



**Talking Points for Ms. Beatrice Eyong,
UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS
Launch of Resource Center for Women in Politics in Borno State
Maiduguri, August 10, 2023**

Protocol:

1. Distinguished guest, it gives me immense pleasure to be at the launch of the **'Resource Centre for Women in Politics'** today in Borno State. I wish to thank the Director General and staff of the Maryam Babangida National Center for Women Development for extending a hand of partnership to UN Women to undertake this laudable initiative. I wish to thank the Government of Borno State for supporting with facility for this project. I wish to sincerely appreciate the Canadian Government for the funding support made possible to bring this vision to life.
2. The extremely low representation of women in politics in Nigeria has been a major concern to UN Women and other stakeholders alike. Nigeria, the giant of Africa, currently boasts of only 3.8% representation of women in parliament across the national and state level, dwarfed by all nations in Sub-Saharan Africa when it comes to women's representation in national parliament. This has grave consequences for the development of Nigeria as a nation. The contributions of women to the socio-economic and political development of any modern democratic state are essential and indispensable. Without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.
3. Women in Nigeria constitute about half of the nation's population and contribute significantly to national and economic development, unfortunately, their participation in informal and formal structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant.



4. The under-representation of women in leadership and decision making globally and in Nigeria is inherently linked to other far-reaching gender disparities including gender-based violence, discriminatory social norms, and lack of legal frameworks to institutionalize temporary special measures and affirmative action principles.
5. Economic disparities between men and women often mean that women cannot compete at the same level as men. For example, the cost of running an election campaign in Nigeria is astronomical and yet women in Nigeria earn 36% less than men according to the World Economic Forum. Women are set back even before they begin.
6. Within this context, I want to congratulate and commend the few women who despite the prevailing challenges took the bold step to venture into politics and further congratulate those who emerged as candidates and winners for the 2023 elections.
7. To address some of these challenges, UN Women in partnership with Canada launched the Advance Project in March 2022. A major component of the Advance project is to enhance the leadership capacity of women in politics and to provide the much-needed support in running effective political campaigns amongst others. Along this line, in collaboration with the NCWD established a Resource Centres.
8. The Resource Center being launched today was borne out of the desire to provide access to resources critical to political campaigns that women candidates in the short term and women in politics in the longer term. The Resource Center is an initiative piloted in 3 locations, Abuja, Borno and Cross River States with plans to replicate in all the 6 geopolitical zones. These Centers will be open and accessible to all women politicians of all political parties to serve the following purposes:
 - a. Serve as a secretariat support to female politicians through the facilities at the resource centres



- b. Conduct individual training as well as counselling sessions that will build the capacity of female politicians to help them effectively compete in elections like their male counterparts
 - c. provide female politicians with required information, political contacts, and resources for within and outside Nigeria.
 - d. Support female politicians to develop and publish political messages and materials.
9. It is my sincere hope that intended beneficiaries will take full advantage of the resources and services provided by the Center to boost their political campaigns and enhance their leadership skills.
10. We must also ensure that young women are included and that their voices and contributions are heard and respected. Young women are demonstrating innovative forms of leadership that unite people around common goals. In line with the vision of Generation Equality, women leaders that have fought for women's rights to date must engage in mentorship and inter-generational conversations to uplift young aspiring female political leaders. I therefore encourage all young women in politics to tap into this initiative and draw from the experiences of more experienced female politicians.
11. In conclusion distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is my hope that the launch of this Resource Center renews our commitment to harness all opportunities to increase women's political leadership in Nigeria. I wish to reaffirm UN Women's commitment to work with government and non-government stakeholders to change the narrative of low representation of women in politics in Nigeria come 2027.

Thank you for listening.