

PREFACE

A spectre is haunting Nigeria- the spectre of Feminism, to paraphrase the opening of *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Hegels.

This is a very dark and troubled time for Nigerians. Inequality, insecurity, hunger, poverty, lack and hopelessness. Astronomical increase in prices of goods and services, near palpable atmosphere of discontent, gradual loss of human dignity, increasing passive resignation to find solace in religious centers, and also search for fullness of life. Grandiose schemes and deceptions as well as infrastructure developments with elastic completion dates resulting in pain and frustration for the people. Youths continue to hope on hope, in utter frustration, turn to drugs, crime and advance fee fraud schemes. Able-bodied young men and women all around withdrawn and in despair. Many among them embark on dangerous migration to countries who have their own unique challenges.

It is unfortunate trust has obviously been eroded in the country, and people no longer trust government and themselves. The overplay of illusory successes proclaimed by some successive administrations are pretty ordinary achievements which only make the people to view the claims with suspicion and ill will. Most of the programs designed to radically change the poor living standard of Nigerians are ill-considered without well-thought-out implementation strategies and clear-cut monitoring and evaluation methodologies turn out a waste of everybody's time, failed promises and interventions and dashed hopes. Also, the people are appalled our participation in international engagements and competitions have been dismal. Moreover, the people notes with concern, investments in the recent past in good governance, job creation, poverty reduction, education, health, agriculture, housing, water, road, power, oil and gas, transportation, infrastructure, human capital development, women and youth development and sports, particularly football, yield diminishing returns.

To draw an analogy between Nigeria of today and United States of America of over five decades ago: Nigeria is in trouble today not because her people have failed but because her leaders have failed. This statement is a paraphrase of the one made in 1968 by Richard Nixon, former American President, when he delivered his acceptance speech on winning the Republican Presidential nomination recorded in his book *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*.

A cross-section of the Nigerian people are saddened and appalled that it is a paradox in their own very rich Nigeria, there could be so much poverty and misery. And because current policies and programmes of government have failed to produce the desired results, there have been calls for constructive alternatives. There is also the growing agitation for diversity and inclusiveness in governance as a strategy to overcome our challenges. Moreover, the mood of the people grope for innovative solutions to current problems and the strong probability that a

new direction will be created for the country. More specifically, impartial observers of the political scene and some high ranking political actors have called for inclusion of more women in governance to produce the needed change.

The publication of **Manifesto of Nigerian Women by Proxy** marks the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Nigeria. In this book I am championing the active participation of women in politics, increased number of women in governance and reformation of the democratic system to achieve the country's stated priorities and goals. Evidence has shown that the country's political recruitment process is faulty. Young women with new ideas and precocious political infants are not encouraged, supported and given the chance to prove their mettle.

In the face of the highly monetised and expensive political participation process, perfectly willing and qualified entrants are not given fair and equal treatment, no clear-cut pattern of movement up the political ladder, and the power structure is controlled by few powerful leaders and influential members. This book therefore seeks to point out anomalies in the democratic system and problems besetting the country arising from the low number of women in politics and governance.

This work is neither a diatribe against male politicians nor an incendiary writing. It is not only an indispensable advance planning resource for young women with new ideas eyeing political office, but also an important political and national development as well as moral reference book for the nation. In addition, this book not only represent the greatest inspiration, motivation and catalyst for the emancipation and political aspirations of women and the regeneration of our beloved country, but also represents the greatest inspiration, motivation, catalyst and ethical guide for the whole nation.

The main objective of the book is to empower, galvanize and mobilize women for active participation in politics and governance, highlight the anomalies and exigencies of Nigerian politics and governance system and set the tone for national regeneration, peace, prosperity and growth.

I am a **Naijaphile** who is **passionate about Nigeria**. I have a **better vision of Nigeria** and **optimistic about its future**. I see **Nigeria in a new image both internationally and domestically**. I anticipate **competent, imaginative and righteous leaders developing strategies for sustainable socio-economic growth**. Also the concept of **peaceful coexistence in a proper democratic setting finally beginning to take root**. I picture **Sambisa Forest transformed into Africa's Silicon Valley, industrial parks as well as an irresistible hospitality hub**. Above all, I envisage a **strong nation that is safe and secure for investment, work and high quality of life; and in league with other countries, creating meaningful value to enrich the world for the benefit of mankind**.

That Nigeria is a highly resourced country with the largest population of black people is transcendental. It is not through human effort, at all, but by the **Creator** of all things: ***"This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes"*** (Psalm 118:23). Unfortunately, the God-given precious gifts have not been put to good use and benefit of the people. It is therefore imperative for Nigerians to act differently and the country to have visionary, compassionate and effective leaders administering its affairs and consistently producing excellent results for the common good and the admiration and respect of other countries.

These goals are realizable when women are fully integrated in every stratum of society and scheme of things.

I am a great believer in the right of women to aspire to high positions in the land because I have their best interest at heart: ***"Let each one of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others"*** (Philippians 2:4). I am rooting for increased women in the legislature and executive based on some interesting facts about women's sheer disposition toward development drawn from research and intuitive understanding of the innate abilities of women for ingenuity and improvisation. So, more women in parliament and government will open vistas of sensitivity and tendency toward future good for the legislature, inject new dynamism into governance, offer constructive alternatives and fresh perspectives to current pretentious policies and programs, and help build a peaceful, more united, fair and just society.

More importantly, the effort is to push for a robust political system through convergence between the inchoate ideas and latent potentials of women and men's deep-seated ideas and headstart in politics and public administration, to make a formidable combination for the benefit of the good people of Nigeria.

A strong motivation for the work is my federalist, centrist and pluralist principles. My intention and motives are completely sincere, altruistic, progressive, patriotic; and of the importance of working for posterity. In the words of former American President, **Richard Nixon**, "I was confident that a new era was about to begin, and I was eager to begin it."

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