



INITIATIVE FOR RESEARCH,
INNOVATION AND ADVOCACY
IN DEVELOPMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 31, 2024

IRIAD-THE ELECTORAL HUB STATEMENT ON AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY

On this Pan-African Women's Day, IRIAD and The Electoral Hub reaffirms our commitment to advocating for policies and programs that support women's rights and gender equity. We will continue to partner with stakeholders to address the challenges facing African women and girls and to amplify their voices and leadership.

Knowledge| Innovation | Inclusion|

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...promoting electoral knowledge, accountability, and integrity

The Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD) and The Electoral Hub joins the African Union and other partners in commemorating Pan-African Women's Day 2024.

Pan-African Women's Day was first commemorated on **July 31**, 1962, in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, following a conference where the Pan-African Women's Organisation (PAWO) was formed. PAWO was established to contribute to the continent's liberation from colonialism, end apartheid, and advocate for the abolishment of discriminatory practices against African women. In 1970, July 31 was officially recognized as Pan-African Women's Day, marking a significant milestone in the struggle for gender equity and women's rights across the continent.

As we mark this important day, we reflect on the significant progress made towards gender equity and women's empowerment in Africa. We celebrate women across the continent who have made giant strides in fighting and standing for the cause of women.

Pan-African Women's Day serves as a vital platform to celebrate the contributions of women across the continent while also addressing the ongoing challenges they face. It is an opportunity to recognize women's significant roles in various sectors, advocate for continued change, promote solidarity among women, and inspire action towards gender equity.

In Nigeria, Pan-African Women's Day is particularly significant as it aligns with the ongoing efforts to improve the status of women and girls in the country. Despite notable progress, Nigerian women still face numerous challenges, including limited access to education, economic opportunities, and healthcare services and exclusion in politics, political representation, leadership and governance. For example, there is the National Gender Policy, adopted in 2006 and revised in 2021 aimed to promote gender equity and women's empowerment, and the landmark judgement on 35% affirmative action for women in appointive and elective positions, yet implementation remains an issue.

Call to Action

As we celebrate Pan-African Women's Day, IRIAD calls upon the following stakeholders to take decisive actions that will foster gender equity and empower women across the continent:

- **Governments:** Governments should prioritize funding and resources for girls and women's education at all levels. This includes not only primary and secondary education but also vocational and higher education to ensure safety and access to educational institutions for all girls. In addition,

governments must strengthen the legal framework and support services that aim to protect women and girls from violence and discrimination. This includes implementing and enforcing laws against sexual violence, providing shelter to survivors, and ensuring access to justice.

- **Civil Society Organizations:** Civil society organizations play a key role in influencing policies that support gender budgeting and planning. They should engage in advocacy activities that highlight the importance of investing in women's rights and gender equality. Conducting community information campaigns is essential to change society's attitude toward gender-based violence and discrimination. These campaigns can educate communities about women's rights and the importance of gender equality.
- **Educational Institutions:** Educational institutions should develop programs that address the unique challenges of girls, especially in rural and marginalized communities. This includes grants, tuition, and safe transport to schools. Also, incorporating gender studies into the curriculum can increase student awareness and understanding.
- **Community Leaders and Individuals:** Community leaders and individuals should stand with educators and policymakers to advocate for gender equity and women's empowerment. Grassroots movements can amplify voices and bring about local change.

On this Pan-African Women's Day, IRIAD reaffirms our commitment to advocating for policies and programs that support women's rights and gender equity. We will continue to partner with stakeholders to address the challenges facing African women and girls and to amplify their voices and leadership. We will in particular engage in activities to ensure the passage of Nigeria's Women's Special Seats Constitutional amendment.

#PanAfricanWomensDay #GenderEquity #Empoweringwomen #WomensRightMatter #54of54

Signed

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ABOUT IRIAD AND THE ELECTORAL HUB

The **Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development** (IRIAD) is an interdisciplinary knowledge and advocacy hub committed and focused on developing a critical understanding of governance processes and regimes from research, documentation, policy engagements, public education and impact advocacy.

The Electoral Hub is an affiliate of IRIAD. It is committed to promoting electoral knowledge, integrity, and accountability in Nigeria. Our aim is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria

through the provision of data, critical and contextualized analysis, and solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process.