



Canada



“Productivity, Safety –Nets and Women Economic Empowerment in Nigeria and Ghana”

Report of the International Development Research Centre/CPA Symposium held at the Lagos Court of Arbitration, 2nd Floor, 1A, Remi Olowude Street, 2nd Roundabout, Lekki-Epe Expressway, Okunde Bluewater Scheme, Lekki Peninsula Phase 1, Lagos on the 29th of March, 2018.

Executive Summary

The Centre for Public Policy Alternatives (CPPA) in conjunction with the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD) as part of its output for the IDRC-GroW Project, organised a Symposium attended by a broad range of participants, ranging from Government Officials, Researchers, Academics, Civil Society leaders and Entrepreneurs. The Symposium’s Welcome Address was delivered by Hajiya Hadiza El-Rufai (First Lady, Kaduna State) on the importance of evidence based research in Women Empowerment. Mr. Michael Falade (Independent Consultant) introduced the research project, briefly discussing methodology and some preliminary findings. The spirited Keynote Address on whether empowering the woman raises economic growth was delivered by Mrs. Amina Oyagbola (Chief Executive Officer, AKMS Consulting Ltd.). This set the platform from which the Symposium and discussions followed. To capture relevant issues, challenges and factors affecting women’s economic empowerment, the forum was divided into 3 Panels with Panellists discussing: Panel 1-Policy Options and Strategies for Increased Productivity and Opportunities for Women; Panel 2- Women Economic Empowerment in Nigeria and Ghana: Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects; and Panel 3-Opportunities and Challenges for Women Economic Empowerment in the Natural Resource and Service Sectors. The event was moderated by Mrs. Jennifer Obado Joel (Co-Principal Investigator-IDRC GroW Project in Nigeria and Ghana).

Spaced between the second and third panels, was a presentation by the First Lady of Kaduna State that elaborated on the work her foundation carries out in Kaduna State. Questions for the Panelists on women’s economic empowerment came from the Moderator and Audience Members, in addition to comments and suggestions from both the latter and the Panelists. Dr. Folarin Gbadebo-Smith (The Director-General of the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research), gave the closing remarks that addressed among other things, the key opportunities for women in the ‘tech space’ and a poser on their readiness to take on the opportunities.



First Session- Panel 1

Policy Options and Strategies for Increased Productivity and Opportunities for Women-Speakers:

Chair: Mrs. Juliana Oyegun-Principal Investigator, IDRC GroW Project in Nigeria and Ghana;

Panelist 1: **Mrs. Thywill Ekpe**-Regional Director, Department of Gender, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ghana

Panelist 2: **Dr. Melvin Ayogu**, Adjunct Professor, Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town, South Africa and Member, ONE Africa Advisory Board

Panelist 3: **Mr. Nyoki Ita**, Government Corporate Relations Officer, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board, (NCDMB)

Second Session- Panel 2

Women Economic Empowerment in Nigeria and Ghana: Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects - Speakers:

Chair: Breno Braga, Senior Research Associate, The Urban Institute, Washington DC;

Panelist 1: **Ms. Jennifer Obado-Joel**, Co-Principal Investigator-IDRC GroW Project in Nigeria and Ghana

Panelist 2: **Mavis Zupork Dome**, Research Officer, Ghana Center for Democratic Development

Panelist 3: **Ms. Grace Ampomaa Afrifa**, Head of Programs, Abantu for Development, Ghana

Third Session- Panel 3

Opportunities and Challenges for Women Economic Empowerment in the Natural Resource and Service Sectors - Speakers:

Chair: Mr. Olaolu Ogunmodede, Senior Research Associate, CPPA, Nigeria

Panelist 1: **Mrs. Hauwa Sodeinde**, Founder and Proprietor-Hauk Explorers Schools, Lagos; and

Panelist 2: **Ms. Tina Asante-Apeatu**, Executive Director of Good Governance Africa-West Africa Center, (Accra)

Panelist 3: **Mr. Newton Y. Norviewu**, Research Officer, Ghana Center for Democratic Development

Symposium Programme Report

1. Welcome address: Hajiya Hadiza El-Rufai-She noted that past efforts to empower women has been top-down, but that the IDRC-GroW project is unique in that it's research and evidence-based. Governments of both countries should be able to use the output for policy-making.

