

DRPC-PAWED HOSTS PANEL SESSION ON WHAT WORKS IN ADVANCING WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS DURING 21ST NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN AFFAIRS STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS MEETING UYO 25TH AUGUST 2021



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Introduction

The Partnership for Advancing Women in Economic Development (PAWED) project, currently implemented by the development Research and Project Center (dRPC) with support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is designed to build a Nigerian CSO advocacy and communications coalition to advance evidence, policies and programs that further women's economic empowerment vanguard organizations such as Women's Empowerment Collectives. It is also aimed at nudging policy makers to increase funding, implement and scale up investment in WEE policies, programs, and projects with an initial focus on increasing the salience of WECs in Nigeria.

dRPC-PAWED hosted a panel session during the stakeholders and development partners in the women sector session meeting at the 21st National Council for Women Affairs hosted by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs.

Objective

To dialogue with government and CSOs on what works and how civil society can work with government to strengthen the salience of women's economic empowerment programming.

Overview

The panel session had in attendance key government stakeholders including:

- The Honorable Minister of Women Affairs – Dame Pauline Tallen, OFR, KSG
- The Honorable Minister Youth and Sports – Chief Sunday Dare
- The Honorable Minister for State, Budget and National Planning – Prince Clem Agba
- The Honorable Minister for State, Education – Hon Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba

Others in attendance included the Commissioners of Women Affairs from the states, Permanent Secretaries and Directors from State Ministries of Women Affairs.

The Honorable Minister for State, Education – Hon Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba in his address, called for all programs for men to be replicated for women. He also pledged to work with the Ministry of Women Affairs to promote women's issues.

The Honorable Minister for State, Budget and National Planning – Prince Clem Agba in his address lauded women empowerment initiatives like the Spotlight initiatives where he chairs the steering committee. He also noted that more women are now playing visible roles in the economic plans, stating that the current ERGP and vision 2020 have women as co-chairs and heads of technical working groups to improve women and gender issues. He stated that in the area of funding, Government is putting more funds into women programs.



The Honorable Minister Youth and Sports – Chief Sunday Dare pledged his support and that of his ministry to improve women's issues.

Panel session



The panel session theme: **ADVANCING WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS IN NIGERIA; WHAT WORKS AND HOW GOVERNMENT AND CSO/WECs CAN WORK TOGETHER?**

The PAWED project provided an opportunity for two of the high level WECs trained in the Lagos capacity building workshop on advocacy and communications to advocate to government via the policy dialogue.

Panelists

dRPC-PAWED presented two of her trained WECs from the national coalition for the panel

1. President, NECA'S Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW) - Mrs Funmilayo Aworoogun
2. President, Nigerian Association of Women Entrepreneurs (NAWE) - Barr Vera Ndanusa

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs nominated the rest of the panelists

1. Director, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment
2. Country Rep; Proctor and Gamble
3. Tax Team Lead, World Bank – Mr. Michael Ilesanmi
4. Director, Gender Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
5. Director General National Aids Commission

The facilitator was dRPC consultant – Dr Plagsat Dayil; Director of Gender Studies University of Jos.

During the panel, the Country Rep; Proctor and Gamble stated that empowerment of women yields gains, noting that this was what works for building the economy, hence, the need for the prioritization of women economic empowerment in Nigeria.

The Director, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment stated that prioritizing women economic empowerment programs has the potential for improving the economy. What works is the blending of empowerment with skills and literacy training alongside financial inclusion. Why its not working was because of the many inequalities.

Mrs Funmilayo Aworoogun noted that governments willingness to continue engagement on the this was what was working but there is a lack of synergy for WEE programs as there are several implementing MDAs, there was also no monitoring and evaluation framework for WEE programming and this is what is not working.



Barr Vera Ndanusa acknowledged that the many interventions were a sign of governments willingness on WEE and that was working but noted also that the lack of coordination, lack of deliberate policies targeting women economic empowerment were some of the issues not working. She advocated to the Hon. Minister for State Education to complement the efforts of the Ministry of women affairs with skills building.

The Director, Gender, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs commented on the neglect of young girls and young female entrepreneurs.

The Tax Team Lead, World Bank – Mr. Michael Ilesanmi, introduced the concept of the Nigeria for Women Project as an initiative that works for women’s economic empowerment in Nigeria. He noted that the Nigeria for women project was designed using affinity groups and the model of women economic collectives works.



Comments from the Hon Minister of Women Affairs



The Honorable Minister of Women Affairs – Dame Pauline Tallen, OFR, KSG, thanked the panelists for an insightful session. She elaborated some of the issues plaguing women. Noting that if a woman was economically empowered, we empower the nation. She called on all ministries to support women’s economic empowerment in Nigeria. Pledging the support of the ministry to do its best to empower women.

Conclusion

The dRPC-PAWED’s panel session on advancing women economic empowerment programs in Nigeria; what works and how government and CSO/WECs can work together provided a forum for government and WECs to discuss key issues. This session ensured that women’s economic empowerment was prioritized and discussed during this year’s National Council of Women Affairs meeting.