

Topic: Women as Resourceful Agents for Building Social Values and Growing a Better Nation

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Social values form an important part of the culture of the society and it all begins from that “Woman” and “that Child”.

Values account for the stability of social order which provide the general guidelines for social conduct. In simple words, values may be defined as measure of goodness or desirability and these all begins from the home. Women “Mothers” play a major role in the family and the society at large. Indeed, they are Resourceful Agents in building Social Values. Parenting right from the home is a big-time business and it’s actually one of life’s toughest assignments which is critical to our survival as a people.

In as much as women the world over are the primary caretakers of young children and wives to their husbands, they play an important role in facilitating or hindering changes in family life and the nation as a whole.

When government is truly representative of the society it serves, its decisions will also fully serve society. For example, if more women are involved in decision making, this may result in more family-friendly policies because of women’s primary responsibilities for children. However, experience shows that women have to make up a sizeable proportion of any decision-making group in order to reach a “critical mass” and represent their unique priorities and concerns and become a genuine and effective voice for substantive change.

While there has been gradual acceptance of women in elective positions in the country however, it is one thing for women to be elected to parliament and another for them to rise to senior decision-making positions such as Speakers or Senate President.

For an effective participation in Nation building, women need to be in high-level economic decision making. This is as important to women’s participation in society as is equitable representation in political bodies. Leaders in business and industry help set the direction of economic policy and development and are part of the power elite in any country; there is often an overlap and career interplay between top economic and political positions. Economic leaders include the executives of national public bodies dealing with economic matters, senior managers of enterprises, senior managers of international and regional financial institutions, and the leaders of trade unions and professional and business

organizations. Women in these positions would drive the desired growth and development of the nation.

Women in grassroots movements is also key to building social values and growing a better nation. Civil organizations are an indispensable part of democratic societies and constitute an increasingly powerful “third” sector that balances and acts in partnership with the public and private sectors. In almost all transition countries, political liberalization has encouraged the formation of NGOs, social movements, grassroots groups, and media organizations; the long-standing repression of autonomous civil associations has largely evaporated. The number of NGOs is growing in the transition region, filling the space left by the retreating state and fulfilling the desire for a civil society. In today’s world, civil associations are important incubators for leadership and are becoming bodies of consequence in society. They are therefore major vehicles in which women can gain experience, build skills and exercise influence. In Western democracies, a broad-based women’s movement has been the primary force in advancing women’s equality, in part by putting and keeping equality issues on the public and political agenda.

The advancement of women to being key Resourceful Agents where they can really bring about change will not necessarily be a spontaneous outcome of political or economic reform. It will require an environment in which women are encouraged and supported in their efforts, in which women have equitable access to resources and opportunities, and in which pro-active policies and practices are pursued by governments, business and civilian institutions. It is clear that women’s concerns will not be addressed in the political sphere without the active participation of women, from the grassroots and local governments to national political and economic leadership

Envisioning a world where girls and women are fully active agents of change means planning a change for the better. It is not hard to argue that equality is a hallmark of human development, a goal all people would wish for themselves, their communities and their countries.

I thank you all for having me talk to you today.

God bless you all and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.