



INSPIRING
WOMAN
AFRICA

EDITION 42, 9TH JUNE, 2026

Happy 60th Birthday

BOMA
ALABI

OOON, SAN

WORLD-CLASS COUNSEL, WORLDWIDE REACH

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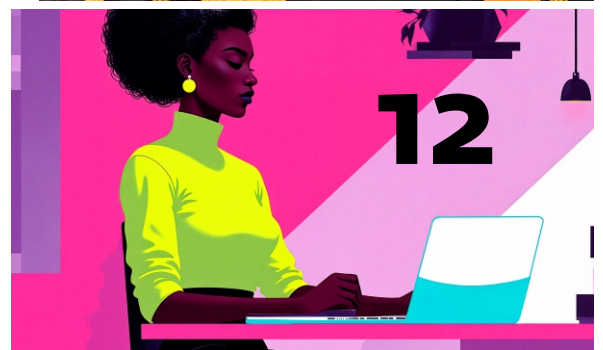
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Kemi Ajumobi

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Welcome!

Dear Readers,

It gives us great pleasure to bring you another edition of IWA in June. The legal profession is indeed a noble one. Over time, especially in Nigeria, people have had to ask questions about the execution of the law and how it affects the citizenry. Questions on what is acceptable and what the law says. A distinguished Learned Silk, who has over the years been available to answer these questions while also being on the side of justice and truth in every situation, is our cover personality for this week.

She is the first and only woman President in the over 50-years history of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and also the Chairman of Shipping Association of Nigeria among other hats she wears.

She recently turned 60 and we caught up with her to ask her questions on Nigeria, the law and turning 60. She is BOMA ALABI OON SAN. We also enjoyed reading what some people who are close to her had to say about her in celebration of her 60th, and we share them with you in this edition.

Welcome to her world and enjoy our insightful interview with her.

Here are other articles in this edition:

HER POINT OF VIEW: I Really Don't Want to Be a Man. By Chinyere Okorochoa.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE: The Ministry of Work: Finding Purpose in the 9-to-5. By Wola Joseph-Condotti.

FINANCIAL AdviseHER: The Mid-Year Reset Your Finances Are Waiting For. By Sola Adesakin.

HOLISTIC LIVING: Your Wellbeing Is Built On Awareness, Not Assumption. By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri.

GENDER INSIGHTS: From Captivity to Recovery: Enhancing Psychosocial Support and Reintegration Pathways for GBV Survivors in Nigeria. By Asmau Benzies-Leo

WE'VE GOT MEN: Dr. FOLUSO FAKOREDE, CEO, Cardiovascular Solutions of Central Mississippi.

WOMAN AT THE HELM: TERESA CLARKE, Chairman, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art.

Until we come your way again next week, let your life and light always shine, and giving up must never be your option.

See you soon!



COVER INTERVIEW

BOMA ALABI OON, SAN

WORLD-CLASS COUNSEL,
WORLDWIDE REACH

Kemi Ajumobi

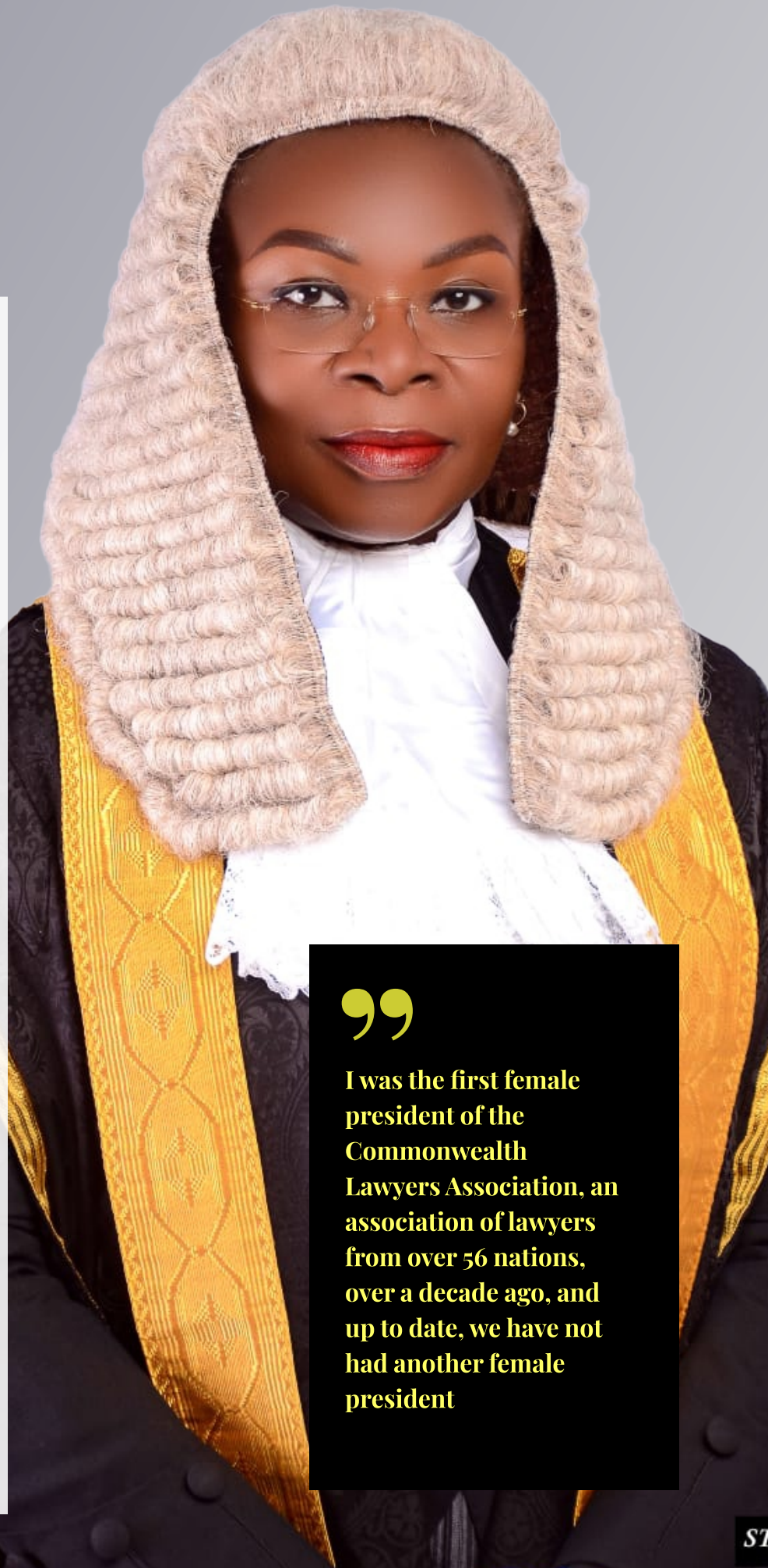


Boma Alabi, OON, SAN is a Senior Partner of Primera Africa Legal (PAL). She leads PAL's Corporate Governance and Compliance Practice.

