



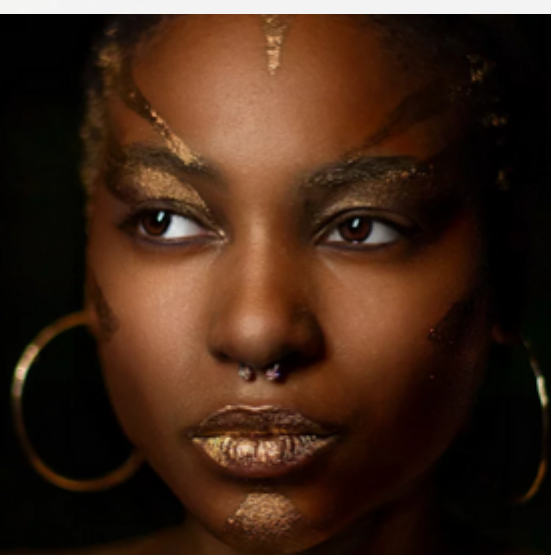
PRESS PACK 2019

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Advancing Narratives and Improving Realities for
African Women and Girls Globally



WHO WE ARE

African Women on Board (AWB) is a non-profit organisation, run by African women for African women, including those of the diaspora. Through our expanding network of allies, experts, and partners, AWB is dedicated to reshaping the future for African women and girls.

Founded in 2017, our growing team incorporates both female and male change makers from around the world. What we all share in common is our unfailing commitment to fast tracking the trajectory of African females into the leadership roles of the future.

WHAT WE DO

Our approach focuses on two key areas of change: **Advancing Narratives** and **Improving Realities**. **Advancing Narratives**, because the African women's story must be told, in a transparent way that breaks free from the pre-determined colonial dialogue. **Improving Realities**, because ultimately, this new approach must help to facilitate genuine change.

Our work is designed to disrupt outdated stereotypes of what it means to be an African woman and girl today. In strategic partnership with a diverse team of advisory allies, we facilitate programming and funding schemes that place social and economic capital in the hands of African women. And when we say African, we mean all women of African heritage including those in the diaspora as well as on the African continent because we believe in the collective power of black women around the world to lift Africa.

OUR MISSION

Through our commitment to reshaping the narratives and advancing the realities of African women and girls, AWB seeks to:

- Change the status/perception of women and girls in Africa
- Strengthen ties between African women and girls of the continent and those of African heritage in the diaspora
- Advance African women in leadership positions in the public and private sector
- Advise governments and organizations on workforce and gender-related policies
- Strengthen influential female role models and the inspiration they can bring to young Africans
- Transform Africa and the wider world through [increasing] women's and girls' leadership and agency

OUR VISION

AWB sees a world in which African women and girls across classes and including within the diaspora, are given the tools and resources they need to fully realise their potential. Removing these barriers for entry and projecting more African women into leadership positions will not only create more accurate representation of this segment in society, but also strengthen the diversity pool and knowledge base of global leadership at large, at a time when the world needs new ideas.

With narratives advanced and realities improved, African women can make an important contribution to tackling the rising challenges of AI, climate change, and global inequality.

OUR APPROACH

In working towards its mission of amplifying African female voices and empowering African women and girls, AWB focuses on two key areas:

- Advancing Narratives
- Improving Realities

Advancing Narratives

AWB's work advances a modern, post-colonial narrative of what it means to be an African woman and girl today. This narrative must replace outdated stereotypes of African womanhood. African women's narratives must be told by African women.

This requires accessible platforms for African women and girls to tell their stories and voice their input to global issues. AWB facilitates a range of storytelling platforms that center African women and shine a spotlight on their contributions to African and global growth and development.

Improving Realities

The power of dialogue is limited if it does not translate into social and economic change that improves the realities of African women and girls across the continent and diaspora. AWB is committed to achieving this change through a variety of means, from business and coding initiatives to financial support in achieving academic and career aims.

We direct our resources into seven key focus areas: Women in Leadership, Women as Consumers, Financial Literacy/Inclusion ("FLI"), Girls in STEM (Education), The Arts, Sports and The Environment Visit our website for more information about each of these Key Initiatives,

GET INVOLVED!

We welcome our partners to join us as champions of these initiatives. Let's place African women and girls at the helm of their future through Africa-focused, strategic development programming that includes them from the beginning. Contact us by email at awb@africanwomenonboard.org for more information on how to get involved as a sponsor or volunteer.

