



Report of the

One-Day High-Level National Summit on the Inclusion of Women in Governance



Organised By:
Centre LSD with Support from FCDO through PLAC

Held at:
Abuja Continental Hotel, Abuja

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1.0 Preamble

The High-Level National Summit on the Constitutional Inclusion of Women in Governance in Nigeria was organised by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) with support from the United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC). The summit amongst other things, highlighted the importance of women's inclusion in governance and served as a platform for harmonizing the efforts by various organizations working in the area of gender and women's inclusion in governance. Furthermore, it presented an opportunity for key actors to synergize and map out joint strategy and actions for collective impact with respect to advancing women's inclusion in governance.

The programme which was held at Abuja Continental Hotel, Abuja on Thursday, August 22, 2024 had over 100 participants in attendance. It brought together allies from the National Assembly, Academia, Development Partners, Traditional and Religious Leaders, Civil Society, Media as well as other actors/advocates who have been working in areas of constitutional inclusion of women in Nigeria.

2.0 Opening Session

The meeting started at exactly 9:00am with the recitation of the national anthem by participants. This was followed by the acknowledgement of the following participants/guests by the compere, Itia Otabor – Director of Strategy, Centre LSD;

- The Speaker, House of Representatives, represented by Hon Talba Fatima – Chairperson, Women in Parliament;
- The Deputy Senate President, represented by Hadjia Yar'Dada Maikano – SA, Women to the DSP;
- The Founding Executive Director, Centre LSD – Dr. Otive Igbuzor;
- The Executive Director, Centre LSD, represented by Dr Margaret Fagboyo – Director of Development, Centre LSD;
- The Representative of UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) – Ayibakuro Matthew;
- The European Union Deputy Head of Mission to Nigeria - Zissimos Vergos;
- The Keynote Speaker, Prof Oluwafunmilayo J. Para-Mallam;
- The Deputy Chairperson, Women in Parliament & Member House of Rep., – Hon Blessing Amadi;
- Member, Ekiti State House of Assembly – Hon Abimbola Solanke;
- The Chief of Party, Palladium SCALE Project – Lydia Odeh;

- The Team Leader, Palladium Propcorn Project – Dr Adia Odeh;
- The Team Leader, PERL-ECP – John Mutu;
- The Executive Director, Gender Equality, Peace and Development Centre – Prof Patricia Donli;
- The Africa Director, MacArthur Foundation – Dr Kole Shettima;
- The Director, CDD, Nigeria – Dr Dauda Garuba;
- The Vice Chair, Centre LSD Board – Comrade Hauwa Mustapha;
- The Country Manager, Christian Aid Nigeria – Tope;
- The First Female Speaker, Edo State House of Assembly – Rt Hon Elizabeth Ativie;
- The First Female Speaker, Ekiti State House of Assembly – Rt Hon Bunmi Adelugba;
- The Special Adviser, Gender Empowerment to Ondo State Governor – Mrs Olamide Falana;
- The Special Adviser on Disability to Abia State Governor – David Anaele;
- The Executive Director, Baobab for Women’s Rights – Ms Dipo Salami, JP

Many other dignitaries were equally acknowledged and recognised at the programme which had several sessions including two presentations and panels of discussion.

2.1 Welcome Address by Executive Director, Centre LSD

The welcome address at the summit was delivered by the Executive Director of African



Pic 1: Dr Fagboyo - Director, Dev., CLSD welcoming participants on behalf of the ED

Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) ably represented by Dr Margaret Fagboyo - Director of Development, Centre LSD due to unavoidable circumstance. The ED welcomed participants and noted that the occasion marks a significant journey towards women constitutional inclusion in governance in Nigeria. He highlighted the benefits of women inclusion in governance (as demonstrated across the world) to include more comprehensive decision-making, richer diversity

of perspectives, and greater commitment to social justice. He also chronicled the long and challenging historical journey towards women inclusion in governance in Nigeria, making reference to the constitutional reforms of Clifford Constitution of 1922 to the 1979 Constitution in which women were first allowed to vote nationwide in an election and observed that the 1999 constitution which

is currently in operation has certain sections that marginalise and discriminate against women. Furthermore, the rejection of the five gender bills by the 9th National Assembly was highlighted by the ED as evidence of the entrenched barriers that still exist thus necessitating the need for an intervention. However, he commended the leadership of the 10th National Assembly who have made commitment to correct the anomaly and noted that it is not just about pushing for gender equality; but creating a better, more inclusive Nigeria for all.

