

**THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA: ISSUES AND
CHALLENGES**

A KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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Protocol

Introduction

Permit me to commence this presentation with an appreciation to the Board of Trustees and members of the National Association of Female Teachers for inviting me to this conference. The decision to form yourselves into an association is commendable.

President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan came into the office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the 29th of May, 2011 with a vision to rapidly develop the economy of Nigeria and its people by the end of his 4-year tenure. The vision is encoded in a "Transformation Agenda" with which he hopes will turn the country around and give it a new sense of direction. More challenges have emerged in the country since then. These include increasing unemployment, high rate of corruption, insecurity and poverty. The agenda draws its inspiration from vision 20:2020 and the previous National Development Plans (NDPs) which had been in place before he took the mantle of leadership.

This revised government plan of action for revitalizing the Nigeria economy comes up against the backdrop of several failed National Development Plans and programmes mounted by previous regimes such as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) adopted in 1986 to redeem Nigeria's economy. SAP eventually had more negative effect on the economy resulting in de-industrialization and increase in the country's debt burden. The National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), adopted in 2003 did record some measure of success in economic growth but was not sustainable (Asobie, 2012). Nigerians have therefore become a little skeptical about economic development plans. The question that readily comes to minds is: will this revised Agenda be sustainable after President Jonathan's exit?

On a critical assessment, the current Transformation Agenda has been articulated into policies; programmes and projects which when faithfully implemented and systematically evaluated are expected to bring about positive changes in developmental indices of the country. Anyim (2012) observed that these articulated policies and programmes are capable of facilitating the revamping of the various sectors of the economy, ensuring comparatively high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and High Human Development Index (HDI).

The transformation agenda therefore emerges from integration of action plans and strategies designed to eliminate the mistakes of successive past administrations in policy formulation and implementation. It seeks ways

of maximizing the present administration's potential for realizing the country's elusive developmental objectives.

Summary of Transformation Policies and Strategies

The summary of government's transformation policies and strategies include:

- A macroeconomic framework for economic direction to be achieved through the National Economic Management Team (NEMT) review of the national revenue allocation formula, passage of a Planning and Project Continuity Bill.
- Job creation, to be achieved through the National Action Plan on Employment Creation (NAPEC), implementing a youth empowerment safety net support programme; development of industrial clusters; reviewing of university curricular to align with job requirements in industry.
- Better power supply by increased investment in the sector to be achieved through the strategy of creating a deregulated more competitive power sector that will attract foreign and local investment ensuring a more viable commercial framework for the sector and a tariff regime that promotes transparency, guarantees security of investment, adequate return on investment, transmission capacity and more.
- Justice and judiciary sector that eliminates all forms of corruption in the administration of justice in Nigeria through achieving greater independence and enhancing the capacity of the justice ministry to superintend prosecution and improving professionalism in legal practice for better service delivery.
- Governance challenges addressed through policies that focus on public service, security, law and order, legislature and anti-corruption measures.
- Human Capital Development through rehabilitating of the educational sector by implementing the recommendations of the Presidential Task Team on Education which includes; strengthening the 9-3-4 educational system and implementing the teachers' salary scale, provision of infrastructure such as classrooms across all levels to ease overcrowding; enhancing the efficiency, resourcefulness and competence of teachers and other educational personnel through training, capacity building and motivation. And better health care delivery, through the implementation of the National Strategic Health Development Plan (NSHDP), Provision of information and Communication Technology, through Public-Private Partnership (PPP).
- Transportation, through evolving a multi modal, integrated sustainable transportation system with more emphasis on rail and inland water ways transportation.

- Other sectors such as Niger delta, labour and productivity, legislature, justice and judiciary, foreign policy and economic diplomacy, public expenditure management have applicable strategies geared towards achieving set objectives in the various sectors.

As an association of Female Teachers, I would imagine that you are interested in the Transformation Agenda as it affects Education industry therefore, this paper will focus on the Transformation of the educational sector outlining the key issues, the existing challenges, and how such challenges can be surmounted to ensure a sustainable revitalization of the sector.