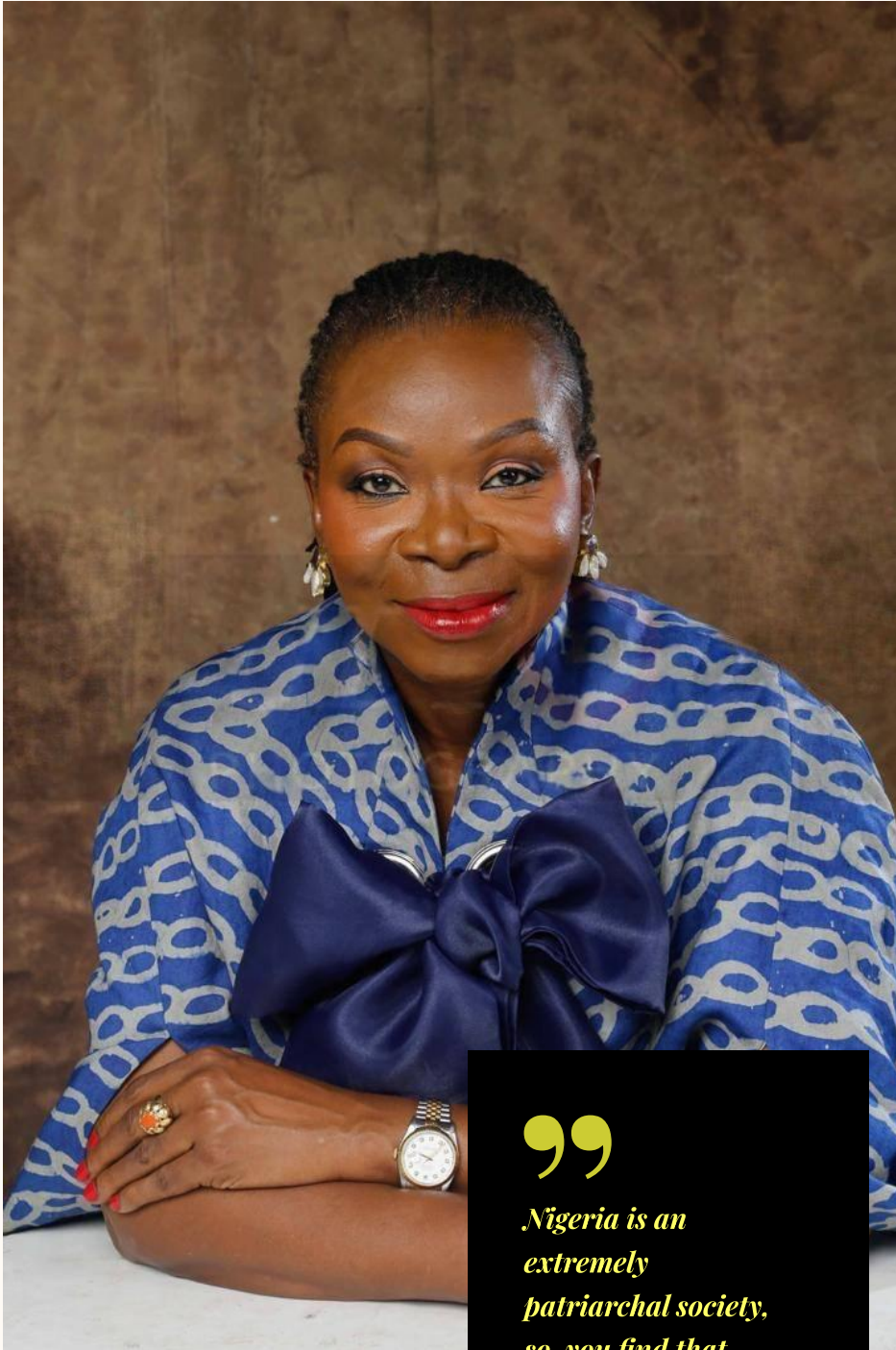
In addition to being an experienced arbitrator and accredited civil and commercial mediator, Boma specialises in international tax law, maritime law, mergers & acquisitions and capital market transactions. She has advised on some of Nigeria's leading commercial deals in a number of sectors including real estate and infrastructure, manufacturing, banking, hospitality, telecommunications, maritime, energy, project funding and development.

She served as the President of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association 2011- 2013, the first and only woman President in the over 50-years history of this association of lawyers from 54 countries, across 7 continents. She was a Council Member of the Board of the Royal Commonwealth Society and also served as the Chairman of the Association of Women Solicitors of England and Wales between 2005/2006. She is a member of the Institute of Directors and the ICC.

She served a 3-year term on the Board of ALFA International, an international network of law firms with its headquarters in Chicago. She is currently the Chairman of Shipping Association of Nigeria (SAN) as well as



I was the first female president of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, an association of lawyers from over 56 nations, over a decade ago, and up to date, we have not had another female president



the President of Shipping, Shipping Agencies, Clearing and Forwarding Employers Association (SSACFEA).

In addition, Boma serves as an INED on the Board of ARM Harith and Cowry Assets Management. She also serves on the Board Committees of ARM Harith Remuneration, Nomination and Governance Committee (RNGC) and ARM Harith Board Audit & Risk Committee (BARC). She is on the Board of Cowry

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Nigeria is an extremely patriarchal society, so, you find that women make career choices based on the work-life balance as a result of which many women lawyers opt for the bench

Asset Investment, F&GP Committee. She is Chairman of Cowry Finance Limited and also serves on the

Advisory Board of WISCAR, a not for profit structured mentoring organisation.

► **Being first and only woman President of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association in its 50+ year history**

I was the first female president of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, an association of lawyers from over 56 nations, over a decade ago. So it is so sad that up to date, we have not had another female president. But it is also not very difficult to understand why. It took a lot of resources, to get to that stage of leadership in the organisation. I was attending all the conferences in various countries across continents. I served on the executive committee for years and travelled for meetings and colloquiums. There were no sponsorships, no free tickets or expenses paid by the organisation. I had to cover all of those expenses myself. So I can understand why not many women are in a position to, even contemplate vying for the position of President of the Commonwealth Association.

► **How your roles across multiple jurisdictions and organisations influence how you lead**

I have worked in different jurisdictions, across continents, and in so doing, I have been in leadership positions as a partner, in London, and here in Nigeria, with offices in Lagos and Abuja, from where we cover the entire country. So, how this has influenced my leadership style is, I have learnt that those who are ambitious and those who are go-getters, whatever jurisdiction they're in, they will push for excellence, they are focused and intentional about their careers, they are productive and always go the extra mile. And in that attitude lies the winners from amongst us in all jurisdictions. I quickly learnt that you cannot push someone who is not motivated and not a self starter. And so the sooner you take them out of your team, the better, because they will continue to underperform.