In conclusion, the ED explained that the summit provides a unique platform for various stakeholders to strategize, collaborate, and mobilize for the constitutional inclusion of women in governance in Nigeria.

2.2 Opening Remarks by Partners

Remarks were given at the opening session of the programme by a representative of FCDO and the EU.

2.2.1 United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Governance Advisor, UK FCDO - Matthew Ayibakuro said he was encouraged by the level of participation and the groundswell of support for the cause of women inclusion in governance which speaks to the fact that everyone recognizes inclusion as the basis for democratic evolution. He observed that the drive for women inclusion seems to be getting the desired momentum and expressed the support of FCDO to take the initiative further.



Pic 2: Dr Ayibakuro of FCDO delivering his welcome remark at the summit

2.2.2 European Union

The Deputy Head of Mission to Nigeria - Zissimos Vergos who represented the EU at the summit acknowledged that women are underrepresented in governance in Nigeria as a result of numerous factors which can be overcome through legislation. He explained that if women are elected into political office, they bring in values that promote equality and the needs of the family. He equally stressed that if there are no women in politics, there will be no peace, no inclusion and prosperity will suffer. The Deputy Head of Mission cited statistics across the globe which show that there was an

improvement in 2015 but it later slowed down in the 2020s. He cited the case of African countries like Rwanda, Uganda, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa where there has been significant progress in women's inclusion in governance and pointed out that legislation and presidential order remain the most potent way to promote gender parity. Mr. Vergos noted that women's political leadership may not be the only answer as it may not be sufficient but it is necessary considering the fact that women should not just strive to exist but they should be included in the scheme of things. He ended his remark by reiterating EU's support for the cause of women in Nigeria.



Pic 3: Rep of the Speaker, HoR - Hon Talba making some remarks at the summit

2.3 Goodwill Messages

Goodwill messages were presented at the summit by the following:

- Dr Adia Odeh – Team Lead, Palladium Propcorn;
- Istifanus Akau - Federal Partnership Facilitator, PERL-ECP;
- Hon Abimbola Solanke - Ekiti State House of Assembly;
- Mrs Lydia Odeh – Chief of Party, Palladium SCALE;
- Dr Kole Shettima – Africa Director, MacArthur Foundation;
- Comrade Hauwa Mustapha – Vice Chair, Centre LSD;
- Temitope Fashola – Country Director, Christian Aid, Nigeria;
- Prof Emma Dandauna – Men Against Rape;
- Hadjia Yar'Dada Maikano – SA, Women to DSP;
- Hon Talba Fatima – House of Representatives;

In their respective goodwill messages, the special guests commended Centre LSD, FCDO and PLAC for the initiative and decried the exclusion of women in governance in Nigeria. They stressed that the inclusion of women in governance is not necessarily about gender equality as many are quick to conclude but the evolution of a more just and equitable society. The efforts by a few states notably Ekiti with a good number of women in governance was cited and commended. Specifically, the representative of the Speaker, House of Representatives – Hon Fatima Talba advised that the rejected bills be represented for consideration by the 10th House of Representatives while the

representative of the DSP pledged her principal's support for whatever resolution that will be taken at the summit.