2. Introduction of IDRC-GroW Research Project: Micheal Falade-He mentioned that the project started in December, 2015 and that research was conducted into the challenges and opportunities that have been brought about by the shift in labour from the natural resource sector to the service sector. In Nigeria, surveys and FGDs were conducted in 12 Nigerian states and 4 sub-regions in Ghana. He mentioned that one of the preliminary findings was that access to credit is being constrained by gender. According to Mrs. Jennifer Obado-Joel, analysis of findings is still in progress.

3. Keynote Address: Mrs. Amina Oyagbola- "A rising tide raises all boats... does empowering women raise economic growth?" – She started her address by relating the efforts of CPPA and IDRC towards the improvement of women livelihoods to the concept of good society, in which the largest number of people in a society are happy. In view of this, promoting the happiness and wellbeing of women—over 50% of the population- is an important component of a good society. She then sought to understand why women in Nigeria and other parts of Africa are still held back, given that the level of female participation in the economy is an indicator of development. In her view, the evidence suggests that women do not have equal access to finance or property, that women and girls do not have equal access to education nor healthcare. Women do not also earn equal pay for the same work put in as men, are not allowed to take equal part in politics nor can they get the top jobs in organizations. These challenges exist despite decades that have passed since the granting of suffrage of British women. While illustrating the ill effects that suppression of a segment of society has on it, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka – UN Under-Secretary-General—during the 2018 International Women's Day said: *"Healthy societies have a mix of voices and influences that provide the checks and balances, the differing threads of experience and perspectives, and the debate that shapes good decision-making. Where voices are missing, there is an important gap in the fabric of society. When those voices count in the millions, we know there is something wrong with our world. Similarly, as we see and hear those voices rise in strength and solidarity, we feel the power of something right."* There is therefore a need to be proactive whilst the society is continually informed of these effects. Existing platforms must continue to put the issues gender parity, equity, equality and justice in front burner. The UN Platform for Action adopted by the UN's

conference – in Beijing 1995 - women serves as a useful roadmap to address female inequality. The critical areas of concern to women include:

- poverty,
- lack of education or training especially in rural areas,
- poor health status of women which leads to death from child birth or malnutrition,
- rape, domestic violence and lawful chastisement in the penal code and other legislations,
- armed conflict,
- Despite the fact that 52% of the population is women and 70% of females work on land, they only own 4% of land in the North East, 10% in the South South and South East, with little or no access to finance. Globally, women own only 20% of land. In the private sector – only 5% of women are CEOs while 11.7% of them are on company board,
- In positions of power and decision making, only 7% of females participate in politics with only 16% representation in the cabinet, lower than the 35% representation allowed for in the National Gender Policy,
- Institutional mechanisms – enabling legislations and setting gender-friendly policies and target,
- Non-enforcement of human rights of women as enshrined in the constitution,
- Women have little or no voice in the media,
- Women and the environment,
- Majority of the 15 million out of school children are girls.

In the same vein, the Beijing conference showed a clear path to solve the challenges and the following recommendations made by the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (CISLAC) can help:

- In order to put a stop to early and forced marriages: *enact new legislation and enforce existing laws and policies. And punish those who flout the laws.*
- To ensure a universal implementation of the child rights act: *put pressure on the 12 Nigerian states that have not adopted the act.*
- To ensure that out-of-school girls attend school: *beef security in the Northern parts of Nigeria and perhaps, reduce segregation of schools.*
- Nevertheless, the schools must be girl child friendly and sensitive to cultural norms.
- To encourage girl education: *governments must incentivize through scholarships and social protection policies.*

But why is the empowerment of women so critical to the wellbeing of society? On closing the gender gap, the World Bank – in its 2017 Economic Forum Report – concluded that gender parity and women’s economic empowerment is fundamental to how economies thrive. On the scale of gender parity, Nigeria ranks as the 122nd while Ghana ranks as the 72nd out of 144 countries. There is much gap to close in economic development by empowering half of the world’s talent pools – women. The UNDP’s Gender Development Index (GDI) – which measures gaps in human development - account for the disparities between men and women in **Health, Knowledge and Living Standards**. Here, Ghana also outranks Nigeria at number 139 which ranks at number 152, out of 160 countries. In passing laws that address gender imbalances and discrimination, the male-dominated National Assembly – in 2016 – voted down the bill which prohibits societal and workplace discrimination as promoting anti-family activities. There is an urgent need to unleash the talent of women and girls who constitute 52% of the Nigerian population. The kidnapping of the Dapchi schoolgirls is symptomatic of the state of girl child education in the country with cultural and economic colorations. According to McKinsey in its report titled “Women Matter in Africa”, African companies having women occupy at least a quarter of their corporate board positions, had earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) about 20 percent higher than industry average. Indeed, there is more work to be done to increase women representation in order to move closer to gender equality.

