

Governance Agenda for an Inclusive Nigeria



Introduction

“
GAIN partners want a progressive nation where their rights and freedoms are fully realized.”

Women, youth and persons with disabilities constitute an overwhelming majority of registered voters in Nigeria. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), these groups constitute 70 percent of people registered during the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) period from June 2021 to August 2022.¹ Inclusive governance is imperative to actualizing the dividends of a democratic system; however, previous advocacy efforts of women, youth and persons with disabilities on political and governance issues have not yielded the desired results. In particular, policymakers have not implemented policies advocated for by these groups that would meaningfully impact their lives. Bound by common intention and purpose, the 2023 general election presents a window of opportunity to change this narrative and put forward a coordinated voice of these three constituencies to engage political actors for a greater and more inclusive Nigeria.

Against this background, the **Women in Politics Forum (WIPF)**, **Youth Hub Africa** and **Inclusive Friends Association (IFA)** commissioned research and produced national priority agendas of women, youth and persons with disabilities.

This consolidated agenda will be used as an advocacy tool in the upcoming 2023 general election and beyond the election period to:



Secure commitments to legal and policy reform from the top 3 candidates for the presidential, National Assembly, and governorship elections, and



Demand accountability from newly elected officials on the commitments they made on GAIN.

¹Vanguard Newspaper, October 26, 2022 found here 2023: PWDs, vulnerable groups constitute 70% of voters

Recommendations



Women

1. Legal and administrative reforms:

- ★ The federal government should comply with the court ruling of 35% of appointive positions reserved for women, including young women and women with disabilities.
- ★ Political parties who already have quota systems should implement them, while others should include it in their constitution, acknowledging these measures need to be taken in a gradual manner.
- ★ Lawmakers should reintroduce the Special Seats for Women bill to the National Assembly within the first year of the tenth Assembly.
- ★ The president should consider issuing an executive order to ensure women's demands sail through.

2. Increase women's participation in politics and decision-making:

Political parties and civil society should carry out capacity-building and empowerment programs to improve women's ability to effectively participate in elective politics and governance.

- ★ Political parties should also facilitate women's inclusion in internal party democracy; reduce the high cost of purchasing forms for election; and end stigmatization of women political candidates, and discrimination against women in politics.

3. Implement the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law:

- ★ Federal and state government officials should mitigate and address violence against women in politics by implementing the VAPP Law

and addressing general insecurity in Nigeria by protecting citizens, especially women and girls, and women with disabilities from insurgents, bandits, and other criminal elements during, and after elections.

4. Enhance service provision on women's health:

- ★ Federal and state governments should increase the expenditure on health and social services at the national and state level to enhance women's health.
- ★ Support all aspects of women's health to put women in a better position to participate in all aspects of society.

5. Engage men in the struggle for gender justice:

- ★ Address barriers from religion, patriarchal societal norms, beliefs, and culture actively engaging men, especially traditional and religious leaders in discussion and self-reflection about masculinities and perceptions of a woman's place in the family and in society.

6. Address structural disadvantages that affect women with disabilities:

- ★ Federal and state governments should address the structural disadvantages that women with disabilities experience through sensitization programs and redress the structural inequities that have kept them isolated, subordinated and discriminated against in the family and in their communities.

7. Economic empowerment:

- ★ Promote economic empowerment for women by passing laws that favor women business owners and enable them to work with banks to ensure equitable financing opportunities for women entrepreneurs and
- ★ Create an atmosphere that will tackle the insecurity and wanton destruction of lives that has resulted in a high cost of living.



Youth

1. Make our nation a safe and secure place to live.

- ★ Federal and state governments should leverage community policing and use modern technologies such as surveillance cameras and drones, to put an end to armed banditry, radicalization, and violent extremism in a strong and clear manner, within the first year of a new administration;
- ★ Comprehensively reform law enforcement agencies and implement the #ENDSARS recommendations to put an end to the vicious bullying of young people.
- ★ Block all leakages in public finance leveraging technology and publicly act on identified corruption cases.
- ★ Maintain an open and transparent administration to inspire confidence and build trust by: openly declaring assets before taking office; holding citizens budget consultation meetings and quarterly accountability forums on government finances; and investing in better training of their personnel to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of these institutions.

2. Young people's participation in policymaking and administration

- ★ Make youth participation a deliberate part of national governance through affirmative action for 35% of cabinet positions for youth under the age of 45 across all states and the federal government.
- ★ With the goal of attracting younger politicians, political parties should minimize the fees associated with nomination forms for candidates seeking to contest for office.

3. Jobs and economic growth for youth

- ★ Encourage youth to set up and manage business ventures by increasing capacity for power generation and distribution in a cost-effective way to improve access and reliability of power infrastructure across the country.
- ★ Improve Nigeria's interest rates through effective monetary policy to boost the businesses of young Nigerians and support the diversification of the economy.
- ★ Improve the business climate for young people and stimulate innovation in Nigeria by fully enforcing the country's "start-up act" and land tenure reforms.
- ★ Create youth-specific investment opportunities in the agricultural sector, particularly in the value-added agro-processing sector.
- ★ Create a public database of information on the Nigerian labor market and make it available to the public to help combat information asymmetry.
- ★ The necessity to settle long-standing tensions between the Federal Government and unions of tertiary institutions, as well as the development of programs for education and training in technical and vocational skills with curriculums that are appropriate for the intended purposes, are all important considerations.
- ★ Facilitate young people's access to business financing and government procurement opportunities.
- ★ Invest in raising young people's understanding of regional integration, training them to use it to their advantage, and doing away with non-tariff trade obstacles to open up new channels of commerce and distribution for Nigerian goods.
- ★ Implement Orasanye's report within the power sector. The report has recommended scrapping or merging existing government agencies for efficiency and to reduce the cost of governance in the country.