▶ **Rate Nigeria's legal system in how it sees and treats women lawyers**

Nigeria is an extremely patriarchal society, so, you find that women make career choices based on the work-life balance as a result of which many women lawyers opt for the bench. This is because of the certainty of hours and pay, and a lot of other matrix in the bench as opposed to the bar. So, for instance, currently, the chief justice of Nigeria is a woman, the president of the Court of Appeal is a woman, and we have so many female judges at all levels of judicial service.

▶ **Balancing risk, regulatory expectations, and business objectives in high-stakes projects**

Well, that is something you do in conjunction with your client and other stakeholders in the project. Your role is to ensure there's a regulatory and legal framework around that project. And then to ensure that you minimise the risk to your client and ensure that the risk that cannot be minimised is properly and appropriately parked with the right party, who is best equipped to deal with it.

▶ **What makes a great lawyer?**

I would say, what makes a great lawyer is your ability to listen and take instructions from your client. Your ability to dissect the issues and provide solutions. And finally, your ability to communicate with clarity, communicate in simple language that your client will understand.

▶ **Embracing modern tech tools and processes in law. What are you learning personally?**

It's really important to embrace modern technology tools and processes to give your best in practice. AI tools, I find, enhance productivity and enhance your bandwidth, your ability to do more work. Ultimately, however, you control what you feed into the AI tools, and in so doing, also control the

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I have learnt that those who are ambitious and those who are go-getters, whatever jurisdiction they're in, they will push for excellence

outcome. And, of course, you must verify, you must not be totally 100% reliant on those tools. They are tools. They are not meant to take over from the lawyer. If you approach it from that perspective, you will find them extremely useful. I certainly find them extremely useful. Copilot is my best friend, and we interact multiple times every day.

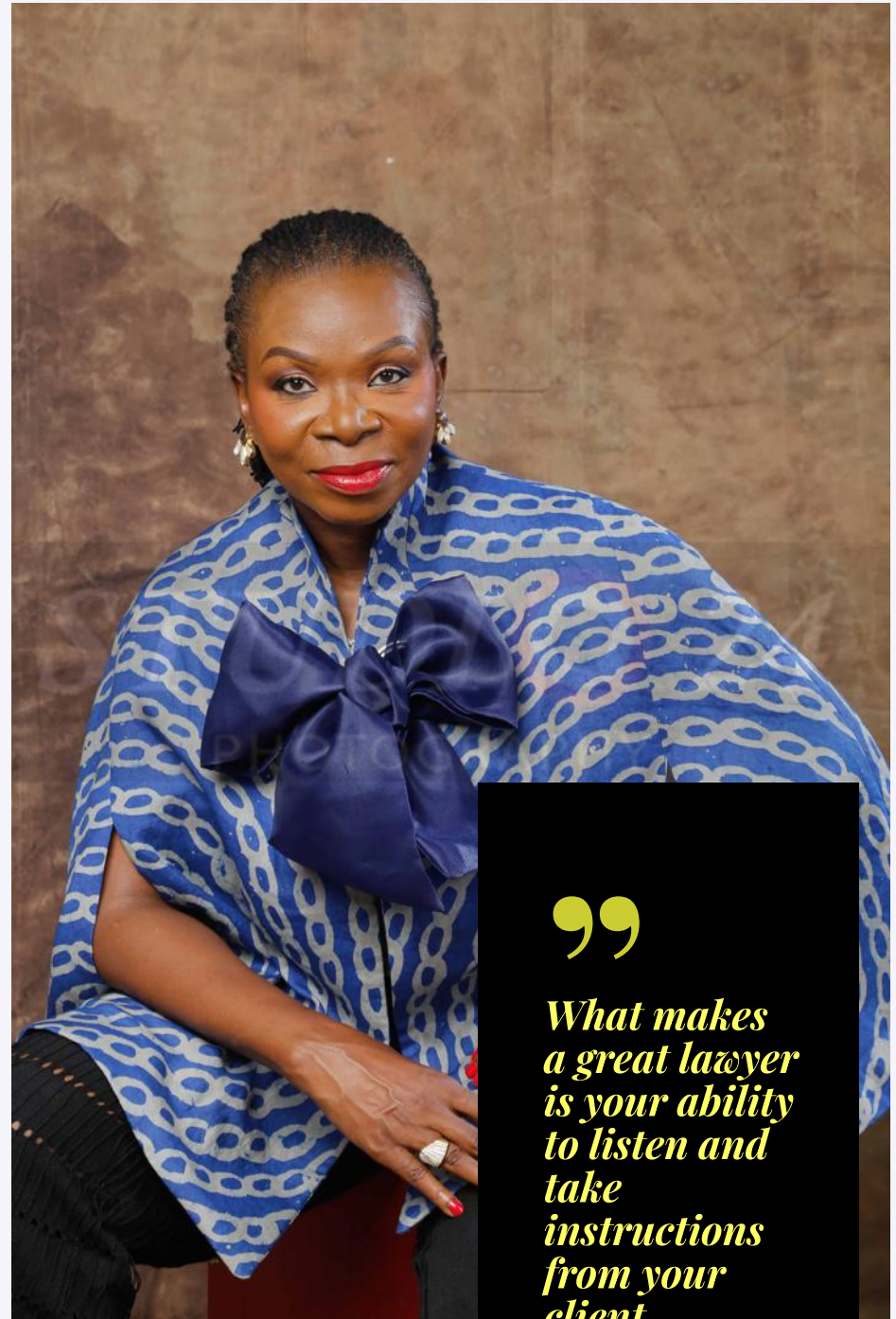


► **What irks you about people being oppressed when the law is available? How important is it to know one's rights?**

What I find really frustrating about people being oppressed when the law is available, is that the people themselves are not willing to use the law and the tools available to them to enforce their rights. I'll give you an example, the Freedom of Information Act has been passed for donkey years, and yet, how many Nigerian citizens have taken advantage of that Act? To hold the local government, the state and federal government, depending on what level it is, accountable to them? Citizens should be demanding their budget, demanding to know what they are doing with their money, and so on. No one is. Also, I have personal experience with people who have been victims of medical negligence or a relative has died as a result of that, and you offer them pro bono legal representation. Guess what Kemi? They will say no, they leave it to God. This is really very frustrating because God has given us the tools to seek and access justice at the human level before we start going for divine justice, but we choose not to use it.

► **In mentoring a young lawyer entering corporate law today, what 3 pieces of advice would you give?**

If I could mentor a young lawyer entering corporate practice today, the 1st thing I'll say to that young lawyer is, learn to listen. Because if you don't listen properly and understand your instructions, you're going to hare off in the wrong direction. The 2nd piece of advice would be to ensure that you do your research thoroughly before you give any advice to your client, because they are not going to double check what you've told them. They will be relying on you. Wrong advice can lead to very expensive consequences. The 3rd would be, learn how to communicate both in writing, and in the room. So your drafting skills must be at the absolute tops, and you must continue to enhance it, to stay at the top of your game.



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What makes a great lawyer is your ability to listen and take instructions from your client

► **Most important leadership lesson you've learnt from serving on diverse boards, and how would you pass it on?**

I have served on diverse boards in Nigeria, United States Of America and of course the United Kingdom as well. My number one essential is that you must make it a priority to understand the business of the company on whose board you're serving. This is essential in order for you to properly contribute as an independent non executive director.

