



National Association of
Women Judges, Nigeria

25
NAWJN
BIENNIAL
CONFERENCE



T H E M E

Mentorship and Legacy Building

Fostering a culture of mentorship, inclusivity,
and empowerment of the next generation
of women leaders in law".



29TH - 31ST
OF MAY 2025.



9AM
PROMPT



THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE
MOHAMMED BELLO CENTRE,
AIRPORT ROAD, ABUJA



DELEGATES AT THE NAWJN SOUTH-SOUTH REGIONAL WORKSHOP WITH THE CJN



NATIONAL ANTHEM

Nigeria, we hail thee,
Our own dear native land,
Though tribe and tongue may differ,
In brotherhood we stand,
Nigerians all, and proud to serve
Our sovereign Motherland.

Our flag shall be a symbol
That truth and justice reign,
In peace or battle honoured,
And this we count as gain,
To hand on to our children
A banner without stain.

O God of all creation,
Grant this our one request,
Help us to build a nation
Where no man is oppressed
And so with peace and plenty
Nigeria may be blessed.

NATIONAL PLEDGE

I pledge to Nigeria, my country
To be faithful, loyal, and honest
To serve Nigeria with all my strength
To defend her unity
And uphold her honor and glory
So help me God.



HON. JUSTICE
K. M. O. KEKERE - EKUN, GCON
CHIEF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA
PRESIDENT OF NAWJN



HON. JUSTICE
MONICA DONGBAM-MENSEM, CFR
PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL



MEMBERS OF THE NAWJN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



HON. JUSTICE
AMINA AUDI WAMBAI PJCA,
VICE PRESIDENT



HON. JUSTICE
HANNATU BALOGUN JCA
SECRETARY



HON. JUSTICE
HALIMA S. MOHAMMED
CJ GOMBE STATE
INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR



HON. JUSTICE
K. M. O. KEKERE - EKUN, CJN GCON
PRESIDENT



HON. JUSTICE
TAMUNOIGONI SUSAN OJI
ASSISTANT SECRETARY



HON. JUSTICE
BLESSING LYOP DALYOP,
PCCA PLATEAU STATE.
P. R. O



HON. JUSTICE
CHINWE ONYEABO
FINANCIAL SECRETARY



HON. JUSTICE
JUMMAI SANKEY, JSC
EX- OFFICIO



HON. JUSTICE
ANGELA MOKU OBI
TREASURER



Conference Programme

DAY ONE

- ARRIVAL
- REGISTRATION
- COCKTAIL

29TH MAY, 2025

10AM
12:00 NOON
5PM - 7PM

DAY TWO

- REGISTRATION CONTINUES

30TH MAY 2025

8:00AM

OPENING CEREMONY

9:00AM – 11:30AM

- HIGH TABLE RECOGNITIONS
- NATIONAL ANTHEM
- WELCOME ADDRESS BY HON. JUSTICE AMINA AUDI WAMBAI PJCA, VICE PRESIDENT NAWJN
- GOODWILL MESSAGES BY:

■ HON. JUSTICE MONICA DONGBAM-MENSEM, CFR (5MINS)
PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL

■ HON. JUSTICE SALISU GARBA ABDULLAHI (5MINS)
ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE

■ HON. JUSTICE BINTA NYAKO (5MINS)
PRESIDENT EX-OFFICIO, IAWJ

■ HON. PRINCE LATEEF O. FAGBEMI (SAN) (5MINS)
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION

■ NBA PRESIDENT (5MINS)

■ NBAWF PRESIDENT (5MINS)

■ FIDA PRESIDENT (5MINS)

■ AWLA PRESIDENT (5MINS)

■ MINISTER OF WOMEN AFFAIRS (5MINS)

■ FRIENDS OF NAWJN (5MINS)

- OPENING REMARKS AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE BY CJN

- UNVEILING OF NEW NAWJN UNIFORM

- AWARD PRESENTATION

- PHOTO SESSION

- TEA BREAK

11:30AM - 12:00PM

- FIRST PLENARY SESSION

12:00PM - 2:30PM

Mentorship and Legacy Building: Fostering a culture of mentorship, inclusivity, and empowerment of the next generation of women leaders in law