Benefits/Effects of Empowering Women

1. McKinsey Global Institute study suggests that closing gender gaps in labour-force participation rates, part-time versus full-time work and the composition of employment would add 12-25% to global GDP by 2025. Other studies, using varying methodologies, find similar results.
2. Studies confirm that companies with more women in top leadership and board positions enjoy higher financial returns.
3. Total agricultural outputs in Africa could increase by up to 20%, if women have equal access to inputs as men.

Ideally, women’s empowerment is based on fairness and decency which is why girls should have equal opportunities as boys. The theme for the 2018 International Women’s Day is apt: “The Time is now!” This speaks to the urgency to formulate the right policies and enact legislations that will allow for the ease of entry, mobility and participation in the service and natural resources sectors.

- **Now is the time** for advocacy and campaigns to change mind-sets of young men and boys learn to value and respect women and girls. Women are not possessions/chattel to be traded, neither are they sexual objects, nor are they play things or child bearing vessels. As people with brains and dreams, they are equal partners in progress, in addition to the critical role they play in procreation.
- **Now is the time** to develop the right attitude towards empowering women and breaking the limiting cultural and institutional barriers that have always impeded progress.
- **Now is the time** for male feminists to step up and speak up in a *He4She* campaign!

Collaborative is needed between private and public sectors to close the wide gap. In clear terms; women's economic empowerment is *not* about tokenism, lowering standards or male bashing, but about equity and parity for all human beings. Rights, as related to women's economic empowerment encompass:

- Equal access to, ownership of and control over land, property, productive assets and resources including finance and capacity building;
- Equal access to **decent work** and full and productive employment;
- Economic independence for women and a full ability to freely assert their autonomy and exercise their choices;
- Full access to decision-making in all economic decisions that affect their lives and that of their families, communities and societies.

To achieve the above objectives, there are lessons in other African countries as regards global gender gap rankings:

- Rwanda ranks as number 4 (63.8%), ahead of Sweden
- Namibia ranks as number 13, South Africa is 19th and Botswana is 46th – all ahead of United States.

In addition:

- Kenya has made constitutional reforms and adopted new policies to improve female representation on Boards.
- Norway imposed quotas – 40% representation allocated to women, which was achieved within 2 years. All these point to the practicality and feasibility of women's empowerment.

By definition, **Women's empowerment means** "enabling women to take an equal place with men and to participate equally with men in the development process, to achieve control over the factors of production on an equal basis with men" for our collective prosperity. Moreover, it is an inalienable right enshrined in our constitution which makes it a human right. Raising the tide of women raises all boats – empowering women raises economic growth. According to Gloria Steinem, *"the story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist or to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights"*. The Nigerian systems, structures and cultural norms still entrench inequality. The danger is obvious in the words of Anchor Tian Wei who said *"Any society that fails to harness the energy and creativity of its women is at a huge disadvantage in the modern world"*. **The Time is now** for women to remove the mental, physical and social shackles and barriers placed on them to learn, grow, lean in and be free to do the things that will enhance them and enable their progress. She noted that: *"I want a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. I want an Africa whose development is people- driven, especially relying on the potential offered by its women and youth and well cared for children-AU Africa Agenda 2063. I believe we can achieve this by enhancing women's voice in decision making, leadership and peace building; by promoting women's economic empowerment and by ending violence against women and girls."*

Panel 1

The panel chair started off by reporting a personal experience where women and girls live in a subsistence way in Nigerian communities. She asked the panelists if policies have addressed inclusive growth, what inputs come from policy to ensure greater inclusiveness. She questioned the efficacy of closing education gaps by applying a quota system through affirmative action. She then asked the panelists how education curricula can make both countries become more inclusive. She also asked Mr. Ekpe Ita (the third panelist) about the oil and gas industry and what made it seemingly unfriendly to women. According to her, not all growth is good and not all tides raise all boats.