Listen to your management, listen to your chair, listen to the other board members, ask for training, and that, in turn, will assist you to serve competently and give your best to the company. Secondly, I would say that it is also important that you speak up and share your thoughts on

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For nearly four years as Chairman of Shipping Association Of Nigeria, I am effectively the voice of the industry, to the government, to other stakeholders and regulatory agencies

the various issues under consideration in the meetings. Don't be put off by the fact that you may be the minority voice. That is the purpose of your being on that board in the first place.

► **As Chairman of the Shipping Association of Nigeria, how is the association addressing challenges of port congestion, and what measures can shippers implement to minimise delays?**

Delays in the ports are largely due to the agencies in those ports. We have customs there, NDLEA is there, we have Standards Organisation of Nigeria, NAFDAC, various regulatory agencies are in the ports, causing bottlenecks. It's not that way in ports in other countries. So, we need to streamline the number of agencies in the ports. We also need the Nigerian Ports Authority to take its duty of providing towage and pilotage vessels more seriously. They must ensure they're in working order to bring the ships in and out of harbor. All of those things are



causing delays. Sometimes, there's also congestion in the terminals, which results in vessels being unable to berth and offload. So, all of the elements along the chain need to be efficient in order to reduce the delay in our ports and reduce the cost to the shippers.

► **Association's stance on local-content requirements and capacity building for Nigerian maritime talent**

The shipping industry, as a whole, would obviously welcome Nigerian maritime talent. However, do bear in mind, the way shipping works, the vessels are literally

going around the world. They are not focused on any one country or one national issue. The fact is, it really goes back to the government. With the Blue and Marine economy to take a strategic look at the industry and then assist Nigerians in training and capacity building and funding, to enable them to take their place in the sector.

► **Being Chairman of the Shipping Association of Nigeria**

I have been chairman of the Shipping Association of Nigeria for nearly 4 years now, and it has been really interesting,



really rewarding and as a matter of fact, I am effectively the voice of the industry, to the government, to other stakeholders and regulatory agencies. I communicate and engage to ameliorate the challenges that the industry faces and in so doing try to work through those challenges with the appropriate authorities in the marine and blue economy.

► **Top three strategic initiatives to strengthen Nigeria's port efficiency and reduce turnaround times for ships**

1. Streamline the number of agencies in the ports and drastically reduce them to 3 or 4, maximum.
2. Upgrade the terminal facilities so that they can offload larger vessels, fast!
3. Buy new tugboats and pilot boats to ensure efficiency and avoid the constant maintenance problems we are seeing currently.

► **The Big 60. Tell us about turning 60 and what it means to you, what you look forward to and the importance of legacy**

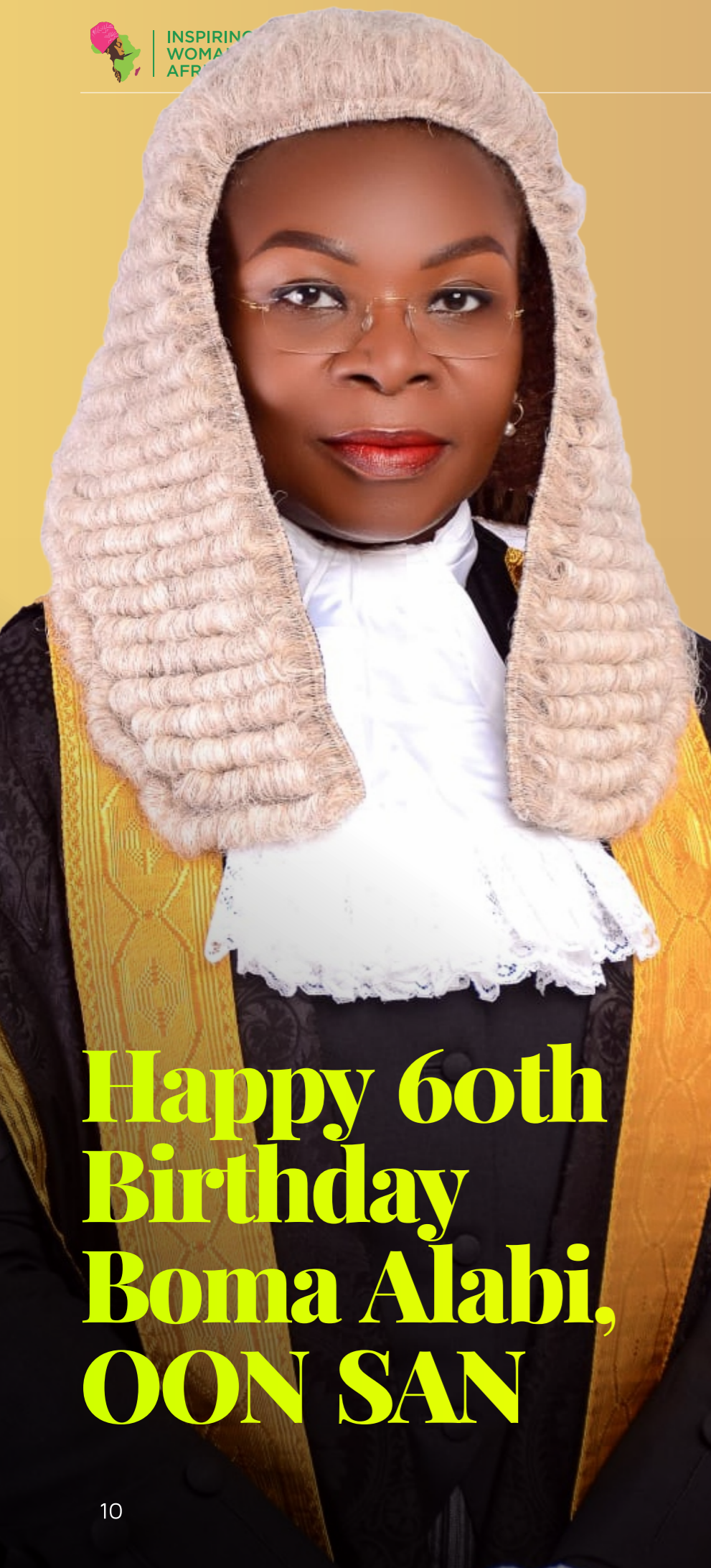
Well, I am 60 years old, and 60 is no different than 50, to be honest, Or 40, or 30. The only difference here is that I'm looking back and thinking, okay, career wise, there's nowhere else for me to go. I'm a Senior Advocate of Nigeria now. That is the apex in terms of hierarchy in the profession. But from a professional perspective, I want to see the law being used more and more often to protect the constitutional rights of the citizen, our rights to life, our rights to security, our rights to education, and all of those things. So you will see more of those sorts of cases being filed for judicial review from my end. On a personal side, I would say my only ambition now and what I do, going forward, from age 60 onwards, is quite simply the pursuit of happiness. That also goes to what life mantras I live by, which is, like I said, the pursuit of happiness.