Transformation in the Educational Sector

There has been a of lot of consistent cry by education stakeholders to see the nation transformed into a prosperous, highly educated and technically driven one. This merely "wishes" and nothing will happen until we take positive actions. Transformation means to change from one form of appearance to another. It involves adopting a new way of thinking and acting. Accordingly, transformation can be at different levels involving individuals, organization or institutions and nation. An individual transformation could be regarded as a process of becoming ready and willing to expand one's view on what is possible for one's self, one's institution and society. At this level citizens must be ready, willing and committed to taking actions that will bring about positive changes. At the institutional level transformation requires that the institution puts in place action plans and strategies that would bring about new and positive changes to the institution; and be committed to the realization of this vision. Therefore, National transformation cannot take place in isolation of both individual and institutional transformations.

Transformation in the Nigerian perspective would involve a "fundamental change in the orientation of individuals Nigerian institutions, government and their agencies and the larger society. There must be an action oriented departure from business as usual (Asobie. 2012).

If the educational sector is to be transformed into a more viable entity then the government's efforts in this direction must be encouraged by effective implementation of the policies and projects mapped out for the transformation of the sector. This is a sure antidote for a sustained development of the sector.

Emerging Issues: Rapid Policy Change

The educational sector has been for the past four decades beguiled with numerous reform initiatives, rapid policy changes and reversals such as the changes in the school calendar, the change from the 6-5-4 to 6-6-4, then to 6-3-3-4 and finally to the present 9-3-4, system of education; the

UPE and now UBE programme; changes in entry requirements and mode of entry into universities; taking over of all schools by government and the handing over of schools to missions as well as the abolishment of unity schools and reinstatement of unity schools to mention a few. Policies and initiatives don't seem to produce the desired results because they are rarely operated long enough for results.

With the onset of the Transformation Agenda of Federal Government, it is timely for educational sector to queue in. It is essential to ask ourselves one basic question and that is, do instituted time lines and performance indicators show progress and achievement of set targets so far? To provide accurate response here, it is essential to outline the priority policies for the development of the education sector, under the Transformation Agenda and these are to:

- promote primary enrolment of all children of school-going age, irrespective of the income profile of the parents;
- engage in the provision of infrastructure such as classrooms across all levels, so as to ease overcrowding;
- increase access and reduce pupil/teacher ratio; and
- enhance the efficiency, resourcefulness and competence of teachers and other educational personnel through training capacity building and motivation (EnuguStatedirect.com, 2012).

Considering the strategic importance of education in human and economic development of any nation, a well coordinated approach is needed, to tackle the enormous task of achieving this policy thrust.

Primary Enrollment Issues

The UBE programme and the 9-3-4 system of education were adopted antecedent to the 6-3-3-4 system. The 6-3-3-4 system of education merged academic and vocational education. It was originally designed to bring in functionality into the Nigerian educational system, so that graduates of the programme could be meaningfully engaged in the society. The programme was a perfect one and is working in some other nations. It would have made impact if it was properly implemented because it was a leap from the informal form of education we all knew. Poor implementation hindered the realization of these goals.

However, functionality has not been abandoned in Nigeria education rather the system in the UBE and 9-3-4 has been expanded to embrace and align with the goals Education For All (EFA) by the year 2015 and the Millennium Development goals (MDGs). In Nigeria, basic education was equated with six years of primary schooling of the past. Currently basic education is extended to include the three years of Junior Secondary School. Universal Basic Education is to embrace formal education up to age 15, as well as adult and non-formal education including education of the marginalized groups within the Nigerian society. It is a policy reform measure of the Federal Government of Nigeria, which is in line with the

erstwhile UPE programme that was envisaged to eradicate illiteracy through the provision of a free primary, secondary education and adult literacy programmes; goals that were hardly achieved. The foundation of the Nigeria education system had suffered much neglect. Poor infrastructure, lack of instructional and learning resources, high pupil-teacher ratio, lack of reading culture among pupils, unqualified teachers, poorly motivated teachers. The UBE programme is expected to redress all of these.