CHAIRPERSON: HON. JUSTICE CHIDIEBERE NWAOMA UWA, JSC

PRESENTER: HON. JUSTICE HELEN MORONKEJI OGUNWUMIJU, JSC

DISCUSSANTS: HON. JUSTICE DIJE ABDU ABOKI, CHIEF JUDGE KANO STATE
HON. JUSTICE MATILDA AYEMIEYE, CHIEF JUDGE BAYELSA STATE

- LUNCH

2:30PM

- CLOSE OF THE DAY



Conference Programme

DAY THREE

31ST MAY 2025

- TOPIC:- **ETIQUETTE FOR WOMEN JUDGES** 9:00AM – 10:15AM
CHAIRPERSON: HON. JUSTICE MONICA B. DONGBAM-MENSEM, PCA, CFR
PRESENTER: MRS. YETUNDE ABRAHAM 45MINS
- QUESTION & ANSWER 30MINS
- TEA BREAK 10:30AM - 11:00AM
- GENERAL MEETING 11:00AM – 12:30AM
- PRESENTATION OF REPORTS BY
SECRETARY
FINANCIAL SECRETARY
CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE
VOTE OF THANKS: HON. JUSTICE BLESSING LYOP DALYOP, PCCA PLATEAU STATE
- FAREWELL LUNCH/CONFERENCE AFTER PARTY
(MUSIC & DANCING) 12:30PM
- CHAIRMAN, ELECTORAL COMMITTEE:
HON JUSTICE TANI YUSUF HASSAN
- MEMBERS
HON. JUSTICE AKON BASSEY IKPEME, CJ CROSS RIVER
HON. JUSTICE MONISOLA OLUWATOYIN ABODUNDE, PCCA EKITI STATE

(BRIEF HAND OVER MEETING/ORIENTATION BETWEEN OLD AND
NEW EXCO WITH THE CJN PRIVATELY)

Awardees

Hon. Justice Kudirat M. O Kekere-Ekun, CJN GCON
Hon. Justice Jummai Hannatu Sankey
Hon. Justice Chidiebere Nwaoma Uwa
Hon. Justice Chioma Egondur Nwosu-Iheme
Hon. Justice Hannatu Azumi Laja-Balogun
Hon. Justice Binta Fatima Zubairu (Isah)
Hon. Justice Asmaü Musa Mainoma
Hon. Justice Jane Esienanwan Inyang
Hon. Justice Hadiza Rabi'u Shagari-Ahmad
Hon. Justice Zainab Bage Abubakar
Hon. Justice (Dr) Ngozika U. Okasiabor
Hon. Justice Ruqayat Oremei Ayoola
Hon. Justice Eberechi Suzzette Nyesom-Wike
Hon. Justice Oyejoju Oyebiola Oyewumi
Hon. Justice Nehizema Idemudia Afolabi
Hon. Justice Asmau Akanbi Yusuf
Hon. Justice Victoria Toochukwu Nwoye
Hon. Justice Lilian Abai
Hon. Justice Hafsat U. Abdulrahman
Hon. Justice Matilda Abrakasa Ayemieye
Hon. Justice Catherine N. Ojugbana-Orishedere
Hon. Justice Binta Nyako
Hon. Justice Roli Harriman

Rapporteurs





Brief History Of NAWJN

The history of the founding of the National Association of Women Judges Nigeria (NAWJN) is linked to the history of the founding of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) and so one cannot write about NAWJN history without touching on IAWJ history as both histories are some worth intertwined.

As history has it, sometime in 1989 when the “US National Women Judges Association” (NAWJ for short) was approaching its tenth anniversary, Judge Arline Pacht was asked by the then president of the U.S. NAWJ to head an international outreach committee. This led to 50 women judges from around the world coming to Washington DC in October 1989 to join more than 450 United States women judges and their guests for the US association's annual meeting. A number of the international judges who were invited to that meeting in their consistent comments stated that they were absolutely blown away by being in the company of so many women judges. Throughout their careers, most of them had never been in legal gatherings where they had more than one or two women colleagues present.