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My only ambition now and what I do, going forward, from age 60 onwards, is quite simply the pursuit of happiness

► **Nigeria's legal system and hope for the citizenry**

Yes, access to justice has always been a challenge, because there's a cost to dispensation of justice. And until we begin to provide properly, budget wise, it will always be a challenge. But at the same time, it's understandable, because we are in a 3rd world country, where the government is yet to provide water, the basic necessities of life, and essential infrastructure for the citizens. Naturally, financing access to justice would be far lower down the scale in terms of importance for the very limited resources. So, it's definitely going to continue to be a challenge for a while.



Happy 60th Birthday Boma Alabi, OON SAN

Celebrating Boma Alabi at 60

It gives me immense pleasure to celebrate my dear friend and colleague, Mrs. Boma Alabi, SAN, OON on the occasion of her 60th birthday.

Boma's life and career embody excellence, courage, resilience, and service. As one of Nigeria's most accomplished legal practitioners, she has distinguished herself through professional competence, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

Beyond her remarkable professional achievements, what I admire most about Boma is her generosity of spirit and her commitment to lifting others.

At WISCAR, we have been privileged to benefit from her wisdom, guidance, and steadfast support. As a valued member of our Advisory Board and Vice Chair of the Women in Law Mentoring Programme Steering Committee, Boma has played an important role in shaping initiatives that are helping to prepare and empower the next generation of women leaders in law.

As she celebrates this milestone birthday, we honour not only her professional accomplishments but also the impact she has made on people, institutions, and society. She has shown that true success is measured not only by personal achievement but also by the lives touched and opportunities created for others.

On behalf of the WISCAR family and myself, I warmly congratulate Boma on her 60th birthday. May this new decade bring her continued joy, good health, fulfilment, and even greater opportunities to make a difference.

Happy 60th Birthday, Boma. Thank you for being an inspiration to so many of us.

*Amina Oyagbola
Founder and Chairperson, WISCAR*



Happy 60th Birthday To Boma Alabi OON, SAN

Today, we celebrate 60 years of grace, grit, and accomplishment.

I celebrate the remarkable woman that you are. A Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), a valued member of the WISCAR Advisory Board and Vice-Chair of the Women in Law Mentoring Programme Steering Committee. Over the years you have been a worthy model for young professional women to follow. You lead with professionalism, firmness and a heart of warmth.

You have shown that strength and compassion can sit at the same table. That excellence does not have to cost you your kindness. You have achieved so much and you are many things to many people. To me you are a good friend, colleague and Sister.

As you step into this new decade, my prayer for you is simple: continued success in all your endeavours, good health and prosperity that overflows to everyone you touch.

Thank you for the example you set. Thank you for the wisdom you share. Here's to 60, and to many more chapters of impact, joy, and good health.

*With best wishes
Hon. Toki Mabogunje*

Happy 60th Birthday To Boma Alabi OON, SAN

A BLESSING. A LEADER. A SISTER at 60 and Gloriously You!

She rises to every occasion with grace, strength and brilliance. A true example of excellence and a life well-lived.

Thank you for being such an incredible part of my life. You are more than a friend—you are family. A sister in every sense of the word. I celebrate you today and always.

Happy 60th Birthday, my sister, my friend!

With love always,

*Habiba Balogun
Principal Consultant, HB Consulting*

Happy 60th Birthday To An Inspiring Leader And Mentor – Boma Alabi, OON, SAN

I celebrate not just your birthday, but your extraordinary ability to lead, influence, and empower.

Your guidance and dedication set a remarkable example for us all. Your leadership, humility, and passion have touched countless lives and opened doors of opportunity for so many of us.

May your life be filled with joy, laughter, and cherished moments and may the coming years reward you with good health, and well-deserved happiness.

Thank you for being such an incredible boss and mentor. We are always grateful for your wisdom and guidance.

Happy 60th Birthday, Learned Silk!

*Mu'awiya Yunusa, Esq.
Partner-Primera Africa Legal.*

Happy 60th Birthday To Boma Alabi OON, SAN

Happy Birthday Learned Silk. At this diamond age, I pray that you will fulfill the length of your days in good health, abundance and joy. May lines continue to fall in pleasant places for you in Jesus Name.

*Barr. Smart Iwu
Partner and Head of Chambers
Primera Africa Legal*



WOMAN EXECUTIVE



The Ministry of Work: Finding Purpose in the 9-to-5

By Wola Joseph-Condotti

For many people, work is simply a means to an end. A paycheck. A promotion. A pathway to security.

And while those are valid, they are incomplete. Because if we are honest, there is a quiet disconnect many professionals feel (especially people of faith) between what they believe and what they do from Monday to Friday. We worship on Sunday. But on Monday, we compartmentalize. We separate faith

from function. Purpose from profession. But what if that separation was never meant to exist?

Work as More Than a Job

What if work is not just about income but about impact? What if your office is not just a workplace but a platform? A platform to influence. To serve. To reflect excellence. To embody values that go beyond profit. Because the truth is, whether you are in a boardroom, a classroom, a control room,

or a small business, you are not just working. You are ministering. Not necessarily with words. But with actions. With integrity. With how you treat people. With the standards you uphold.

Closing the Gap Between Faith and Work

One of the greatest disservices we have done to ourselves is believing that purpose is reserved for pulpits, and work is reserved for survival. But throughout Scripture, we see something different.

Joseph governed. Daniel advised kings. Esther influenced policy. Deborah led a nation. None of them stood behind a pulpit. Yet all of them fulfilled divine purpose in the marketplace. Your workplace is not separate from your calling. It is often the expression of it.

Excellence as Worship

When we begin to see work through this lens, everything changes. Excellence is no longer just professional, it becomes spiritual.

Integrity is no longer optional, it becomes worship. Service is no longer transactional, it becomes ministry. The way you lead a meeting. The way you respond under pressure. The way you handle power. All of it speaks. Because people may never read a Bible, but they will read your life.

Purpose in the Ordinary

Not every day at work will feel meaningful. There will be routine tasks. Difficult colleagues. Moments of frustration and fatigue. But purpose is not always found in the extraordinary. It is often revealed in the ordinary, done well.

In showing up with consistency. In choosing integrity when no one is watching. In treating people with dignity, regardless of their position. This is how impact is built. Quietly, steadily, intentionally.

A Personal Reflection

Over the years, I have come to understand that the boardroom is not separate from my faith, it is one of the places it is most tested.

In decisions where ethics compete with expediency. In moments where pressure could easily lead to compromise. In opportunities where I must choose between visibility and values. And in those moments, I am reminded: I am not just leading a business. I am stewarding a calling.

Final Thoughts

To every woman navigating her 9-to-5 and wondering if there is more: There is! Your work matters. Your presence matters. Your influence matters. You do not need a stage to have an impact. You do not need a title to have purpose. Right where you are. In your office, your team, your daily responsibilities, there is an opportunity to lead, to serve, and to reflect something greater than yourself. So show up with excellence. Lead with integrity. Serve with intention. Because when work becomes ministry, every day becomes meaningful.



