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INSPIRING
WOMAN
AFRICA

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OYINKANSOLA
BADEJO-OKUSANYA SAN

AUDACIOUS DARE TO LEAD NBA PRESIDENCY



PATTVPHOTOGRAPHY

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Welcome!

Order in the court!

Dearest IWA readers, in this edition, IWA court on its pages, headlines its compelling argument: 'OYINKANSOLA BADEJO-OKUSANYA, SAN, Audacious Dare to Lead NBA Presidency'.

Our Honorable Court speaks through IWA magazine, where in this edition, Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya, SAN has been examined, cross-examined, and the evidence as shared here will inspire readers to dare to dream big and be bold about it.

Exhibit A: Her campaign is about leadership that is BOLD in vision. Exhibit B: BOLD in service. Exhibit C: BOLD in delivery.

For her, it is beyond simply making history, it's about making the difference that counts. Those who know her describe her as unwavering and audacious. She is a beacon whose light does not dim when the room grows crowded with noise.

The question before the court of IWA readers is: Should there be a reason for her not to run for this exalted office? The answer is: NO.

THE VERDICT: Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya SAN, has a proven track record, her expertise is exceptional and her decision to run for the office of the President of NBA is precedent for the future of Nigeria's legal culture.

As you flip through page by page, you'll meet a trusted counsel with a storied career. This isn't a hyped narrative merely adorned in glossy prose, it's a well-documented exposé on the life of a woman who has dared to put herself forward to serve.

IWA has presented the testimony, gathered the exhibits of merit, and kept the interview nonopaque. We rest our case!

Here are other articles in this edition:

HER POINT OF VIEW: What Cairo Taught Me About Career Growth. By Chinyere Okorocha.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE: The CEO at Home: Why Executive Presence Must End at the Front Door. By Wola Joseph-Condotti.

FINANCIAL AdviseHER: The Art Of Financial Pruning. By Sola Adesakin.

HOLISTIC LIVING: Sleep Is Not A Luxury: The Hidden Foundation Of A Healthy, Productive And Fulfilling Life. By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri.

GENDER INSIGHTS: The AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: A Critical Step for Nigeria's Security and Development. By Asmau Benzies-Leo.

TRIBE WITH THE VIBES: The Assurance Of A Sleepwalker. By Zainab Aderounmu.

WE'VE GOT MEN: Haruna Musa (PhD), MD/CEO Jaiz Bank.

WOMAN AT THE HELM: Osayi Alile, CEO Aspire Coronation Trust.

See you in July.

Stay safe!



COVER INTERVIEW

OYINKANSOLA BADEJO-OKUSANYA, SAN

AUDACIOUS DARE TO LEAD NBA PRESIDENCY

Kemi Ajumobi

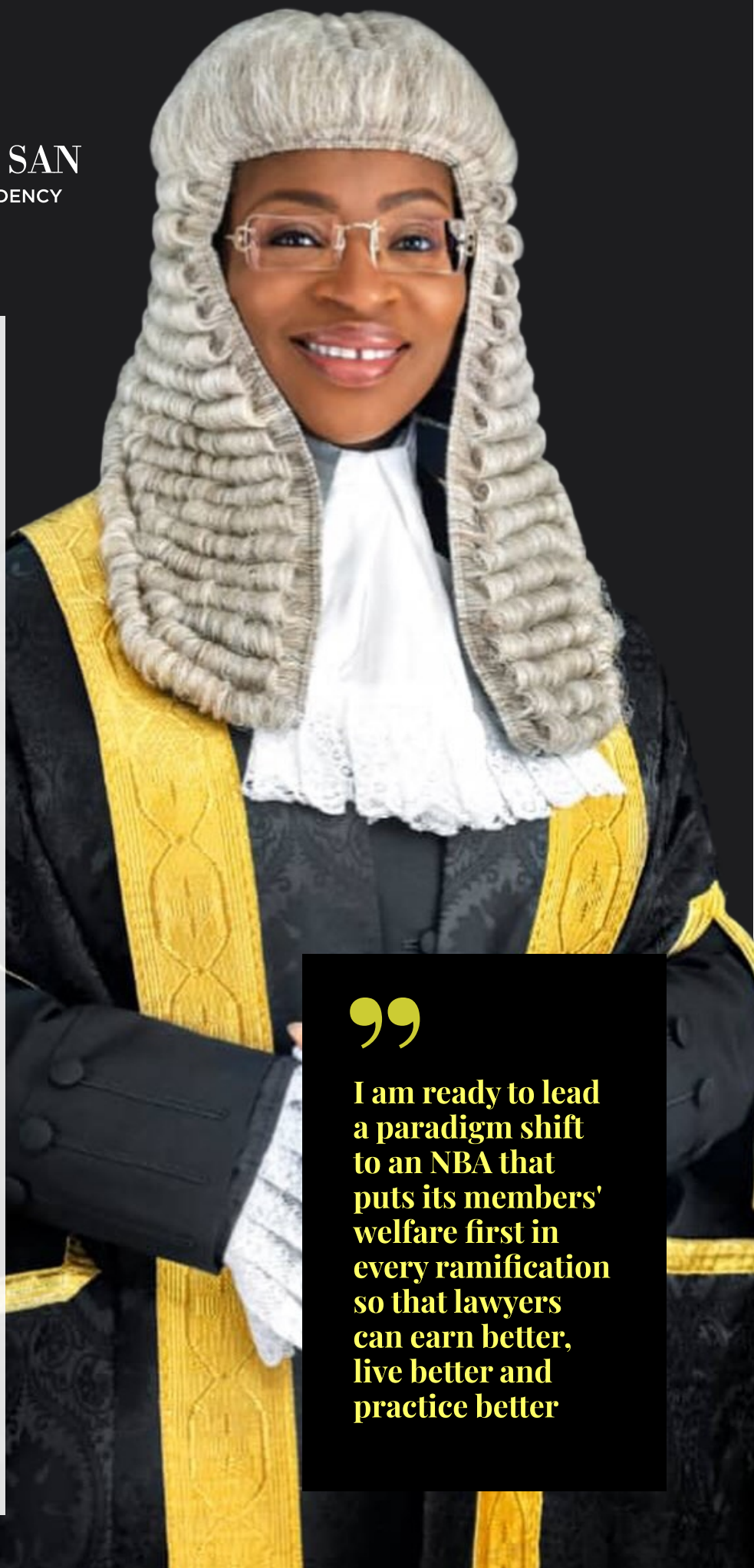


yinkansola
Badejo-
Okusanya, SAN,
FCI Arb, is a
Partner at ALP
NG & Co.
(Africa Law

Practice NG & Company), where she serves as Co-Head of the firm's Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice. A distinguished barrister, alternative dispute resolution practitioner, and public policy professional, she has over two decades of experience advising and representing private individuals, corporate entities, and government institutions in complex commercial disputes before trial and appellate courts in Nigeria, as well as in domestic and international arbitral proceedings.

A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK) and an Accredited CeDR Mediator, Oyinkansola is widely respected for her expertise in litigation, arbitration, mediation, regulatory compliance, justice sector reform, and public policy. Her practice is characterised by a strong commitment to dispute resolution as a tool for preserving commercial relationships and advancing access to justice.