Objectives of the UBE

According to the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2012), the objectives of the UBE programme include:

- ensure unfettered access to nine years of formal education;
- the provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age;
- reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency;
- reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency;
- ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills, as well as ethical, moral civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) which was formally launched by President Olusegun Obasanjo on 30th September 1999, is intended to be really universal, free and compulsory. The formal educational system is only one of six components included in basic education in the implementation guidelines of the Federal Government. Others relate to early childhood, literacy and life skills for adults, nomadic population, and non-formal education. Although the UBE has made gains in terms of net enrolment but there are still challenges concerning equity and quality (Obanya, 2010). With UBE implemented across the nation one can say that "universal schooling" has been achieved, (Ekpo, 2010).

In the contrary UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) has data to show that even in terms of enrolment, the UBE programme does not seem to have made much positive difference, As at 2007 (seven years into the operation of the programme) primary school Gross Enrolment ratio (GER) and Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) were still below the regional (African) average. Transition to the secondary level is low. Pre-primary education is available only to 16 percent of children, evidence that exclusion sets in right from the early years of the life of the child. The indication seems to be, therefore, that UBE has not even succeeded in getting Nigerian children to school, let alone getting them through school and ensuring that they actually learn (CIEFFA/AUC, 2009). The Universal Basic

Education Commission (UBEC) national summaries from 2007 to 2009 reveal total enrollment figures of 21,121,157; 21,122,583 and 21,714,314 for 2007, 2008 and 2009 respectively. There had not been much change in enrollment in these three years (UBEC, 2012).

Twelve years into the inauguration of the programme, implementation has been uncoordinated and slow. As a result the internationally set goals may not be met.

For two consecutive years (2008, 2009) Akwa Ibom State government gave me opportunity of presenting a keynote address during the celebration of the day of the African Child. I observed repeatedly that discussing the accelerated action plan for African child as I was requested to do, appears to be a mere academic exercise without a persuasive global advocacy strategy that targets our leaders. (Ekpo, 2009) Great nations of the world do not toy with their education. Education is not politicized as we do. The United States of America for instance has placed so much premium on education matters that she has devoted a commensurate percentage of its budget to the education sector. All succeeding administrations tend to maintain this high premium. Similarly, the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair during his political campaigns highlighted education as his priority. In a series of his policy paper he wrote;

...We are starting with education because education was, is, and will remain our number one priority. For the past 10 years, we have said, year in year out, that Britain will only prosper, and its people will only get on in the 21st century, if they are **well educated**.... We are proud of our records – investment up by 50% in education in real terms since 1997, (Blair, 2005).

When he assumed office therefore, he stated as his main policy thrust, "Education, Education and Education". It is a known fact that education is United Kingdom's industry.

According to Waruku Boaz, programme manager for African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), Nigeria may be one of the 26 African countries to miss the EFA 2015 goals. This is because they have not been able to translate what they committed on paper to practice. (Punch Newspaper, April, 2012), International Development watchdogs have already indicated that the country is unlikely to achieve both EF A and MDGs by the year 2015. (Obanya, 2010). Looking at one of the time-bound goals of the Millennium Agenda as the Central Developmental Plan reveals that education must be recognized as an enabler for all other development goals. It is crucial to achieve Universal Primary Education.

Besides universal schooling, there have been some significant achievements recorded in the implementation of the UBE programme. Some of the 2008 targets are gradually being met. These include the following:

- **About 50% of Basic Education (B.E):** Schools having conducive teaching and learning; environment; buildings are springing up in primary schools across the nation courtesy of the Federal government intervention through the Education Trust Fund (ETF), (now TET Fund), Niger Delta Development Commission and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).
- **Some provision of educational materials though sporadic:** Every year, the Federal Government gives books to all the states of the federation in core subjects they offer.
- **About 80%** of Basic Education teachers have acquired the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE); NTI is continuously engaged in the Training of teachers for the UBE programme (though competence may be difficult to assess).
- **Complete revision of Basic Education Curriculum to conform with the reform agenda:** The review of the National primary school curricular by the National Education and Research and Development Council (NERDC) is in progress.
- Mobilization and development of partnership with private sector to support and fund education; this is being achieved through the TET Fund.
- **Capacity building of UBE teachers and Managers:** The National Teachers Institute (NTI) has re-trained a good number of UBE teachers. (Again not systematic to produce reliable data).

UBE would require some form of re-positioning for it to be able to move Nigeria towards the goals of Education for all by 2015 and MDGR Among "the necessary first steps in moving education forward in Nigeria as recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Education was the reform of the system to make it more result oriented.

