**MEDIA RELATIONS PAPER FOR FIRST LADIES**

By

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Women have not been known for efficient and effective use of the media in these parts. Women shy off the public places except when to be decorative – seen but not heard. Therefore, Women-Media relationship with media has been less than cordial as should be for the most part.

**The MEDIA**

The Media is the group name for a wide range of communication modes, means, range and even the practitioners - from the traditional which we know from town crier etc. to the modern where it has assumed several wonderful dimensions whose aim remain the same in our interactivity in society.

Several forms of the modern media - the press, the radio and television play a big **role** in the **life** of the society. Behind these forms are media men and women – Practitioners – or Gentlemen of the Media. They inform, educate and entertain people. They in majority of cases, influence the way people look at the world and make them change **their** views. They are the mass media and play a very important **role** in organizing public opinion.

Their main purpose is to disseminate the information and knowledge and is the best medium of **communication** for mass audience. With the help of various media like electronic media, print media and web media, the mass **communication** method is accomplished in a suitable but highly effective way.

Modern **media** comes in many different formats, including print **media** (books, magazines, newspapers), television, movies, video games, music, cell phones, various kinds of software, and the Internet. Each type of **media** involves both contents, and also a device or object through which that content is delivered.

**Background:**

Permit me to classify all of them as **The** **Pen** for the purpose of this old statement. The fact of the Pen being mightier than the sword has always been true even if cliched and win over most issues and factors. Another surprising fact is that for the sex (Female) with so much understated strength/power that it virtually rules the world – albeit unknowingly, crying shy of authority wielding, is anomalous. Permit me this expression. The use of power lies in its boldness of application even on a subtle level, its prioritization, its proper perspective or big picture view, reprioritization when necessary and timeliness. Using this power must always factor in the media.

These factors may explain why women have never been able to appropriate or harness the inherent powers that lie with the media, if you permit me so to say. The answer is in developing a healthy relationship or partnership with the media.

It is true that politics which hitherto excludes women continuously in the political space, has

Beside every powerful man is an even more resilient, strong, intelligent and encouraging woman, and of that there is no doubt. What the woman in the unseen spaces of power has not realized is what she can achieve in tandem with appropriate use of the media to complement her spouse, actualize her own societal development goals and have visibility and identity as an achiever – all to the good or profit of society and herself.

**Needed Change**

Excellencies, we can all improve the lot of the Nigerian nation with efficient use and partnership with the media community who are all at your disposal. The role of the media in our socio-economic and political lives can actually catalyze development and make a better room for the Nigerian people (women inclusive) if rightly harnessed.

Women are born with a well-developed sense of welfare, organization and productivity because we are by nature productive – don’t we as women produce and nurture the human race?

Because we do these, we are placed in privilege to reposition our societies through our activities and under-position it also by our inactivity. Therefore, we must engage the Media in a healthy and continual relationship.

Another concern is that the modern woman pays too much attention to appearances rather than issues of socio-economic-political importance. Looking Good is Good, is Good Business and Great for the woman! That is not all that we are about. A school of thought happen to think looking good itself is no longer a means to an end but might become an end in itself, - unfortunate. Our society as the world out there, have too many problems waiting for the good looks, tender heart and fantastic feminine brain (another fact) to tackle them. What we own may not mean much if we do not achieve much for posterity. To that end, we must strive to leave a landmark. On that journey, your worst critic/nightmare and best friend/ally is the media in any form. As with everything in life there is a good and not so good way or even ‘not use way’ of the media. Using the media is an imperative. Finding the right, the way and using it is the best thing to do.

**The Role of the Media: The Desired Change:**

**Agenda setting in the Media:** The Media exists to drive society to change for the better, for posterity. To that end the Media sets the goals and agenda in every human society where it exists for information, for education, entertainment and development**.** It is not less so here.

**Women Underestimating or neglecting use of media:** Top-level Women underplay the significance of the media at every point for the promotion of their national goals and agenda setting. Let us look beyond the epileptic payment of media practitioners and sometimes non-payment by some media houses – all part of the cycle of corruption – aimed at gagging the press, sometimes by the “powers that be”, the unstable, unpredictable economic ambience in which we operate, and other corruption factors. The bottom line there is that the truth of reportage can be compromised. All these factors militate against even if indirectly, the output of fact. It is the peculiar tragedy or hazard of our trade in Nigeria and I salute the resilience of our media men/women. Even them distinguished Excellencies, you can work with these to promote the agenda or project in hand.

**WHAT WE MUST BEGIN TO DO IF NOT ALREADY DOING:**

**See the Media as friend**: We must begin to see the media as friend and partner and position ourselves in that light so that they also will align with our goals for society’s development and improvement. There are many ways of achieving this simple goal. Friendship with the Media is basically not about money but your passion to serve. Be passionate about your service. The passion will reach the media, you will win their heart in your sincerity of your passion.