3.0 Presentation One: Constitutional Inclusion of Women in Governance in Nigeria

In her presentation titled: *The Constitutional Inclusion of Women in Governance in Nigeria*; Prof. Oluwafunmilola Para-Mallam of NIPSS, Jos appreciated Centre LSD for conceiving the summit and commended the topic considering the critical role the constitution plays in promoting the welfare of all. The paper had the following outline:

- *Preamble*
- *Introduction: The Rationale for an Inclusive Nigerian Constitution*
- *A Brief History of Women's Constitutional Exclusion*
- *Lessons for Nigeria from Good Practices in other African States*
 - *Special constitutional/legislative measures*
 - *Political systems or political will*
- *Towards Inclusive Constitutional Democracy in Nigeria*
 - *The need for a critical pathway*
 - *Some critical success factors*
- *Conclusion*

Prof Para-Mallam spoke passionately on the above outline and equally highlighted the following:

- The sense of marginalization among several constituencies including women and girls in Nigeria.
- Nigeria falls behind the African average in terms of inclusion as it ranks among the 10th lowest with 4% women representation in parliament compared to countries like Rwanda (61.25%), South Africa (46.1%), Namibia (44.23%), Senegal (38.21%), Mozambique (36.86%) and others.
- There are some forms of female victimization by the constitution hence the need for deliberate review to include gender.
- Whereas certain sections of the constitution like sections 14(1), 15(2), 17(3) and 42(1) promotes equal participation and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and other disparities, there are other sections of the constitution that silently inhibits women participation.

- Female participation in constitutional drafting/review process in Nigeria have never exceeded 15%.
- An overview of the rejected female friendly bills indicates that reasons ranging from religion to socio-cultural explanations as well as claims that the bill were either unconstitutional or had substantively been addressed under Section 42 of the Nigerian Constitution were responsible.
- The top 10 performers in women’s representation in national parliaments have taken constitutional and other special legislative measures to address the historic disadvantages that inhibit female inclusion in governance.

To advance inclusive constitutional democracy in Nigeria, the speaker identified some critical success factors to include:

- Early mobilization and capacity building of relevant constituencies and stakeholders;
- Alliance Building and Networking among women’s diverse socio-cultural, profession groups and political parties around shared agendas and interests is crucial;
- Strengthening cross-party women’s political and parliamentary forum.
- The need to engage in opinion moulding advocacy;
- Inclusive and participatory constitution drafting process ensuring women and their interests are well represented at the drafting/review table;
- Press for electoral system reform;
- Non-conventional methods including strategic and legitimate behind-the-scenes approach.

3.1 Panel Discussion One – How NASS can ensure Constitutional Inclusion of Women in Governance in Nigeria

The first discussion panel at the summit was on how members of the 10th National Assembly can ensure constitutional inclusion of women in governance in Nigeria. The session had Dr Ejiro Otive-Igbuzor as panel lead/moderator while other members of the panel were:

- i. Hon Fatima Talba
- ii. Hadjia Yar’Dada Maikano
- iii. Majeed Dahimi
- iv. Olamide Falana.

The panel lead opened the conversation by running through the issues raised by the keynote speaker – Prof Para-Mallam and requested panelists to comment directly to the issues with actionable points.

Discussion Question: *How can members of the 10th National Assembly ensure constitutional inclusion of Women in Governance in Nigeria?*

Majeed Dahimi

- The problem of exclusion of women from governance is not largely due to lack of framework. It is also not correct to say that our tradition is the culprit. Rather, it is the political culture that evolved in Nigeria over time. The actors in the political space have deliberately limited women’s participation in governance.
-

Hon Fatima Talba

- As head of the house committee on women, I had to add men to the committee membership as a strategy to sensitise the men and get their support. There is needed to get something out of the constitution. There are two critical stakeholders that are very relevant in this direction. They are the male parliamentarians and the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



Pic 4: Panel Lead - Dr Ejiro Igbuzor (at the middle) moderating the panel discussion session at the summit

Mrs. Olamide Falana

The push for special seat or measure is

the way to go and the steps to be taken in this direction is to:

- Identify our allies and work with them – it is good to know that the Speaker of the House of Rep and the Deputy Senate President are *He-for-Shes*;
- The need to use lobby as a strategy to get as many persons as possible to buy into the campaign. Lobbying should be continuous until the desired goal is achieved;
- Use men who are sold to the idea to strategically lead the campaign;

- Bring in the media to help magnify the issues and get citizens to buy-in and take ownership;
- Women in the various state houses of assembly should come together to push for women inclusion in governance;
- Equity strategy should be considered at this stage rather than equality.