Called to the Nigerian Bar in 2002 after obtaining her LL.B (Hons) degree from the University of Lagos, where she had earlier earned a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree in English, she commenced her legal career at Olaniwun Ajayi LP. In 2007, she was appointed Senior Special Assistant on Justice Sector Reform to the Governor of Lagos State, Babatunde Raji Fashola,



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I am ready to lead a paradigm shift to an NBA that puts its members' welfare first in every ramification so that lawyers can earn better, live better and practice better



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*My campaign is anchored on **BOLD leadership - leadership that puts members first, that listens, includes, acts, and delivers.***

SAN, working in the Office of the Honourable Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Olasupo Shasore, SAN.

In that capacity, she contributed to significant justice sector initiatives, legislative reforms, and institutional strengthening programmes aimed at improving access to justice and protecting the rights of vulnerable citizens. Among the notable access to justice interventions undertaken during this period were the relocation of the Office of the Public Defender to a purpose-built and more accessible facility and the introduction of more humane transportation arrangements for inmates attending court proceedings.

In 2011, she was appointed General Counsel to the Governor of Lagos State, a position she held until 2015. During her eight years in public service, she advised on major policy initiatives, public-private partnerships, arbitration legislation, compliance matters, consumer protection issues, innovative

home ownership initiatives and justice sector reforms.

She also served as a vital liaison between the Lagos State Government and the Nigerian Bar Association, facilitating sustained collaboration and support for numerous NBA activities, including branch law weeks and the 2011 Annual General Conference hosted in Lagos.

In 2017, she became a founding partner of Africa Law Practice NG & Company, which has since evolved into one of Nigeria's leading commercial law firms with affiliations across Africa. As Co-Head of its Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice, she continues to provide strategic counsel on high-value disputes and complex legal matters across multiple sectors.

Oyinkansola has made significant contributions to the development of arbitration and alternative dispute resolution in Nigeria. She served on the Executive Committee of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK), Nigeria Branch, and chaired its Annual

Conference Planning Committee for three consecutive years in Lagos (2014), Abuja (2015), and Port Harcourt (2016). She was also a member of the Nigeria Economic Summit Group/National Assembly Business Environment Roundtable (NESG-NASSBER) Arbitration and Dispute Resolution Working Group and participated in the reform process that culminated in the enactment of the Arbitration and Mediation Act 2023. She is a member of the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA), the International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA), the African Arbitration Association, ArbitralWomen, the International Bar Association (IBA), the Commonwealth

Lawyers Association (CLA), the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), and a Life Member of the African Women Lawyers Association (AWLA). She also serves on the Board of the Lagos Court of Arbitration (LCA).

A committed Bar leader, Oyinkansola has devoted considerable time and energy to the service of the Nigerian Bar Association. Her various leadership roles have included Assistant Secretary of the NBA Lagos Branch; Delegate to the 2006 NBA Elections; Member of the NBA Lagos Branch Building Committee; Member of the Technical Committee on Conference Planning in successive NBA administrations; Chair of the NBA Lagos Branch Annual Dinner Committee in 2021 and 2022; Member of the Future of the Legal Profession Committee; Member of the Conference Investigation Committee; Alternate Chair of the 2023 Annual General Conference Planning Committee; and Chair of the 2024 Annual General Conference Planning Committee.

She has also served as a co-opted member of the NBA National Executive Council since 2022. In recognition of her exceptional service to the Association, she was awarded the NBA Presidential Medal of Service in August, 2024.

Beyond professional accomplishment, Oyinkansola is deeply committed to the ideals of justice, fairness, and service. A passionate advocate for the vulnerable and underserved, she has undertaken extensive pro bono work, securing life-changing outcomes for indigent litigants, including the successful defence and acquittal of persons facing capital offences and the reversal of wrongful convictions on appeal. Her commitment to ensuring meaningful access to legal representation reflects a lifelong dedication to the rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights. A sought-after speaker, mentor, and thought leader, she is particularly passionate about professional development, mentorship, gender



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I have always been of the firm belief that our association is strongest when every member feels seen, heard, and represented

equity, children's rights, and the advancement of young lawyers. She is widely regarded as a strategic organiser, consensus builder, and inspirational

leader who combines professional excellence with a profound commitment to institution-building and public service.

Oyinkansola is the daughter of two distinguished trailblazers: the late Professor Olufolabi Olumide, a distinguished General Surgeon who was the first Vice-Chancellor of Lagos State University, and Clara Folasade Abiodun Olumide (née Solarin), a consummate university administrator, who rose to become the first female Registrar of the University of Lagos. On 29 September 2025, she was



elevated to the prestigious rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), the highest honour in the Nigerian legal profession, in recognition of her outstanding contributions to legal practice, public service, and the administration of justice. A chorister and Church Steward at Methodist Church Nigeria's Emmanuel Chapel, Ikoyi, Lagos, Oyinkansola enjoys reading, music and travelling. She is passionately committed to Nigeria's advancement and the strengthening of its institutions. She is happily married to Yomi Badejo-Okusanya and they are blessed with a son.

whatever we set out to do because you never know who is watching. My father gave his time and service all his life, whether as a Rotarian or as Director of Chapel Music and Organist at the Chapel of the Healing Cross at Idi-Araba. I sing in the choir of my Church, and I am a Church Steward. These values have remained my compass throughout my life. The legal profession appealed to me because it combines intellect with service. I wanted to be part of a profession that shapes society, protects rights, and advances justice. Though I almost missed it, because I first studied English, and then no longer wanted to go back to school to study law because I was having too much fun working and earning money. Thank God for my very determined mother who made sure I did not derail. I cannot thank her enough. She and my father remain my greatest influences in life.

Like many lawyers, my journey was not without challenges but I was fortunate to have wonderful mentors – the late Bankole Aluko, SAN, Olasupo Shasore, SAN, Dr. Konyinsola Ajayi, SAN, Funke Adekoya, SAN and Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN. These are people that played and are still playing active roles in my professional development. I learned

We grew up on the UNILAG Campus at Akoka, a wonderfully intellectual environment. Growing up, the overarching principles instilled in us from parents who led by example were integrity and the importance of a good name, hard work, being focused, contentment, respect for others and striving for excellence in

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The Bar must remain the guardian of the rule of law; not selectively, but consistently

from the best! I was intentional about making them my mentors. Each and every one of them. Gratefully, from them I learnt early that success in law requires discipline, resilience, continuous learning, and the humility to keep growing and learn from those younger than you. Consequently, some of my other mentors have been (and still are) colleagues that are much younger than me and much younger at the Bar. Indeed it has been a tremendous advantage because I keep learning new things. Besides, who is a leader, if not someone that is committed



to a lifetime of learning. That humility and focus is something I mentor younger lawyers about constantly. Keep focused. Keep your eyes on the ball. The distractions are just that, distractions. Don't give in to them. Be intentional. These principles that I live by eventually culminated in my being conferred with the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria in September, 2025, a privilege I am extremely grateful for.

Today, I remain committed to service, to the profession that has given me so much, and to ensuring that future generations of lawyers have as many and even greater opportunities than those I had.

► **Why are you running for the office of the President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA)? Why should you be voted for?**

Hmm.... Good question! I ask myself that question all the time, just to remind myself of what is important.

People often assume that seeking leadership is about ambition. For me, it has always been about responsibility. Interestingly, leadership has often sought me out. For instance, when I was unanimously made the President of my Old Girls Association Class set, I wasn't even present at the meeting. They just called me and told me they had elected me president in absentia, which was humbling.

