

# NO COUNTRY WITHOUT WOMEN

What data tells us on women's representation in  
Government as of February 2020



# INTRODUCTION

According to the World Bank development indicators, women make up 49.32% of Nigeria's population, meaning almost half of the entire population are women. Despite having this staggering number, female representation in decision-making processes has been abysmally low since the return to democratic rule in 1999. Though women have gone on to excel in other sectors like banking, health, education and distinguished themselves in various public and private-sector leadership positions, they remain largely under-represented in the political space as the space is presently dominated by men. The political space is bereft of positive/special measures to guarantee women inclusion in the political process.

Gender inequality is recognized as a global challenge with some countries performing relatively better in closing their gender gaps. Since the Beijing conference of 1995, more international and regional instruments, resolutions, and initiatives have also emerged with specific focus on bridging the gender gap and creating a safer world for women and girls.

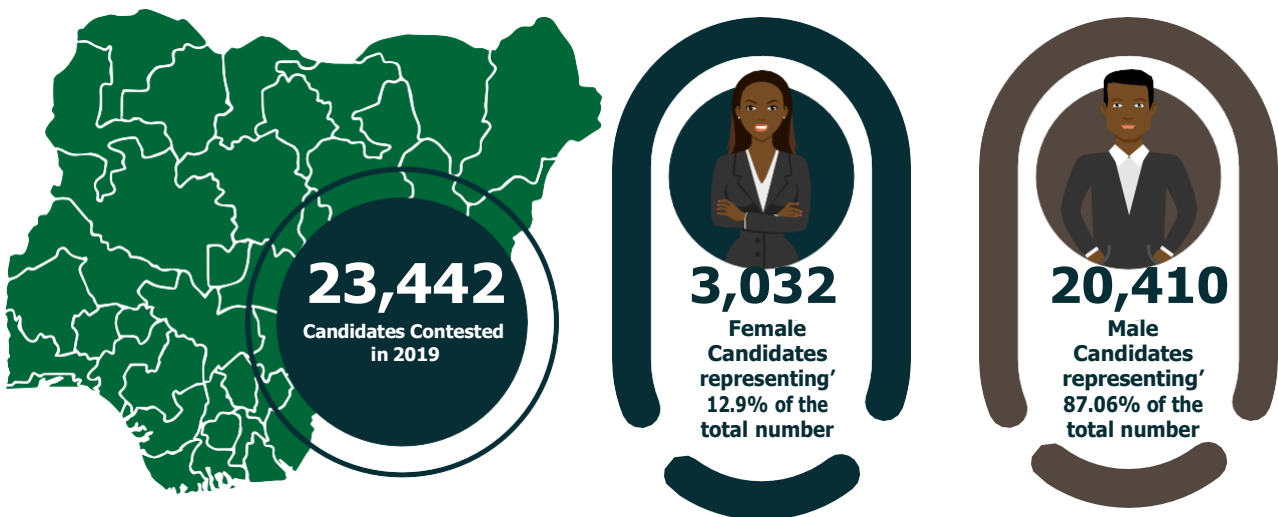
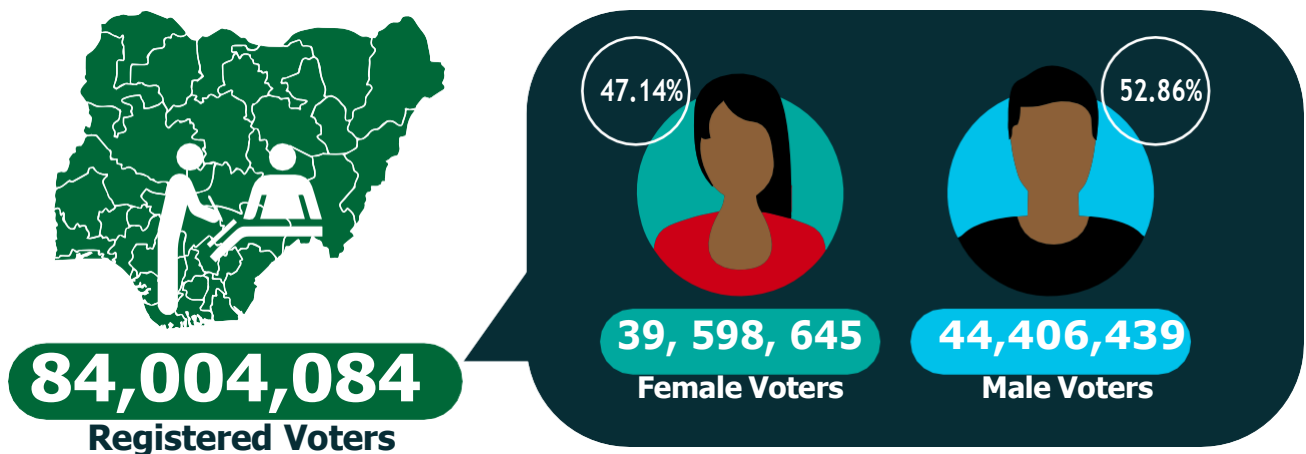
For instance, goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targeted at promoting gender equality, recognizes the need to end all forms of discrimination against women and gender inequality as a basic human rights issue as well as a critical need for a sustainable future. Nigeria is a signatory to these international and regional instruments on women and its National Gender Policy seeks to promote the rights and provide equal opportunity for women. The existence of these

instruments and policies have however yielded limited results in making women visible in the political space. The reality suggests the more the policy the higher the decline in the number of women in both appointive and elective positions. It is no doubt that women remain highly marginalized, discriminated against; and largely under-represented in Nigeria's twenty years democracy.