They also said that it was heartening to realise how much they had in common with their sister judges from around the world, despite different cultures, languages and judicial systems. The international attendees at that meeting were unanimous that a new global association of women judges should be formed. They realized that, as strong as they might be individually, they could be far more effective when working together in common cause. As Arline Pacht put it, “The concept of women judges acting collectively to reject laws or customs that condoned violence and discrimination against women was an idea whose time had come”.

The next two years were spent working through the logistics of forming the international association and, in October 1991, the IAWJ was formally constituted. Reflected in the bylaws was the fact that the IAWJ was to have the rule of law and gender equality at its very core.

Arline Pascht was asked to head the organization and so she is deemed the mother of the IAWJ and

there is no doubt that, without her vision and persistence, the organisation could not have achieved what it has. She continues to inspire.

Judge Arline was determined to leverage off the combined experience and influence of the members around the world and to concentrate on one priority issue that would improve the lives of women.

During the early discussions, it was clear that everywhere around the world, the major issue affecting women related to violence. At that time, domestic violence was typically considered a private family issue and rarely, if ever, led to legal action. It was agreed therefore that this would be the priority issue for the new association. A number of the affiliated women judges' associations around the world tailored training sessions on this subject for their members and colleagues and, where appropriate in terms of judicial ethics, also began pressing for changes in support services, policy and legislation relating to violence against women.

It was this background that led to the formation of the Nigerian chapter of IAWJ that is NAWJN. Among the 50 women judges invited to the U.S. in 1989 for the tenth anniversary of the U.S. Women Judges Association were three Nigeria women judges in person of Hon Justice Aloma Maryam Muktar - the first female Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon Justice Roseline Ukeje - the first female chief justice of the Federal High Court and Hon Justice Constance Momoh - the first female chief judge of Edo state.

In the words of the past president of IAWJ our own Judge Binta Nyako “The IAWJ was founded in 1991 by Arline Pacht an American jurist in her basement. Hon. Justice Roseline Ukeje, the first female Chief Judge of the Federal High Court was a founding member. Within that inception stage, Hon. Justice Constance Momoh, a former Chief Judge of Edo State, and then the Hon. Justice Alooma Maryam Mukhtar, the first female Chief Justice of Nigeria became part of the founding members. Judge Pacht envisaged forming an association of dynamic women to help mentor women judges, the girl child, and more.”

These three women judges returned to Nigeria and in agreement with the decision reached in the U.S.

with Arline Pascht to have an international association with affiliate member associations from countries all over the world, decided to put the vision into action and so on the 25th of May 1991 the first inaugural meeting of women judges was held and in attendance were these three female judges and several other senior female judges including our own retired Hon Justice Bulkachuwa, Hon Justice Bozimo, Hon Justice Dongbam–Mensem HPCA, CFR, Hon Justice Soton Denton-West, Hon Justice Rosaline Omotosho to mention but a few. It was at that inaugural meeting, modalities for NAWJN as an association were agreed upon and today, we have a formidable association of women judges. All attendees to the inaugural meeting of 25th May 1991 are all life members of the association- NAWJN.

NAWJN has grown today to about 450 members. Past presidents have been Hon Justices Bulkachuwa, Ukeje, Clara Ogunbiyi, Bozimo, Binta Nyako, Ogunwumuji, Uwani Abba Aji, Mary Odili, Jummai Sankey and the president the CJN Hon Justice K. M. O. Kekere-Ekun GCON.

Judge Arline, mother of IAWJ, was determined to succeed in the quest for curbing gender violence and ensuring gender parity and so she introduced a lot of programmes through the assistance of Anne Goldstein, then a young academic and human rights expert, and currently still with the IAWJ as senior advisor. Arline asked Anne to develop a training program for judges on gender violence, using international human rights law as the core. This led to the development of the IAWJ's flagship program, the Jurisprudence for Equality program or JEP and a major fund raising effort by Arline to take the project to the world.

NAWJN has partnered with IAWJ in implementing its projects: JEP, GLOW-Global Leadership of Women, Sextortion -which is aimed at identifying a practice that had gone unnoticed, unpunished and unnamed. The IAWJ came up with the term sextortion to describe the abuse of power to obtain a sexual benefit or advantage. In effect, sextortion is a form of corruption in which sex, rather than money, is the currency of the bribe. There is currently the WILIL initiative which is funded by co-impact.