Every stage of my career has reinforced the belief that when experience gives you the capacity to make things better, you also acquire the responsibility to serve. That belief took me into public service. I wasn't sitting down in my office and the opportunity to serve came. No. My work took me to the Lagos State Ministry of Justice from time to time and I was intrigued by the policy work that was being done that would affect the lives of millions of Nigerians. I wanted to be a part of that so I offered myself as soon as the new Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN Administration was sworn in and I was fortunate that my offer was accepted. That belief has also guided my work within the legal profession.

I am running because I believe the NBA is at a defining moment and the



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I will be a President who will speak boldly and act swiftly for the Bar and the wider public's interest with courage and conviction



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There is no doubt that women often face additional hurdles in leadership journeys.

However, I have never allowed challenges to define my possibilities

responsibility to serve has once again come calling. Our members are demanding stronger leadership, improved welfare, greater accountability and a more influential Bar that speaks boldly on issues affecting both lawyers and the society. That being said, the idea to run for

president wasn't originally mine. Since I was called to the Bar, I've always been what we jocularly call a “Bar man” – someone who is actively involved in Bar activities whether by holding office within the Bar or simply attending Bar meetings, conferences, events and participating actively in Bar activities. So I understand what the Bar is, what it was and what I think it should be and where I think it should be going. One day, I was having this long animated conversation with a senior colleague about the direction I thought the Bar should be heading in and how it could do so much more for its members, and after listening to me for a

while, he said “I think you should run for president of the NBA”.

My immediate reaction was horror! I know what it entails and the human in me instantly rejected the rigours of taking on such a humongous task. But like I said, I believe service is a responsibility, so it really didn't take very long for the idea to take root. There comes a point when one must ask, “What more can I give?” rather than “What more can I gain?”

And that is where I find myself today. The legal profession occupies a unique place in society. Lawyers defend rights, shape public policy, resolve disputes and strengthen democratic institutions. When the profession is strong, society benefits. When it is weakened, the consequences extend far beyond lawyers themselves. My aspiration is therefore bigger than winning an election. I want to help build a bolder Bar that is respected for its integrity; a Bar in which its members are prepared for the future and committed to justice in its broadest sense. I want young lawyers to feel hopeful about their future. I want experienced lawyers to feel proud of the institution to which they belong, and I want the Nigerian Bar Association to continue to be a principled voice whenever the rule of law or the public interest is threatened.

Why should lawyers vote for me? Another good question. Members should vote for me because I am prepared, tested, capable and ready to lead. My campaign is anchored on BOLD leadership - leadership that puts members first, that listens, includes, acts, and delivers.

If lawyers choose to entrust me with this responsibility, I hope it will be because they are convinced of the values I have tried to live by - service, excellence, integrity and because they can see that I am genuinely committed to building a 'Bolder Bar' that works for everyone. I am offering a unique combination of private sector and public service experience, competence, and a proven record of service. I have spent years listening to members and engaging with branches across the country and I understand the challenges facing lawyers across different sectors and across generations. I know firsthand what is

required to lead a reform agenda, and I am ready to lead a paradigm shift to an NBA that puts its members' welfare first in every ramification so that lawyers can earn better, live better, practise better and more importantly, move from merely surviving, which most lawyers are, to thriving.

At the end of the day, titles come and go. What endures is the difference and impact we make in the lives of others and the institutions we leave stronger than we found them. That, more than anything else, is why I am running and why I should be voted for. Because I genuinely care and I genuinely want to make a difference.

► **Is it truly hard to live up to promises made during a campaign? How do you intend to change this narrative if you win?**

Leadership is not about making promises. It shouldn't be. Leadership is about making sensible and responsible commitments and being willing to be held accountable for them. And to me, it's only hard when you haven't thought it through. The difficulty arises when promises are made without a clear implementation framework.

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35 years is too long for the NBA not to have a female president when over 60% of its members are female

I believe every commitment must be backed by a plan, timelines, measurable outcomes, and regular reporting. My manifesto makes this very clear. I don't just say what I plan to do, I say how I intend to do it. That way I have created a blueprint that all, including me, can follow. The five pillars of my manifesto are underpinned by three principles – they must be achievable, they must be scaleable and they must most importantly be sustainable.

If I am elected, my administration will establish clear benchmarks and periodic reporting to members because transparency builds trust, and trust strengthens institutions. Progress should not be hidden in committee rooms; members deserve to know what has been achieved, what had not, and why.

► **If elected as President, what is your vision for the NBA, and how would you measure success?**

My vision for the NBA is of a BOLDER, inclusive, innovative, and respected NBA that works for every lawyer regardless of where and how you practise law. A Bar that reclaims its space as a credible voice for justice, democracy, and the rule of law. How will I measure success? If by August 2028, members can look back and say the NBA is more relevant to them than it was in August 2026, I would consider that to be a success. If I am able to turn the NBA into a more financially transparent and accountable association, where members are active partners in its progress, I would consider that to be a success. If lawyers can genuinely say that they have more from their association - more opportunities, more resources, more respect, more economic empowerment, more welfare, then I would consider that a success.

Everything in my manifesto is geared towards setting the NBA on the path to achieving this. If I can do this I would be satisfied. At the end of my tenure, I want members to be able to point to specific improvements and say, “The NBA works better for us and I am proud to belong to it.”

► **What concrete steps would you take to ensure diverse voices are represented in NBA decision-making?**

Inclusion must be intentional. I will ensure that committees and leadership structures reflect the diversity of our profession. Young lawyers, lawyers with disability, women lawyers, law officers and lawyers in the public service, lawyers in the academia, and lawyers from different regions in rural or urban branches, must all have a seat at the table. This is very important to me. Too often I hear stories of marginalisation, exclusion and disconnection. We must change that and one of the ways I will do that is to institutionalise regular stakeholder consultations so that policy decisions are informed by broad-based input rather than a few voices. I have always been of the firm belief that our association is strongest when every member feels seen, heard, and represented.

► **What specific initiatives would you champion to improve accessibility to legal services and justice for vulnerable Nigerians?**

Hmm..... access to justice is one of the greatest challenges in our society and I guess in every society really, its only a question of degree. The most vulnerable in any society are the ones that bear the brunt and society looks up to associations like the NBA to rise up to its moral and professional responsibility and act to ensure that justice is accessible.

One of the things that I hope to achieve is by broad consultation, expand the institutional framework for access to justice initiatives, so that we have a framework in place that we can continue to build upon to ensure that the NBA takes its role as the conscience of the nation and the promoter and protector of the rule of law, very seriously.

A framework that supports stronger coordinated pro bono initiatives and legal aid programmes across all our branches, promotes civic education and encourages strategic partnership to expand legal assistance to vulnerable groups. This framework will have clear objectives and measurable outcomes, and will involve the



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Feedback must lead to action. Listening is important, but responding effectively is what builds confidence

active participation of members so that we are also building capacity.

Access to justice also involves ensuring that the justice system works efficiently. The level of discontent, apathy and outright cynicism for the justice system amongst the citizenry is appalling. The NBA must be much more sensitive to the perception that the public has about the justice system and take bolder steps to reverse this. It is quite literally an existential threat and we must see it as such. We must protect our profession and restore confidence in it.

One of the things I hope to launch is the NBA Justice Watch to monitor court efficiency and broader justice sector performance. This will strengthen accountability and greatly improve perceptions. Justice must be available to all Nigerians regardless of their economic status and the NBA has a bolder role to play and we will play it. The Bar must

remain the guardian of the rule of law; not selectively, but consistently.

