



COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A WEBINAR ON THE ROLE OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY IN ADDRESSING DRUG ABUSE AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE HELD ON TUESDAY 29TH JUNE 2021.

At the **Nigerian Governors' Wives Forum (NGWF)** we have been concerned about the alarming rate of drug use and abuse in the country, and its impact on young people. We have also been deeply worried about the cases of sexual and gender -based violence which have continued to rise in all States of the Federation. Nigerian Governors' Wives influenced the declaration of a **State of Emergency** against Sexual and Gender Based Violence by the **Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF)** on June 10th 2020. We have also been able to advocate for the passage of relevant laws to protect women and children in our States, and in States where laws are in place, we are actively involved in implementation strategies. In June 2020, 14 States in Nigeria had domesticated the VAPP Act. As of June 2021, 27 States have domesticated the Act. This is an indication that our efforts are bearing fruit. We also engage in sensitization and awareness campaigns against Gender Based Violence and have created Sexual Assault Referral centers, shelters and safe spaces in our respective States. As First Ladies we also provide succour to survivors of gender-based violence and their families.

To commemorate International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 2021 (June 26) we organised a Webinar on June 29 to explore the links between drug abuse and sexual and gender-based violence. The objective of the webinar was to hear from respected members of the entertainment industry how we can work together to ensure that awareness is raised effectively on these two critical issues. Members of the entertainment industry serve as role models for young people and grassroots constituencies, and can be powerful voices for social change.

We believe that our advocacy efforts can be strengthened exponentially if we work with those who have access to a critical mass of citizens who are more inclined to listen to them than to political leaders.

Speakers at the webinar were Nollywood superstars Kate Henshaw, Ali Nuhu and Toyin Abraham; Playwright & Director Ifeoma Fafunwa; Music stars Di'Ja and Timi Dakolo. The famous actress and producer Ajoke Silva was the Moderator.

This is a summary of the engagement with leading voices in the entertainment industry:

OBSERVATIONS

- The patriarchal nature of our society provides an atmosphere for Sexual and Gender Based Violence to thrive
- Drug abuse breeds violence in intimate partner relationships
- Forced marriages often lead to spousal abuse and drug use
- Poverty and overdependence on spouses contribute to violence in the home
- Social media aggravates issues of GBV and drug abuse.
- Lack of access to education leaves girls and women with very poor choices

RECOMMENDATIONS

- NGWF should see the entertainment industry as partners in progress in terms of getting advocacy messages across to citizens, especially young people
- Artistes should endeavour to discourage the portrayal of drugs as a source of inspiration, and desist from perpetuating gender stereotypes which fuel gender-based violence and discrimination against women
- Parents should develop closer ties with their children in this age of significant peer pressure

- More messages, awareness and sensitization programs should be targeted at grassroots communities
- Entertainers should use their platforms to promote good behaviour and serve as role models young people can look up to

NEXT STEPS

- Education and reorientation programs for increased
- of drug abuse and gender-based violence
- Advocacy for the establishment of more Sexual Assault Referral Centers and Shelters for GBV survivors.
- Advocacy for drug rehabilitation centers where they are needed
- Continued partnerships with relevant stakeholders at community level for ownership of the issues
- More investments in the entertainment industry as key partners in development at national and sub-national level.

The NGWF thanked the panel for sharing their insights and welcomed further collaborations, while the panelists all agreed to use their platforms to promote these causes for the greater good of the country.

Signed



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