There is a need for further intervention in terms of curricular review and strategies to improve learning, like the Read and Write Now (RAWN) project being implemented in Akwa Ibom State. The project is training teachers to teach primary one pupil to read using synthetic phonics. For few states that have cued into this strategy, a fast track learning package known as Jolly Phonics is the tool used. Children are learning to read at an early age. It is hoped that the new curricular will be a more functional one. And that the teachers will be empowered to be able to implement it.

Quality Issue in the Nigerian Educational Sector

Quality is central to a sound educational system. Stake holders in the Nigerian Educational system have been commenting on the issue of

quality for quite some time. How do we improve the quality of our primary, secondary and tertiary education graduates? How do we improve the quality of the teachers and lecturers, the quality of the content/curriculum; the quality of facilities and infrastructure, the quality of administration of educational institutions?

Achieving quality in education involves several aspects: the individuals, institutions, government and society. The quality of Nigerian education can be assessed through the competency of the teachers, the standard of the content and delivery system. Our educational system should be able to meet national and international standards by keying into international bench marks, peer review and international ratings. We can say that quality is achieved when Nigerian universities can be rated as being among the best one hundred universities in the world; when our primary, secondary and tertiary education graduates from government schools can compete favourably with their counterparts worldwide.

Tertiary Institutions in the country have been mandated to introduce entrepreneurial studies into their curricula, to ensure that youths leave school with skills that will turn them into job creators, rather than waiting for years to secure jobs. This alone will not address quality; it has been found that most Nigerian learners find it difficult to put what they learn into practice (Nwosu & Ekpo, 2008). We should look inwards at our teaching techniques and values, laying less emphasis on paper qualification rather than skill acquisition.

Sustainable Quality of Education

Steps to bring about sustainable high quality education should start at the tertiary level. As soon as these efforts begin to yield positive results at the tertiary level they will likely cascade down to the other levels. The changes in the university curricula to include civic education, entrepreneurial studies, and other general studies courses have not addressed the issue of quality. Increasing access to tertiary education through the establishment of more federal universities, polytechnics and colleges of education or the encouragement of the corporate organizations and private individuals to do same have increased access but has not addressed quality. This issue of quality however, can be addressed by looking at the content delivery system; the personnel and the curricula, what our children should learn to make them relevant nationally and internationally in this 21st century. This should be addressed through national and international bench marks and standards. The content being presented to students should be delivered in such a way that meaningful learning can actually take place. The best curricula can be flawed by ineffective delivery system. Nigeria is a vast country; schools are still insufficient for our growing youth population. The teacher-student ratio is just too large and this undermines efforts at achieving quality in

education. The teachers and lecturers that present content must be knowledgeable and competent.

Issue of Professionalism

Professionalism in the teaching profession is expedient. Teaching should not be a 'last resort profession that people move into when all other jobs are not attainable. High standard of teachers and lecturers can only be attained through Continuing Teacher Development (CTD). Quality teachers are actually products of good training process. Trainable Student Teachers are necessary inputs. Therefore effort must be made to seek out and ensure that intellectually qualified individuals are admitted into the teaching profession. Certificate pecuniary considerations are often the indices used in assessing a professional status. This is not all.

Lecturers in education should be encouraged to continually develop themselves. Teachers in both basic and post basic education should be retrained periodically. The Federal Ministry of Education has been mounting programmes such as the continuing training of primary school teachers in Science, Mathematics and English Language executed through the National Teachers' Institute for the past five years.

Issue of Facilities

Addressing the issue of quality cannot be complete without considering facilities for lesson delivery and infrastructure. The Federal Government through NUC is making efforts to provide e-learning facilities to Federal Universities as noted earlier. This will enable the deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to drive the content delivery and evaluation in teaching and learning with its attendant benefits. The Education Trust Fund (ETF), Corporate organizations, NGOs and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) have done a tremendous job in the provision of infrastructure for tertiary, secondary and primary institutions, but much still needs to be done. The issue of autonomy of Nigerian Universities should be addressed to engender quality in the institutions.