Political marginalization of women in Nigeria can be attributed to factors such as cultural and religious beliefs which are further institutionalized by Nigeria's political party system and structure. For instance, Nigeria's current political party structure is built on party practices like the lack of internal party democracy, political exclusion, and marginalization of vulnerable groups. This is reflected in the constitution of the party leadership, membership management, and candidate nomination. All these processes are skewed to favor a select few. In addition, to the hurdle women face at the party level, they also struggle to mobilize voters to vote for a woman; they struggle to contest in a flawed, highly commercialized, and violent electoral process. These challenges make it difficult for women to emerge as candidates or win the election.

The 2019 general elections offered some form of hope for female politicians as new political parties emerged and some political parties made public commitment to support women candidacy. Although this led to an increase in the number of women aspirants in the 2019 general elections, the number, however, dropped after the party primaries.

# Women Candidacy in the 2019 Elections



The 2019 general election was an election of numbers due to the abundance of registered voters and candidates in the election. Eighty-four million, four thousand and eighty-four (84,004, 084) voters registered. Of this, thirty-nine million, five hundred and ninety-eight thousand, six hundred and forty-five (39, 598, 645) were women representing 47.14% female voters while 44, 406, 439. 52.86% were male voters.

Twenty-three thousand, four hundred and forty-two (23,442) candidates contested in the elections. Of these, women candidates were three thousand and thirty-two (3,032) representing 12.9% of the total number of candidates in the general elections.

# Women Candidates by Elective Offices Contested in 2019

For the Presidential election, a total of 146 candidates (President and Vice President) contested in the 2019 elections. Of this number, 28 (19.2%) were women. This was an increase on the 18% women candidacy in the presidential election in 2015.

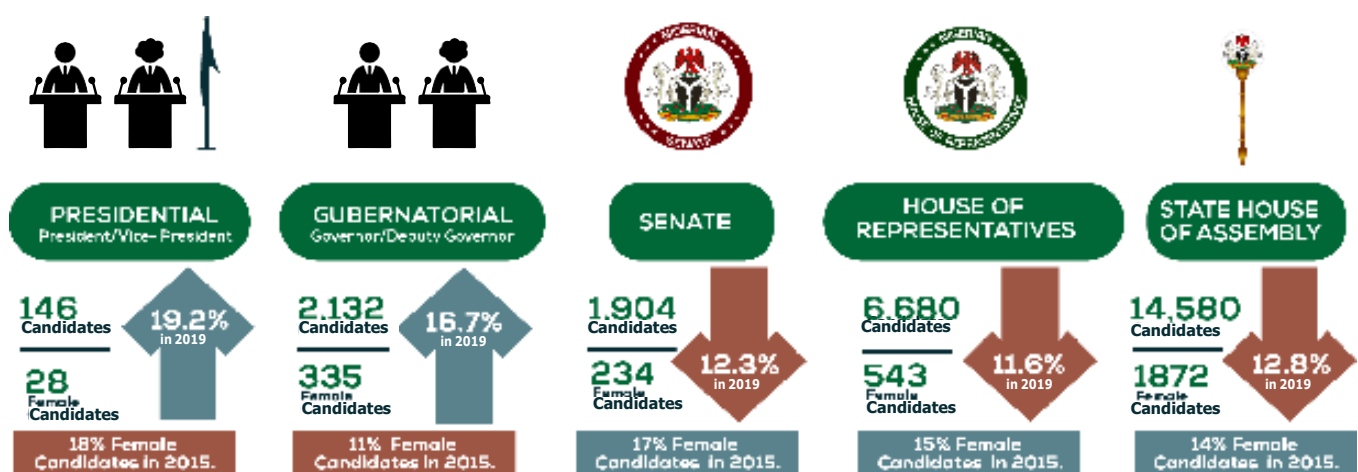
In the Governorship election, a total of 2,132 (Governorship and Deputy

Governorship) contested in the 2019 elections. Of this number, 355 (16.7%) were women. This was an increase on the 11% female candidacy in the 2015 Governorship elections. 234 out of the 1,904 candidates in the Senatorial elections were women.