Hadjia Yar'Dada Maikano

- There is the need to sensitise citizens on the legislations on ground. It is also critical to examine the 5 bills presented to the 9th NASS. The experience of countries like Rwanda that has successfully used legislation to achieve inclusion will be useful for Nigeria to get to the desired level of women inclusion in governance.
- The heavy use of money as major inducer during electioneering campaigns is something that should be discouraged in order to improve women's participation because women most times do not have the financial war chest men have to throw into politics.
- Women should look out for one another for encouragement and be their 'sister's keeper'.
- Our religious leaders can also play critical roles to disabuse the minds of those who think that Islam prohibits participation of women in politics.

The panel lead – Dr Ejiro Otive-Igbuzor observed that the call for the replacement of equality with equity is worrisome. She explained that equality is the end point while equity is simply a process or a means to attain equality, therefore, if members of the NASS do not understand these gender concepts it will be difficult for them to legislate on the issue as the outcome of their engagement would be definitely unimaginable. She proceeded to ask panelists to give their **final thoughts on how the 10th National Assembly can ensure constitutional inclusion of Women in Governance in Nigeria and the following were their comments:**

Majeed Dahimi

- If we do not have a wholistic political/democratic process devoid of corruption and the use of money, women's inclusion in governance in Nigeria will remain a challenge. Therefore, there is the need for actors in our political arena to promote good democratic tenets and values that encourage inclusivity.

Hon Fatima Talba

- Equality appears a bit harsh and difficult for men to bite. Therefore, it is better to start with equity. Coming from a Sharia background, you will better understand the use of the concept of equity instead of equality.
- I was almost frustrated and denied the opportunity to contest and become a member of the House of Representative because some Islamic clerics saw my interest in politics as something that shouldn't be but I had to use the concept of equity to advance the argument that saw me through.

Mrs. Olamide Falana

- If equality is the issue, it can be removed. As part of the starting point, we should ensure that the number of seats women have at the moment do not reduce and intensify the search for women that are qualified to encourage them to participate in politics.

Hadjia Yar'Dada Maikano

- The women in NASS should look at the challenges of women in their respective constituencies and do something to address them as a strategy to encourage participation. They should work towards building potential women to come on board governance and politics.

In closing the session, the lead panelist/moderator stated that what advocacy cannot achieve for many years, the law can achieve as fast as you can imagine; therefore, it is the right strategy to adopt in the circumstance. She also explained that looking at gender economics, it is critical to note that women bring in a lot to promote economic development. Dr Ejiro Igbuzor concluded that the present economic challenge in Nigeria can only be addressed through the inclusion of women. She decried the 13 states whose houses of assembly do not have female members and described it as unfortunate.

3.2 Open Discussions/Interactions

To further discuss how the 10th National Assembly can ensure constitutional inclusion of Women in Governance in Nigeria an open discussion/interaction session anchored by Faith Nwadishi was held as a follow up to the panel discussion session. She recalled an

experience a few years back while pursuing the PIB when she wanted a female representative to speak on certain gender aspects of PIB and the woman simply said, “of what use is the PIB to women? Nwadishi went further to ask participants to make contributions that will provide actionable steps on how the 10th NASS can promote constitutional inclusion of women in governance in Nigeria. The following were comments made by some participants:

Amb Chibuzo Okereke

The 5 gender bills are not something that can be achieved once. There are a few proposals that can be considered in this regard:

- First, it would be better to go the route of proportional representation
- Secondly, it can also be approached by altering relevant sections of the constitution that speaks to the number of seats in the parliament. If you tell an average legislator who is looking forward to re-election to forfeit his seat for a female member to emerge, it will be difficult for him to accept.
- Zonal representation model can also be explored as a way forward. For the house of representatives, 2 seats can be dedicated to women per state.

