



IRIAD-The Electoral Hub Commemorate

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2021: WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: ACHIEVING AN EQUAL FUTURE IN A COVID-19 WORLD

International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. The United Nations declared the International Women's Day in the year 1975 with the aim to:

- Help nations worldwide eliminate discrimination against women; and
- Help women gain full and equal participation in global development.

Since those early years, International Women's Day has assumed a new global dimension for women in developed and developing countries alike. The growing international women's movement which has been strengthened by four global United Nations women's conferences has helped make the commemoration a rallying point to build support for women's right and participation in the political and economic arenas.¹

The International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievement of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. Significant activities are witnessed worldwide as groups come together to celebrate women's achievement or rally for women's equality.²

The emergence of COVID-19 has deepened pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political, and economic systems which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic on women globally. Women leaders and women's organizations have demonstrated their skills, knowledge and networks to effectively lead in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. Today there is more acceptance than ever before that women bring different experiences, perspectives and skills to the table, and make irreplaceable contributions to decisions, policies and laws that work better for all.³

To uphold women's rights and fully leverage the potential of women's leadership in pandemic preparedness and response, the perspectives of women and girls in all of their

¹ UN on International women's day.

² History of the International Women's Day. UN Women

³ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/11/announcer-international-womens-day-2021>

diversity must be integrated in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs in all spheres and at all stages of pandemic response and recovery.⁴

In this light, the UN which is known for the promotion of good governance through its accountability, effectiveness and transparency aims to achieve the following in this COVID-19 pandemic:

- To ensure women's equal representation in all COVID-19 response planning and decision making;⁵
- To build capacity and knowledge of women in the society; and
- To educate the girl child and women in the rural areas on their civic rights so as to promote their participation in the decision making in the nation.

It is against this context that the theme for this year's International Women's Day has been set as "Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 World".

To commemorate the 46th anniversary of the International Women's Day, the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD) will be sensitizing young girls in secondary schools on the Open NASS Initiative, which is a campaign that calls for a more open, transparent, and accountable National Assembly (the national legislature in Nigeria). This sensitization programme is aimed at encouraging young girls to perform their roles as active citizens by engaging legislators and ensuring that their voices and interests are being effectively represented in legislative processes.

As we celebrate this day, IRIAD wishes all outstanding women in the health, politics, economic, security, and other sectors a happy International Women's Day. We envisage a world in which women are equal players in decision-making processes across all sectors.

Signed

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⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/11/announcer-international-womens-day-2021>

⁵ UN Policy Brief "The Impact Of COVID19 on Women"