

OPENING REMARKS AT THE INDUCTION OF NEW AND RETURNING GOVERNORS WIVES MAY 18-19TH 2023, ABUJA

PROTOCOLS

HE Dr Aisha Muhammadu Buhari, First Lady Federal Republic of Nigeria

HE Senator Oluremi Tinubu, First Lady-Elect

Chair NGF

Chair NIGWF

HEs State First Ladies

Ministers and National Assembly Members

Top Government Functionaries

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Development Partners

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The role of a First Lady has the potential to be a powerful platform for influencing change and advancing governance and development goals. What started out as a role that was essentially an extension of domestic responsibilities of a wife has evolved over time to become a formidable platform that can be used to influence change and expedite reforms on a large scale. While a lot of the work First Ladies do might not be visible, their involvement and connection with grassroots communities is key to ensuring that people feel the impact of government interventions.

While it is acknowledged that Governors' Wives accomplish a great deal in their own States, recently, they have started to use their platforms in more deliberate and impactful ways as a group. Working in collaboration with top government officials, development partners and civil society organisations, this class of Governors' Wives has accomplished a great deal in the areas of responding to SGBV, drug abuse, cancer control, Girl Child education and policy advocacy. This class of departing Gobs Wives and the returning ones have been truly exceptional!

For the first time ever, the NIGWF has been properly institutionalised. We now have:

- Registration with CAC (or at least in the process)
- Operational Handbook for all Governors' Wives which includes the Constitution and Code of Conduct
- A Secretariat

- A full-time CEO
- A Board of Trustees

We took a decision to establish a BOT to ensure sustainability of the Forum and provide advice and guidance when required. On behalf of the BOT, I would like to assure outgoing and present First Ladies, as well as all our partners that there is no going back to the days of arguing over the role or relevance of Governors' Wives. You are here. You matter. You are relevant and you will continue to play a critical role in serving your people and supporting your spouses. As individual spouses, you are superstars in your respective States, but together, you are formidable. To my outgoing First Ladies, congratulations and well done. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

I thank HE Dr Aisha Muhammadu Buhari, First Lady of Nigeria, our mother and Matron of the **NGWF** for all her leadership and support for our set. I congratulate our incoming First Lady, HE Senator Oluremi Tinubu and I hope you will all give her the appropriate support and cooperation.

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve and God bless.

HE Olabisi Adeleye-Fayemi

Former Chair, Nigerian Governors' Wives Forum and Chair, Board of Trustees