It is significant to note that the International Association of Women Judges has partnered with Co-Impact, a philanthropic collaborative fund, to develop and implement a multi-year programme to enable, support and promote sustainable leadership pathways for women in leadership in the Global South. To this end, it is working with affiliate Associations in five countries (Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Mexico and the Philippines) to address and work out strategies to overcome the barriers confronting women in leadership in the profession. The initiative is called Women In Leadership In Law (WILIL).

The Nigerian team is doing its part in the implementation of its goals. Two training sessions have been held in 2024 and 2025. Furthermore, NAWJN has also had regional workshops over the years in ensuring these laudable projects are actualized and so one must say NAWJN has come a long way. The story in the pages of this picture book will tell it all.

Thank you.

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY HON. JUSTICE AMINA AUDI WAMBAI,
JCA, VICE PRESIDENT OF NAWJN AT THE 2025 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES (NAWJN) HOLDING
AT THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE MOHAMMED BELLO CENTRE,
AIRPORT ROAD, ABUJA FROM 29TH – 31ST OF MAY 2025.**

PROTOCOLS...

My Lords, Distinguished participants, invited guests.

I stand here before you this morning with deep sense of humility, privilege and joy, on behalf of the executive council of the National Association of Women Judges Nigeria (NAWJIN) to warmly welcome you all to the 2025 biennial conference of our great association, NAWJIN, with the theme;

"Mentorship and Legacy Building: Fostering a culture of mentorship, inclusivity, and empowerment of the next generation of women leaders in law".

Permit me to most heartily and in a very special way welcome our revered Chief Justice of Nigeria my lord, **Hon. Justice Kudirat Motonmori Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun, GCON** who is also the esteemed president of NAWJN, all the justices of the Supreme Court here present, my lord the Honourable, the President of the Court of Appeal, **Hon Justice Monica Bolna'an Dongban-Mensem CFR, JP+**, the Honourable Attorney General of the Federation and Minister for Justice, **Lateef O. Fagbemi SAN**, and to each and every one of you for finding time out of your very busy schedules to be here with us today.

My special appreciation goes to our chief host, the Administrator of the National Judicial Institute, Hon. Justice Salisu Garba for always being supportive of and receptive to NAWJN matters and giving us the privilege of holding this conference here at the institute. I extend a very warm welcome to all our distinguished speakers and participants to this year's biennial conference. Exactly two years ago, we were elected to take over as the executive committee of NAWJN and at that time it looked like an onerous task and a long journey. We wondered how we would handle the affairs of NAWJN since as an EXCO, we were all meeting ourselves for the first time.

Today we can attest to the fact that as an exco, we have become one family, a close-knit family, consanguine sisters from the North to the South, the East to the West bound by the common objective to achieve and led by the most amiable personality we all describe as a sweet mentor, mother, leader, motivator and our heroine, the Honorable, the Chief Justice of Nigeria **Hon Justice K. M. O. Kekere-Ekun GCON**. As an EXCO, we came on board on the 23rd of May 2023 and immediately set up our hearts to achieve. Fortunately, God blessed us with a visionary leader, our esteemed president, the Honourable, the CJN, with whom it has been a privilege to serve. She motivated us to give our best selflessly and to pursue our vision and goal for the association purposefully and intentionally. With this in mind, we mapped out a strategy for our tenure in line with the vision of the mother body, the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ).

The IAWJ founded in 1991, over thirty years ago by a group of over fifty women judges across the globe is a non-profit and non-governmental organization committed to equal justice for women and eradication of violence against women. With the formation of the international body, came the formation of the Nigerian chapter by our pioneer women judges led by the first female chief justice of Nigeria, **Hon. Justice Mariam Aloma Mukhtar GCON (Rtd)**. To the glory of God, our tenure as an exco, coincided with the tenure of the second African President of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), our very own Hon. Justice Binta Nyako of the Federal High Court, whose election was greeted with much acclaim and excitement at the 2023 biennial conference of the IAWJ held in Marrakech, Morocco from 11th – 14th May 2023. My lord **Justice Binta Nyako** just handed over to the president of the Moroccan chapter of women judges at the 17th IAWJ biennial Conference held in South Africa from the 9th to the 12th of April 2025. As we congratulate **Hon, Justice Binta Nyako**

for a successful and remarkable tenure, we say well-done; we are proud of you for a wonderful tenure and great show of leadership. We also congratulate Hon. Justice Roli Harriman for her re-election as the Regional Director for the sub Saharan Region.