► **How would the NBA partner with government, civil society, and the private sector while maintaining independence?**

I do not believe that partnership does not mean surrendering independence. Just as I do not believe that the most effective Bar is a combative one.

The NBA must engage constructively with government, civil society, development partners, and the private sector while remaining firmly committed to its principles.

Where collaboration advances justice and institutional reforms, we should participate. Where government actions undermine constitutional values and the rule of law, we must speak up, firmly and immediately. It is not an option, it is a duty. Respectful engagement and principled advocacy can coexist. I will be a President who will speak boldly and act swiftly for the Bar and the wider public interest with courage and conviction.

When there is a need to be combative we will be. And when the occasion calls for dialogue and collaboration, we will do so too.

► **Reforms to pursue to strengthen professional ethics, disciplinary processes, and public trust**

The reputation of the profession depends on our commitment to ethical standards. I support strengthening ethics training, enhancing awareness of professional obligations, and ensuring disciplinary processes are fair, efficient, and transparent.

We must reward excellence, address misconduct decisively, and continuously reinforce the values that make the legal profession a trusted institution.

► **How would you improve the NBA's engagement with regulators, bars, and law schools?**

The legal profession is becoming increasingly global and technology-driven.

The NBA must deepen engagement with



regulators, legal education providers, and international bar associations to ensure our lawyers remain competitive. We need stronger continuing professional development programmes, curriculum conversations with law faculties, and greater exposure to emerging areas of legal practice.

► **Is this goal more challenging because you are female?**

Yes and no, if that makes sense. Yes, because the barriers that women face climbing to the very top are real. Societal expectations, domestic obligations and responsibilities, bias. Sometimes the bias is barely visible, subconscious and unconscious. Other times it's right there up in your face. I have had a very senior lawyer tell me and a colleague that the leadership of the Bar is not for women. And he wasn't joking! This is just one

example. So there is no doubt that women face additional hurdles in leadership journeys.

On the other hand, I would say no, because I have enjoyed tremendous support from both men and women who have seen beyond my gender and identified a capable person who can get the job done that they are willing to support. I am also enjoying the support of the "If not now, when?" gang. Those who believe it is time for the leadership of the NBA to be more reflective of the members it seeks to lead and that 35 years is too long for the NBA not to have a female president when over 60% of its members are female.

For me personally, my mantra remains capacity and I have never allowed challenges to define my possibilities. I am very proud of being a woman and I do not want to be a man. As excited as I am at the prospect of making history as the second

female to be president after Dame Priscilla Kuye 35 years ago. I would rather take the conversation away from gender. I am running as a qualified capable candidate with the experience, competence, and vision to lead the NBA. And if anything, this interesting journey has strengthened my resolve and deepened my understanding of inclusive leadership.

► **Is the law fair to female lawyers in Nigeria?**

The law provides important protections, but challenges remain in practice. Many female lawyers continue to navigate structural barriers, unconscious biases, and balancing professional and family responsibilities.

Progress has been made, but there is still work to do. The objective is not special treatment but equal opportunity, equal respect, and equal access to leadership positions.

► **How should NBA policy advocacy incorporate gender perspectives?**

Justice sector reforms affect people differently, and policy advocacy should reflect that reality.

A gender-responsive approach helps identify barriers that may

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*The
credibility of
our voice
depends on
the integrity
of our
actions*



disproportionately affect women and other vulnerable groups while ensuring that reforms are effective and inclusive. When diverse perspectives inform policy, the outcomes are stronger for everyone.

► **What steps would you take to safeguard judicial independence and improve the relationship between the NBA and the judiciary?**

An independent judiciary is fundamental to democracy and the rule of law. The NBA must continue to advocate for judicial independence, adequate funding, security of tenure, and institutional reforms that strengthen the administration of justice.

At the same time, we need constructive engagement with the judiciary based on mutual respect, shared responsibility, and a common commitment to justice.

► **How would the NBA advocate for faster, fairer court processes and reduce backlogs?**

Justice delayed remains justice denied. The NBA must champion procedural reforms, greater use of technology, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, improved case management systems, and increased judicial capacity. Reducing delays requires collaboration among judges, lawyers, court administrators, and policymakers. The NBA must be a leading voice in driving these reforms.

► **How would you elevate the NBA's international profile?**

The NBA is one of the largest and most influential bar associations in Africa and should play an even greater global role. I will strengthen relationships with international bar associations, promote knowledge exchange, encourage cross-border professional opportunities, and position the NBA as a leading voice on legal and governance issues across Africa and beyond.

► **What mechanisms would you implement to hear directly from members?**

Leadership must be accessible. I will

maintain regular engagement through branch visits, virtual town halls, stakeholder consultations, surveys, and digital feedback platforms. Most importantly, feedback must lead to action. Listening is important, but responding effectively is what builds confidence.

► **How would you strengthen the NBA's role in promoting integrity?**

Integrity is the foundation of both the legal profession and public service. The NBA must continue to champion ethical conduct, accountability, constitutionalism, and the rule of law. We must also lead by example, demonstrating the values we advocate in society. The credibility of our voice depends on the integrity of our actions.

► **What role will IT and data play in making your work as President better?**

Technology and data is central to effective leadership and we will put this to effective use. Data helps us understand member needs, measure performance, allocate resources efficiently, and evaluate programmes objectively.

Technology can improve communication, member engagement, continuing legal education, administrative efficiency, and access to services. A modern NBA must be data-driven and digitally enabled.

► **For so long, there hasn't been a female President of the NBA. Why so long? What will this change mean?**

The absence of a female President for 35 years, after Dame Priscilla Kuye, who was elected 1st Vice President in 1990, and became president in 1991 when the then President late Clement Akpamgbo, SAN became the Attorney-General of the Federation, reflects broader societal and institutional realities that have historically limited women's access to leadership opportunities.

Dame Kuye ran for President in 1992 but her attempt was unsuccessful. To date, she remains the first and only female president of the NBA. Funke Adekoya, SAN also ran unsuccessfully in 2006 and

2014.

The NBA now has the opportunity to elect its first female President and have its second female President in over three decades. For me personally, this is not simply about breaking a glass ceiling or making history. It is about expanding possibilities and breaking the habit of believing that some opportunities belong to a few and not to all.

More than sixty years ago, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of "the fierce urgency of now", recognising that there are moments when problems can no longer be deferred and action can no longer be postponed. And so I stand on the shoulders of these two giants of the profession, Dame Priscilla Kuye and Funke Adekoya, SAN, whose trailblazing efforts have made mine possible. My greatest joy would be to present my certificate of return to them both to show them that their extreme courage in the face of barriers, some of which I have not had to face, was not in vain.

If I am elected, it will demonstrate that the NBA values merit, competence, and service above all else. It will send a powerful message to every lawyer, especially young women lawyers, that leadership is attainable and that excellence has no gender. It will in fact send a

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I look forward to the day when gender no longer features in the discussion because the only criteria is capacity



powerful message far beyond the legal profession. If a young female lawyer can look at the NBA and see possibilities where previous generations saw barriers, then our profession becomes stronger. The significance lies not in the symbolism alone, but in what it says about the future of our profession.

I have said constantly that I am not running to tick a box or add to a statistic. I don't want to be "lonely at the top". It is far more important to me to get there, fling the door open and wedge it with my foot, so that all our willing, capable and competent female members can get seats at the tables. And I look forward to the day when gender no longer features in the discussion because the only criteria is capacity.