CONTACT US

Social Media

- Facebook: AWB Network
- Instagram: @awb.network
- Twitter: @awbafrica
- LinkedIn: African Women on Board

Website

- www.africanwomenonboard.org

Email

- awb@africanwomenonboard.org
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Phone

- +234 (0) 901 366 8401

PROGRAMMING CALENDAR

PROGRAM/EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
• Real Women Series London	September 5, 2019	London, UK
• Press Conference	September 18, 2019	Lagos, Nigeria
• Making African Women's Voices Mainstream	September 18, 2019	Lagos, Nigeria
• The Women Amongst Us [TWAU] - Sneak Preview	September 23, 2019	New York, USA
• AWB@UNGA	September 26, 2019	New York, USA
• Breakfast Roundtable with Brazilian Diaspora	September 28, 2019	New York, USA
• TWAU Exhibition - Lagos Photo Fest	October, 2019	Lagos, Nigeria
• Remarkable African Women Summit	2020	Accra, Ghana



Advancing Narratives and Improving Realities
For African Women and Girls Globally

A MOVEMENT BY AND FOR WOMEN OF AFRICAN HERITAGE

We play a pivotal role in the world, yet our contributions go unrecognized. Who is speaking up, standing up and showing up for us? It is time to mobilize our emerging and established female leaders to propel their successes, provide a platform towards economic empowerment, and be the catalyst in rewriting our narratives and contributions to the world. We invite you to be part of a distinguished group of leaders, innovators and dignitaries from around the world in this unique global platform that's paving the way for our voices to be included in the global discourse on gender equity.

Fast Tracking Black Women into the Leadership Roles of the Future

AFRICAN WOMEN ON BOARD AT
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AWB@UNGA

THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER

5:00 PM

FORD FOUNDATION
CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
320 E 43RD ST, NEW YORK, NY 10017, USA

NEW YORK

Enquiries: awb@africanwomenonboard.org | Produced by RDF - www.rdftrstegies.com



LIBERIA VICE PRESIDENT, NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE CEO AMONG LEADERS TAKING 'AFRICAN WOMEN ON BOARD' CAMPAIGN TO UN

- Leaders from across Africa and the diaspora unite in push for gender equality
- Bank of Industry, Bring Back Our Girls, Ford Foundation, HP Inc., UK Trade Commissioner to Africa among supporters taking action
- #MeToo has yet to hit home in Africa, say campaigners driving dialogue in schools, companies and governments
- Early successes include Wikipedia profiles for notable African women, London Stock Exchange Advisory Group on activating African female entrepreneurship
- AWB launch event planned for UN General Assembly Week in New York on Sept. 26

18th September 2019 (Lagos, Nigeria) – Two years after the #MeToo movement heightened awareness of gender-based injustice, a major new campaign group argues that African women are still being left behind.

African Women on Board groups together some of the most powerful leaders in business and government across Africa and the diaspora – both female and male – to advocate awareness in schools, companies and governments. The campaign group will launch during the UN General Assembly week in New York on Sept. 26 at the Ford Foundation, with speakers including Liberian Vice President Jewel Howard-Taylor, Nigerian Stock Exchange CEO Oscar Onyema and Aisha Oyeboade, the co-founder of the “Bring Back Our Girls” support network for those kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Even before its official launch, the group is making waves – working with Wikipedia to profile notable African women, partnering with the London Stock Exchange Africa Advisory Group to produce a report on activating female entrepreneurship, and collaborating with the Ford Foundation for master classes on women in politics, investment and financial literacy. The campaign has reached into villages across the continent by partnering with schools to recruit and train more girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the so-called STEM subjects that lead to better paid jobs and opportunities.

The Lagos-based women-led independent non-profit is timing its official launch around the UN General Assembly's 7th Annual High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

“No discussion on finance in developing nations is complete without an examination of the gendered disparities experienced at the society level,” said Nkiru Balonwu, entrepreneur and the Founder of African Women on Board. “We are letting out a clarion call for a global movement by and for women of African heritage where we can collectively mobilize to support African women and unlock growth on the continent. Our mission is to advance narratives and improve realities for African women and girls globally by fast-tracking women and girls of African heritage into the leadership roles of the future.”

AWB seeks to ensure that African women's narratives are informing development models on the continent and beyond by referencing studies that prove how detrimental the absence of diversity of thought and experience can be in leadership, be it in the private or public sector.