Wola Joseph Condotti

Chief Executive Officer, Eko Electricity Distribution Company

Wola is the CEO of Eko Electricity Distribution Company (Eko Disco).

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

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

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

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

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

FINANCIAL AdviseHER



The Mid-Year Reset Your Finances Are Waiting For

By Sola Adesakin

We are almost at the halfway point of 2026. You have roughly six months of real data behind you and six months of real opportunity ahead. This moment is more valuable than January was. January is full of energy and declarations. December is full of reflection and mild regret. But mid-year is where the actual work happens, because you have evidence from the first

half and enough time left in the second to do something meaningful with it.

Start with an honest review of what you intended in January. Not to judge yourself, but to see clearly. Did you hit your savings target? If you planned to save N50,000 a month and averaged N30,000, you are N240,000 behind where you wanted to be. That is not a crisis. It is a data point. Did any unexpected costs reshape your financial picture? A medical expense, a car repair, a family obligation that arrived without

warning? How does your income compare to what you expected? These numbers are not just history. They are your planning inputs for everything that follows.

If you are behind, resist the temptation to fix everything at once. Cutting ten things simultaneously is the budget equivalent of a crash diet. It works for two weeks and then collapses. Instead, find two specific leaks. The streaming subscriptions running in the background that you do not actively use. The food delivery habit that has quietly grown from N15,000 a

month to N45,000. The weekend spending that never quite makes it into the budget but shows up reliably in your bank statement. Close two leaks, redirect that money with a specific destination, and hold it for 90 days. That is a sustainable correction.

If you are ahead, do not ease up. This is the time to lock in the gains. If you have been investing N40,000 a month consistently, consider moving it to N50,000 for H2. That single adjustment, held for six months, adds

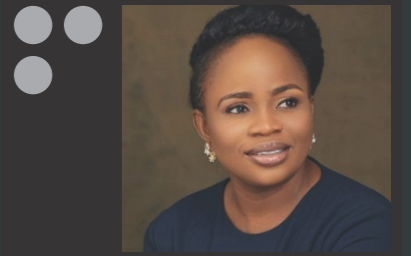
N60,000 in additional capital before the year ends. Small upward adjustments compounded over years are how serious wealth is built.

Look at the things you planned to do this year that are still waiting. A will. A life insurance policy review. The appointment with a financial advisor you have been moving to next month for the past five months. These tasks live permanently in the future because they carry no immediate consequence for being delayed. Assign each one a specific month in H2, put it in your calendar like a meeting, and treat it as non-negotiable.

Plan for year-end costs right now. Not in October, now. The expenses that arrive in the final quarter of every year are not surprises. They are entirely predictable. School resumption fees in September. The social spending that picks up in November and peaks in December. Family obligations, travel, end of year contributions to group celebrations. If these costs collectively run to N300,000 for you, that is N50,000 a month starting now to have them covered without borrowing or panic. Open a separate savings line today and name it specifically. Named savings pots get left alone in a way that unnamed ones do not.

Choose one financial habit to build between now and December. Not a list of five. One. The person who picks one habit and holds it for six months arrives at December in a meaningfully different financial position. Pick the most impactful one for where you actually are right now. If you have no investment account, open one this month and fund it, however modestly. If you have no emergency fund, start building toward three months of expenses. If you have debt at high interest, commit a fixed extra amount toward it each month until it is gone.

H2 does not owe you a fresh start. But if you show up to it with clarity and a specific plan, it will work with you in ways that January, with all its optimism, usually cannot. The year is not over. Go get the second half.



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

I Really Don't Want to Be a Man

Chinyere Okorochoa

For many years, career advice to women has carried an unspoken suggestion: if you want to succeed, lead like a man, think like a man, negotiate like a man, be as tough as a man, and if possible, remove every trace of softness from the room before you enter it.

But I have never subscribed to that school of thought.

I really don't want to be a man. I do not say this as a statement of competition, superiority, or defiance. I say it from a place of deep conviction. I believe women are uniquely designed, specially equipped, and beautifully gifted with qualities that the world desperately needs, especially in leadership.

For too long, many women have felt that to be taken seriously, they must suppress the very attributes that make them powerful. We have been told, directly or indirectly, that empathy is weakness, intuition is emotion,

collaboration is indecision, and foresight is overthinking. I disagree.

In fact, I believe that some of the qualities women naturally bring into rooms of leadership are not weaknesses at all. They are leadership assets. They are strategic tools. They are gifts that can transform organisations, institutions, nations, and communities.

I call these qualities the F.I.L.E.
Foresight...
Intuition...
Lateral Thinking...
Empathy...

These four qualities, when properly understood and intentionally developed, can make women exceptional leaders in every sector and at every level. So let's examine them more closely.

Foresight is the ability to see beyond the immediate. It is the capacity to think ahead, anticipate consequences,

and consider how today's decisions will affect tomorrow's outcomes. Many women carry this naturally. We plan, we prepare, we think about impact, and we notice the gaps before they become crises.

In leadership, foresight is invaluable. It helps us move beyond short-term wins and build sustainable solutions. It allows us to ask: What happens next? Who will be affected? What are we not seeing? How do we build something that will last?

A leader with foresight does not merely react. She prepares. She positions. She protects the future.

Then there is "Intuition". Intuition is often dismissed because it is not always easily explained on a spreadsheet. Yet, how many times have we known that something was not quite right before the facts confirmed it? How many times have we sensed a person's discomfort, a team's silent resistance, or an opportunity hidden beneath uncertainty?

Intuition is not irrational. It is often

experience, observation, emotional intelligence, and wisdom working together quietly. It is the inner knowing that comes from paying attention.

For women in leadership, intuition can be a powerful guide. It helps us read the room. It helps us understand what is not being said. It helps us sense when people need support, when strategy needs review, and when courage is required.

Of course, intuition must be balanced with data, facts, and sound judgement. But we must stop apologising for having it.

The third quality is "Lateral Thinking". Women are often masters of finding alternative routes. Perhaps because many of us have had to navigate barriers, manage multiple roles, and succeed in systems that were not always designed with us in mind, we have learned to think creatively.

Lateral thinking is the ability to look at a problem from different angles. It is not being trapped by the obvious. It is asking: Is there another way? Can we approach this differently? What solution have we not considered?

This quality is essential in leadership because the world is changing too quickly for rigid thinking. Organisations need leaders who can innovate, adapt, connect dots, and find solutions where others see only limitations.

Women bring that resourcefulness into the workplace, the boardroom, public service, entrepreneurship, and community leadership. We know how to stretch resources, manage complexity, and create possibilities.

Finally, "Empathy".

Some people hear the word empathy and immediately think of softness. But empathy is one of the strongest leadership qualities any person can possess. Empathy is not weakness. Empathy is the ability to understand people, connect with their realities, and lead with

humanity. It is what allows a leader to build trust, inspire loyalty, resolve conflict, and create environments where people feel seen and valued.