Thywill Ekpe mentioned that policies can enable inclusive growth and should focus women and the girl child. In Ghana, women constitute 51.8% of the population but there are socio-cultural barriers facing them as well as domestic violence, similar to that of Nigeria. A review of the National Gender Policy in Ghana highlights women issues and access to productive resources. For the girl child, a five-year strategic plan has been put in place on reducing the rate of adolescent pregnancy.

She argued that inclusiveness is a problem because most women are in the informal sector. For instance, 70% of women work in the agricultural sector and majority of them are smallholder farmers without access to productive resources which invariably lead to low income. This is primarily because, in Ghana, land is only inherited by men. A solution that would enhance productivity would be to bridge the gap between socio-cultural and productive resources.

She is of the belief that the economic productivity of women in Ghana is impeded by their reproductive function. This also affects their educational advancement as they are the primary care givers and therefore, access to education should be made more convenient. In some situations, women had to postpone acquiring advanced degrees for up to 5 years because of child rearing. She mentioned that there is a need for the male folk to be co-opted into advancing women's rights in what is known as a "He-for-She" campaign. The support of male is needed to progress-for women's education and careers-especially those who are married. On the role of affirmative action for adolescent pregnancy, she argued that the poverty of female guardians who are supposed to provide support to teenage mothers drives them towards men. She also broached the idea of mentoring young girls.

Dr. Melvin Ayogu argued that growth has not been inclusive as there is no equal access to opportunities. For inclusiveness to be achieved, the playing field has to be leveled. He stated that women empowerment is a right, and it should not be perceived in terms of granting favours. To make his argument, he gave some anecdotal evidence about the discrimination of women: In South Africa, a man has to give permission to his wife for her to open a bank account. In Dubai, he had to write a letter of no-objection on behalf of his wife to start a faculty job. In addition, she did not earn the same with men in the same job and equal qualification.

He also mentioned that there is a psychological aspect to the challenges women face; in South Africa, women defend their husbands against prosecution when they are maltreated or the victims of domestic violence. In some Nigerian cultures, he mentioned how a woman is molested and dehumanized when her husband dies. All these lead to their weakening and dilution of productivity. Essentially, there are different scenarios in different societies but with similar outcomes.

Making his argument on policy intervention to close the gender gap, he said that the woman's role in the society is multi-dimensional. He argued that maternity leave is not a favor to women but a right while pregnancy should not be viewed as a burden. In fact, there are positive externalities to the biological and maternal roles of women – the moral character instilled by women through child care is important for how members of a society behave for the common

good. There is, therefore, a need to educate ourselves that the benefits of women empowerment accrue to the society in the future. Therefore, social costs have to be incurred.

He mentioned that there have been success stories in women empowerment in other parts of the world – In the United States, women work in submarines and in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a woman flew a plane for the first time ever. Challenges also exist, however – Europe is battling with replacement rate as women are refusing to give birth if the right policies are not put in place. Hence, costs must be socialized. In the UAE, *emirati* men are not marrying their women, probably because they seem not to be able to meet up with the rather high financial commitment that the *emirati* women demand for as part of the spousal responsibilities.

Mr Nyoki Ita mentioned that the NCDMB has contractual initiatives for women at 5% interest rate within an 8 year tenure, being managed by the Bank of Industry (BOI). This is brought about by the cooperation of International Oil Companies (IOCs) and local communities. He said that the NCDMB has had interactive sessions with the CSOs to ensure that women have a right of place in extractive industries. Currently, only 0.8% of roles in the Oil and Gas industry belong to women. In exploration, they are non-existent, despite the fact that 2 years ago, women were trained to play roles in the sector. In shedding light on how much access there is for women at the artisanal level in the natural resource sector, he mentioned that 80% of rural women participate in artisanal mining in remote locations. In addition, many of them are uneducated and are mostly single mothers and divorcees. He advised that the bars should be brought down to allow women have more access to training. This, Mrs. Juliana Oyegun disagreed with, as she recognized that the industry is unfriendly to women and that the remedial work has to be done by his organization as a critical stakeholder in the sector.