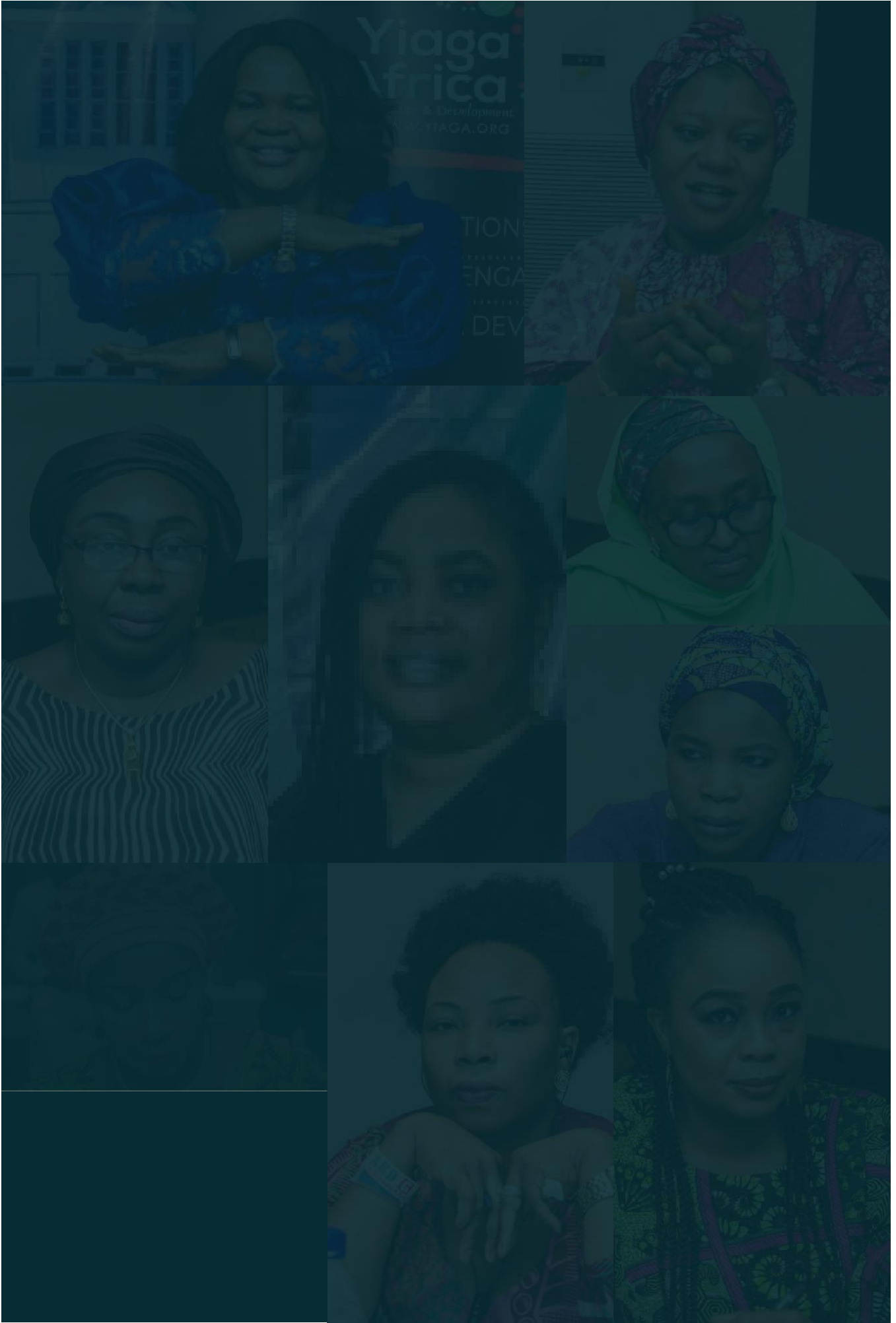
This represents 12% women candidacy signaling a decrease from the 17% women candidacy in 2015. In the same vein, 4,680 candidates contested in the House of Representatives election. 543 (11.6%) were women. This was a decrease from the 15% female candidacy in 2015.

Similarly, the state assembly election also recorded a decrease from 14% women candidacy in 2015 to 12.8% in 2019. Only 1,872 out of 14,580 candidates in the state legislative elections were women.

## Women Candidates by Elective Offices Contested in 2019



This indicates that about one in five (19.2%) of the candidates vying for the office of the president or vice-president is a female. This is closely followed by the proportion of female candidates (16.7%) in the gubernatorial election. Then followed by the House of Assembly at 12.8%. The House of Representatives had the least representation of female candidates at 11.6% in the elections.





# Data on Female Representation in the National Assembly before the 2019 Elections

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**T**he National Assembly recorded a sharp decline in the number of female legislators in the House of Representatives whilst the Senate retained the same number of female legislators elected in 2011.

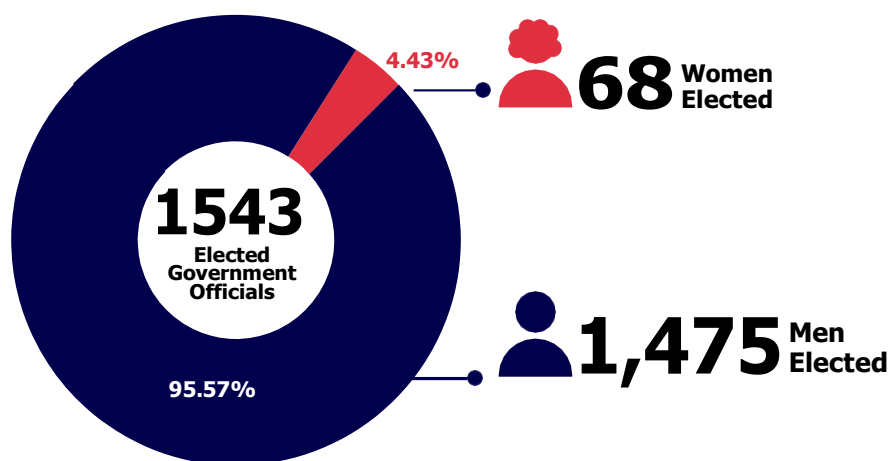
In 2011, 7 female candidates were elected to the Senate representing 6.4% while 26 female candidates were elected as members of the House of Representatives, representing 7.3% of legislators in the House of Representatives.

