founded and invested in businesses globally, spanning Africa, Europe, India, Latin America, the Middle East, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA.

Some of his most prominent start-up companies and investments include Mascom Wireless Botswana, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe, Econet Wireless Nigeria (now Airtel Nigeria), Econet Wireless New Zealand (now 2degrees), Trilogy Capital Partners Canada (early investor), Cassava Technologies (comprising Liquid Intelligent Technologies, Cassava AI, Africa Data Centres, Sasai Fintech, and Liquid C2 Cloud & Cybersecurity) and Telrad Group Israel. He continues to invest privately through his investment

companies and family office.

He is Founder and Executive Chairman, Cassava Technologies. Cassava Technologies is Africa's first integrated tech player of continental-scale at the forefront of technology innovation, with operations and investments across Africa, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, the UK and the USA. A vertically integrated ecosystem of digital services and infrastructure enabling digital transformation, Cassava Technologies' businesses include Africa's largest open access cross-border fibre broadband network, spanning 110,000km+/68,000+ miles (Liquid Intelligent Technologies); Africa's largest network of interconnected carrier-neutral data centres powered by renewable energy (Africa Data Centres); cloud and cybersecurity (Liquid C2); artificial intelligence solutions (Cassava AI); fintech (Sasai Fintech); and on-demand digital platforms

(Vaya Technologies).

Born in Zimbabwe, Masiyiwa left as a child and returned home after Independence in 1984, working briefly as a telecoms engineer before setting up his first business in 1986. He emigrated from Zimbabwe in 2000, living with his family in South Africa until 2010 when they moved to the UK. He now lives in Jersey from where he runs a global portfolio spanning more than 40 countries on four continents.

His accolades include the World Food Prize Borlaug Medallion in 2019 for his role as Chair of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (focused on strengthening food systems and supporting Africa's smallholder farmers); induction in 2023 as an International Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; and the W. E. B. Du Bois Medal awarded in 2024 by Harvard University. In 2025, he and his wife Tsitsi

received the David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award and Masiyiwa was named by Time Magazine amongst the world's 100 Most Influential People in AI.

A graduate in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Cardiff University, Strive Masiyiwa has received honorary doctorates from Stellenbosch University, Yale University, Morehouse College, Nelson Mandela University, and Cardiff University (Fellow).

Through family foundations, Higherlife Foundation and Delta Philanthropies, led by his wife Tsitsi and eldest daughter Elizabeth Tanya, Masiyiwa has supported 400,000+ scholarships for African children and youth. He continues to invest in catalytic social impact initiatives in Africa, focusing primarily on education, health, youth entrepreneurship, rural transformation, sustainable livelihoods, disaster relief and preparedness.

HOLISTIC LIVING

Rights, Justice, Action, but also: Restoration, Regulation and Renewal

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri



This year's International Women's Day theme, "Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls," is a global rallying cry. But it is also a psychological one. This is because you cannot speak of rights without speaking of mental health. You cannot pursue justice while ignoring emotional wellbeing and action becomes dangerous when women are silently depleted.

Across Nigeria and around the world, women are leading revolutions. In boardrooms and courtrooms. In hospitals and tech startups. In classrooms and communities. In homes and parliaments. Women are funding economies, shaping policy, raising generations and building nations. Yet beneath the applause, many are exhausted. Not incapable. Not ungrateful. Not weak. Exhausted.

As a Psychiatrist and founder of a 30-bed specialist mental health and drug rehabilitation hospital, I see what

rarely makes headlines. The executive whose insomnia is praised as ambition. The entrepreneur battling panic attacks between investor meetings. The mother who is everyone's emotional anchor while privately drowning in anxiety. The high-achieving young woman quietly managing depression in a culture that rewards performance but punishes vulnerability. These women are not failing. They are functioning under chronic strain.

Let me tell you about Remi.

Remi is a 42-year-old Nigerian entrepreneur who built a thriving logistics company from scratch. She employs over fifty staff. She is financially independent. She sits on advisory boards. She funds scholarships in her hometown. On social media, she is celebrated as a model of modern African success. What the world did not see was the 3 a.m. wake-ups, the heart palpitations before presentations, the constant fear of "dropping the ball," the guilt of not being enough at work or at home. By the time she came to our hospital, her blood pressure had spiked dangerously high, her sleep had collapsed, and she had begun experiencing severe anxiety episodes. "I thought this was the price of success," she told me. It wasn't. It was the cost of unregulated stress.

Chronic stress is not empowerment. Over-functioning is not liberation. Burnout is not progress. When cortisol remains elevated for years, when sleep becomes optional, when emotional labour goes unacknowledged, the body eventually protests. Hypertension appears earlier. Autoimmune disorders increase. Anxiety and mood disorders spike. Marriages strain under unspoken tension. Creativity declines. And eventually, the hospital beds fill.

Rights without recovery lead to collapse. Justice without support leads to breakdown. Action without regulation leads to depletion.

Holistic wellbeing must become part of our gender equity conversation. Economic empowerment must include access to mental healthcare. Leadership development must include emotional resilience training. Workplace advancement must include psychological safety. Public policy must include preventive mental health investment. If we expect women to build a nation, we must not break them in the process. This is not about fragility. It is about sustainability.