Questions and Comments – Panel 1

- **Mrs. Furera** mentioned that policies are often not based on strategic plans in Nigeria, unlike in Ghana. She also asked about factors that were considered in selecting the sampled states.
- **Bosun Solarin (LCCI)**: mentioned that freedom is demanded and not freely given. She raised a concern that resolutions at different forums organized on behalf of women were not followed through-for instance, nothing much was done when the Gender bill was thrown out in the Nigerian National Assembly. She advised that there is a need for more seminars to be organized, sponsors must be sought and action must be taken.
- **Hajiya Hadiza El-Rufai** commented that Governor El-Rufai is a “male-feminist” as his Chief of Staff is a woman and there are other women in his cabinet. However, there is

no woman among members of the State House of Assembly and even the Commissioner in charge of Women Affairs is a man. In her own effort, she created a foundation named after Yasmine, her daughter who passed away in 2011. The foundation focuses on creative writing for children between the ages of 8 and 18 years, and a women literacy program for female drop-outs. She mentioned an example of the poor state of public education in Nigeria, as the kidnapped Dapchi girls could hardly express themselves in the English language.

- **Lola Olusola** reiterated an earlier sentiment that nature is unfair to women and that a tradeoff exists between their reproductive responsibilities and career path.
- **Theresa Adefisayo (LCCI)**: mentioned that she's into the business of electroplating but said that when women are trained, they are not looked out for nor followed up adding that her idea – the anode – has suffered the same fate of neglect.
- **Ms. Nkechi (CPEEL)**: also supported the idea "He-for-She" campaign, such as educating the male child to respect the rights of girls.
- Another participant advised that there is a need to do away with the rhetoric about the responsibilities of male versus female children at home, especially with respect to house chores.

Panel 2

The panel chair began by mentioning that similar research was also being conducted in Pakistan. According to him, people can only make right decisions if they have the right information and that GDP growth does not produce change enough unless it's inclusive. He then asked the panelists: How they think growth can be made more inclusive and how they think Nigeria and Ghana are similar or different and lessons that both nations can learn.

Ms. Jennifer Obado-Joel briefly reintroduced the project and stated that for the purposes of the project, that the service sector was inclusive of telecoms, food and hospitality and transportation sub-sectors. She added that over 1000 people and 40 personalities in different focus sub-sectors were interviewed for the project. She mentioned the importance of social safety nets as a panacea to challenges women face, such as divorce and domestic violence. Social safety nets include provision of child care and that a trade-off exists between productivity and child care in addition to disparities that exist based on the status of women (for example, a bank manager could afford to hire domestic staff that could help with domestic chores, as against a petty trader that simply may not have the income to do so). Other forms of safety nets are mandatory health care provision by firms and policymakers, as well as social

networks which could provide access to credit. She took the view that economic growth does not have to destroy the social fabric.

On lessons that Nigeria can learn from Ghana, she said that planning with respect to security and commuting is more organized in Accra, as there is more intentionality involved. There is also a rich informal sector in mining. She mentioned that Civil Society was more organized. On what Ghana can learn from Nigeria, she said the latter has a knack for long-term economic planning. She added that Asians own a large number of shops in Kumasi, something that doesn't happen in Nigeria. She advised that CSOs should be engaged more with politicians in Nigeria by moving away from what she referred to as the "NADECO spirit" – i.e. one that was characterized by aggression and should move towards more conciliatory approaches.

Mavis Zupork Dome mentioned that the study was conducted in four (out of 10) regions in Ghana and that in one of the FGDs, men did not want women to focus on their career but the home. She posed questions on the possibility and difficulty of a woman scaling up from being a food vendor to owning a restaurant because the woman did not know that she had a right to grow economically and productively. As regards the access to agricultural subsidies, she mentioned that the playing field needs to be leveled.

On what both countries can learn from each other, she mentioned that civil society groups are stronger in Ghana as they had found a way to harness their collective action. On wealth creation, targets should be set for women who are empowered to mentor or train others.