In 2015, 7 female candidates were elected to the Senate representing 6.4%, while 22 female candidates were originally elected as members of the House of Representatives, 1 female lawmaker passed away. The number was retained at 21 (5.8%) as the bye election conducted by INEC didn't produce any female winner to fill the vacant seat. 46 (4.6%) women were elected to the State Houses of Assembly.

# Female Representation in Elective Offices post 2019 General Elections

There are currently 68 elected women out of the 1543 elected government officials putting women representation at 4.43% nationally. This includes the office of the President, Vice President, Governor, Deputy Governor, National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly.

National Outlook of Elected Government Officials



There are 469 legislators in the National Assembly: 109 and 360 in the Senate and House of Representatives respectively.

The 2019 general elections witnessed a decrease in female representation in the Senate with 8 female candidates elected to the Senate representing 7.3% of legislators in the Senate, while 13 female candidates were elected as members of the House of Representatives representing 3.6% of legislators in the House of Representatives. This indicates a decline in female representation in the House of Representatives from 2015.

For the executive office, only 3 women emerged as deputy Governors in Enugu, Kaduna, and Oyo states. The President, Vice President, Governors are all men.

## Age Disaggregation

The youngest of the 8 female legislators in the Senate is 49 years old. In the House of Representatives are 3 female legislators between the ages of 40 - 45. The other 10 legislators are 45 and above.

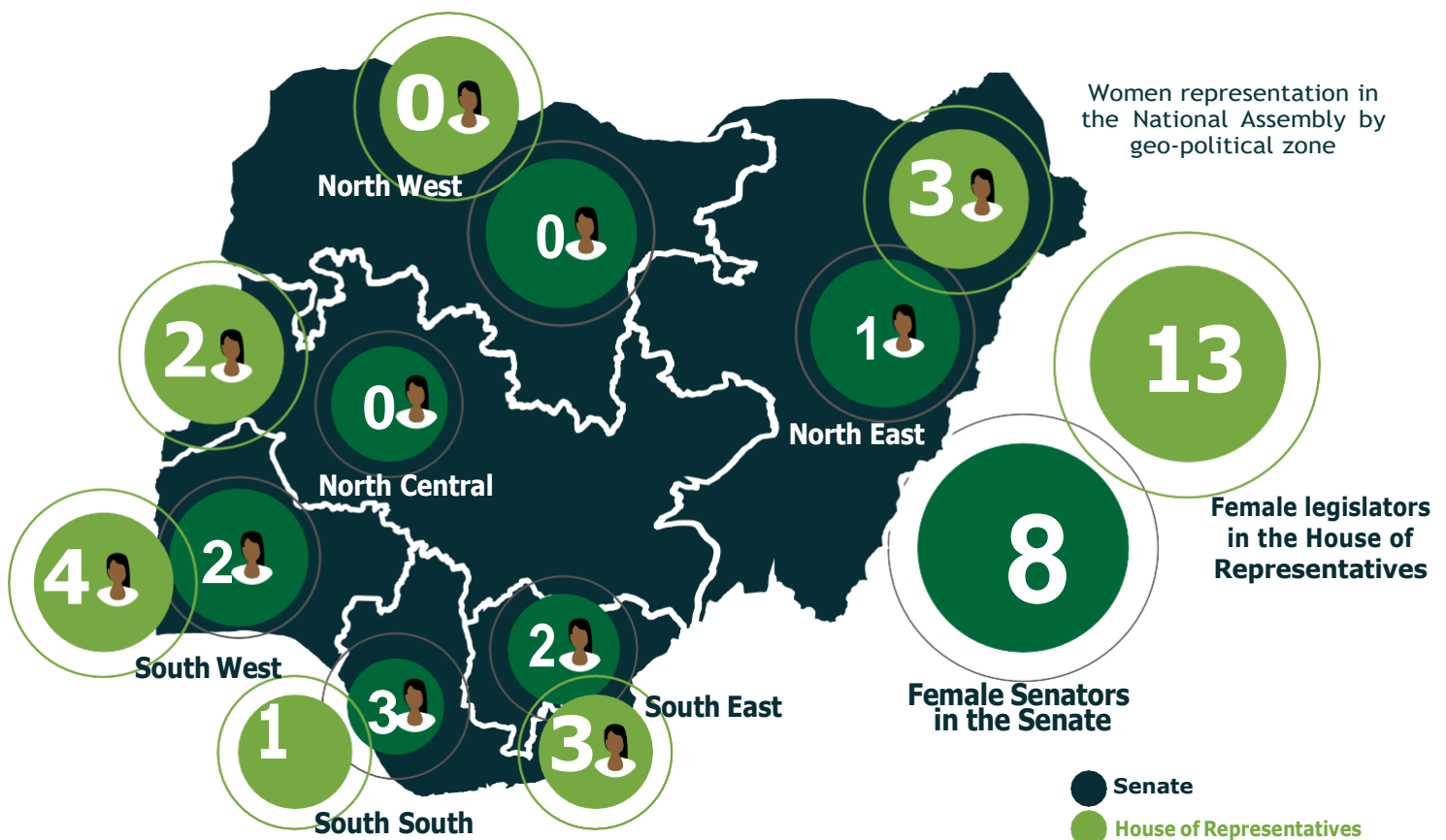
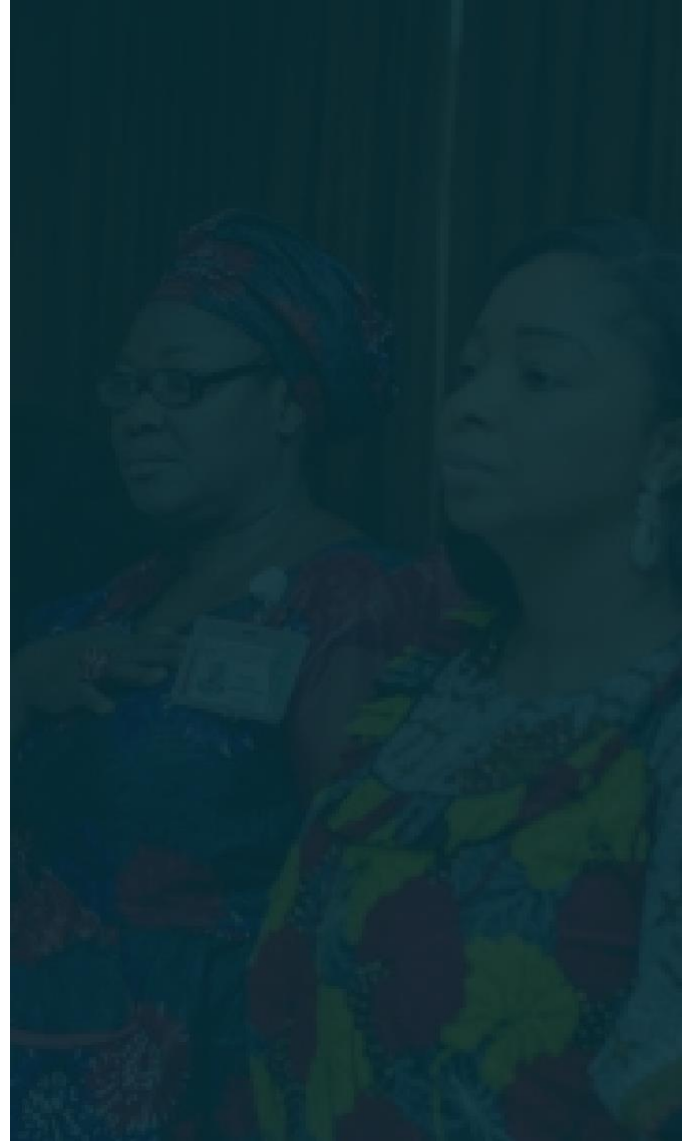
All 8 female legislators in the Senate are **ABOVE 45 YEARS OLD.**