Issue of Funding of Education

The funding of UBE is provided under the UBEC Act. Under the Act, the Federal Government is to provide a certain amount of money to each state of the federation to improve basic education. The Act also provides that State Governments shall provide counterpart funding. In doing this, the State Government decides what facility they would want to provide building of new primary schools or renovation, equipping of their schools and so on. However, some state governments have difficulty in accessing the UBEC funds, because of one default or the other in meeting the guidelines. Before they access the funds, all the action plan must have been submitted to the Federal Government through UBEC, and funds for a

new year cannot be accessed unless the funds for the previous year have been utilized and retired.

Such unutilized funds are lying in various banks, thus, undermining the Federal Government's objectives in opening such window of opportunity to provide quality basic education. Despite expressed political commitment to reverse years of neglect in the education sector and a significant increase of the Federal funding, investment in basic and post basic education is still low compared to other Sub-Saharan countries (Unicef-Nigeria). For instance, Ghana with 12, 130 primary schools, 5, 450 junior secondary schools, 503 senior secondary, 21 TTC, 18 Technical Institutions and 15 Universities spend between 28% to 40% of its budget on education since 1957 till date.

Issue of Training, Capacity Building and Motivation of Personnel

Nigerians like most African countries is facing double challenges in the various development pursuits. The first challenge is that of the initial training of competent teachers in adequate number for the available schools. The second challenge is to upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills. These often create additional demand for teacher training capacity. Every year, government releases a certain amount of money to the various states for the training and retraining of teachers. They also have other agencies of government that undertake the training of teachers apart from UBEC. The National Teachers' Institute (NTI) also has the responsibility of training teachers. In 2011, the federal government flagged off the training of over 22,000 teachers nationwide. This year (2012); at least 50 teachers will be going for training in South Korea. The training efforts of the federal government are laudable. But, are the right personnel going for the training? Experience has shown that in short listing the beneficiaries for these trainings somehow the **same teachers are trained yearly or that more of desk officers are shortlisted rather than the teachers in the field.**

The implementation of the National Teachers' Education Policy including the new teachers' salary scale is also among the priority recommendations of the Presidential Task Force on Education. Teachers' welfare is the key to the success of the Transformation Agenda, the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, and the realization of the national overall development aspirations. This is a necessary step, only well motivated teachers can transform the educational sector.

Major Challenges in Transformation

Governance

One of the major challenges in the implementation of the transformation agenda is governance. Most Federal and State Ministries including the Ministry of Education are still grappling with the bureaucratic bottle necks. The minister of education herself has been quoted to complain of having

to struggle against the frustrating attitudes of bureaucrats' to implement the President's Transformation Agenda (Vanguard Newspaper, 2012) Nigeria's inability to tackle most of the developmental challenges such as poverty, unemployment, security and poor infrastructure can be largely attributed to poor governance arising from poor policy formulation and implementation, mismanagement of resources, institutionalized corruption, wastages and economic crimes. The present administration in its Transformation Agenda intends to deliver good governance through tackling corruption, value re-orientation, accountability and transparency as well as monitoring and evaluation of all priority policies, programmes and projects.

The Agenda recognizes the role of transparency in achieving good governance. It therefore places emphasis on the full implementation of the Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI) act of 2007 as a means of combating corruption in the public service. Other strategies aimed at combating bad governance include civil service reforms. Individuals must be carried along as they have a key role to play in the promotion of good governance.

Programme Review

Review of the programme should be in the form of strategic interventions such as:

- Clearly articulating the roles of the Local, State and Federal governments in the implementation of the programme to avoid encroachment into each other's constitutional rights.
- Similarly, redefining the roles of UBEC so that it does not conflict with the roles of the National Institute for Educational Planning (NIEP) in training Managers, National Education and Research and Development Council (NERDC) for curriculum development and the National Teachers Institute (NTI) for teacher development.
- Employing a built-in monitoring mechanism to ensure achievement of set targets;
- Setting intervention strategies based on the identified loopholes and barriers to UBE, EFA and MDG targets of every LGA and every State;
- Providing more information about the implementation strategies so that the people can be carried along all through the process.