Ms Grace Ampomaa Afrifa stated that research is key to development and that policies must be evidence-based. On the challenges women face in Ghana, she mentioned that 82% of women are involved in agricultural activities but are low income earners. She added that patriarchal systems occur more in the Northern parts and that advocacy must be done by all citizens, not only by NGOs. She mentioned that the target is for 40% of women to own land and empower them to scale-up their businesses.

On what both countries can learn from each other, she mentioned that Ghanaians are complacent – tend to be stuck in their comfort zones unlike Nigeria which is forward-looking. Nigeria could learn from Ghana on the passage of legislation that empowers women, since only Lagos state has passed a domestic violence bill into law but a similar law has been passed universally in all 10 regions of Ghana. However, implementation is an issue in both countries. On efforts being made, she said that Ghana will soon pass an affirmative action law for gender. Advocacy has been intensified by taking advantage of the new government and lobbying is

going on at all levels of government. She added that about 1000 girls are being empowered to engage in tiling.

Questions and comments – Panel 2

- Participants were generally in agreement that there should be monitoring and evaluation of activities of women who are being empowered. On social safety net, there is need to for women to own empowerment for the purpose of sustainability – by allowing them pool financial resources among themselves.

Commuting and safety can be a problem in Ghana – cash is being used for trade whereby women travel long distances from south to north to buy goods, which sometimes get stolen. Technology could help to reduce dependence on cash.

- **A staff of 'Spaces for Change' (Nigerian NGO)** asked "***how do Ghanaians manage their political environment to get desired results?***"
 - o **CDD:** Mavis Dome replied that this could be done by identifying politicians who are interested in specific issues. She also advised that a particular CSO with an agenda should seek collaboration with other CSOs who have similar interests. The media can also be co-opted as partners. In service delivery, she advised that parliamentary committee meetings be attended by Civil society to identify politicians who will back a particular agenda.
 - o **Abantu:** Ms Afrifa mentioned that there are platforms – a coalition of CSOs in Ghana – at various levels who are collaborating on the SDGs and each has their own conveners. The media should be trained on issues being discussed or investigated for proper reportage. Abantu have also trained women to be politicians in a "woman in politics" programme.
- **Mrs. Gbadebo-Smith** mentioned that the main distinction between Ghana and Nigeria is the size of the countries and the number of CSOs in them. She added that CSOs are active in Nigeria.
- **Dr. Ayogu** posed that when equal opportunity was achieved, who will take care of the kid at home? This was due to the notion that the interest of children should be acknowledged and addressed by all parties. He mentioned the issue of *ex-post* guarantees and how people tend to behave opportunistically. So, in his view, one of the

challenges is to how to ensure that a partner – in a marriage, for instance – does not exploit the other’s commitment.

Juliana Oyegun, responding to the request of Bosun Solarin (that there should be a platform for action among interest groups) said funding opportunities were available for such agendas. Adding her thoughts to the relationship between parliamentarians and the people, she advised that citizens train themselves to work with their political representatives. Reporting a personal experience in Edo State, Nigeria; she said a local government representative was surprised someone came to meet him on the poor condition of a road network, to which the politician promptly had the road repaired and mentioned that the issue had never been brought to his notice. She said “we have to take more responsibility to make our representative represent us.”

Mr. Flaubert Frimpong (an IDRC representative) stated that a lot of responsibilities are being put on researchers. Essentially, this is because evidence must precede action. He added that IDRC has a mandate to provide evidence in a timely manner and in the needed format, to make sure that women are given the place they deserve in all parts of the world. He promised that the Deputy High Commissioner will provide support by facilitating contact with policymakers and investors.

Panel 3

The panel chair informed the panelists he would prefer that their responses be in form of anecdotes rather than research findings and posed two questions: How does social contract work – what happens after women are empowered; and what opportunities are there to communicate in the natural resource and service sectors, in both countries?

Mrs Hauwa Sodeinde began by mentioning that she runs a school that help parents care for their kids – ages 1 to 9 – while they are at work. She also was involved in training women economically and monitoring their progress, so that challenges that crop up can be addressed. In one of her training efforts, she mentioned that some men expected to be paid before they give permission to train their wives.

She said she wrote a book about community development in child rearing and advised that female children should be trained to know they are capable of doing anything, that there is really no need to ‘think outside the box’ and that there was no box. There is also a need for children to be involved in emotional development as there’s currently a disconnection between the quality of education and what it is supposed to achieve.