► **To every woman who is afraid to dare, what do you have to say?**

Do not allow fear to become the author of your story. Look at those who have dared to dare and tell yourself if they can do it, so can you. Do not be afraid to fail. My wonderful husband reminds me all the time: "if you can win, you can lose" and this has kept me grounded. I am working extremely hard to win, but I don't see losing as the end of the road. It is just a learning process that makes success inevitable the next time around. Every meaningful achievement begins with the boldness to take the first step. There will always be obstacles, doubts, and voices that question your ability. Sometimes those voices will come from within you. Do not let them define you or hold you back. It is easier said than done but after that first step, you will find yourself asking what you were so fearful of.

Be BOLD. Always. Believe in yourself, your competence and your capacity. Prepare diligently, work harder than most, and keep pushing forward. You are much more than you think you are. I am discovering that every day. Hold firmly onto your faith. BE INTENTIONAL. Your dreams are valid, your voice matters, and your contribution is needed. You must dare and you must dare greatly. The world is waiting for what only you have to offer.

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The NBA now has the opportunity to elect its first female President and have its second female President in over three decades

► **Concluding words**

They say fortune favours the bold.
I say the Nigerian Bar Association belongs to all of us who are bold enough to demand more - more economic dignity, more opportunity, more accountability, more value for every member. The future of the NBA will be shaped by the choices we make today.
I am offering myself to serve the NBA with humility and a clear vision for a bolder, more inclusive, and more effective Bar. This campaign is about leadership that is BOLD in vision, BOLD in service, and BOLD in delivery. It is about building a presidency so focused on delivery that it permanently changes what members expect from the Bar.

I do not simply seek to make history.
I seek to make a difference.

I do not just want to be the first elected female President of the NBA.
I just want to ensure that I am not the last.



WOMAN EXECUTIVE

The CEO at Home: Why Executive Presence Must End at the Front Door

By Wola Joseph-Condotti

There is a quiet discipline that no leadership book fully prepares you for. It is the discipline of switching off.

Not just logging off your email. Not just leaving the office. But the deeper, harder work of walking through your own front door and leaving the CEO on the other side of it.

Because the woman your husband married is not a CEO. The mother your children reach for is not a Managing Director. The friend your circle calls at midnight is not a board member.

And if you are not careful, the title you have earned in the world will quietly begin to replace the person you were created to be.

The Home Is Not a Branch Office

Somewhere along the way, executive culture began to suggest that leadership is a twenty-four hour identity. That the mark of a serious leader is to be always available, always strategic, always on. That your phone should never truly rest. That your mind should never truly leave the boardroom.

I reject this. Firmly. Practically. Daily. Because the home is not a branch office. My husband is not a direct report. My children are not stakeholders. My marriage is not a quarterly deliverable. When I walk through my front door, I am not bringing a CEO home. I am coming home as a wife, as a mother, as Wola. And that transition (from executive to wife, from boardroom to kitchen table) is not a diminishing of who I am. It is a return to who I am.

Hakeem Married a Woman, Not a Title

My husband Hakeem did not marry an energy sector executive. He married me. He was there long before the titles. He will be there long after them. And one of the greatest disciplines of my life has been ensuring that the woman he gets at the end of the day is not the leftover of the CEO, but the same woman he chose. That means not debriefing the day the moment I walk in. Not treating our

conversations like strategy reviews. Not carrying the tone of the office into the tone of our home. Not answering my children with the clipped efficiency that serves a board but wounds a child.

The voice that closes a negotiation is not the voice that tucks a child into bed. They must not be the same voice.

The Sacred Separation

I have learned to build what I call a sacred separation.

It is not rigid. It is not mechanical. Some nights the sector does not sleep and neither do I. Some weekends a crisis will steal a Saturday. That is the nature of the chair. But the default must be protected. The home must be defended from the encroachments of the office, because the office will take everything you give it and still ask for more. My children must not grow up remembering a mother who was physically present but mentally elsewhere. My husband must not feel like he is sharing his wife with a company. My friends must not feel like appointments on a calendar. Presence is not just being in the room. It is being in the room while you are in the room.

Even Jesus Went Home

Scripture shows us a pattern that executives often miss. Jesus, at the very height of His ministry (crowds swelling, miracles flowing, the weight of the world literally on His shoulders) still withdrew. He still rested. He still ate in homes. He still washed feet. He still wept with friends. In Mark 6:31, He said to His disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." Even the Son of God understood that public assignment does not cancel private humanity. If Jesus withdrew, so can you. So must you.

Final Thoughts

The title will end. The season will pass. The chair will one day belong to someone else. But your husband will still be your husband. Your children will still be your children. The home you built (or did not build) in the quiet hours will still be standing, or not. So lead your company well. Lead it excellently. Lead it with everything you have. But at the front door, lay the crown down. Pick up your name. Pick up your softness. Pick up the woman your family married, raised, and loves. Because the office will always want more. But your home deserves you whole.

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 LL.M. 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 Art of Financial Pruning

By Sola Adesakin

There is a practice in gardening that feels counterintuitive the first time you encounter it. To get a plant to grow fuller, stronger, and more productive, you cut it back. Deliberately. You remove the branches that are consuming energy without producing fruit. You clear the dead weight so the living parts can thrive. The gardener does not do this with regret. She does it with intention, because she understands that growth and accumulation are not the same thing.

Your financial life works exactly the same way.

Most of us were taught to add. Earn more, save more, acquire more. And addition matters. But there is a season, and for many of us that season is now, where the more important work is subtraction. Looking carefully at what you have built and asking not just what to keep growing, but what needs to be cut, what needs to be pruned, and what has quietly become a weed consuming resource that belong somewhere else.

Financial pruning is not about lack. It is about clarity. It is the deliberate act of removing what is no longer serving your financial life so that what remains can actually flourish.

Start with your expenses. Not with a machete, but with a gardener's eye. Go through the last three months of your bank statements and sort every recurring expense into one of three categories. Things that are actively contributing to your life and your goals. Things that were useful once but whose season has passed. And things you are not entirely sure why you are still paying for. The third category is usually larger than expected. Subscriptions that auto-renewed past their usefulness. Memberships held out of inertia. Commitments made in a different financial season that have not been reviewed since. These are the weeds. They are not dramatic. They do not announce themselves. They just quietly consume

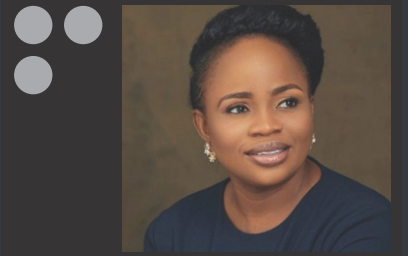
resources that could be growing something else.

Cut them. Not someday. This month. Then look at your investments with the same honesty. A pruned investment portfolio is not a failed one. It is a focused one. The question to ask of every investment you hold is not simply whether it has made money, but whether it still belongs in the life you are building. Is this investment aligned with where you are going, or is it a remnant of where you were? Is it performing in a way that justifies the capital it holds? Is it something you understand well enough to defend, or something you are holding out of hope or habit?

Some investments need to be watered. They are in the right soil, they have the right structure, and what they need most is patience and consistent addition. Others need to be pruned, trimmed back, repositioned. And some, honestly, need to be removed entirely. Holding a loss-making position indefinitely because exiting feels like admitting a mistake is not loyalty. It is a weed.

