

**CAREER WOMEN AND NATIONAL  
TRANSFORMATION**

**BY**

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## **Protocol**

### **Appreciation**

Please permit me to start with profound gratitude to our mother, Her Excellency, Dame (Dr.) Patience Goodluck Jonathan and her team for putting together this great conference.

On behalf of University of Uyo women, I welcome your Excellency and the Honourable Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Hajiya Zainah Maina to Akwa Ibom State.

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is a great privilege for me to be a part of this historic gathering for women empowerment. I choose to base my discourse on career women and their role in national transformation because I see this category of women as the privileged group within Nigerian structure.

There is a societal expectation from career women to improve on the contemporary standard of services they provide to humanity. The younger generation looks unto them for leadership role modeling.

### **WHO IS A CAREER WOMAN?**

You may probably think I am referring to women profession also like bankers, lawyers, accountants, teachers, doctors etc. No! A career could be defined as the type of job or profession one does for a long period of one's life and in which one hopes to gain advancement in. At times the concept is used in a derogatory manner to depict a



professional woman who is married to her job such that she finds no pleasure in raising or managing a family. The social scientists make bold to say that a career woman and marriage do not mix well. In the 70s such perception made young promising career ladies to "chicken" out of their profession so that they can marry.

All over the world women have continued to demonstrate professionalism, intelligence and unlimited potential as they contribute to the overall struggle for human development.

### **EXPECTATIONS FROM A CAREER WOMAN FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

- By virtue of her position in the society, a career woman should set a standard by her level of commitment to assigned task.
- She should be dedicated to her duty and be determined to succeed at all cost.
- From biblical view point, every woman is created from the refined product of man – a man's rib.
- She is expected to possess good leadership qualities that can inspire, motivate and sensitize a team of other talented professionals to effectively influence their actions and results.
- Major cause of conflict and distrust in the nation is lack of flexibility on the part of the leaders. A career woman should be flexible and adaptable to the challenging needs of the establishment where she works.
- They need to be calm and well focused under extreme pressure.

There is therefore an ingrained resilient power in every woman and if she is God-fearing and wise, she is expected to be a builder of home and community.

## **CATALYSTS FOR IMPACT AND TRANSFORMATION**

There are a number of catalysts activities and behaviours which women should focus on to create more impact in our national life to effect the desired transformation. Some of these activities are:

**Collaboration:** We would make more impact when we collaborate with one another. In a group of like-minds we can give and receive support to excel.

**Packaging:** We need to package our goods and services for contemporary clients or market.

**Intellectual Development:** We need continuous intellectual development at all levels. Great attention (not lip-service) should be given to the education of the girl-child who is tomorrow's woman. We need more training to get to our target.

**Networking:** Networking: is inevitable if our talents and capabilities are to be exposed for the benefit of not only the womanhood but the nation at large.

**Planning:** Women are naturally gifted in planning their homes and the lives of their children. This God-given talent needs nurturing and refining to suit changing environments and situations. Planning needs setting of goals and deadlines. We need to create functional action plan for daily, weekly, or suitable timed task.

**Mentorship:** Mentorship is essential in defining direction, facilitating operations of tasks and for inspiration in breaking new grounds. Have a mentor and be a mentor. We all need one another.



## **WHAT HOLDS WOMEN DOWN?**

We still need more female role models who can “look down the ladder” to encourage the younger ones to come up.

**Imbedded Personal Mindsets:** The men may think we cannot work together and we sometimes incline to this perception and thereby distrust ourselves. If we know our various callings in life, we will not be jealous of one another’s giftings. At all ages, many men want to take on more responsibilities in their organizations and have greater control whereas the women’s zeal tends to decline with age. “We do not want any extra stress, we <sup>would</sup> ~~will~~ say”.

**Imbedded Institutional Mindsets:** The greatest barriers for women’s contribution to the transformation agenda is the imbedded mindsets in the society. It is common to hear “it is not a woman’s job” or “everybody knows you cannot put a woman in that position”, and such other deflating statements.

For such reason, I have grown to detest one of our colloquial greetings, “Iban ide? Iban come? Iban see? Iban fine? Any complain? And we answer no complain”. Even when there are complaints.

- It is the societal mindsets that women cannot speak polished English because they are uneducated.
- It is the societal mindset that a woman cannot be a managing director of a company because she is a weaker vessel.

## CONCLUSION

Thanks be to God. Things are changing for the better for Nigerian women. These changes are caused by the hand of God, and it cannot be hindered! It is gladdening to observe the emerging trends in Nigeria today.

- A dynamic intelligent woman is reorganizing our National life-line – the oil and gas sector; she is exposing the rot caused by the “stronger vessel” and “taking the bull by the horn” despite stiff opposition by the same self-acclaimed wise and strong group.
- A dynamic focused woman took over the task of “safe guarding the health of the nation” by putting checks against drug abuse.
- Many other women before now have contributed to building the Nigerian nation. The list is long.
- Now, another visionary woman is paving the way for more women into politics, breathing life into more women, pulling them out of oblivion into prominence and showing them where to go and what to do. **This is a socio-economic evangelism:** opening the eyes of the blind, empowering women to give food to the hungry, clothes to the naked, accommodation/shelter to the rejected, undoing the heavy burdens, and letting the oppressed gain freedom. This is a great transforming socio-economic missionary work of Her Excellencies, Dame Dr. Patience Goodluck Jonathan and our dear mother, Mrs. Ekaette Unoama Akpabio and others.

Today, the first lady and mother of the nation, the wife of our President, Her Excellency, Dame Dr. Patience Jonathan has recruited and assembled more “missionaries” – all of us to expand

the scope and frontiers of this divine call to duty. If this fire is not quenched by greed, selfishness, and other "viruses" that plague our one and only nation, the Nigerian women will never be the same again, but will continue ascending the ladder of prominence and leadership to become "a sine-qua-non" in the Nigerian polity.

Thank you for listening, God bless you.