Implementation

The institutional capacity and commitment of the personnel in the various government agencies and institutions over seeing the implementation of the Transformation Agenda is grossly inadequate. For instance the problems in the implementation of UBE include poor supervision of projects, poor quality of work, poor preparation of action Plans and changes in Action Plans without reference to the commission. Also, poor prioritization of projects and accountability by states constitute setbacks. The distribution of books to primary schools across the country in order to

restore reading culture among the pupils and to improve the quality of primary education is being undermined because oftentimes these books do not get to the target beneficiaries, rather the books are found in various markets! Moreover, what is the meaning of distributing books to a non reading public without intervention to enhance reading. Implementation can only be effective if the people key into the objectives.

Sustainability

Sustainability has been the bane of most National policies and development programmes. These policies and programmes are mounted by government to tackle specific problems and after a couple of years fizzle out or are abandoned by successive regimes. In the present Transition Agenda, we are assured that there is an overriding push for effective planning, coordination and provision for continuity of policies and programmes of the agenda with creation of an enabling environment for private sector participation through Public Private Partnership (PPP) (Anyim, 2012). The challenges in sustainability are linked to governance, poor implementation and non-ownership of such policies and programmes by the individuals and institutions that are to implement them.

Equitable Access

Issues of gender equity (comparable education experience for boys and girls) in education and gender parity (equal enrolment of boys and girls), have been the subject of much debate during the past decades and have become a prominent topic of debate in all countries. However, it is no longer a case for agitation among women in Sub-Sahara Africa or developing nations as a whole. There is a rising global consensus for the rights of women. This is seen in international treaties such as the declarations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. Countries acceding to the treaty (which Nigeria is among) are bound to provide equal opportunities for men and women.

In Education, MDG and the EFA compels Nigeria and other developing nations to ensure that there is both parity and equity in education. A positive correlation exists between the enrollment of girls in primary school, the gross national product and increase of life expectancy (World Bank, 2012). Further, more the rapid socio-economic development of a nation has been observed to depend on the caliber of women and their education in that country. (Schultz, 2002). Thus for Nigeria to achieve the desired economic growth through the Transformation Agenda it must equally be committed to achieve MDG and the EFA goals. The Universal Basic Education hope to eradicate gender parity and illiteracy at all levels of education and among all genders. Available statistics reveal that by 2007 seven years into the UBE programme there was a disparity in education especially in the Northern Nigeria. And according to the 2012

World Bank report although the parity gap is narrowing, the ratio of female- to -male primary school completion is decreasing in Sub-Sahara Africa.. Boys are most likely to complete school than girls. In the case of literacy there is still a wide gap between male and female; the female adult literacy rate (ages 15 and above) for the country was 59.4% in comparison to the male adult literacy rate of 74.4 %,(World Bank, 2012).

At higher educational levels there are still gaps in the fields of study that women and men choose as part of their formal education. These choices matter because they will translate into gender differences in employment and ultimately into differences in productivity and earnings. Gender differences in occupation and employment account for 10-50 percent of the observed wage gap in the low and middle-income countries (World Bank, 2012). As economies grow, gender disparities may shift from enrollments and learning to segregation in fields of study. These gender differences in choice of discipline emerge early and grow larger as young men and women move into higher educational levels. In the secondary level girls are more likely than boys to opt for general secondary education than vocational secondary education. At the tertiary level, these differences magnify. In Nigeria as is across the world, women are overrepresented in education and health; equally represented in social sciences, business, and law; and underrepresented in engineering, manufacturing, construction, and science (World Bank, 2012).

What Is Unique About Women In Educational Development?

Women constitute a very important component of the society, estimated to be about half the population of the world. Culturally, African women are intrinsically enterprising with progressive spirit and valuable talents. There is ingrained resilient power in every woman in addition to their mothering disposition. These are valuable qualities to make them good teachers. A cursory look into our UBE and Secondary schools will reveal that over 50% of the teachers are female. So why are we not performing? Of all social challenges faced by women in public offices is the "Pull Her Down" (PHD) syndrome which has made women to be working against each other. This has not allowed proper networking. Women with good practice do not circulate freely, acting as catalysts in the system and producing rapid results. Women educators could form a monitoring network for the girls with the goal of assisting them at all levels of the educational system. Too often, female teachers are traders. They are engaged in all forms of "moon -light" businesses during official school hours. They bring their wares to the classrooms and occasionally even request the pupils to hawk them. Moreover, all the children hawkers in our streets are from homes where women manage. These school hour businesses started when teachers were disillusioned, having worked for months without salaries.