Ms. Tina Asante-Apeatu stated that the lack of human and financial resources is not necessarily a problem but governance was the real issue. However, research helps to identify gaps. She mentioned that the top-down approaches do not work because one would not know the actual problems a people face. In Ghana, she said land grabbing is common and that women don't own land partly because of socio-cultural issues and partly because they are not economically empowered. She also agrees with the idea of getting men to support women. According to her, women in politics-women groups-are often insulted, as there is no level playing field.

Mr. Newton Norviewu (CDD): By referencing Afrobarometer, he stated that citizens do not always contact those who govern them at the local levels. He mentioned that women often do this less than men. In some aspects such as school feeding, women dominate but in many other areas, men dominate. According to him, an important issue is who – men or women – takes action when opportunities are available. He also stated a sentiment that because of the level of mechanization, more men engage in the largely subsistence mining. He further stated that women often provide support services in agriculture but that they need skills to increase their income.

Questions and comments – Panel 3

- **Mrs. Furera** mentioned that there is a need for the tracking and monitoring of the long-term impact of programs and projects.
- **Ola Olusola:** advised that more women needed to be risk takers. Even in a developed country like the US, women tend to take risk less even when they attend the same schools and have similar skill sets compared to men.
- **Bosun Solarin:** while responding to Mr. Newton's concern about women not taking up available opportunities, suggested that parliamentarians need to make laws first and then implementation can follow. On women participation in Nigerian politics, she mentioned that midnight meetings by politicians could be an impediment.
- **Nyoki Ita:** advised Mrs. Hauwa to be an advocate of "emotional development" in children to other colleagues of hers.
- **Juliana Oyegun:** while responding to Mr. Newton's concern about women not being able to cope with the use of crude tools for mining, such as lifting heavy objects, she

objected that “decent work¹” is what is needed. She stated her concerns about pedagogy, as regards the way children are being taught.

- Another participant observed that finger pointing is common as regards who should take responsibilities-between parents and teachers-for social and emotional behavioral development. Parents are the primary educators of children while teachers are co-educators. In Somalia, there is evidence that when mothers are educated, their children perform better educationally.

Closing Remarks by Dr. Folarin Gbadebo-Smith

He mentioned that the IDRC-GroW project has been a fairly exhausting journey but the experience has been illuminating. In all the discussions at the event, he noticed there was no mention of religion which could be a tough challenge toward women empowerment, especially in the northern part of Nigeria. He spoke about the trade-off between biology and sociology, what will be the consequences of upending the social order in terms of the child and who would take the responsibility of providing parental care? In Singapore, in the past, men refused to marry educated women.

On the participation of women in politics, he stated that we must not forget Aristotle who said politics is an art of war. The question is: Are women prepared to engage in the art of war, as trade and business are also an art of war? Yet he understood that in politics, the educated class is being excluded from participating in the political process, as more abnormal people (who attend meetings during the midnight) engage in politics, especially in developing countries.

He stated that there is very little attention paid to *preparing* women to participate in the economy-sororities in Nigerian and Ghanaian do not exist, unlike in universities in the United States. Therefore, women need to understand the business of networking. Unfortunately, attending universities in Nigeria can make someone less intelligent – in goes an open-minded, fertile intellect and out, comes a mind that has been shut down. Dissent, argument and opinions are not encouraged in Nigerian universities. They are told all they need to learn can be found in one book or the other. However, the ability to think is a crucial element of the fourth industrial estate. Firms, not governments create jobs.

¹ According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.



He stated that a fourth industrial revolution was unfolding, whereby colour, identity and race do not matter. Future industries are in the mind and that some of the barriers to women empowerment are psychological and we must recognize that some parts of the Nigeria still have very conservative laws. He reiterated the sentiment mentioned earlier that there is really no box to think out of – schools have to inform girls that there are jobs they can key into regardless of their sex.

He explained that there was a need to rethink the business of women empowerment and not necessarily focus solely on the labour aspect. So, how do women create firms? He stated that there were no laws – in Lagos State, for instance – barring women from creating firms. The issue for him was because men are natural risk takers while women value safety more, in both business and politics. He ended by hoping that IDRC will support women in a deeper way.

The Moderator thanked the attendees and invitees and officially closed the forum.