



COMMUNIQUE

**ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT
OF
WOMEN & GIRLS**

20th July 2020

www.awlo.org

A LETTER FROM THE HOST



The subject of 'women and the economy' has been on the front burner of international development. It gained prominence when Japanese prime minister, Shinzō Abe embarked on an ambition to boost Japan's stunted economy, and coined the term "womenomics" to "capitalize on the power of women" whom he called "the most underutilized resource".

African Women in Leadership Organisation continues to narrow down, to areas of high leverage, in the advancement of women's leadership. Hence, the goal of the virtual town-hall meeting on Economic Empowerment of Women & Girls held on the 17th July 2020 was to pool the skills of AWLO's international network; to exchange ideas, and tailor solutions to increase women's economic participation and opportunities.

This Communiqué therefore captures the contributions of private and public sector leaders, on the African continent and the diaspora. African Women in Leadership Organisation is a non-for-profit organization, advancing African Women's Leadership globally.

Elisha Attai

Dr. Elisha Attai

Host & Founder, AWLO



MODERATOR'S OPENING REMARKS



**Chief Osasu Igbinedion,
CEO, TOS TV Network**

The topic today is the economic empowerment of girls and women. And the time could not be better. I want to congratulate the African Women in Leadership Organisation for discussing this today.

I will like to give a brief background about the choice of topic today. In Africa a High level of income and gender inequality exists, which continue to fuel poverty. Until something is done about this, the level of poverty will keep increasing.

The fundamental contribution of women and girls in their households and national economies is increasingly acknowledged in Africa and the international community. Mainly because of their energetic efforts to organize and articulate their concerns and getting their voices heard.

At both grassroot and national levels, more women associations are taking advantage of new political openings, to assert their leadership roles. They are also pressing for expansion of women's economic and social opportunities and the advancement of women's right.

By improving their position, women advance the country's broader development prospects. While there has been considerable progress developing women's capabilities, their participation in leadership, economic, and political decision-making remains very limited.



MEET THE PANELLISTS



Chief Dele Momodu

is a Nigerian journalist/publisher, businessman, and motivational speaker. He is the CEO and publisher of Ovation International, a magazine that has given publicity to people from all over the world, mainly in Africa. He writes a weekly column called "PENDulum", which are praised for highlighting issues in Nigeria, as well as discussing popular topics, current events and notable people, often in a polemic/critical style.



Hazel Brandy Williams

is the first female to be appointed Senator on the Concerned Citizens' Movement (CCM) benches in the Nevis Island Assembly. On 26 January 2013, she was sworn in as Junior Minister in the Nevis Island Administration with responsibility for Youth Affairs, Gender and Social Affairs, Social Development, Sports Affairs, Community Affairs, Import and Export Control and Licensing Unit.



Honourable Ambassador Nomusa Dube-Ncube

is the Member of the Executive Council responsible for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Honourable Dube-Ncube served as a Member of the Executive Council for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs for 2 terms between 2009 and 2019.



Chief Henry Seriake Dickson

is a Nigerian politician and a Lawyer. He is the former Governor of Bayelsa State in southern Nigeria from 14 February 2012 to 14 February 2020. He was a member of the House of Representatives from 2007 until 2012.



LIGHT BULB MOMENT



When people neglect women's representation in politics. It means we are not going to have such prudent managers of resources.

Politics is a game of numbers. Because women have allowed themselves to be bullied by men, they have not made substantial gains. Women must learn to walk together, because united we stand, divided we fall.

- Chief Dele Momodu



CONTRIBUTIONS

- There should be a strategy for making in-roads for women in politics and business.
- Women's strong values, such as; focus and prudence make them better managers and even more dependable. Their potential must be harnessed for the country's development.
- Girls must be equipped with skills and knowledge to lead independent lives, to create wealth for themselves, and wealth for themselves and others.
- Disempowerment of women can be addressed through access to finance/credit, and support in mentorship to create small scale business, and leverage of the informal sector to create sustainable businesses.
- Government institutions can be used to create access to healthcare for maternal mortality issues, and access to finance; to provide better life outcomes for women.
- Investment in girl-child education will create a new vista of opportunities. Including adult literacy opportunities for those outside school age.
- A Combination of policy-making, and involvement of women in leadership will systemically end women's economic disempowerment.
- Being that women constitute a high population; countries creating wealth, prosperity, and stable society, will emanate from women's empowerment.
- As mothers and breadwinners of families, to support and raise children. It's important to support women to be on their own.