The weeding conversation is the hardest one because it requires you to release things you once chose. But the gardener does not keep dead branches out of sentiment. She keeps her eye on the harvest. Now look at the things worth nurturing. Every financial life, however complicated, has a few areas of genuine promise. A savings habit that just needs to be redirected into a better instrument. An investment that is quietly compounding and deserves more capital. A skill or income stream that has been growing and would flourish with more deliberate attention. A protection structure, insurance, emergency fund, pension, that needs to be fed more consistently. These are your fruit-bearing branches. They do not always make the most noise. They are often the quieter corners of your financial life, doing steady work while you are distracted by the loud things. Nurture them. Increase the contribution. Review the structure. Give them the resources you freed up from the weeding.

Financial pruning is a seasonal practice, not a one-time event. The gardener does not prune once and never return. She comes back. She checks what grew, what stalled, what needs more cutting. Twice a year is enough for most people. January when the year begins, and now, mid-year, when you have real data and real time remaining. Sit with your finances this week the way a gardener sits with her garden. Not anxious, not reactive. Curious and intentional. Ask what is growing, what is consuming, and what has simply outgrown its purpose. Weed. Prune. Nurture. Grow. That is not just good gardening. That is how a financial life actually flourishes.



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

What Cairo Taught Me About Career Growth

Chinyere Okorochoa

Standing Before History. Some trips give you beautiful photographs. Others give you perspective. My recent visit to Cairo, Egypt, did both. Seeing the pyramids of Giza had been on my bucket list for years. Like many people, I had seen them countless times in books, documentaries, and travel magazines. But nothing prepares you for the moment you stand before them in real life.

They are massive. Silent. Unshaken by time. As I stood there, taking it all in, I found myself asking a simple but powerful question:

What am I building?
Not just in terms of career success, titles, or achievements... but legacy. Because the pyramids are not just

tourist attractions. They are proof that great things are built with vision, patience, and intention. And that lesson applies directly to our careers.

Success Is Built Brick by Brick. We live in a world obsessed with speed.

Everyone wants quick wins, fast promotions, and instant recognition. Social media makes success look immediate. But real career growth rarely works that way.

The pyramids reminded me that lasting success takes time. No great structure is built overnight.

The same applies to your career. Every difficult project, every late night, every skill you learn, every setback you survive, they are all bricks.

Sometimes we become frustrated because the results are not immediate. But growth is often happening long before it becomes visible.

Career Lesson:
Stop chasing speed and start building substance.

Ask yourself: Am I focused on quick applause, or am I building something that will still matter ten years from now?

Visibility Matters
Another unforgettable stop in Cairo, was the Great Sphinx of Giza.

There it stood: bold, mysterious, and impossible to ignore.

Even from a distance, partially barricaded, its presence was powerful. It did not need to announce itself. It

simply stood there and commanded attention. There is a career lesson in that too...

Many professionals, especially women, are taught to believe that hard work alone is enough. We keep our heads down, deliver excellent work, and hope someone notices. Unfortunately, that is not always how leadership works. Competence is important. But visibility creates opportunity. If no one knows your value, they cannot reward it.

Career Lesson:
Your work must be seen. Speak up in the room. Share your ideas. Document your wins. Build your personal brand. Excellence without visibility can become invisible. The Sphinx reminded me that silent excellence is often overlooked.

Another lesson from Cairo is that your Foundation Determines Your Height.

At the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, I walked through centuries of preserved history... ancient medical tools, jewelry, royal artifacts, burial rituals, and stories of great Pharaohs.

What fascinated me most was not just what was displayed, but what it represented: structure, systems, and preservation. Nothing great survives without a strong foundation. In careers, we often focus on the visible things; promotion, title, recognition etc. But the real strength is underneath.

Your integrity.
Your discipline.
Your reputation.
Your emotional intelligence.
Your relationships.

These are the foundations that hold long-term success together.

Career Lesson:
Do not neglect what people cannot see.

Your character will often take you further than your credentials.

Build trust. Protect your reputation. Develop competence that can survive any room. Build for Legacy, Not Just for Today.

What struck me most about Egypt was its relationship with legacy. The Pharaohs did not think small. They built for generations they would never meet. That stayed with me.

As professionals, especially women balancing careers, leadership, family, and expectations, we often get trapped in survival mode; meeting deadlines, paying bills, solving today's problems. But real leadership requires a bigger question:

What will remain because I was here?
Did I simply do the job?
Or did I leave people better, systems stronger, and doors wider for others?

Career Lesson:
Think beyond your current title. Mentor someone. Build something sustainable. Create impact that outlives your position.

Because true success is not measured by how busy you were, but by what remains after you leave.

Final Reflection
Cairo gave me incredible memories. Yes, I took the photos. Yes, I rode the camel. Yes, I stood in awe of history. But the greatest souvenir I brought home was perspective. Career growth is not just about climbing faster. It is about building stronger.

It is about visibility, consistency, courage, and legacy.

And perhaps the most important question every professional should ask is this:

Am I just working... or am I building something that will last?



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.

The adoption of the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU-CEVAWG) in 2025 marks a historic milestone in Africa's collective effort to eradicate gender based violence (GBV). The Convention provides a comprehensive, legally binding framework that addresses the root causes, manifestations, and consequences of violence against women and girls across the continent. As Nigeria continues to grapple with complex security challenges, the ratification and domestication of this Convention present a timely and strategic opportunity to strengthen national responses to violence, insecurity, and social instability.

At its core, the AU-CEVAWG seeks to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, both in public and private spaces. It goes beyond existing frameworks by addressing emerging issues such as technology facilitated violence, conflict related sexual violence, and harmful traditional practices. The Convention also emphasises state accountability, survivor centered approaches, access to justice, and the provision of comprehensive support services including healthcare, psychosocial support, and legal aid.

The importance of this Convention cannot be overstated. Violence against women and girls remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations in Africa, and Nigeria is no exception. From domestic violence to conflict related abuses in the North East, and increasing reports of sexual violence across the country, GBV continues to undermine the dignity, safety, and potential of millions of women and girls. While Nigeria has made progress through laws such as the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, gaps remain in implementation, coordination, and access to justice. The AU-CEVAWG provides a unified continental framework that can help

GENDER INSIGHTS



The AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: A Critical Step for Nigeria's Security and Development

