PRESENTATION BY Ms. HAUWA HALIRU- ON STRATEGIC ALLIANCES AT THE GOVERNORS SPOUSES INDUCTION HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 18th, 2023

PROTOCOLS

Your Excellencies, Honorable Minister(s), Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all here today to the Governors Spouses Induction.

The theme for the 3rd edition of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum’s Spouses Induction Summit is – **Partnership for impact: First Ladies & Subnational Governance.**

As we all know, partnerships are a cornerstone of success in any organization, and the Nigerian Governors Wives Forum is no exception. Over the years, the forum has established strong and collaborative partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, government agencies, corporate bodies, faith based organisations, traditional rulers and community groups. These partnerships have been crucial in advancing the mission at the NGWF, amplifying the forum’s impact, and driving positive change in the community they serve and beyond.

**About NGWF:**

For the benefit of our esteemed guests in the audience that are not conversant about NGWF, the Forum is an association of all 36 States First ladies who have commited to working together with one voice, one mission and vision to maximise their impact and drive their mandate to compliment the efforts of the Governors, for impact at the subnational.

I will now talk about the Partnerships and strategic alliances that the Nigerian Governors Wives’ Forum has cultivated with our esteemed stakeholders.

**Nigeria Governors’**

The strategic alliance between the Nigeria Governors’ Forum and the Nigeria Governors Wives’ Forum is a significant collaboration that has proven to be the backbone of NGWF by providing crucial support towards the achievement of the forum’s goals. Recognizing the vital role played by the wives of the governors in promoting social welfare and community development, the NGF has extended its support to the NGWF, fostering a strong partnership.

Through NGF's support, NGWF has been able to implement a wide range of programs and activities across Nigeria. These include healthcare initiatives, skill acquisition programs, women empowerment projects, and advocacy campaigns on issues such as GBV, gender equality, and women's rights.

The Nigeria Governors’ Forum actively encourages the participation of the First Ladies in advocacy, enabling them to contribute their perspectives and insights on critical issues affecting women and children. This collaboration ensures that the NGWF's activities align with the priorities and strategies of the state governments, which is **good governance** at the subnational- thereby fostering synergy and maximizing the impact of their initiatives.

NGF's backing has greatly strengthened the forum’s capacity to reach out to vulnerable populations, mobilize resources, and create meaningful change in communities throughout the country. Their commitment to NGWF's goals reinforces the importance of gender mainstreaming and the role of women in social development, thereby empowering the First Ladies to make a significant impact in their respective states.

**National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA**) is another crucial collaboration that is on-going

the First Ladies, having been deeply concerned about the drug abuse situation in the country started with raising awareness and running prevention campaigns and establishing rehabilitation centers in their respective States.

In 2021, a Task Force was put together under the leadership of HE Mrs Betsy Obaseki, First Lady of Edo State and HE Dr Amina Abubakar Bello, First Lady of Niger State. The Task Force then came up with a Drug Abuse Advocacy Strategy which NGWF is currently implementing.

In February 2022, the NGWF met with the Chairman, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, General Buba Mohammed Marwa where it was agreed that NDLEA would work with State First Ladies as important allies in furtherance of the objectives of the agency and to further involve State First Ladies in the fight against drugs as champions in their respective States.

The NDLEA promised to build the capacity of State First Ladies and their teams to be effective partners in the war against drug abuse **and in furtherance of this**, in June 2022, there was a two-day capacity-building workshop for the NGWF team in Abuja organized by NDLEA in collaboration with UNODC and the European Union.

**National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA)**

The Forum has partnered with NPHCDA under the First Ladies Against Cancer (FLAC) initiative which is a coalition of spouses of current and former state governors dedicated to leveraging their roles in public service to build partnerships that will address the systemic gaps to accessing cancer care services in Nigeria.

Working mainly through awareness programs and high-level policy advocacy, FLAC currently has 12 members, with the focal cancers addressed being breast and cervical cancers as they are the two most common in Nigerian women.

In collaboration with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, all FLAC member states flagged off Global elimination day in 2020 by lighting up landmarks in their states and organizing a balloon release. This advocacy campaign is on-going and more partnerships are on the way..

**In all of these collaborations, Women Advocacy Research & Documentation Center (WARDC)** WARDC has provided technical support for the forum through policy advisory, advocacy, research, and documentation

WARDC is a non-profit women and girls’ rights organization and a long-standing partner of the Forum..

Concerned about the spike in cases of violence against women and girls in Nigeria, the NGWF and WARDC partnered to build advocacy and awareness campaigns on ending sexual and gender-based violence.

WARDC has supported the NGWF to strengthen existing Sexual Assault Referral Centers across the country. The Forum also partnered to produce and launch the Standard Operating Procedure on ending gender-based violence for the use of national organizations working in the sector.

WARDC has also collaborated with the state government on the draft and passage of the costed model action plan in Bauchi, Sokoto, Cross River, Lagos, Ebonyi, Borno, Kwara, Osun, and Adamawa.

The Forum’s partnerships are not transactional, but rather transformative, as they enable the forum to collectively achieve outcomes that would be difficult or impossible to achieve individually, and as we move forward in this journey, we are excited about the possibilities and opportunities that these WARDC has provided technical support for the forum through policy advisory, advocacy, research, and documentation partnerships bring.

The NGWF has benefitted immensely from other partnerships. These partnerships have provided political will, financial support, technical assistance and solidarity. The forum is indebted to the following institutions:

* Office of the First Lady, HE Dr. Aisha Muhammadu Buhari
* Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
* The Ford Foundation
* MacArthur Foundation
* Nigeria Academy of Sciences
* Westminster Foundation for Democracy
* Invictus- Africa
* UN Women
* Office of the SSA to the President on SDGs
* Access Bank
* Proctor & Gamble and
* EU/UN Spotlight Initiative

The forum is stronger, more focused and eager to continue strengthening the existing partnerships while exploring new collaborations and finding innovative ways to work together to make a positive impact in our community and beyond. We are grateful for the unwavering support and commitment of our partners, and we look forward to the collective achievements and successes that lie ahead.