



## **GOVERNMENT OF IMO STATE**

Office of the Wife of the Governor  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
P.M.B 1183 Owerri,  
Imo State

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HER EXCELLENCY, BARR. MRS. CHIOMA UZODIMMA, WIFE OF THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF IMO STATE, AT THE VIRTUAL OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 2021 FEMALE LAW STUDENTS' SUMMIT OF THE LEGAL TORCH INITIATIVE WITH THE THEME: "A WOMAN IN HER PRIME: THE BUDDING LEGAL LUMINARY AND HER CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY" ON THURSDAY, JULY 22, 2021.**

### **Protocol**

Esteemed Dignitaries, Distinguished Speakers, Female Law Students and Guests, it is such an honour to be here to welcome you all to the sequel of the Female Law Students Summit organized by the Working Council of the Legal Torch Initiative. I stand as one humbled by this invitation and my acceptance of this offer is a show of my approval for what this summit seeks to achieve.

I highly commend the work that the Legal Torch Initiative is doing to improve the perception and narrative of female lawyers in Nigeria and Africa at large, with emphasis on producing phenomenal women in the profession who will in turn positively affect the society and take their rightful place in advancing national prosperity.

With retrospect to the maiden edition, I have nothing but admiration and commendation for the Working Council of the Legal Torch Initiative, for this platform committed to a mission to illuminate, redefine, reset, and create positive change in the legal profession.

The theme "A woman in her prime: The budding legal luminary and her contemporary society" is a timely representation of the unspoken elephant that sits undisturbed in the legal profession today, as we are in a time when the world needs to look past status quos, stereotypes and

biases, and beam the light on women doing extraordinary feats in the profession and the nation at large, as well as create a path for the budding female lawyer who seeks to shine her light as a legal luminary.

That women have come of age in the legal profession in Nigeria is undebatable. That the female lawyer can rise to any height she chooses has become possible. Whether it's in the courtroom practice, on the bench or in academia, women lawyers in Nigerian have produced class and we will strive to see more of that in the coming days.

Women like Hon. Aloma Mariam Mukhtar GCON (First Female Chief Justice of Nigeria) and the likes of many others have shown it to be so; that the legal profession in Nigeria can produce phenomenal women advanced in knowledge, skill and potential. It can be a hard road, but it is not impossible.

In my various speaking engagements to womanhood, I have always taken a stand that the woman is a strong breed, created with a rare ability to persevere, withstand pain, and carry the world in her heart and on her shoulders as she pushes relentlessly for the victory she sees within herself.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the real amazon of this world is every woman in this room, every girl with a dream, every female lawyer determined to fight off the traditions of society, the frightening journey and carve for herself a place amongst the great.

The woman is a fighter, the female lawyer is more. If the rupture she experiences at childbirth cannot break her, if the monthly visitor that comes raging with pain and weakness cannot diminish her, then nothing else can. Not even the challenges she experiences in her journeys to becoming a renowned legal luminary.

The world needs women like you, dauntless, unrelenting, fiery big dreamers who rise up to challenge the status quo, to unsettle the equilibrium of things, to create the change we need. Women who would become a voice for the million others who have no voice. Society needs fearless and bold women like you, women like me.

Dear Amazons, the rumours are all true, that the light at the end of the tunnel is obscured by the bright flames of justice descending, that a woman's prime had been stifled from budding by the challenges she faces in finding her place in a profession that is out to break her spirit. The rumours are all true, but rumours are what they are; rumours, clichés are what they are, clichés. Equilibrium can be unsettled; status quos can be broken.

As a Legal professional, as a woman, and as someone who has been fortunate enough to advance in my career with the help of excellent mentors and sponsors, I cannot help but notice when other women are not afforded the same opportunities at advancement that I have enjoyed. So, while I can relate to your struggle, I do believe that things are getting better and that the issue of diversity in law firms is officially on the table. I encourage you to help ensure it remains there.

Aim high, aim big, don't settle! This is 2021, and surely, we are past the point of both subtle and overt discrimination of women. Surely, the woman's dedication, hard work, resilience, personality and ambition can overcome any traditional mentality she may encounter.”

I have no reason to give up hope, neither should you. I stand here today in support of your dreams, in support of the budding legal luminary. You must never fail to remind yourself that you are a woman, and you are strong. That you are a lawyer and you are a fighter!

Have no fear, the female lawyer can be more!  
See you at the top.

Thank you and may God bless us all.

**H.E. Barr. Chioma Uzodimma**  
**First Lady, Imo State**