## Women representation in the National Assembly by geo-political zone

There are 8 female Senators in the Senate: 3 are from the South-South geo-political zone; the South-East and South-West geo-political zone both have 2 each; while the North-East geo-political zone have 1. The North-West and North-Central geo-political zone have none.

Of the 13 female legislators in the House of Representatives: the South-South geo-political zone has 1 female legislator; the North-Central geo-political zone has 2 legislators; the North-East and South-East geo-political zones both have 3 female legislators each, while the South-West has 4 female legislators in the House of Representatives.

The North-West geo-political zone has no female legislator in the House of Representatives.



Source: <https://www.inecnigeria.org/elections/election-results/>



# Female Representation in State Houses of Assembly

A comparison of female representation in State Houses of Assembly from 2011 - 2019 indicates a steady decline in the number of female legislators elected.

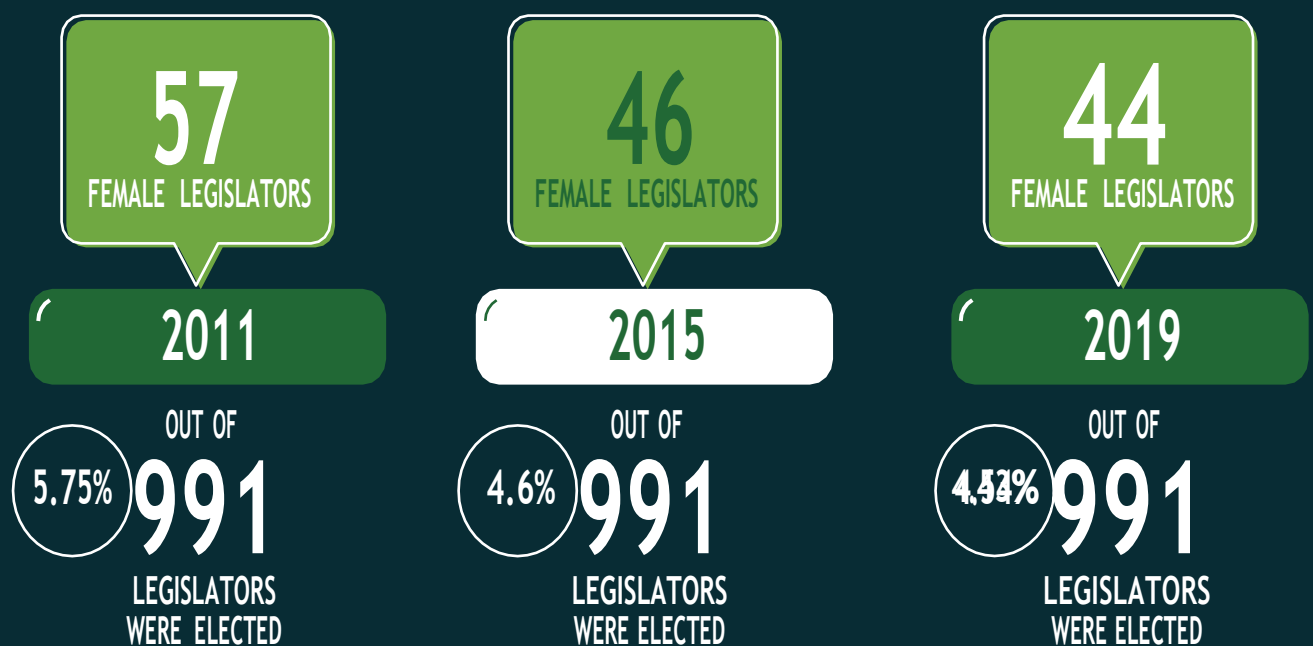
In 2011, a total number of 57 female legislators out of 991 legislators were elected to the 36 State Houses of Assembly across the country, representing 5.75% of elected lawmakers at the state level.

