

COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A TWO-DAY NATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ADVANCEMENT
IN NIGERIA WITH THE THEME:

'THE GLASS CEILING AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA: REALITIES AND REFLECTIONS,'

ORGANIZED BY
THE HEINRICH BÖLL
STIFTUNG (HBS),
ABUJA, NIGERIA.



Venue: Rockview Royale Hotel, Wuse 2, Abuja. **Dates:** 26 – 27 November 2025.

1.0 Preamble

A National Conference on Women's Leadership Advancement in Nigeria was convened by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS) as part of a project titled 'The Role of Women in Women's Leadership Advancement in Nigeria: Realities and Reflections.' The Conference sought to critically examine both the external and internal barriers affecting women's representation in leadership across the country.

The objective of the gathering was to:

- Present findings of the survey on 'The Role of Women on Women's Leadership Advancement in Nigeria: Realities and Reflections' as well as analyze structural and psychological obstacles to women's leadership;
- Facilitate open, intergenerational dialogue to bridge divides and foster mutual understanding;
- Co-create context-specific, actionable strategies for strengthening women's leadership; and
- Build lasting camaraderie, solidarity, and collective power among women leaders.

2.0 ATTENDANCE

The conference brought together a diverse audience, including representatives of international and local civil society organisations, established and emerging female leaders, gender scholars and researchers, media professionals, political actors, policymakers, public officials, and other stakeholders committed to advancing gender equity in leadership.



3.0 KEY OBSERVATIONS

Participants made the following key observations:

1. Progress since the Beijing Conference of 1995 has been slow, with women in Nigeria remaining significantly underrepresented in leadership over all sectors despite constituting 49.95% of the population.
2. Nigeria ranks comparably with some of the most conservative countries globally in terms of women's leadership representation, posing an urgent national concern.
3. Patriarchy remains a primary systemic barrier, reinforced through cultural norms, institutional practices, education, and socialisation.
4. Disrupting tradition is challenging without first examining the origins and foundations upon which it was established.
5. Women in leadership continue to face a double standard, assessed through masculine criteria. They face excessive expectations, less tolerance for errors and are subjected to gendered backlash.
6. Collective pressure and not individual efforts is required to dismantle patriarchal systems, build solidarity, and shift power structures.
7. Mentorship remains a critical need; however, current models are largely informal, inconsistent, and insufficient to sustain leadership channels.
8. Digital violence contributes to the erosion of women's participation in public discourse, with one in three



Nigerian women experiencing online abuse.

9. Male allyship is necessary but must be deliberate, value-driven, and aligned with gender justice and not tokenistic.¹
10. Social and political capital are essential currencies in leadership and must be intentionally cultivated by women across generations and sectors.
11. Intergenerational relationships, although multifaceted, present opportunities for mutual learning, continuity, and legacy building.
12. Support for projects on men and boys, especially on understanding gender justice is essential, but remain significantly underfunded.

4.0 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

To accelerate women's leadership in Nigeria, the Conference recommends the following priority actions:

4.1 Actions for Women Leaders, and Girls and Women-Focused Institutions

1. Build coalitions and alliances across gender, sectors, and generations to challenge legal, cultural, and systemic barriers.
2. Actively participate in political party structures and decision-making spaces to influence policies and leadership outcomes.
3. Strengthen mentorship networks through formal and informal structures rooted in respect, reciprocity, accountability, and shared values.
4. Expand legal and policy advocacy to enhance protection, representation, and leadership visibility for women at all levels.
5. Diligently document and amplify women's stories of leadership, resilience, and impact to transform public narratives and inspire emerging leaders.
6. Create intentional support systems, including horizontal and vertical networks that nurture confidence, resilience, and leadership continuity.
7. Translate women-focused legal and policy frameworks into local languages and disseminate them at community level to ensure accessibility and uptake.
8. Emerging leaders must deliberately establish structures that foster collaboration and enable peer-to-peer mentorship, particularly in environments where such opportunities are currently limited or absent.
9. Rather than competing for a single seat at the table, collaborate to secure representation and collectively support the woman in that position to succeed. Women at the table should ensure that seats are created for other women.



4.2 Actions for Communities, Civil Societies and Public Institutions

1. Reinforce equitable socialization practices in homes, schools, communities and cultural institutions to disrupt gendered limitations and harmful stereotypes.
2. Engage communities and traditional structures as partners in expanding women's leadership opportunities.



3. Address digital violence through effective and enforceable protection frameworks, reporting structures, and public education.
4. Develop and strengthen coalitions that support women leaders, recruit emerging girls into civic and political spaces, and equip movements with strategies to advance women and girls' participation and influence.
5. Integrate women's leadership modules into learning curricula, extra-curricular activities and establish intentional mentorship programs across public and private learning institutions, political parties, civil society, and the private sector to support women and girls' leadership development.

4.3 Actions for Male Allies

1. Adopt a gender-responsive lens in leadership, advocacy, and workplace practice.
2. Challenge patriarchal norms and behaviours in personal, institutional, and political spaces.
3. Support cross-gender mentorship while maintaining responsible boundaries and ethical safeguards.
4. Encourage boys and young men to learn from, emulate, and support strong women role models.



4.4 Actions for the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), Abuja

1. Conference materials should be made publicly available to ensure broader access and dissemination.
2. Engage the relevant stakeholders in discussions and the implementation of the results.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Conference reaffirmed that dismantling deeply rooted patriarchal systems requires sustained collaboration, education, accountability, and collective leadership. Participants acknowledged the urgency of strengthening leadership channels through intergenerational mentorship, institutional support, and inclusive policy frameworks. The Conference concluded with a renewed collective commitment to advancing women's leadership in Nigeria and ensuring that gender equality becomes a lived reality and not an aspiration.

Issued: 27 November 2025 – Abuja, Nigeria.

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