Suggestions on Overcoming some of the Challenges

Admission

In admission into the tertiary institutions disparities in male and female entrance into Science and Technological, Mathematics (STM) courses, should be remedied through an affirmative action in favour of girls. "where women and men have equal chances to become socially and politically active; make decisions, and shape policies-is likely to lead over time to more representative, and more inclusive, institutions and policy choices and thus to a better development path (World Bank, 2012:29). The present use of multiple admission processes (joint matriculation examinations and institutional screening tests) will gradually ease out corruption in admission into higher institutions. Already, success stories abound as to the improvement in the caliber of entrants into the universities.

Effective Monitoring

The overall goal for the programme period is to have a harmonized monitoring and evaluation mechanism for all the priority policies, programmes and projects for the generation of an annual country report under the coordination of the National Planning Commission (NPC). it attempts to measure inputs, outputs, outcomes and the impact of policies, programmes and projects on the economic and the welfare of the citizenry. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism should be built into every project and programme. For the Higher Institution, the periodic accreditation exercise has provided a platform for monitoring and quality control inspectorate division should be active for primary and secondary levels.

Rewarding Excellence

There is a need to reward individuals and institutions that exhibit clear transparency and diligence in the implementation of the government's policies and record success or meet set targets. As government steps up mechanisms to check and punish offenders such structures should be set up to reward excellence. This does not need to be a national award but can be done at ministerial level, on institutional level or below. It will serve as motivation for hard work.

Timely Information Dissemination

The people cannot support government's efforts to transform the Nation if they do not know what the government is doing. Information on policies and strategies for success should be exhaustively disseminated especially to the grassroots. This is necessary given the fact that Nigerians are wary of development plans that tend to do the opposite.

Professionalization in Teaching.

Initial Teacher Training Institutions should insist on admitting academically competent candidates and not "rejects" from other professional,. candidates with aptitude for teaching and not those who use it as a "stop-gap" The establishment of Teacher Registration Council is a good step in the right direction. The structure should be kept functional at all levels like engineers ,doctors, architects or pharmacists do.

After the setting up of the Teacher Registration Council (TRC), it is also necessary to make it attractive by enhancing Teacher Salary Scale.

Stakeholder Empowerment

Transformation in Education sector can not succeed without the teachers being empowered. Every credible profession is empowered to function. Teachers as individuals and as organized group need empowerment. They need knowledge, awareness, financial capacitation and will power. The task of teacher empowerment is both of the teachers as well as of the society. Knowledge is not static, teaching strategies are equally evolving , teachers must read to keep themselves abreast. Teachers who do not read, cannot teach pupil to love reading. Teachers who are not computer literates in today's classroom should know that his or her value is eluding in the system. Harvey Ullman in Mason, 2003 is noted to have said this,

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether this happens at the age of 20 or 80 years. Anyone who keeps on learning not only remains young, but becomes consistently more valuable regardless of physical capacity, (In Mason, 2003).

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me reiterate that it takes you and I to cause a transformation. It takes leaders and the citizens with a progressive mind set to bring about a lasting transformation. It takes women as managers of the home to kick start the transformation.

Attempts are being made by the present regime in the Transformation Agenda to address the issues which have undermined previous government developmental programmes. However, the most crucial influence on the success of any government development programme is the attitude of the implementers. Individuals, institutions, ministries and government agencies must have ownership of the programme. If the Transformation Agenda is to make a substantial impact on the Nigerian

economy, the educational system and the lives of the citizenry, all the stakeholders should embrace it and act on what they preach. Women educators can key into the Transformation Agenda through individual and collective efforts in their offices, institutions, ministries and agencies in order to create the desired impacts on the lives of Nigerians.

This paper has listed and discussed extensively issues bordering on access, professional development of teachers, teaching profession, teachers' empowerment and frequent policy changes. It is essential to note that transformation in education sector may begin with the teacher from the classroom as they teach but implementation of their discoveries involves all stakeholders in the education industry.

I sincerely believe that these ideas and suggestions contained in this address would not end up on paper but will be noted and acted upon in order to yield desired impact and aspirations of the organizers of this timely event.

Thank you for your patient listening.

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