In 2015, the number decreased as a total number of 46 female legislators out of 991 legislators were elected to the 36 State Houses of Assembly across the country, representing 4.6% of elected lawmakers at the state level.

## Post-2019 Election Female Representation in State Houses of Assembly

A total of 1872 female candidates out of 14580 candidates contested for State Houses of Assembly representing 12.8% of the total number of candidates.

Of the 1872 female candidates that contested for State Houses of Assembly, only 44 female legislators were elected to 22 State Houses of Assembly across the country, representing 4.43% of 991 members of the State Houses of Assembly.



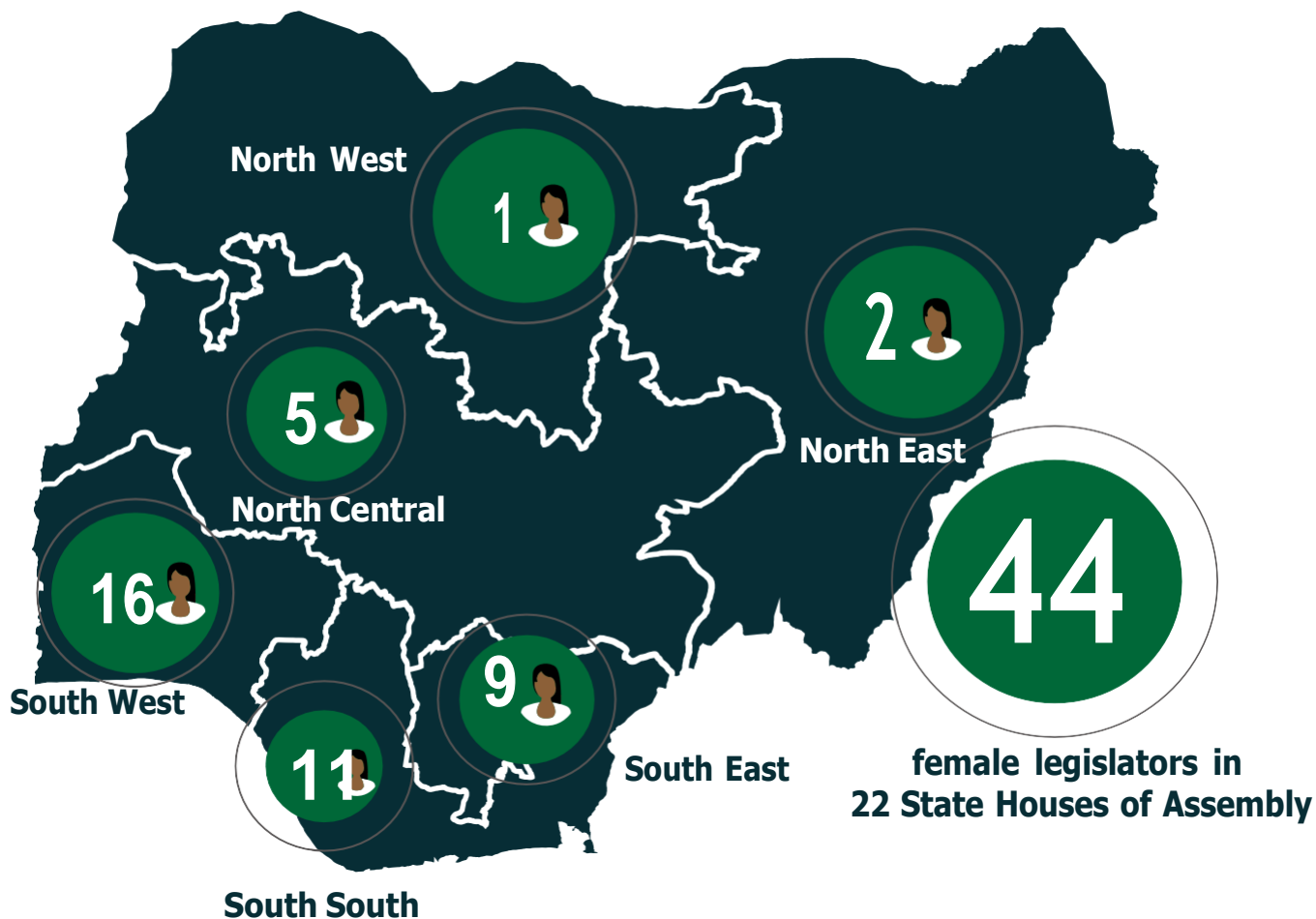
### Source:

International Republican Institute (IRI) 2015 Nigeria Election Observation Report.