Asmau Benzies Leo

Nigeria strengthen its legal and institutional mechanisms. By aligning national laws and policies with the convention, Nigeria can ensure a more coordinated and effective response to GBV. It also reinforces commitments already made under instruments such as the Maputo Protocol, while expanding the scope to address contemporary challenges. Importantly, the convention has significant implications for Nigeria's current security landscape. Insecurity in Nigeria; ranging from insurgency and banditry to communal conflicts and displacement, has a disproportionate impact on women and girls. They are often targets of abduction, sexual violence, forced marriage, and exploitation. The Convention recognizes the intersection between GBV and conflict, and calls for the protection of women in fragile and conflict affected settings. Ratifying the Convention would therefore strengthen Nigeria's security architecture by

integrating gender responsive approaches into peacebuilding, counterterrorism, and humanitarian interventions. Addressing violence against women is not only a human rights imperative but also a development and security priority. Societies that tolerate violence against women are more likely to experience instability, poverty, and weak governance. By contrast, protecting women's rights contributes to stronger families, resilient communities, and sustainable peace. The Convention thus offers Nigeria a pathway to tackle underlying drivers of insecurity, including inequality, marginalisation, and social exclusion. Nigeria can also draw valuable lessons from countries like The Gambia, which just ratified the convention and has demonstrated strong political will in advancing gender equality and combating GBV. The Gambia's proactive stance in adopting and implementing progressive gender policies

highlights the importance of leadership, institutional commitment, and collaboration with civil society. By following in this path, Nigeria can reaffirm its leadership role in Africa and demonstrate its commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of women and girls. To fully realise the benefits of the AU-CEVAWG, several key steps are recommended for Nigeria: First, the Federal Government should prioritise the signing and ratification of the Convention without delay. This will signal political commitment and positions Nigeria within the community of progressive African states championing women's rights. Second, there must be a deliberate effort towards domestication, in line with Section 12 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria. This involves translating the

provisions of the Convention into national legislation that is enforceable across all states. Given Nigeria's federal structure, it is also critical to ensure that state governments adopt and implement aligned laws, particularly in states where the VAPP Act has not yet been domesticated.

Third, the government should invest in institutional strengthening and capacity building for law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and service providers. This includes training on handling GBV cases, improving survivor support systems, and ensuring accountability for perpetrators. Fourth, there is a need for sustained funding and resource allocation to GBV prevention and response initiatives. Without adequate funding, even the most robust legal frameworks will fail to deliver impact.

Fifth, community engagement and social norm change must be prioritised. Ending violence against women requires shifting deeply entrenched cultural attitudes and practices that perpetuate discrimination and abuse.

Finally, partnerships with civil society organisations, women's groups, and international partners should be strengthened to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach.

In conclusion, the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls represents a transformative opportunity for Nigeria. Its ratification and domestication would not only advance the rights and protection of women and girls but also contribute significantly to national security, peacebuilding, and sustainable development. At a time when Nigeria faces multifaceted security challenges, investing in the safety and empowerment of women is not optional, it is essential. By taking decisive action and following the example of countries like The Gambia, Nigeria can move closer to a future free from violence, where every woman and girl can live in dignity, safety, and equality.



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.



WOMAN AT THE HELM

OSAYI ALILE

CEO of Aspire Coronation Trust (ACT)

Osayi Alile is the CEO of Aspire Coronation Trust (ACT). Aspire

Coronation Trust Foundation is an award-winning organisation that addresses development challenges and associated needs across the African Continent through funding, capacity strengthening and strategic project delivery with local and regional nonprofits and social enterprises, to drive sustainable development. We seek to promote broad based participation/partnership with other institutions and/or donor organisations aimed at building sustainable communities and to provide innovative solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges.

Osayi stands as a bridge-builder across philanthropy, international development, sustainability, and the SME ecosystem. As CEO of Aspire Coronation Trust (ACT) Foundation, she leads a grant-making non-profit renowned for funding health, entrepreneurship, environmental stewardship, and leadership initiatives. Under her stewardship, ACT Foundation has earned the recognition of “Not-

For-Profit of the Year” for three consecutive years, a testament to its impact and the people behind it.

In addition to her role at ACT, Osayi Co-Administrates CACOVID, a private-sector task force formed in collaboration with the Federal Government, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), and the World Health Organisation (WHO). This work reflects her commitment to mobilising resources and partners in service of public health and resilience.

A seasoned voice in leadership and capacity-building, Osayi previously served as Executive Director of FATE Foundation, Vice President of Junior Achievement of Nigeria, and CSR Consultant for Access Bank Plc. In these roles, she championed practical, people-centered approaches to development—creating pathways for entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and responsible corporate citizenship.

Osayi’s influence extends beyond organisational leadership. She has served as past Chairperson of Women in Management, Business and Public Policy (WIMBIZ), and she contributes to a diverse slate of boards, including House of Tara, Zapphaire Events, SARO Oil Palm Ltd, and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA). Through these roles, she champions ethical leadership, inclusive growth, and sustainable development.

Known for her collaborative leadership style, Osayi blends strategic vision with a deep commitment to people—the entrepreneurs she supports, the communities they serve, and the future generations who will inherit the outcomes of today’s decisions. Her work is fuelled by a conviction that meaningful progress comes from listening, learning, and investing in people.

Her academic background is in Sociology and Public Administration from University of Lagos and Rutgers University, New Jersey.



WE'VE GOT MEN

Haruna Musa (PhD)

MD/CEO of Jaiz Bank Plc

Haruna Musa (PhD) was appointed Managing Director/CEO of Jaiz Bank Plc on November 21, 2023. A seasoned banker with more than three decades of experience across Nigeria and the wider African continent, Haruna brings a quiet confidence and hands-on leadership style to the role.

A lifelong learner, Haruna's academic journey is detailed in diverse disciplines. He studied at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Bayero University, Kano; and Cranfield University in the United Kingdom. He earned his PhD in Islamic Banking and Finance from Universiti Utara in Malaysia, reflecting a deep commitment to ethical finance and financial inclusion.

From Cranfield, Haruna earned an MSc in Finance and Management. He also holds a Master of Business Administration from Bayero University, Kano, along with a Postgraduate Diploma in

Management from the same institution. Earlier, he completed a Bachelor of Agriculture at Ahmadu Bello University, highlighting a broad foundation in both science and business.

Haruna has completed numerous executive-level courses around the world, underscoring his dedication to staying at the forefront of global banking practices. He is also an honorary member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), a testament to his standing in the profession.

Before stepping into the top role at Jaiz Bank, Haruna spent eight years as Executive Director at GT Bank. Across his 27-year career, he spent 22 years with Guaranty Trust Bank Holding Company (GTCO), where he developed a deep understanding of large-scale operations, risk management, and customer-centric banking.

In every role, Haruna brings a blend of strategic vision, practical execution, and a genuine commitment to ethical,

inclusive banking. He is focused on steering Jaiz Bank with integrity, innovation, and a people-first approach.

Right from the first month he resumed office as MD, Musa outlined a bold direction for Jaiz Bank. With a reputation for calm, decisive leadership and strong track record in corporate banking and risk control, he launched a listening tour across the bank's main hubs in Abuja, Kano, and Lagos. He connected with colleagues at every level, challenged familiar assumptions, and encouraged open, constructive feedback on what the bank does well and where it can improve.

In just a few years, Jaiz Bank has grown from a well-regarded name to a prominent national player. Under Haruna Musa's leadership, the bank has demonstrated steady discipline, a reimagined culture, tech-enabled progress, and a strong pledge to principled finance.

HOLISTIC LIVING

Sleep Is Not A Luxury: The Hidden Foundation Of A Healthy, Productive And Fulfilling Life

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri

In a society that celebrates busyness and glorifies exhaustion, sleep has become one of the first sacrifices people make in pursuit of success. We proudly boast about late nights, wear fatigue like a badge of honour, and mistake constant activity for productivity. Yet beneath this culture of relentless hustle lies a silent crisis. We are not simply sleeping less; we are living less well.

The greatest misconception about sleep is that it is merely a period of rest. In reality, sleep is one of the body's most sophisticated renewal systems. During quality sleep the brain consolidates memories, emotions are processed, hormones are regulated, tissues are repaired and the immune system is strengthened. When sleep is compromised, every other dimension of life begins to suffer.

