

# Charter of Demands By Women and Youths in Kano and Kaduna States

## Background

Political parties are essential institutions of democracy through which citizens express their aspirations to contribute to the polity of the nation through participation in political parties and through elections. By competing in elections, parties offer citizens a choice in governance, and while in opposition they can hold governments accountable. The Nigerian Constitution provides for every citizen, whether male or female, to enjoy the fundamental human rights accrued to everyone and to participate in public life. One of the rights provided for within the Nigerian Constitution as well as other international instruments such as the Universal declaration of human rights, which is the freedom to right of association. Political parties exercise this right as well as individuals who choose to belong to any party of their choice to express their aspirations as well as participate within the governance process.

In Nigeria, disappointingly so, young people and women have been largely excluded from leadership and decision-making processes in political parties, elective, and appointive positions, as the political space is closed, the youths and women who form most of the population remain excluded from leadership and governance. Nigerian youths and women have yet to achieve the level of inclusion required to gain representation in politics due to leadership deficits, poor internal democracy among the older

parties, and an absence of a strategic political agenda which poses barriers to young people and women playing a role in National Development.

From 1999 to date women and youth participation in electoral process, has been low. Women and youth have been recognized as the driving force for social transformation; unfortunately their active participation in governance and politics has been minimal. Though women having 49% of the total population according to 2006 Nigerian population census figure, but there has been a gross gender gap between men, women and youth, especially in political representation, economic management and leadership. This is as a result of some factors that have brought about this wide political and socio economic disparity. The election



of Women continues to dwindle each electoral cycle despite women constituting highest numbers at polling units. Women constitute 5.4% in National Assembly and 4.6% in SHoA, 16% in FEC (7/44).

Statistics also vary about the proportion of the population that comprises youth, especially within the political age ranges of 25 – 35 years but the youth can be said to constitute not less than 50% of the Nigerian population. The 2011 Nigerian Youth Manifesto stated that active and constructive youth participation in the Nigerian political process has gradually become non-existence over the years with most of them involved as thugs than active party members and office holders.

Although some parties like the PDP, APC, YPP, and ADC have within their party policies have committed to 35% affirmative action in favour of women but the reality was far from the written. In the party congress held in October 2021, the Kaduna state chapter of the All Progressive People's Congress party ensured that women now occupy more positions within the party leadership besides the provisional women leader. It should be noted that the positions given to the women are as deputy or vice in all party positions. The Peoples' Democratic Party in their recent congress elected Muhammed Kakade, a 25 year old youth as the youth leader. All of these are an indication that the advocacies carried out to political parties at all levels is yielding result and as such more needs to be done around women and youth on exposures to issues and policies.

At this juncture it is expedient to note that most political parties started giving expression of Interest forms free to women but this wasn't yielding much result as the women hardly go beyond the Primaries level. The youth too have not fared better. The body language of the political parties is that which shows the lack of concerted and conscious support for women and youths who come out to vie for any position. Money politics and godfatherism are also some of the factors that have been militating against women and youth participation in politics.



### Issues identified impeding the full and active participation of women and youth political participation



- Low representation in political parties and elective office
- Stigmatization and shaming.
- Ignorance /Poor access to information and lack of proper communication
- Cultural and religious influence
- Inadequate political activities at local level involving women and youth beyond campaigns
- Poor political education /Poor political orientation
- Lack of inclusion
- Inferiority complex
- Godfatherism

## **Actions to be taken by political parties**

### **Pre Election Period**

### **Candidate Selection**

- Ensure 35% affirmative action for women participation in politics and governance.
- Identify incentives to attract women and youths and encourage them to join the party, such as capacity building or advocacy.
- Establish consensus among party leadership to promote women and youths electoral participation.
- Consider adoption of voluntary party quotas for women candidates and formalize it in recruitment rules.
- Place women and youths in winnable positions on party lists, or in winnable/safe constituencies.
- Women and Youths should be encouraged to cultivate strategic alliances with men, since men play a critical role in building internal party support for these kinds of policies.
- Consider setting a limit on nomination/primary contest expenditure.
- Women and youths should be partnered with international organizations and CSOs to build their capacities.
- Establish an internal party fund or provide subsidies to women and youth candidates.
- Provide women and youths with skills to raise early money, campaign and build name recognition.





## Election Period

- Ensure women's visibility in the electoral campaign and access to the media.
- Ensure women candidates' safety during campaigning and keep party supporters in line where there is potential for violence.
- Identifying and disseminating party positions that are priorities for women, which could also attract more women's votes for their party.
- Build women's capacities to campaign and consider twinning or mentoring of first time candidates.
- Monitoring elections, including by recruiting women as party agents to be present at polling stations, particularly if those polling stations are allocated for women only.

## Post Election Period

- Ensuring women elected to a political institution are provided with leadership roles within the parliamentary group (e.g. group chairperson) and parliamentary committees (e.g. chairperson or group focal point).
- Ensuring gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in party policies, including by supporting gender-specific policy reform, such as combating gender-based violence or targeting parental leave or reproductive rights issues, and by promoting gender equality in areas like access to justice, health, nationality, labour, land rights, social security and inheritance.
- Conduct assessments of the level of gender equality within the party, with the aim of identifying, and ultimately eliminating, any practices or rules that may directly or indirectly undermine women.
- Form strategic partnerships with civil society organizations.