“Research that shows that when you bring women on board, into the workplace, driving our communities, then we see business growth and economic growth without comparison,” said Emma Wade Smith, UK Trade Commissioner to Africa. “I have come to the conclusion that the only way that we can really influence the rules of the game, to change the dynamic so that we are all equally able to achieve our full potential, is to make sure that we strive high, and we work together, and that we're inclusive so that we're all able to drive the future that we want to see.”

In addition to a suite of international programs, AWB will showcase African women in all of their complexity and variety as a way of combatting the relegation of women to stereotypes or into silence.

“African women’s voices, narratives and genius collectively make up an untapped resource with the potential to improve realities for themselves and everyone around them,” said Balonwu. “AWB is providing an essential platform on the world stage whereby African women can finally be heard and their narratives conveyed.”

The meeting in New York will bring together female entrepreneurs, professors, medical doctors, farmers, mothers, activists, artists and scientists of African heritage. Discussion will be stewarded by some of the most formidable visionaries and institutions from around the world including Liberian Vice President Jewel Howard-Taylor, Nigerian Stock Exchange CEO Oscar Onyema, and Bring Back Our Girls co-Founder Aisha Oyebode, as well as Dr. Joyce Payne, Founder of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund; Hilary Pennington, Executive Vice President of the Ford Foundation; Elisabeth Moreno, Managing Director, Africa at HP Inc; Christine Soufrant Ntim, Founder of the Haiti Tech Summit; Betty Irabor, Publisher and Founder of Genevieve Magazine; Derrick Ashong, Emmy-nominated producer and founder of Amp.it; and Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe, the Obi of Onitsha.

Beyond a celebration of their journeys and discussion of their contributions to the advancement of global affairs, African Women on Board will announce an international-scale project to showcase the success of African female leaders from the past, present and of the future.

“Undoubtedly, when African women do well, the entire continent can prosper,” said Balonwu. “And when Africa is strong, black people everywhere are empowered.”

The event will be held on Thursday 26th September at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice in New York, with social media under the hashtag #AWBatUNGA.

About African Women on Board:

African Women on Board (AWB) is a non-profit organisation run by African women for African women. Our goal is to amplify African female voices, support African female empowerment, and help to create a world in which African women and girls across all classes including those of the diaspora, are given the tools and resources they need to fully realise their potential. <https://www.africanwomenonboard.org>

Photo of Nkiru Balonwu: <https://bit.ly/2mnybXv>

Image of African Women on Board at UNGA week: <https://bit.ly/2lZdOzm>

For more information, interviews, images or videos, contact:

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PRESS ADDRESS - DR. NKIRU BALONWU

Thank you for coming. My name is Dr. Nkiru Balonwu, Chair of African Women on Board (AWB).

In the lead up to the United Nation General Assembly's 7th Annual High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), AWB holds this briefing to announce our global launch and the ground-breaking campaign we're spearheading on behalf of women of African heritage globally.

I'll start by sharing a bit about AWB, including who we are and why we do what we do.

What is AWB

African Women on Board (AWB) is an independent non-profit and African women-led organization on a mission to advance narratives and improve realities for African women and girls globally.

AWB is made up of female and male change-makers from around the world who share the common goal of fast-tracking the trajectory of African females into the leadership roles of the future.

Background on AWB

AWB was started in 2017 as a network of women working together to advance the economic, political and social rights of African women. We looked at solutions to getting women into Senior management, C-suite and board positions. We recognised from experience and data-backed findings that teams are strengthened and more solution-oriented when women are at the table and are given decision-making responsibilities.

We wanted to expand these opportunities for African women. And when we say African, we mean all women of African heritage including those in the diaspora because we believe in the collective power of Black women around the world to lift Africa.

Our focus at AWB is to advance narratives and improve realities for African women and girls. We choose to advance narratives because how we are perceived as African women effects how the world interacts with us. It effects our access to resources such as education, healthcare, and financing for businesses.

Women around the world are having a "moment" in history where their stories and experiences are being brought to the global consciousness. Unfortunately, the unique perspectives and narratives of African women have been left out of this conversation almost entirely.

AWB is saying that it is time for African women to be included in these conversations and have our say in the development and growth of the continent, now.

Through our key focus areas and initiatives, we are serving as a conduit for skill and knowledge acquisition for African women and girls. To date, Africa women are benefiting from our Masterclasses which have equipped them in building online businesses, making long term investments and pursuing public office. As we speak, there is a set of young women who are receiving IT training through our Girls in STEM education initiative. These are among the ways African Women on Board (AWB) are investing directly in the lives of women and girls to lift their conditions and expand opportunities for them.