A leader without empathy may command obedience, but she may never inspire commitment. A leader with empathy understands that results matter, but people matter too.

And this is where women have so much to offer.

The world does not need women to become less feminine in order to lead. The world needs women to bring the fullness of who they are into leadership. We need women who are competent, confident, strategic, and excellent, but also intuitive, humane, thoughtful, and emotionally intelligent.

We do not need to copy men to be powerful or successful.

We do not need to abandon our uniqueness to be respected. We do not need to harden every part of ourselves to prove that we belong.

Leadership is not male or female. Leadership is influence, responsibility, service, courage, and impact. But when women lead authentically, bringing their full range of gifts to the table, leadership becomes richer, wiser, and more balanced.

So no, I really don't want to be a man. I want to be a woman who leads with clarity and strength.

A woman who uses her foresight to build for the future.

A woman who trusts her intuition while sharpening her judgement.

A woman who thinks laterally and creates new possibilities.

A woman who leads with empathy without apologising for it.

Because when women embrace their F.I.L.E., they do not merely occupy leadership positions.

They transform them.



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.

GENDER INSIGHTS

From Captivity to Recovery: Enhancing Psychosocial Support and Reintegration Pathways for GBV Survivors in Nigeria

Asmau Benzie Leo

Nigeria continues to grapple with protracted insecurity driven by insurgency in the North East and widespread banditry

across the North West and parts of the country. Over the past decade, thousands of women and children have been abducted, held in captivity, and subjected to various forms of gender based violence (GBV), including sexual violence, forced marriage, exploitation, and psychological abuse. While rescue efforts and military operations have led to the release of some survivors, the long-term impact of captivity on their mental health and social wellbeing remains profound and insufficiently addressed both at the family, community, and institutional levels.

Survivors returning from captivity often experience severe psychological distress. Many have endured repeated trauma, including witnessing killings, experiencing sexual violence, or being forced into roles within armed groups. As a result, conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and emotional withdrawal are common. Children, in particular, may exhibit developmental delays, behavioral challenges, or difficulties reintegrating into their families or formal education systems. Women and girls may also face stigma from their communities, especially those who return with children born in captivity, further compounding their trauma.

Despite these realities, access to structured and sustained mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services in Nigeria remains limited, particularly in conflict-affected rural areas. Existing services are often provided by humanitarian actors, non-governmental organisations, and a few government-led initiatives. However, these interventions are frequently short-term, underfunded, and not sufficiently integrated into the broader health and social protection systems.

Effective MHPSS for GBV survivors must go beyond immediate psychological first aid to a holistic intervention which requires a layered approach that includes community-based support, specialised mental health care, and long-term rehabilitation strategies. At the community level, the provision of safe spaces for women and children are critical. These spaces will provide an environment where survivors can share experiences, receive counseling, and rebuild social connections. Trained community volunteers and social workers are also needed to play a vital role in identifying vulnerable individuals and providing basic psychosocial support services.

At the clinical level, there is a need to expand access to trained mental health professionals who can provide trauma-informed care. This includes counseling, psychiatric services, and referral systems for severe cases. Integrating mental health services into primary healthcare facilities in affected LGAs is critically needed, this will significantly improve accessibility and survivor centred approach to service provision. Mobile clinics and outreach services can also help reach remote communities where survivors may otherwise be unable to access care.

Equally important is addressing the social dimensions of recovery. Survivors often return to communities that may not fully understand or accept their experiences. Stigma, discrimination, and rejection, especially for women associated with insurgent groups or who have been kidnapped for a long period of time can hinder reintegration efforts. Community sensitisation and awareness campaigns are therefore essential to promote acceptance, reduce stigma, and foster supportive environments for survivors.

For children, reintegration into the educational system is a key component of recovery. Accelerated learning programmes, bridging classes, and psychosocial support within schools can help children regain a sense of normalcy and purpose. Teachers and guidance and counselors should also be trained to recognise signs of trauma and provide appropriate support within the classroom setting.

Economic empowerment is another critical pillar of rehabilitation. Many survivors return with limited means of livelihood, increasing their vulnerability to further exploitation or abuse. Skills acquisition programmes, vocational training, and access to micro-grants can help survivors rebuild their lives and regain independence. These interventions should be tailored to the specific needs of women and adolescent girls, taking into account cultural and contextual factors.

To strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, several

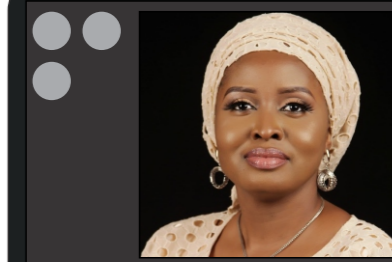
recommendations are essential. First, the Nigerian government must prioritise the integration of MHPSS services into national and state-level health systems, ensuring sustainable funding and capacity building. Second, there is a need for standardised guidelines and protocols for supporting GBV survivors from captivity, aligned with international best practices.

Third, coordination among stakeholders including government agencies, humanitarian organisations, and community leaders must be improved to ensure a holistic and survivor-centered approach. Data collection and evidence generation should also be strengthened to inform policy and programme design while ensuring confidentiality and ethical standards are highly prioritised.

Fourth, community-based reintegration programmes should actively involve traditional and religious leaders, who play a significant role in shaping community attitudes. Their engagement can help facilitate acceptance and reduce stigma against survivors.

Finally, survivors themselves must be included in the design and implementation of programmes that affect them. Their voices, experiences, and resilience are critical to developing effective and contextually appropriate solutions.

In conclusion, addressing the mental health and psychosocial needs of GBV survivors emerging from captivity in Nigeria is both a humanitarian imperative and a critical component of peacebuilding and recovery. Without comprehensive support systems, survivors risk being left behind, trapped in cycles of trauma and marginalisation. By investing in holistic, survivor-centered approaches that combine mental health care, social support, and economic empowerment, Nigeria can pave the way for meaningful rehabilitation and reintegration, restoring dignity and hope to some of its most vulnerable citizens.



Dr. Asmau Benzie Leo

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

Dr. Asmau Benzie 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 (CENCAIN), 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.



WOMAN AT THE HELM

Teresa Clarke

Chairman, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

Teresa H. Clarke is the Chairman, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. She is also the Chairman and CEO of Africa.com LLC, a role she began in 2010 after stepping down from a managing director position in Goldman Sachs' investment banking division.

Under her leadership, Africa.com has grown into a leading Africa-focused platform, attracting roughly five million page views each month from users in more than 200 countries. The site curates news, insights, and travel information covering all 54 African nations and contributes to shaping global perceptions of the continent.

While at Goldman Sachs & Co., Clarke managed mergers and acquisitions and advised on corporate finance for major U.S. and European Fortune 500 clients. She also led the Goldman Sachs Africa-Aspen Programme, a leadership initiative for rising African public- and private-sector leaders, developed in partnership with the Aspen Institute.