In NASS, the caucuses are the places where you push for or lobby for votes. So, it would be proper to use them to push this agenda.

Barr Blessing Amadi

- My advice is that everyone should be involved in politics by showing interest and possibly register as a member of a political party. The activism and participation of everyone is key.
- Women professionals should be involved and used to promote women’s inclusion by either supporting or contesting directly at an election.
- There is the need for a summit on Women in Governance where stakeholders irrespective of political divide will be encouraged to participate and be deliberate about pushing more women into governance.

Uche Madubuko

- It would have been good for more of those in policy making position to be in attendance at such an important summit as this.

- For us to talk about inclusion, our language needs to change. Rather than women inclusion, it should be progressive governance that considers women inclusion.

Uche Andrew

- The inclusion of women in disability should be considered in view of the fact that they suffer more marginalization and neglect.

Hon Bunmi Adelugba

- The inclusion of women should be deliberate and women on their part should endeavour to collaborate and work with allies to achieve the desired level of inclusion in governance.
- Wives of governors and other strategic gatekeepers should be thoroughly engaged in this campaign.
- Female parliamentarians at the National Assembly should endeavour to work with those at the state houses of assembly with a view to coming up with same agenda aimed at promoting women's inclusion in governance.
- Political appointees should also be carried along on this

Hon Elizabeth Atovie

- It is germane to consider the critical mass of persons to engage ranging from young professional women, those in rural areas among others. The civil society should consider going back to mobilise the grassroots to support the cause of women inclusion in governance in Nigeria.

Hon Leah

- The message should be sent back to the states for them to join forces on this. There are 6 geopolitical regions in Nigeria and among the states, Ekiti in the South West and Yobe in the North East should be commended for supporting women inclusion in governance. The governors of these states should be given awards to encourage others.
- The women present in the house should be go back to their respective regions/states with the message and continue to sensitise others about it.

Jake Epele

- The time has come for a national strong women’s movement. Women working in silos cannot achieve the desired result.
- There is the need for a strong agitation for gender responsive budgeting that will benefit women

Dr James Zasha

- There should be naming and shaming of legislators that are not doing the needful to support such progressive bills.

Ezenwa Nwagwu

- There is need to move from project to struggle. Self-promotion is always the challenge but developing a movement is key to addressing such issues because, it goes beyond receiving funding from donors to taking it up as a cause we are willing to pursue over whatever period it may require.
- NASS members often appears to be unteachable so it is difficult to get them to understand certain things like equity and equality.



Pic 5: Com Hauwa Mustapha, Vice Chair, CLSD Board commenting on an issue at the summit

Dr Ejiro Otive-Igbuzor

- The National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) can be very instructive in the training of legislators.

Hauwa Mustapha

- Continuous intensive training on gender and inclusion is recommended and required for NASS members.
- It is important to assess the quality of representation given by the women already in parliament. Is there anything done that makes any of them stand out?

- It is germane to make chapter 2 of the Nigerian 1999 constitution justiciable such that those in leadership position can be held responsible for failure to deliver.

Dr Margaret Fagboyo

- The electoral laws should be amended to give room for independent candidates during election. This will eliminate the restrictions and inhibitions by political parties that equally stand against the emergence of females as standard bearers or candidates of political parties at an election.

3.3 Response from Keynote Speaker

The Keynote Speaker – Prof Para-Mallam acknowledged the contributions made by the panelists and other participants and described them as very interesting. However, she responded to issues raised as follows:

- The topic is about constitutional inclusion not necessarily political inclusion of women. The focus should be on how the constitution can become women friendly considering the limitations of the 1999 Nigeria constitution in promoting women inclusive in governance;
- I don't agree that the constitution is not a part of the issues. There are lots to do on the constitution to make it work for women;
- The suggestion to increase the number of seats as a strategy to increase women's participation/inclusion is something that could be considered;
- There are empirical evidences to show that women in governance improve the welfare of the people;
- The concepts of equity and equality should not be misunderstood. Equality is not merely a physical representation alone. It is about values and capacity to contribute in equal terms (like the male counterparts) to support national development;
- The issue of power is also not well understood. There is a deep understanding that men think about power from a zero-sum point of view. Consequently, they think this discussion is about taking power from them. This is most unfortunate because it should not be;