<https://www.inecnigeria.org/elections/election-results/>

YIAGA Africa Observatory on Youth Candidacy in the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria, April 2015.

# Female Representation in State Houses of Assembly



**Source:** <https://www.inecnigeria.org/elections/election-results/>

Of the 44 female legislators in 22 State Houses of Assembly across the country, the North-West geo-political zone has 1 female legislator, the North-East geo-political zone has 2 and the North-Central geo-political zone has 5 female legislators.

The South-East geo-political zone has 9 female legislators, the South-South geo-political zone has 11 female legislators while the South-West geo-political has 16 female legislators, making it the geo-political zone with the highest number of female legislators.

## Age Disaggregation

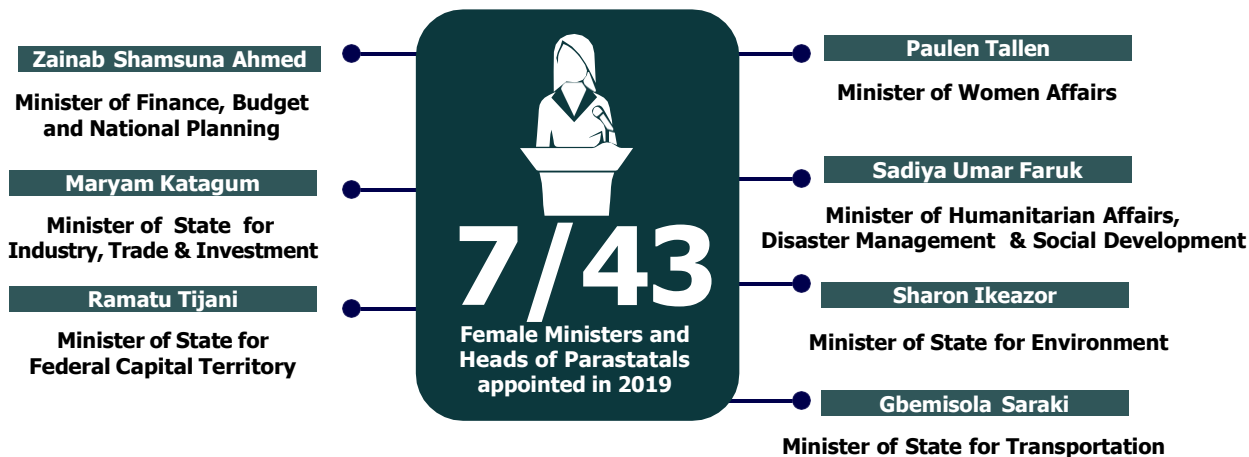
Of the 44 female legislators in the State Houses of Assembly, 3 are between the ages of 31-35, 5 are between the ages of 36-40, 9 are between the ages of 41-45 and 27 are 46 and above.

No female legislator between the ages of 25 - 30 emerged in the State Houses of Assembly.

# Appointive Offices

## Female Representation in the Federal Cabinet

There are currently 43 ministers and heads of parastatals appointed into the federal cabinet post-2019 general election. Out of this number, 7 are female, representing 16.2% of appointees in the federal cabinet.