AWB@UNGA Global Launch

To bolster our local programming efforts, AWB is excited to announce our global launch during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Thursday, September 26th 2019, hosted at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice in New York. AWB@UNGA is our response to UNGA's Seventh Annual High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development. We know that no discussion on finance in developing nations is complete without an examination of the gendered disparities experienced at the societal level.

AWB@UNGA comes at a critical moment, a time when the role of women in sustainable economic development cannot be overlooked, especially in emerging economies. Our women play a pivotal role in the world directly as entrepreneurs, innovators and workers in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy.

Both in business and government spaces, we know that diverse teams maximise growth, team performance and value. Considering a context wherein the African continent boasts the highest number of women-led businesses but also the greatest discontinuance rate around the world, the time is now to engage and empower our women who are already taking risks to drive change. Given the metrics wherein, gender inequality results in a loss of up to 35 percent of GDP in Africa, there is no question at all: increasing economic opportunities for women is critical in Africa's growth and development.

AWB@UNGA promises to be a dynamic, African women-led forum, before a powerfully diverse and intimate audience of foreign dignitaries, finance experts, academics and thought leaders. This year, our theme is rooted in Fast Tracking Black Women into the Leadership Roles of the Future. With AWB@UNGA, AWB asks, who is speaking up, standing up and showing up for women of African heritage?

Outcomes from AWB@UNGA

In collaboration with our key partners, allies and sponsors AWB@UNGA will:

- Spotlight African women role models across various industries
- Issue a Call-to-Action to ensure the fast-tracking of African females into the leadership roles of the future
- Disrupt outdated narratives of African women through the amplification of narratives of African women as the key innovators in the global economy that they are
- Strengthen ties between African women and girls of the continent and those of African heritage in the diaspora
- Mark the global launch of 'Project 100,000 RAW' leading up to our Remarkable African Women (RAW) Summit in Accra, Ghana in Spring 2020

Most notably, AWB@UNGA will launch 'Project 100,000 Remarkable African Women' which will be a database of the extraordinary women of African heritage and their stories about how they are making a difference globally.

'Project 100,000 RAW' will be a dynamic virtual platform where the world can gather to catalogue the unsung brilliance of African women. With this platform, there will always be a reference text and never a question of the existence of African women as strong contributors to the success and innovations of nations around the world.

Sign Off/Transition to Allies

Please join us in thanking our partners, allies and sponsors including Bank of Industry, Africa Law Practice and Tolaram Group for helping bring AWB@UNGA to the forefront. Together we are united in our commitment to propelling the success of African women, providing them with a platform towards economic empowerment and creating a catalyst to rewrite their narratives and the story about their contributions to the world.

PRESS ADDRESS - PROF. CHIOMA AGOMO

Hello all, thank you for joining us. My name is Professor Chioma Kanu Agomo and I am a Trustee of African Women on Board (AWB).

To share a bit about myself, I currently serve as a Professor of Law at the University of Lagos. In my long career in teaching, I've worked as the Head of Department of Commercial and Industrial Law UNILAG and also Dean of the Faculty of Law. At the time, I was the first female academic to occupy that position and the first female elected Dean of a Faculty since the establishment of the University in 1962.

I am a Fulbright Scholar and graduate of Queen Mary College in London, and I also serve as a member of the Council for Legal Education and author of Modern Nigeria Insurance Law.

I am present today to testify to the importance of the work of African Women on Board (AWB) ahead of their global launch in New York next Thursday, September 26th, 2019.

One of my specialty courses as a Law Professor is in Gender and the Law.

What attracted me to AWB was the understanding from the leadership, to the programming staff, to the council and community of allies is that "gender diversity" is not as a women's issue, but an economic issue, which concerns us all. The creation of opportunities for women directly correlates with heightened potentials for growth for everyone around them. Data consistently shows that investment put in the hands of women lifts up their surrounding communities.

The game changing principle with AWB is their emphasis on recruiting allies from all backgrounds, female and male in their work to advance narratives and improve realities for African women and girls. The importance of engaging male allies in this larger effort for equality for all cannot be understated.