- There are specific amendments to be considered to promote women inclusion. There is the concept of federal character which ensures that every shade of the nation is carried along in terms of governance. If this is the case, there should also be gender character to promote gender balance.
- There is a clear need to work on those areas of the constitution that discriminates against women.
- The NIPSS set up a Gender and Policy Centre aimed at training actors in the public sphere on how to push the narrative further on gender inclusion and national development.

4.0 Opening Comments by Session Chairman

Speaking on behalf of the Chairman of the afternoon session, Dr Otiye Igbuzor, observed that women suffered so much when compared to men looking at the historical development of Nigeria’s constitution and political development. He



Pic 6: Dr Igbuzor making some remarks to open the afternoon session of the summit

specifically noted that women had always been neglected and marginalized all through the constitutional engineering process in Nigeria starting from the Clifford’s Constitution of 1922. He pointed out that it wasn’t until 1979 that women across Nigeria were allowed to vote in an election. The Founding Executive Director of Centre LSD stressed the need for the use of constitution and other special measures to promote women inclusion in governance in Nigeria considering the fact that a significant number of countries in Africa have used it successfully.

The clamour for the use of social movement to address gender gap and women inclusion as advanced by participants and resource persons during the morning session was re-echoed by Dr Igbuzor. He proceeded to conclude that the morning session was able to establish the basis for the conversation while the afternoon session will focus on the strategy to promote women inclusion in governance.

5.0 Presentation Two: Advocacy Approach on Constitutional Inclusion of Women in Governance

The presentation on Advocacy Approach on Constitutional Inclusion of Women in Governance was made by Barr Ebere Ifendu - President, Women in Politics Forum. While reeling out some statistics on women's inclusion in governance, she pointed out that only 6 countries globally have 50% or more women in parliament in either single or lower chamber. They are; Rwanda (61%), Cuba (56%), Nicaragua (54%), New Zealand (54%), Andora (50%), Mexica (50%) and UAE (50%). She shared the statistics which says that women are either Heads of State or Heads of Government in only 27 countries out of over 180 nations of the world. The speaker noted that there has been some development in some countries around Nigeria like Sierra Leone where a reviewed constitution was accented to leading to an increase of the number of women in parliament from 18 to 40. Barr Ifendu recommended that an advocacy approach on constitutional inclusion of women in governance should encompass the following elements:

- Collaborative Effort,
- Research and Data Collection,
- Awareness and Sensitisation,
- Engagement with Policy Makers,
- Build Capacity,
- Media Engagement,
- Public Mobilisation,
- The use of Inclusive language, and
- Intersectionality.



Pic 7: Ebere Ifendu presenting the second paper at the summit

5.1 Panel Discussion Two: Mobilizing for Constitutional Inclusion of Women in Governance

The second discussion panel which was led by Prof. Joy Ezeilo as moderator had the following as panelists:

- i. David Anaele – Special Adviser on Disability to Abia State Governor
- ii. Brenda Anugwom - CEO, Women Trust Fund
- iii. Bukky Shonibare - ED, Invictus
- iv. Amb Eniola Cole - ED, Nessaction
- v. Tim Aniegbunam - Social Analyst

The panel lead opened the discussion by observing that the 5 bills rejected by the 9th NASS is not the end of the what should be done to promote constitutional inclusion of women in governance. She stressed that women inclusion should be fully enshrined in the constitution but unfortunately, over the years there have been issues inhibiting gender inclusion in Nigeria. In terms of what should be done, she advocated the adoption of the 6Cs advocacy approach which include:

- i. Consensus building on issues to advocate,
- ii. Capacity building of actors to facilitate understanding of the issues,
- iii. Communication of the issues unambiguously,
- iv. Concerted action of actors and allies,
- v. Coordination of the entire process, and
- vi. Cooperation of everyone involved.