Consider Michelle, a successful professional whose nights became battlegrounds. While the world slept, she lay awake replaying deadlines, worries and unfinished tasks. Morning brought exhaustion instead of renewal. Her creativity disappeared, relationships became strained and even the activities that once brought joy lost their appeal. She was not lazy or unmotivated. She was depleted.

Her transformation did not begin with medication alone. It began with recognising that sleep problems rarely exist in isolation. Guided by professional support, she embraced a holistic approach. Gentle movement calmed her body, sunlight restored her body clock, therapy addressed anxiety, meaningful relationships strengthened resilience and healthier routines gradually restored restorative sleep.

She did not simply sleep better; she lived better.

This is the essence of holistic living. Health cannot be divided into isolated compartments. Sleep, movement, nutrition, emotional wellbeing, relationships, purpose and recovery continuously influence one another. When one pillar weakens, the others inevitably follow.

Research consistently links chronic sleep deprivation with increased risks of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, anxiety, depression and reduced immune function. It also impairs concentration, judgement, creativity and emotional regulation. Conversely, quality sleep strengthens resilience, productivity and overall quality of life.

Improving sleep therefore requires

more than an earlier bedtime. It demands intentional living. Morning sunlight, regular movement, nourishing food, healthy boundaries with technology, meaningful social connection, stress management and consistent sleep schedules all work together to support the body's natural rhythm.

Equally important is recognising that emotional burdens often steal sleep long before physical illness appears. Workplace pressure, financial uncertainty, unresolved conflict and chronic worry follow many people into bed every night. Addressing these underlying challenges through counselling, mindfulness, faith, supportive relationships or intentional reflection often improves sleep more sustainably than temporary fixes.

Communities and workplaces also have responsibilities. Organisations that encourage recovery, healthy work boundaries and psychological wellbeing cultivate healthier, more productive people. Sustainable excellence cannot exist without sustainable restoration.

Perhaps the greatest lesson sleep teaches us is that restoration is not weakness. Every thriving system in nature alternates between effort and recovery. Human beings are no different.

Sleep is not an interruption to success. It is the invisible foundation upon which health, happiness, creativity and purpose are built. When we honour sleep, we strengthen every aspect of our lives. When we neglect it, every other pillar eventually begins to crack.

In a world constantly demanding more from us, perhaps the most courageous act is choosing restoration before exhaustion forces it upon us.

10 Evidence-Based Tips for Better Sleep Hygiene

1. Keep a consistent sleep schedule.

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Your brain thrives on routine.

2. Create a bedtime ritual.

Spend the last 30–60 minutes before bed reading, praying, stretching, or practicing deep breathing to signal your brain that it's time to rest.

3. Switch off your screens.

Avoid phones, tablets, and TVs at least one hour before bedtime. Blue light suppresses melatonin, the hormone that helps you sleep.

4. Watch what you consume.

Avoid caffeine after midday, limit alcohol, and don't eat heavy meals late at night.

5. Design your bedroom for sleep.

Keep it cool, dark, quiet, and comfortable. Your bedroom should be a sanctuary for sleep, not work.

6. Move your body daily.

Regular exercise improves sleep quality but avoid vigorous workouts within 2–3 hours of bedtime.

7. Calm your racing mind.

Write tomorrow's to-do list, journal your thoughts, or practice gratitude before bed. A calmer mind sleeps better.

8. Don't force sleep.

If you're still awake after 20–30 minutes, get out of bed, do something relaxing in dim light, and return only when you feel sleepy.

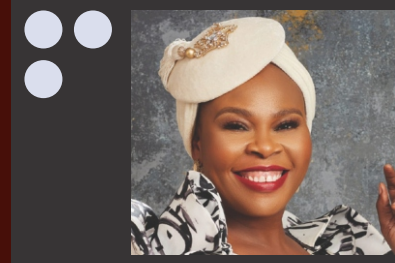
9. Protect your peace.

Stress is one of the biggest thieves of sleep. Resolve conflicts where possible, set healthy boundaries, and avoid emotionally stimulating conversations before bed.

10. Treat sleep as an investment, not a luxury.

Every good night's sleep improves your mood, sharpens your thinking, strengthens your immunity, and protects your long-term physical and mental health.

Remember: The quality of your day begins the night before. Protect your sleep, and your sleep will protect you.



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- Psychiatriist 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

The Assurance Of A Sleepwalker

By Zainab Aderounmu

“To move with the assurance of a sleepwalker.” I first heard those words from the Neurophysicist, David Dosu, who described himself as an assured sleepwalker. In his March 1936 speech, Adolf Hitler declared to his audience, “I go the way that Providence dictates with the assurance of a sleepwalker.” Hitler believed in his own greatness and his choice of action that nothing deterred him from forging ahead, even when he wasn’t always right.

What does it mean to move with the assurance of a sleepwalker? Imagine a

somnambulist who gets up to perform complex activities, walking and even eating, while in a deep state of sleep. They might bump their heads a few times, brush it off and keep moving. I’ll never forget one time I had a friend sleep over, and my unopened Milo tin was halved by the next morning. When I questioned her, she denied eating it but casually mentioned she might have ‘sleep-eaten’ half a tin of Milo. The award-winning Physicist and AI scientist described it as hitting a few rough patches on his journey to greatness, and quickly picking himself up. Dosu doesn’t understand the concept of

embarrassment, which I find intriguing.

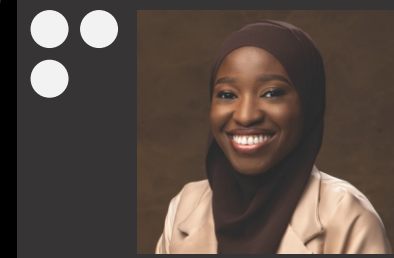
The maxim, ‘Embarrassment is the price for mastery,’ has been repeated by so many people that the original author is hard to pin down. But, I’ll attribute it to Stephen Bartlett because that’s from whom I heard it first. I have experienced the idea that embarrassment is an under-exploited emotion. Repeating a positive embarrassment-inducing action quickly produces mastery and unshakable self-confidence. Take language learning, for instance. Learning a new language and speaking it as a beginner can be very embarrassing, but repetition and consistency quickly make you proficient.

Many times, we have allowed the illusion of ‘what would people say’ stop us from pursuing the things that make us happy. I call it an illusion because people are quite preoccupied with their lives, and even when they do have something to say, which they often do, it’s fleeting. Imagine if David Dosu had allowed his career crush’s snide comment “you need to learn to speak better English” stop him from applying

to CERN or from starting Idalia Africa; we wouldn’t have a Nigerian who worked at a world-class scientific research organisation, or someone trying to multiply that impact. Imagine if I allowed my colleague’s “debate isn’t for everyone” stop me from learning how, I wouldn’t be where or who I am today.

Our parents’ generation was, and still are, very obsessed with what people would say, and they hated the feeling of embarrassment. They wanted to be prim and proper at all times, but a ‘prim and proper’ person rarely pursues their craziest ideas. A prim and proper person may prefer to drift through life, doing only the things acceptable to the world and the people around him. Having the assurance of a sleepwalker isn’t an easy task. It requires an almost-insane level of personal conviction. You may not always be completely free of conscious doubt, but knowing that whether or not you win, you’ll surely learn, helps.

After all, Thomas Edison didn’t fail 1000 times; he simply found 1000 ways not to create a light bulb, before discovering the one way that actually worked.



Zainab Aderounmu

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



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