The role that our lawmakers, largely male, play in challenging, creating or reproducing our current state of gender relations is critical in controlling the performance of our nation and the continent as a whole. I stand with AWB and in full agreement that we do need "Men as Allies" to champion women as the natural conduits that can feed success for all. I join AWB in welcoming everyone to the conversations we are having next week at AWB@UNGA and to this larger movement we are stewarding to make African women's voices mainstream.

And a big thank you to our partners, allies and sponsors for making this happen.



NKIRU BALONWU

Dr. Balonwu is Founder and Chair of African Women on Board, an independent nonprofit dedicated to advancing narratives and improving realities for African women and girls globally. She is also Founder and Managing Partner of organisational strategy and stakeholder engagement consultancy, RDF. She has worked in a variety of fields including technology, law and strategic communications. In addition to serving in senior management roles at Spinlet and Ratio Consulting, she also served as a Lecturer within the Law Department at the University of Lagos. Passionate about the empowerment of African women, Dr. Balonwu has advised various government agencies, political parties and private sector organisations on how to engage women in politics, in the workplace and as consumers. She sits on the board of several organisations and not for profits, and advises a number of SMEs on Go to Market Strategies. Dr. Balonwu holds a Doctorate Degree from the University of California, Berkeley, a Masters from University College London (UCL) and a First Degree from the University of Manchester.



PROF. CHIOMA AGOMO

Prof. Chioma Kanu Agomo is an AWB Trustee, and a Nigerian professor of Law at the University of Lagos with specialisation in Law of contract, Industrial law, Insurance law and Gender and the Law. In 1981, Prof. Agomo joined the Department of Commercial and Industrial Law as a lecturer. From 1994 to 1995 she was in the United States as a senior Fulbright Research Scholar. In 2004, She was elected Dean of the Faculty of Law, making her the first elected female dean of a Faculty in the University of Lagos. Professor Agomo was made an Honorary Fellow of the Queen Mary University of London in 2011. She obtained both her Bachelor of Law (LL.B) and Masters of Law (LL.M) from the Queen Mary College, University of London in 1976 and 1977 respectively. From 1979 to 1980 she attended the Nigerian Law School before being called to Bar in 1980.



GBEMI A. ABUDU

Gbemi Abudu is an AWB Fellow and the Managing Partner of BMGA Enterprise Limited. Prior to BMGA, she served as the Vice President, Sales & Marketing at ANAP Business Jets Limited, and the Head, Retail Operations and Marketing at Polo Luxury. She is a global marketing professional with extensive experience in luxury brand management, marketing and business intelligence, market entry, and retail management primarily in North America, Africa, and the Middle East. She began her career in the luxury industry after business school with Louis Vuitton North America. She has also worked for the Jordan Investment Board, Clorox, White & Case LLP, and Walt Disney Company. Gbemi holds a Masters in Business Administration in Global Marketing from Thunderbird School of Global Management. She received a Bachelor's degree in Marketing and Public Relations from University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming.



OLU AROWOLO VERHEIJEN

Olu an AWB Fellow and an investments and general management executive with nearly 20 years of experience in the energy and financial services sectors. She is co-founder and CEO of BFA Foundation – an organization that aims to provide access to transformational educational and professional experiences for economically disadvantaged, high potential, young Africans. She was a Partner at Persistent, an early stage investor and venture builder in the off-grid energy sector and the firm's Nigeria office. Prior to Persistent, she was a Deal Lead at Shell E&P Africa, where she led over \$4.9 billion in oil & gas, power and infrastructure transactions and represented Shell on the governing board of one of its upstream Joint Ventures. Olu has expertise in gas commercialization, negotiations and stakeholder management, investments, deal origination, M&A advisory and general management. Prior to joining Shell E&P, she worked for Moody's Investors Service in New York. She is an active venture and angel investor across various sectors and serves on the Boards of several companies and non-profits. Olu is passionate about socio-economic development in Africa, advancement of female talent and facilitation of equal access to educational and professional opportunities for underrepresented groups. Olu has a BA in Political Science from Long Island University and Master's in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

AWB REAL WOMEN SERIES [LONDON] | SEPTEMBER 2019



AWB REMARKABLE WOMEN SERIES: MEET THE AUTHOR | JULY 2019



AWB FOCUS: POWER, POLITICS WOMEN | APRIL 2019



AWB MASTERCLASS: WEALTH FINANCE & POWER | JANUARY 2019



AWB REAL WOMEN SERIES: WOMEN, TECHNOLOGY & LEADERSHIP | AUGUST 2018

