

**ADDRESSED DELIVERED BY HER EXCELLENCY, DR. (MRS.)
IDIAT OLURANTI ADEBULE, THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR LAGOS
STATE AT THE OCCASION OF LIVE ABUNDANTLY
EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
LAGOS (UNILAG), J. F. AJAYI AUDITORIUM, YABA ON
THURSDAY 1ST MARCH, 2018.**

PROTOCOL

It gives me great pleasure to join the distinguished guests, students, stakeholders and community leaders here at today's symposium organised by Live Abundantly Empowerment Initiative.

I am indeed delighted that this symposium is being held to commemorate the 2018 International Women's Day and create awareness of the International and National policies already instituted to create an unbiased, informed and progressive society for women and children.

I appreciate the sponsors ably led by Dr. Ama Onyerinma for your noble initiative since 2016 aimed at creating awareness to address the prevalence of abuse against women and children, make education accessible to children plagued by disabilities and destitution; and the empowerment of women through formal and informal education.

It is heart-warming to know that your group is using this platform to complement the efforts of government to educate, enlighten and empower women and children in various communities about their rights and privileges. There is

no better way to ensure the survival and development of women, if their rights and privileges are not guaranteed. When we guarantee the rights and privileges available to them in the society, it enables them to reach their full potential, otherwise, empowering the whole society would be a tall order.

Kay Granger in his words says **“Human rights are not a privilege granted by the few, they are a liberty entitled to all, and human rights, by definition, include the rights of all humans...”** That is why theme of today’s symposium titled **“Human Rights – Our Privileges”** is very relevant.

As a government, we cannot alone guarantee individual rights to live with dignity. We rely on the support of well-meaning individuals, corporate organisations, NGOs and human rights cum Civil Liberty agencies to up-the-ante and create a society where the rights of all citizens are respected and upheld. We continue to create an enabling environment devoid of brutality and injustice against women.

Women and children are very important part of our society and no society can thrive without making enduring policies concerning them in its programmes. Our government recognizes it, and this explains why the welfare of women and children is one of the critical policy focus of our administration.

I want to advise our women to take advantage of the current level of women emancipation initiative both globally and locally. Women should get involved in governance and politics, seek political positions and take advantage of different

policies of government aimed at stopping women trafficking and child abuse.

In Lagos State, we have been focused and proactive through deliberate policies and sustained efforts to ensure fairness, equality and the full rights of women and the girl-child. For instance, the Lagos State Public Service, Lagos State Judiciary, House of Assembly and the Executive arm of government have experienced fair and large women representation, in such capacities as Heads of Public Service, Chief Justices, Members of the State House of Assembly and as Deputy Governors just to mention a few. In addition, the recruitment, promotion and career progression in the State Public Service is open and fair. All persons irrespective of gender are treated equally.

As part of a broad range of policies and programmes to protect the rights of women and the girl-child, on Thursday 1st February, 2018, this administration achieved another milestone with commissioning of (2) Two Sexual Offences Courts for the sole purpose of quick disposition of sexual offences such as rape, defilement and other sexual related offences.

This is to complement the operations of the Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) set up to protect women and children from domestic violence and abuse. The rights of women are also protected through activities of the Directorate of Citizens Rights and the Office of the Public Defender under the Ministry of Justice.

To train and empower more women in skills of their choice and alleviate poverty among them, the State currently

operates (18) eighteen skill acquisition centres. Through the State's Mega Empowerment programmes, thousands of women including widows and vulnerable women, who are graduates of skill acquisition centres have been empowered and mobilized with various items and micro loans to make them self-reliant.

Today provides another opportunity for me to encourage our womenfolk to speak with one voice and take bold actions to end various forms of abuse in our society.

Our administration will continue to take actions and support all programmes, policies and initiatives meant to enhance gender parity, put an end to all forms of discrimination against women and ultimately the rights and privileges of women in Lagos State.

On a final note, I congratulate Live Abundantly Empowerment Initiative on the occasion to commemorate this year's International Women's Day and for organising this symposium to educate and empower women and the girl-child to become agents of progress and change.

I wish you a successful symposium.

Thank you and God bless.

Itesiwaju Ipinle Eko lo je wa l'ogun!!!

Dr. (Mrs.) Idiat Oluranti Adebule

Deputy Governor

Lagos State.