CONTRIBUTIONS

- We must deliberately create mechanisms by which we encourage women to take up leadership positions, so they can be on the table during decision-making.
- We do need to bring women into the fold, and ensure that women and girls take the center stage as a step towards bridging the digital divide, and drive investments in digital infrastructure.
- Women must have equal participation in the digital space. Through selling their crafts, and exploring opportunities in augmented reality for tourism and hospitality.
- Women can be trained in robotics, without in-depth formal education, to man drones.
- Women who own online small-and-medium-scale enterprises must drive sales online.
- Women's Safety technology can be used to call for help in danger, with the click of a button.
- With access to a digital infrastructure, African can introduce tech in all aspects of life. Such as access to mobile banking, drones for transportation of saving drugs, effectiveness and efficiency in agriculture, and trade-related infrastructure. This is a new horizon of opportunities for women.
- The root causes of Women's Disempowerment mainly result from the gatekeepers of economic space – men, who need to buy into the understanding that women ought to play an integral role in economies.



LIGHT BULB MOMENT



Digital literacy for women and girls will put women in the drivers' seat in the area of technological revolution.

African Women can print 3D toys, to show our indigenous culture to the world.

We need to start inventing our own solutions that will speak to our problems, our context, and enrich Africans.

- Honourable Ambassador Nomusa Dube-Ncube



Q & A

Q: What's the best strategy to teach women technology? Osaretin Agbonavbare

Using what women know best. Starting from automating those things, they get done manually. They can be shown how technology makes life easier; as a way of life, as opposed to something that is foreign. For instance, the use of mobile phones as safety devices, for interaction with the family.

- Honourable Ambassador Nomusa Dube-Ncube

Q: As leaders, how are young women given opportunities? With their level of dedication and education, what is being done to empower young women with political aspirations?

H.E. Mrs Princess Sarah Sosan

Young women aspiring for politics need access to finance for working capital. Existing barriers are as a result of Patriarchy. Therefore, men as decision-makers, must support women who have leadership capacity. Quotas must be assigned. Women stand a chance, and being socialized differently, will bring a different skill set.

- Hon. hazel Brandy Williams

Women are mostly in the informal sector - generating daily income. Seeing that the way to do business in the post-pandemic, mostly deploys technology. In textile and event planning women-dominated sectors. How do women adapt to the new realities?

- Maureen Omokhomion

With the pandemic, women must shift their mindset. Instead of hawking, we must use the mobile phones, to take orders and process deliveries, for instance. We can't risk women being exposed to the pandemic; amidst crowded marketplaces.

- Honourable Ambassador Nomusa Dube-Ncube



LIGHT BULB MOMENT



Every time we are told that we need to do something, we do it. However, the goalpost keeps changing.

A woman in charge of her economic future, is a woman in charge of her own life.

- Hazel Brandy Williams



REMARKS

The root causes of women's disempowerment economically are numerous. In the 'beginning', they are raised deficient - not given the opportunity to develop economically viable skills (education etc.)

- **Cornelia Ndifon**

Looking at women as a group, in a bid to offer reparations to oppressed nations; whose labours have been taken for years. In addition to loans, cheaper tools such as universal basic income is needed urgently; targeting rural women, and those in informal trade.

- **Beulah Mosupye**

Women need a lot more hand-holding, personal development to build their confidence. They need support, mentorship, and advocacy in ecosystems to build businesses and jobs.

- **Telly Valerie Onu**

If we want to really push, empower, and drive women into leadership. It is high time we also get very inclusive by bringing in men to support us women. It is very clear that the majority in power and most functions are men, and we really need to start educating the men in position to sincerely support the women. We can also begin from our homes, letting our boy child know they have a responsibility to support the girl child.

- **Ngwi Njikta**



LIGHT BULB MOMENT



In the African Context, we are dealing with existentialist issues such as survival. We must enable rural women; who constitute a majority, have more responsibility, more children, are in households of husbands with multiple wives. It's important to formulate protocols to support the rural women to survive and do better.

In majority of the developing world, we see women doing far more than we think they do. In Africa, they are the breadwinners, they are the foundation upon which the wellbeing and survival of bulk of our population really rest.

Women bear the brunt of survival, enabling families, raising children, imparting the right values to be future leaders. It's important to highlight their issues and challenge govt at all levels.

- H.E. Henry Seriake Dickson



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Dr. Elisha Attai - Founder, AWLO

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- Chief Osasu igbinedion

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- Chief Dele Momodu
- Hon Hazel Brandy Williams
- H.E. Henry Seriake Dickson
- Honourable Ambassador Nomusa Dube-Ncube

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