With regards to who should be the targets and what should be done, Prof Ezeilo identified legislators and other influential actors. She pointed further that there should be advocacy and sensitization backed by well researched facts. She later called on the panelists to take turn to respond to the question of: ***How to mobilise for constitutional inclusion of women in governance in 2024 – what should we do and who should do what, where and when?***

Tim Aniegbunam

- There is a task ahead of us following the rejection of the 5 bills– the chapter is not closed and action must start from today. There should be a communique from this meeting to set the stage for the task ahead. There is the need to unveil the potential of the female gender.
- It is critical to ask why the gender bills failed in the past and what should be done with the 10th NASS to get them to take the bills seriously?
- Considering the paucity of female members in the state houses of assembly what are the assurances that the bills will be passed when they get there?
- Networking and coalition is a key strategy to address this challenge.
- Traditional institutions and leadership should be carried along.
- The social media space should be used such that every stakeholder is put on same page.

Brenda Anugwom

- Why do we still talk about women representation in Nigeria as a challenge despite the progress in many countries? Unless we address some structural issues in the constitution, Nigeria will remain where it is.
- In section 22A of the constitution, the word man should be replaced by person.
- There is the need for massive sensitization to get citizens to understand the issues with constitutional inclusion of women in governance.
- It should be noted that women have proven to be economic builders – India was pushed out poverty through the instrumentality of women in the informal sector.

David Anaele

- The question to ask is who takes ownership of this process? If the women don't take it seriously by owning the campaign, it will not go far.
- Do the wives of governors or speakers that we are talking about understand what the issues are?
- What kind of communication do we need to have through the media?
- There is the need to raise a youth champion from the academic community to drive this campaign.
- There are civil societies that are working in different areas but the intercession of all them are required to run with the issues.
- The message should be clearly stated such that same thing is said by everyone
- In the next 17 months or thereabout, INEC will come up with a timetable heralding the beginning of a new political order and it will be over as politicians will be occupied with reelection plan rather than the business of governance.

Amb Eniola Cole

- The conversation should not be left for women alone, men in parliament should be involved.
- There is a move by NASS to mobilise students in Lagos state where it is reaching out to student union leaders in 10 institutions of higher learning in Lagos.
- When a project is youth driven, it receives more attention and traction. So, if we have young women brought in, it will be easy to push and drive the discussion.

- Often times, women are silenced with the issues they face when they want to rise up. This sort of things limits their participation in politics.

Bukky Shonibare

- To identify the different actors to engage, it would be good to look at the areas of the constitution that inhibit women’s inclusion in governance and determine who benefits from such:
 - Section 42 – who benefits from women being discriminated against? Men, people whose interpretation of the Holy Books are skewed, and parliamentarians that are selfish;
 - Section 29 – which says a girl is deemed to be an adult if she is married – who benefits from this? Those who are interested in marrying young girls;
 - Section 26 – which says a woman cannot transfer her citizenship to her husband – who benefits?
 - Section 147 – which talks about quota – who benefits? Male legislators;
 - Section 14 – The federal character part of section 14 – the drafters of this portion of the constitution fails to look at other critical aspects of character including gender.

The lead panelist added that apart from the sections of the constitution identified by the Bukky Shonibare, sections 48, 49, 71, 77 and 117 are also not gender sensitive. She noted that an additional 74 seats need to be created to improve women’s inclusion in governance.

5.2 Open Discussions/Interactions

A follow up session of open discussions and interactions was moderated by Bunmi Dipo-Salami JP, Executive Director, Baobab for Women’s Human Rights. She observed that from the conversations so far, it is clear that many things have been said including engaging men, women, youth as well as those in the grassroots. She called for further contributions from the audience requesting them to come up with new ideas to bring to the table to advance the conversation and take the shame off Nigeria. The following were comments made by some participants:

Uche Madubuko

- There is the need to target and prioritise states where women's representation is abysmally poor.
- To engage this process, there is need to understand the process. Knowledge of the law and research information are key to help get direction.