Persons with Disabilities

Council to persons with Disabilities and 5% of all other political appointments in the state.

1. Laws and Policies:

- ★ The executive or legislators should sign the National Trust Fund Act into law and fully implement it by the already existing Nigeria Commission for Persons with Disability (NCPWD).
- ★ The state Governor through the State Ministry of Education should commit to domesticating the National Inclusive Education Policy and where such policy already exists, increase funding allocated to the education of children with disabilities in the state at least by 20% annually.
- ★ Through an executive order (temporarily) and then through the finance bill (permanently), import duties should be waived on the importation of assistive devices for persons with disability, thereby making it affordable.
- ★ National Assembly members should commit to a champion tax rebate for employers complying with the 5% disability quota as incentives through an act of parliament.

2. Affirmative Action:

- ★ The President and state governments should commit to affirmative action to ensure at least 5% of all political appointments are reserved for qualified persons with disability.
- ★ National Assembly members should commit to developing and/or supporting a constitutional alteration bill to legally reserve at least six seats at the Senate, 18 seats at the National House of Representatives, 3 seats at the State Assembly and a minimum of 2 seats at local government legislative councils for persons with disability and bind on the President 5% quota for persons with disability in the cabinet and other political appointments.
- ★ The state Governor should commit to allocating at least two seats of the State Executive

- ★ The President committed to influencing the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budgeting, and National Planning to include a line item on disability in the national appropriation budgeting template for MDAs.

3. Service provision:

- ★ The President should affirm that the next national government will adopt the national accessibility standards and the Federal Ministry of Works would ensure all public infrastructures are accessible for persons with disabilities.
- ★ The President should guarantee the provision of free tertiary education, either through scholarship or an act of parliament, for all persons with disabilities in federal tertiary institutions.
- ★ The President should commit to influencing the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs to develop and implement a special disability social protection scheme to cover out-of-pocket expenses on health by persons with disabilities.
- ★ The President should guarantee the adoption of the National Sign Language Policy and influence the use of sign language interpreters in all federal and state government public events.
- ★ Through the state health insurance agency or State Ministry of Health develop a package to make public health services accessible for persons with disability at no cost or at a discounted rate. This will reduce their out-of-pocket expenses on health.
- ★ The Federal and state governments, through the Ministry of Works, should rehabilitate or construct all state-owned public infrastructure to be accessible for persons with disabilities.

- ★ The state Governor should commit to supporting the State Ministry of Women Affairs to put in place programs and mechanisms to protect women and children with disabilities from gender-based violence and other related offenses.
- ★ Either through the State Sports Commission or the ministry in charge of sport, increase funding for para-sport by 50% during his/her first three years in office.
- ★ Either through the state-owned disability agency or relevant ministry, put in place a disability-inclusive social protection scheme for older persons with a disability residing in the state.



Contributors

GAIN partners acknowledge the contributions of the following organizations and individuals who participated in identifying GAIN priority areas and in validation of the findings.

100 Women Lobby Group

The Electoral Hub

Abuja Cooperative Federation

Accountability Lab Nigeria

Activista

African Independent Television (AIT)

African News Daily Online

Building Blocks for Peace/ Nigeria Youth 4 Peace

Citizens Commons

Connected Development (CODE)

DUKPA Community

EVA Nigeria

Federal Ministry of Environment

Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)
Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN)

Gender Mobile

Grassroots Development Monitoring &

Advocacy Centre (GDMAC)

Inclusive Friends Association (IFA)

International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)

MAD Media Initiative

National Council of Muslim Youth Organization (NACOMYO)

National Council of Women Societies (NCWS)

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

National Youth Assembly of Nigeria (NYAN)

National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN)

National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ)

Network of Women with Disability

Nextia Capital Limited

OXFAM Nigeria

PLAN International

Punch Newspaper

Raising New Voices

RuralPro

SCAD Initiative

Shehu Musa Yar'adua Foundation

Street Project Foundation

TECH HER

The 2Baba Foundation

University of Ibadan

VANGUARD

Women in Politics Forum (WIPF)

Women Wing of Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN)

YES Project

YIAGA Africa



Governance Agenda for an Inclusive Nigeria

Commitment Card for 2023 General Elections

I _____
the _____ candidate of the _____
hereby make a commitment that if elected during the 2023 general elections, I will
implement the recommendations made by Nigeria's women, youth and persons with
disabilities (PWDs) in the Governance Agenda for an Inclusive Nigeria (GAIN).

Signature

Date



Governance Agenda for an Inclusive Nigeria

Commitment Card for 2023 General Elections

I _____
the _____ candidate of the _____
hereby make a commitment that if elected during the 2023 general elections, I will
implement the recommendations made by Nigeria's women, youth and persons with
disabilities (PWDs) in the Governance Agenda for an Inclusive Nigeria (GAIN).

Signature

Date