**Train the Media**: We must train media practitioners to report from the point of knowledge of what we propose to do or are doing. As vanguards of the nation’s conscience and repository of its cultural and socio-economic well-being, the media will take this responsibility seriously and approach it with all the importance it deserves. Call them for brief on what you intend to do even if informally.

The media pushes agenda for improvement and development and where we are hoping to improve or develop our communities, the media must be our greatest ally. They will put our projects out there for visibility, for knowledge, acceptance, for support. Where the issue is in the face of the citizenry continuously, it will become reality. This is so because women always, will address all the necessary angles for human development – whether domestic, workplace, psycho-social and in all other spaces – Women think holistically, strategically about society and their progeny in continuous terms for development as should be. Your roles as first ladies compulsorily harnesses your presence and contributions to state and society’s development as partners with your esteemed husbands.

**Media /Image Training for you (projected Image)**: As a top lady, please train in public speaking /oration/presentation to strengthen your capacity to interface with the media on your public appearances. This training will equip you (both as training and dry-run for public speaking). Pre-read your speech before the final delivery. If need be, rehearse several times and familiarize yourselves with the content. This capacity will help portray you in positive light and competence; grant better performance (because you are performing) to enhance media acceptability.

**Complementing your Spouse/Family**: Exalted ladies, Politics is a pre-condition for women’s basic rights to be taken into account in the overall benefit of society and this should be in the mind of every progressive, self-respecting media practitioner. The Media holds the key to unlocking the potential for resonating your performance and contributions into significance socially, politically because you are your spouse’s greatest political ally. Of course, you are also an ally of human development whose responsibility in some measure has been squarely placed in your domain. Your contributions will speak in support of the goals of the men in power to whom you are allied in matrimony and whom in the eyes of the public – you are one with or support ardently.

Family unit is important to the media so ensure a well put together family front.

**Perception of The Media:** Over the years, there is an element of negative perception of the media as “flotsams & Jetsams” in some quarters. Distinguished ladies, this is a luxury we cannot afford to indulge in. Do not go with this prejudice. Bring them close to your media team. Find space to interact with them where there is need. They are necessary to the buy-in of your ideas and projects. Some will offer positive criticisms. Examine their views for what is worth. Growth comes out of the good, the bad and the ugly in most cases.

Excellencies, if you do not want to condemn the country to underdevelopment, push your project in the media and be passionate about it. Work with the Media and translate it to action going forward to grant us the goal of a better society.

**Use the Web or Social Media:** A much-abused platform is the social media on which all manners of truths, lies, misconceptions and contrived situations abound. Those platforms abound with all manners of purveyed and purported ‘facts’.

In reality, it is a platform on which to sound off your good and contributory activities and ideas. If well used, they will fly and position you in very positive light indeed. So, GET TRENDING! Trend with the issues and ideas of human, humanitarian, contemporary issues; causes and the peculiarity of your state needs.

Oftentimes, operatives of social media platforms on behalf of their principals think that it is a place for featuring them rather than the good and great ideas that they (the principals) represent in reality. Ensure they operate your handles appropriately.

**Be Accessible:** Create access point for catching up with the most vulnerable and understand their problems. Be seen to be accessible to the most vulnerable. They can give a lot of good media because they speak for you even where the media cannot. The media will eventually get their views and input out in public domain to your good.

**Talking out of Turn or When Unsure:**  Do not comment or answer on any issue about which you are unsure or have insufficient knowledge, have unverified or untrusted information. Simply have no comment. It is better to be safe than sorry. Negative comments make better copies in the tabloids and rag media and are usually exaggerated! They usually hit the news stands before the good professionals. Even damage control may not mitigate all of their negative impact.

In conclusion, permit me to summarize what must be done to build a great media relationship.

**NOTES FOR GREAT MEDIA RELATIONSHIP**

There are few working tips needed for a great media relationship. They are briefly stated here for ease of reference.

* The Media is your Friend- See the as friends and partners in progress
* Not every event deserves publicity
* Over exposure is counter productive
* Ethics of the office must be painstakingly adhered to avoid bad publicity
* Ensure appropriate dressing to fit every occasion
* Affect media
* Avoid Media Confrontations
* Speak the media language
* Be Natural
* Be camera conscious.
* Read through all your speeches before final delivery
* Seek professional help to assist your public image
* Complement your spouse well
* Present a great family image
* Don’t join issues within the public governance space
* Trend on Social Media - identify human causes with peculiarity to your state needs
* Be seen to be accessible to the most vulnerable
* If un sure, don answer or comment on any issue
* The Media is your friend. It is not about money but your passion