GOODWILL MESSAGE BY AWLA PRESIDENT: MANDY DEMECHI-ASAGBA TO AWLA NIGERIA ON ITS 2023 AWLA PARLEY IN ABUJA

Dear Country Representative AWLAN EFE ETOMI and her Executive Committee AWLA, Nigeria,

The Chairperson- AWLAN MARGARET NWAGBO and Members of the Planning Committee AWLA, Nigeria

The Chairman Local Organizing Committee (LOC) and Coordinator AWLA Abuja Lolia Emakpore and her Exco and team

The Alternate Chair LOC/ Coordinator AWLA Nasarawa State Zubairu Cynthia Rukaiya and Members of AWLA Nigeria,

Respected Executive Officers of AWLA, Past and present,

Distinguished Awlans,

I congratulate you for taking this initiative on a very important subject that is dear to the heart of every patriot: THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN WOMAN IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: Getting it Right – Fixing the Breach.'\_

I am honoured and elated to share with you in this special event for networking, impact and development of AWLA, AWLA PARLEY 2023

We at AWLA are super proud of you for keeping the flag flying. Thank you AWLA Nigeria.

I, on behalf of the Executive Council and the Executive Board and members of the African Women Lawyers Association ( AWLA) wish to say I am indeed very happy to see that the Parley has come to stay as members nationwide always look forward to this annual gathering- a great opportunity to mix, mingle and network thus fostering our goal of networking between female lawyers and opportunity for disseminating information on available opportunities, peculiar challenges and benefits, identify with and share with branches ideas and ideals that can strengthen the development and growth of the Association as we bring our services closer to the people particularly the grassroots thus leaving none behind. For us to attain parity, there is a need to carry everyone along. We need the number for fortification and victory.

I commend your selection of seasoned speakers whom we trust will do justice to this topic.

"We cannot go forward without Women"

-Vladimir Lenin(1997:94)

Unfortunately, inspite of the efforts of women to strive to the higher place in the society, they are still at great disadvantage and seen as inferior by their male counter parts

In asserting the importance of women it is pertinent to note that failure of the Government to apply affirmative action over the years in political appointments is what got us to the brink of collapse. You cannot be doing things the same way and expect a different result. Some patriotic Nigerians have identified this missing link and are beginning to glamour for women in leadership. A mother can never ever allow her child to suffer. America and Canada got this secret, the reason they honour their women and children. They are given paramount consideration. You want Hooligans off the streets: empower your women, you want safe and secure environment, empower the woman, you want a prosperous nation: empower the woman, you want to rid the country of mega corruption: empower the woman

You want a proactive, sensitive and responsive governance: empower the woman, you want to regain the value of the Naira: empower the woman YES God saw that it was not good for the man to be alone and sent him a help mate, the strength and help of the man. The woman is the missing link. If we must fix Nigeria, fix parity.

We do not in this current administration expect much change. However we should always remain optimistic. With below 10 percent ministerial appointment of women? I am still in shock as I vividly remember Mr. President achieved 35% affirmative action as Governor of Lagos State and encouraged more women to seek elective positions. I also remember Her Excellency Oluremi Tinubu recommending 50 % women inclusion during the Senator Omo- Agege led senate constitutional Review. To imagine she could not influence Mr President to even do 35% is sad. However, we cannot give up as there are still many more appointments to be made. I believe our seasoned politician first lady will not take no for an answer but press further for parity. She has seen it all. The 10th Assembly is another disaster brewing with abysmally low female representation. This portends danger for passage of the Gender Bills. It's time our leaders began to apply the experience of the wise nations who have attained near 40% affirmative action

Rwanda has over 35% women representation despite having a 30% bench mark and it has been a success story all the way. Same for Canada, Uganda and Mozambique has about 32% against the backdrop of Nigeria shuttling between 5 and 10 in the last two dispensations.

Getting it Right, Nigeria has to emulate the wise nations and work towards attaining Agenda 2030 SDGs Goal 5 : GENDER EQUALITY.

Time is ticking………

Will you wait for power to be given to you forever?

Our mother's waited, where are they?

We ain't waiting any more….

Time to turn promises into actions, act as watchdogs and hold the government accountable for their commitments by issuing Declarations on Accountability by Government on Gender equality and human Rights of Women, support women vying for political offices and Leadership positions, support women human rights defenders above all encourage women to actively participate in politics and economics.

Plan to catch them young, building bold, confident and courageous young girls resolute to rule their world through the schools outreach with

ZERO tolerance for relegation of women.

The presumption of women as weak and belonging to the other room or kitchen is becoming rebuttable daily as women are beginning to occupy their space and are set to fully occupy their space breaking and shattering the glass ceilings to fix our world

defying the framework of impossibilities and limitations set by structure and culture.

We are not unaware of our major challenges of majority of women in Nigeria which are:

lack of access to healthcare, education, justice, finance, water and sanitation.

SDGs goal 1: end poverty in all its forms is our strategy to attain parity. We must never lose track of this number 1 key to Parity. Goals 3,4 and 6 ( good health and wellbeing, quality education and clean water and sanitation) are the primary keys followed by goals 8, 10 and 16 ( decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities and peace, Justice and strong institutions) are the enabling keys.

Yes, you can effectively juggle a career with family life. Let no one tell you to stay at home, thank God for technology. If you're not tech savvy, please get involved and FIX THE BREACH

A clarion call for women to support women in politics, industry, et al. Call it all round support to succeed. Support one another, support your Association. Contribute your quota meaningfully. Do not starve your Association of funds. Be intentional about funds drive. Be a part of the success story of your Association A strong and united AWLA makes you stronger and formidable..

It is time we rise to the occasion of taking our destinies in our own hands to attain parity. It is time to build a solid sisterhood devoid of bickering. It is time to focus on the ultimate goal and play our part- be your sister's keeper, give the shoulders to lean on and hugs to encourage, let us join hands to build and reorientate our PHDS. It is time to empower your sisters and daughters. It is time to validate and build the confidence of one another and celebrate one another. Oh yes, we can make it happen. This is Getting it Right and fixing the breach

Don't wait to be served power *'a la carte'.* Be super preparedand ready to conquer your world. The time to act is NOW.

Thank you

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