The World Health Organisation has repeatedly warned that mental health conditions are among the leading causes of disability globally. Yet in many developing

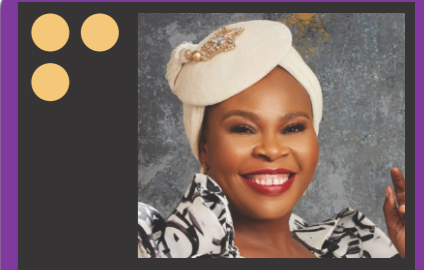
countries, mental health funding remains critically low. In Nigeria, access to specialist mental health care is still limited relative to the size of our population. Meanwhile, women carry multiple roles as professional, maternal, relational and communal — often without structural support. We cannot keep celebrating "strong women" while ignoring the physiological and psychological cost of that strength. Strength should not mean suffering in silence.

This International Women's Day, I challenge institutions, policymakers and corporate leaders to expand the definition of action. Action is not only appointing women to boards. Action is funding health, especially mental health programmes. Action is creating humane work policies that recognize rest as productive. Action is normalising therapy. Action is designing systems that prevent burnout before it becomes a diagnosis.

A dysregulated population cannot build a regulated society. If women are constantly operating in survival mode, decision-making narrows, empathy declines and creativity suffers. Regulation is not indulgence; it is infrastructure. A woman who is emotionally regulated is more strategic, more innovative and more resilient. A woman who is supported is more likely to lead effectively and raise emotionally secure children. Thriving women build thriving economies. Healthy women raise stable generations. Regulated women lead transformational systems.

So this year, let us not only ask how many women are at the table. Let us ask whether they are well enough to sit there long term. Are they supported enough to thrive? Are we building systems that protect their humanity, not just their productivity? Empowerment without wellbeing is temporary. Achievement without restoration is unsustainable.

The future we are building requires women who are not just powerful, but whole. If we expect women to build a nation, we must not break them in the process.



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

Women now dream different dreams

By Zainab Aderounmu

Society has always expected certain things of people, with more elaborate must-haves for women in particular. In the unfolding of our lives, an unquestioned hand wrote the order of specific events with their accompanying timelines; go to school, get a great job, get married and have children, which is at the centre of it all. If at thirty, you were unmarried and without kids, you'd automatically become a failure, as if no other alternative dream was valid.

However, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, *Dream Count*, tells the story of four women who dreamed different dreams, capturing a growing reality far more than we care to admit. Chiamaka's dream for example, a passionate love that truly sees her, and causes a merging of souls, is one we'd tell women to 'grow up' about. As if

finding or seeking real love is an activity reserved for fairies and not humans.

The encounter where she almost married Chuka just because 'they were a good match', is a story too many young women have admitted. For instance, Ifedayo Agoro, founder of DANG, has spoken openly about the engagement she broke off just two months before the wedding, when she realised she was marrying only to ward off societal pressures.

Chia too, as she's fondly called in the novel, almost willed herself to fall in love with Chuka because it was a sensible match, and she could have found much worse prospects at her ripe age of thirty. Like Chia, many women are tempted to choose what makes sense to everyone, except themselves.

At forty-two, Zikor, her successful lawyer friend, could no longer afford to be picky or to hold out for love. Her dreams were simple: study law, get a good job, get married and have two children.

Unfortunately, the other half of her dreams wasn't panning out, particularly because it depended on another human being's willingness. As a result, she suffered repeated mistreatment from her lovers. Her life took a devastating turn when the man she believed loved her and planned to marry her, got her pregnant and vanished upon hearing the news. The poor woman faced childbirth alone.

Kadiatou, a poor village girl from Guinea, married and became widowed. She married her uncle's choice for her and gave birth to a girl. In an unexpected turn of events, her first love, whom she wasn't allowed to marry, helped her apply for asylum in the United States, and it was granted. She rebuilt her life from the ground up and was content living a life she had never imagined was possible. Of all the women, I found Omelogor most interesting because she lived by a different script. She wasn't interested in marriage and she wasn't afraid of what



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 Comper', 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.

people thought of it. She built a full rich life and frequently hosted her friends. Yet, her family thought her life was missing its most important piece; the single thing that would make her whole, even when she was already whole.

It reminded me of aunties quickly rebuking when you asked if marriage truly was compulsory. "God forbid! May God not make you unfortunate," they would say quickly even when many marriages around them hardly resembled great fortune.

Yet, attitudes are shifting. The recent State of Love Report by Zikoko, shows that there's a growing minority of younger people who are questioning the importance of marriage. Although nearly 5000 young Nigerians believe marriage is for love and compassion, 4 in 10 married respondents admitted to regretting being married.

The question isn't why the pinnacle of one's life ambition is tied to this societal arrangement, although that is something to scrutinise. The question is: if marriage really is about finding love and companionship, why do we shame people who are yet to find theirs?

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A group of five diverse women in professional attire, including a hijab, standing in front of a city skyline. The women are of various ethnicities and are looking directly at the camera with confident expressions.

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