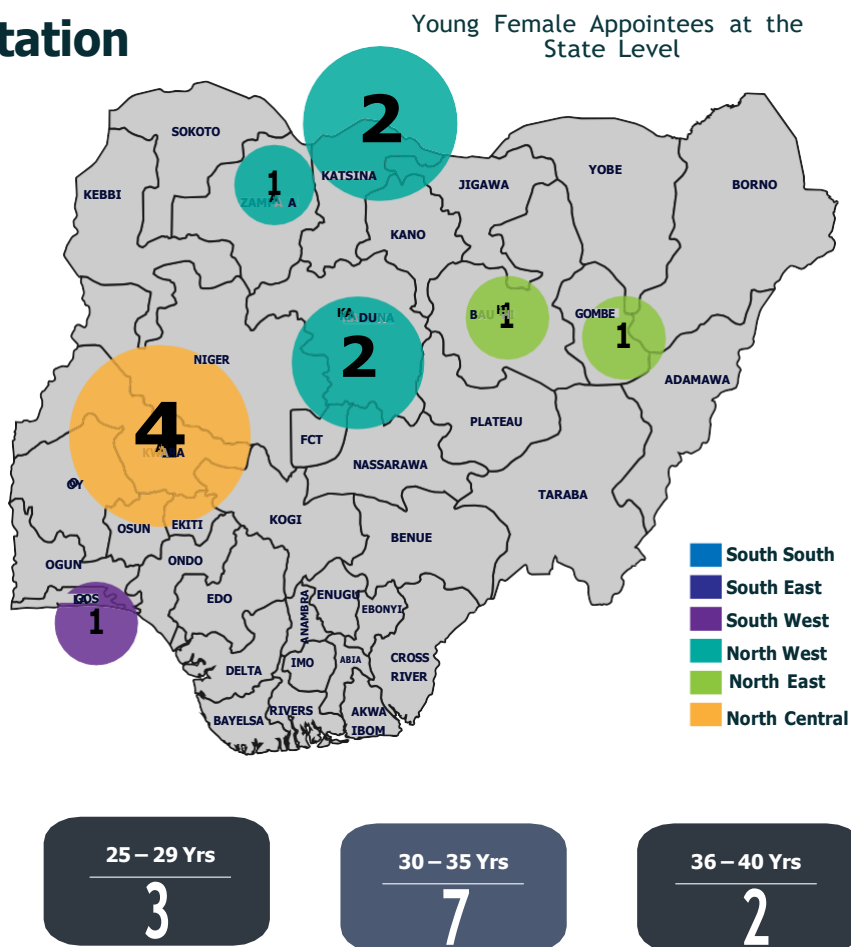


## State Level Appointments: Young Women Representation

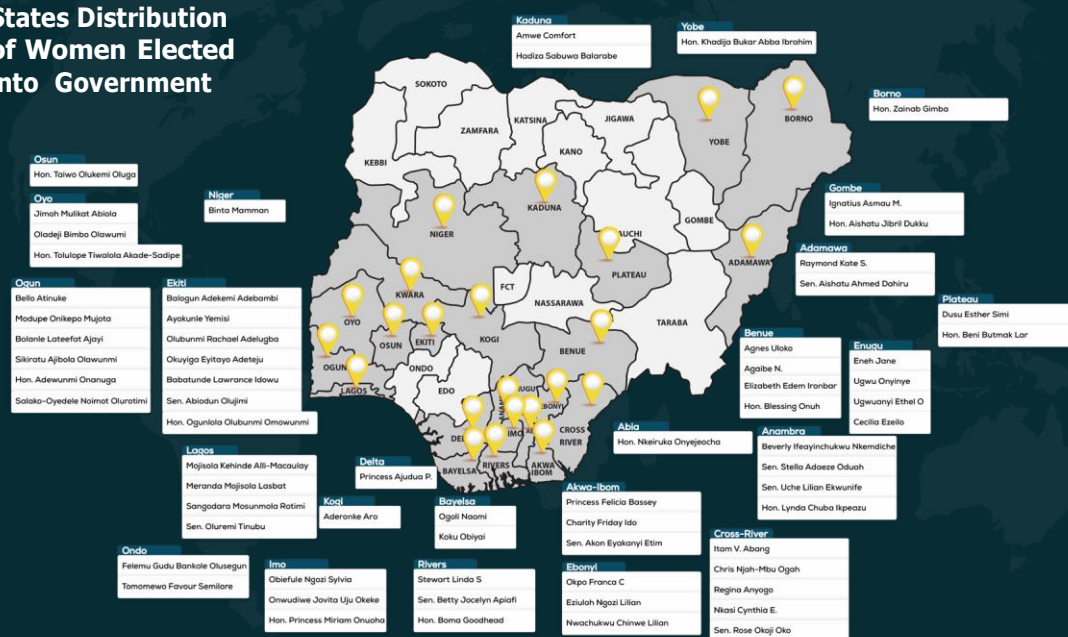
Field data collected as of January 2020 from 17 states indicates that a total of 12 young women of the 50 under 40-year-olds were appointed in the post 2019 election period.

For this purpose, the age classification is disaggregated as follows: 25 - 29, 30 - 35 and 36 - 40.

Of the 50 young persons in appointive positions across 17 states and the FCT, 10 are between the ages of 25 - 29. Of this number, 3 are young women. 28 young persons are between the ages of 30 - 35. Of these number, 7 are young women. While there are 12 persons between the ages of 36 - 40. Of this number, 2 are young women.



## States Distribution of Women Elected into Government



## What data tells us about Women Political Representation in Nigeria's Politics

Elected Offices	2007		2011		2015		2019	
	Female Candidates	Women Elected	Female Candidates	Women Elected	Female Candidates	Women Elected	Female Candidates	Women Elected
<b>President</b>	1 of 25	0	1 of 20	0	1 of 14	0	6 of 73	0
<b>Vice President</b>	5 of 25	0	3 of 20	0	4 of 14	0	22 of 73	0
<b>Governor</b>	14 of 474	0	13 of 353	0	23 of 380	0	77 of 3269	0
<b>Deputy Governor</b>	21 of 474	6 of 36	58 of 347	1 of 36	64 of 380	4 of 29	265 of 3269	3 of 36
<b>Senate</b>	59 of 799	9 of 109	90 of 890	7 of 109	128 of 746	8 of 109	234 of 2824	8 of 109
<b>House of Reps</b>	150 of 2342	26 of 360	220 of 2408	26 of 360	270 of 172	17 of 360	543 of 4680	13 of 360

### Source:

IRI 2015 Nigeria Election Observation Report

YIAGA Africa Observatory on Candidacy in the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria.

# Conclusion

It is evident that, despite targeted interventions by civil society organizations to bridge the gap, female representation in the political and decision-making process is abysmally poor. Marginalization of women in political parties plays a huge part in this. Thus, it is imperative for stakeholders to keep advocating for reforms in political parties since parties remain the only platform for contesting for elective office.

To achieve a significant representation of women in government, legislative and constitutional reforms are required to mandate political parties and government at all levels to ensure women's political inclusion. Unless strategic interventions including a quota system and affirmative action are adopted this ugly trend will continue to deprive political spaces of women representation in decision making processes..



**3, Frantz Fanon  
Crescent, 17th  
Road, 4th Avenue,  
Gwarinpa, FCT,  
Abuja Nigeria**



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