In South Africa Residence (1995–2000), during this period, she taught corporate finance in the MBA programme at Wits Business School and served on the investment committee of a private equity fund focused on Southern Africa.

Motivated by addressing South Africa's leadership pipeline gap, she founded the Student Sponsorship Programme (SSP). SSP offers scholarships and mentoring to academically talented but economically disadvantaged South African students to attend private schools. Since its inception, SSP has supported scholarships for over 600 high school students, amounting to more than \$10 million, with more than 90% of graduates advancing to higher education.

Clarke serves on the boards of SSP South Africa, the Southern Africa Legal Services (Legal Resource Centre), the Tony Elumelu Foundation, and the Opportunity Agenda. She is also an emerita board member of the Harvard Business School

Alumni network.

From a lineage steeped in the noble tradition of learning to a visionary career spanning media, justice, and the arts across the African continent, Clarke's journey inspires as a tapestry of impact and prestige. Her unwavering devotion and transformative leadership culminated in her being awarded one of South Africa's most esteemed national honors—the Order of the Companions of O.R. Tambo.

She bagged a bachelor's degree in economics, cum laude, from Harvard College, an MBA from Harvard Business School, and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.



WE'VE GOT MEN

Dr. Foluso Fakorede

CEO, Cardiovascular Solutions of Central Mississippi

Dr. Foluso Fakorede grew up in Nigeria before moving to the United States during adolescence. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Biology with a minor in Economics from Rutgers University, followed by an M.D. from UMDNJ–Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in Camden, New Jersey. His training included an Internal Medicine internship and residency at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, after which he completed a Cardiology fellowship with a subspecialty in Interventional Cardiology and Endovascular Intervention at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, New Jersey.

During his fellowship, he was distinguished as Chief Cardiology Fellow. His clinical focus encompasses preventative cardiovascular care, women's heart health, and catheter-based interventions for

Coronary Atherosclerosis Disease (CAD) and Peripheral Atherosclerosis Disease (PAD).

In 2015, Dr. Fakorede founded Cardiovascular Solutions of Central Mississippi, with a mission to educate communities and expand access to high-quality care in the Mississippi Delta. He has emerged as a national advocate addressing health disparities in underserved populations. As Co-chair of the Association of Black Cardiologists' PAD initiative, he has collaborated with Congressional lawmakers to establish the first bipartisan PAD caucus, aimed at advancing legislation to reduce preventable amputations and to promote PAD research, education, and treatment.

In 2018, he testified on Capitol Hill as part of a congressional delegation, highlighting the PAD epidemic and leading a "Sprint to Zero Amputations" initiative with policy recommendations to

curb unnecessary amputations.

Dr. Fakorede has also engaged in international outreach, including a medical visit to Cuba in October.

He currently serves on the Society of Cardiac Angiography and Intervention vascular disease committee and as part of the American Heart Association Patient Advocacy Group. Dr. Fakorede's work for health equality has been highlighted by Business Insider, Men's Health magazine, and Reader's Digest. He was honored by The ROOT 100 most influential African Americans 2020 and was also invited to become a member of the Men's Health magazine Advisory Board.

HOLISTIC LIVING



Your Wellbeing Is Built On Awareness, Not Assumption

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri

In a world where busyness is worn like a badge of honour and “feeling fine” is often mistaken for being well, one of the most dangerous assumptions we make is that silence in the body means safety. Yet, the human body rarely announces its struggles loudly in the early stages. It whispers. And too often, we are too distracted to listen.

This is where the conversation must shift, from reactive healthcare to intentional, holistic living.

Consider the story of a woman who appeared to be thriving. She was

productive, present for her family, and deeply engaged in her work. By all visible standards, she was well. Yet beneath that surface, silent risks were building—elevated blood pressure, rising cholesterol levels, and the early signals of conditions that, if ignored, could have led to life-altering consequences.

What changed her trajectory was not a crisis. It was awareness. A routine check revealed what her body had not yet loudly expressed. And in that moment, she was given something incredibly powerful—the opportunity to act early, to adjust, to prevent rather than repair. This is the essence of

holistic wellbeing. It is not defined by the absence of symptoms but by the presence of awareness.

Health, in its truest sense, is not something we check only when something goes wrong. It is something we continuously understand, monitor, and nurture. Routine health assessments are not merely medical procedures; they are tools of insight. They allow individuals to see beyond how they feel and understand what is happening within their bodies. The danger of neglecting this awareness is not always immediate, but it is cumulative.

When health issues go undetected, they do not remain static. They progress. Conditions that could have been managed early become more complex. Treatment options narrow. Costs increase. And the emotional toll deepens, often bringing anxiety, uncertainty, and fear. But beyond the clinical implications, there is a broader perspective that must be embraced.

Holistic living requires us to move from assumption to intentionality. It asks us to take ownership, not just of treatment, but of prevention. It encourages a lifestyle where awareness is built into routine, where understanding one's health becomes as normal as daily activities.

Preventive care is one of the most powerful, yet underutilised, tools in modern health systems. Regular screenings, assessments, and consultations provide early warnings—signals that allow individuals to make informed decisions about their lives. These decisions may include lifestyle adjustments, dietary changes, stress management strategies, or medical interventions when necessary.

For individuals living with chronic conditions, this awareness becomes even more critical. Continuous monitoring allows for timely adjustments, preventing complications and improving quality of life. It transforms health management from a reactive cycle into a proactive strategy. Equally important is the psychological dimension.

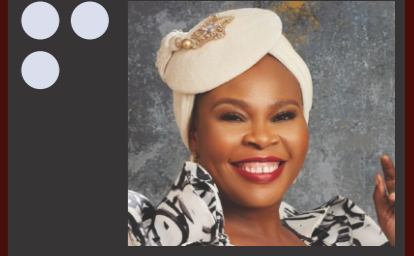
Uncertainty about one's health can be deeply unsettling. The absence of information often breeds anxiety, while clarity, even when it reveals challenges provides a sense of control. Knowing where you stand empowers you to act, to plan, and to live with greater confidence.

Yet, despite these benefits, many people continue to delay routine check-ups. Time, fear, financial concerns, and a false sense of security all contribute to this pattern. But the cost of delay is often far greater than the cost of prevention.

We must begin to see health not as an event, but as a continuum. It is shaped daily by our choices, influenced by our environments, and strengthened by our awareness. Routine check-ups are not interruptions to life; they are investments in it. They ensure that we are not just living, but living well with clarity, intention, and foresight.

In the end, the most powerful form of care is not the one that responds to illness, but the one that prevents it because by the time the body begins to shout, it may already be late.

The question, then, is simple yet profound: are you waiting for symptoms, or are you choosing awareness? Holistic living begins with that decision.



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.



A Journey Through Traditional Beauty & Flavor


Inside Clay Food Shop & The Henna Place

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

Clayfoodshop

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


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

 [@clayfoodshoplagos](https://www.instagram.com/clayfoodshoplagos)
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The Henna Place

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

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

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