



Communique on the Need for the Establishment of Childcare Facilities in Nigerian Workplaces

 Held On The 18th Of June, 2024

 2 Pm(WAT)   zoom

Preamble

Gender equality and work-life balance are increasingly vital in today's workplaces. A [study](#) titled The Impact of Motherhood on Career Development of Female Journalists in Nigeria revealed alarming statistics: 81% of respondents who are mothers had declined work due to childcare responsibilities, and 21.4% felt motherhood adversely affected their career growth. The study also highlighted three significant challenges affecting career women: the absence of accessible, affordable childcare options, long work hours and feelings of frustration and burnout. These challenges make it difficult to balance motherhood and career, which severely affects their career progression and highlights the global struggle for universal gender equality and the underrepresentation of women in managerial positions within Nigerian workplaces.

In 2021, a bill proposing the amendment of the Labour Act to include establishing workplace daycare facilities for nursing mothers underwent its second reading in Nigeria. Regrettably, progress on this bill has stalled since then. If passed into law, employers of labour would be mandated to develop crèches in workplaces to facilitate nursing mothers' return to work while enabling recommended breastfeeding practices by WHO and UNICEF. Flexibility in the workplace benefits both employees and their organisations through improved job satisfaction and reduced stress, reduced labour turnover and absenteeism, and the ability to attract and retain skilled staff.

The webinar focused on raising awareness of the need to develop policies and structures such as creches in Nigerian workplaces and calling for adequate funding to support their implementation.

Experts included Charles Emmamuzuo, Country Director, PLAN International, Nigeria; Hassana Umoru Maina, Executive Director of ASVOIL Support Initiative; and Dr. Lilian Okonkwo Ogabu, the Deputy National Chairperson, National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ). Ijeoma Okereke-Adagba convened the event through the Report Women Network of the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) with support from the Centre for Journalism, Innovation and Development (CJID).

Key Observations

1. Motherhood is very demanding, which is heightened when combined with one's career.
2. Women must exert double the effort of their male counterparts to succeed and thrive in the workplace, as success translates to improved remuneration and recognition within the organisation.
3. Employers originally developed workplaces to fit men's lives and situations, creating a divide between work, home, and public and private space. Where women are involved, the public and private spaces have to intertwine.
4. Most of the issues affecting women in the workplace, both for their personal health and careers, are influenced by decisions made by men.
5. Today, media organisations lack childcare facilities for female journalists. Only 25% of women working in the media receive support from their organisations, such as flexible work arrangements and office creches, compared to 75% who get no support. This significant disparity is an indicator that maternity leave alone is insufficient.
6. Increased maternity/paternity leave, paid maternity/paternity leave, affordable and accessible childcare options, flexible work arrangements, mentorship, and leadership development opportunities are among the workplace policies and structures that facilitate women's career progression.
7. Women's rights are human rights, and if women must work and be able to express themselves and pursue their careers, they must do that in a conducive and supportive environment. Women will be more productive and less pressured at home if provided with a conducive work environment.
8. Nigeria has many laws, but the challenge has always been in the implementation.

Recommendations

1. Stakeholders must be intentional about dismantling the capitalist structure that has been set up in the workplace.
2. Employers must consider the full spectrum of what it takes to make a woman effective at her work when formulating policies.

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3. The government must mandate every office, whether private or public, to establish creches, and the implementation of the law must be coordinated, not favouring one sector over the other.
 4. Employers must put women in situations and in positions of power to make decisions about women.
 5. Organisations (public, private, and CSOs) and leaders must ensure that women are paid for the gaps and disruptions they suffer in ways that enable them to catch up; this will translate to increased productivity at work and home.



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