Deborah Ike

- The issue of enabling environment and support for women who are given the opportunity to be card carrying members or when they win the primaries should be considered rather than abandoning them.
- It is important to put in place structures to know what to do when women get it e.g. are we building a coalition?
- There is the need to go local and a situation where women begin to emerge as godmothers should be envisaged.
- If we must succeed in promoting women inclusion, we should drive it into our children to develop their interest and catch them young in the campaign .

Segun Babalola

- There should be a structure that coordinates this initiative from the regional levels or states. If we engage top CSOs from the zones they can help to harvest issues from the grassroots to thicken our advocacy issues.

The moderator further asked participants to comment on how well they think they know those they are advocating for. The following were comments made by some participants:

Hauwa Mustapha

- In terms of what should be done, we should go back to the 5 bills that were thrown away, dust them and do some reviews before representing them to the national assembly for passage.
- There is the need to be careful about who to bring in when advocating for a movement. There are some progressive religious and traditional leaders that can be selected and engaged to avoid being pulled down.
- Whatever the strategy, it is more important to see the outcome such that the inclusion of women must be transformative and does not perpetuate class

domination, rather, it should benefit all and lead to a progressive transformation not the emergence of a female elitist group.

Prof Patricia Donli

- It would be good to understand the true interest of NASS as well as those behind the rejection. In addition, it would be good to know the person or persons standing as obstacles as well as who influences them.
- There is the need to sensitise women to avoid elite capture.

Dr James Zasha

- We should take stock of the situation we are now, to identify the weaknesses, strengths and barriers so that people will be certain with how to go about addressing the issues.
- It is advisable to have a policy brief that can guide the campaign such that everyone can run with a singular message to avoid ambiguity and miscommunication.

Hon Bunmi Adelugba

- The CSOs and their networks should work together to replicate the same efforts at the state level involving the youth, using various social media platforms.
- There should be a template to run with such that everyone will be reading from same book.

Ufuoma Awhefeada

- The disproportionate representation of the female gender cuts across all sectors including education so it is not only politics.
- There is so much energy in synergy, therefore, coordination is key to addressing the challenge at hand.
- The issue of inclusion should be driven down to the student level. Patriarchy is so deeply entrenched even at the student's union government level where the office of the VP is usually reserved for females.
- There should be models for young boys as a strategy to get them to understand the need for inclusion.

- This campaign should not be carried out as if we want to rub it off on the face of the men. They should be made to understand that they are equally beneficiaries of this initiative.

Mrs Olamide Falana

- The ‘gen zees’ should be engaged in this campaign because of the energy they can bring in that can make a lot of difference.

Kingsley Attah

- As civil society, there is the need to strategically position ourselves to provide the technical skills and support to female candidates to get them to succeed.
- The emergence of the first female SUG president in Cross Rivers state was facilitated by our NGO.
- We should work on what we have on ground, clean it up and use it for advocacy.

Uche Amaka

- We should start thinking of how to add WWD to promote social inclusion and development. States like Lagos and Plateau are doing well with supporting women with disabilities to contribute to development process
- There is the need to talk about structural barriers that are often cultural. The Quoran talks about the privileges of women as a whole chapter was dedicated to women. It is not religion that is the issue but culture.
- There is the need to engage leadership of NASS because they influence the voting pattern. Also, there is a platform of engagement through which you can ask or influence your representations to know how they vote on critical issues

6.0 Closing Session – House Keeping and Closing Remarks

As part of the closing session, Victoria Udoh – Director of Monitoring and Evaluation called on participants to meet the secretariat for housekeeping issues. Thereafter, the Director of Strategy – Itia Otabor gave a brief closing remark in which he thanked participants and all those who facilitated the various sessions of the summit and wished them safe journey back to their various destination. Participants later had a group photograph before the summit came to a close at about 4.10pm.