Now, upon assuming office, the present EXCO hit the ground running with the vision to pursue the ideals of access to justice and equal justice for all, the protection of women, children and vulnerable persons, greater representation for women in the judiciary and positions of leadership in general and by extension mentoring the next generation of female lawyers and judges. To that extent, we held workshops in the six geopolitical zones of the country. We are happy to say that each and every one of the events was a successful and memorable outing for us. This year's conference is particularly significant not only because the Exco is wrapping up its two year tenure with this theme encapsulating the association's vision and the Exco's focus for the past 2 years, but also because for the 1st time, the conference is drawing attention to a very important but almost forgotten or neglected aspect of our profession, etiquette, for women Judges.

This Conference also marks the very first time ever in the history of the association in this country, that NAWJIN president will be wearing two rightful caps at the same time, one as the President of our esteemed association and the 2nd as the Chief Justice of Nigeria. This Exco is indeed blessed. Please join me in congratulating our President, for becoming the Honourable Chief Justice of Nigeria during her tenure as President of NAWJIN and for an impactful one year in office as the Chief Justice of Nigeria and an exemplary President of NAWJIN. Our president the CJN has been the champion of mentoring the younger generation of women judges and lawyers as reflected in all our workshops across the geopolitical zones and at this conference. Hence, the theme of this conference, to resonate the importance of mentoring and its benefits for the next generation of women judges and lawyers. We have also added a bit of icing to the cake by dealing with an interesting topic on etiquette a long forgotten but important aspect of our daily work, carriage and comportment first as women and then as women judges.

We thank you for allowing us serve you as the 2023-2025 Exco. We hope we have acquitted ourselves creditably and can give ourselves a pat on the back and breathe a sigh of relief that to a very large extent we did not disappoint you. Please be assured that though very tasking, we served you with so much joy and dedication culminating in the preparation of and rounding up with this conference which we hope will be remembered for a long time to come. We urge you to participate actively, interact, network and exchange ideas freely, relax and unwind maximally and enjoy yourselves optimally as we promise to serve you sumptuous meals and lots more. It's a time to relax and unwind. Finally, let us not forget that it is our election year, and we hope to have a seamless election that will usher in a new Exco that will continue with the baton as we hand over.

To our distinguished guests, speakers and chairmen of sessions who accepted our invitation to be here with us today, we appreciate and cherish your presence. It is your presence and goodwill messages that have made the day. This is why we are delighted to once more warmly welcome you. We thank you profoundly and also thank all the participants who are here present.

Thank you for coming. God bless you all,
God bless NAWJN, God bless our judiciary and God
bless our great nation Nigeria



AMINA AUDI WAMBAI, JCA
VICE PRESIDENT, NAWJIN.

**ADDRESS BY HON. JUSTICE K. M. O. KEKERE-EKUN CJN GCON PRESIDENT OF NAWJN AT THE
2025 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES (NAWJN)
HOLDING AT THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE MOHAMMED BELLO CENTRE,
AIRPORT ROAD, ABUJA FROM 29TH – 31ST OF MAY 2025.**

PROTOCOLS...

My Lords, Distinguished participants, invited guests, it is with great joy that I welcome you to the 2025 Biennial Conference of our great Association, the National Association of Women Judges Nigeria (NAWJN), with the theme

**“Mentorship and Legacy Building: Fostering a culture of mentorship, inclusivity,
and empowerment of the next generation of women leaders in law”.**

By the special grace of God, I am wearing two caps today - first, as Chief Justice of Nigeria to declare this conference open and second, as the President of the Association.

We were elected and sworn in as the Executive Committee of this Association on the 23rd of May, 2023, to run its affairs for a two-year tenure. Our tenure coincided with the tenure of the second African President of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), our very own **Hon. Justice Binta Nyako** of the Federal High Court, whose election was greeted with much acclaim and excitement at the 16th Biennial Conference of the IAWJ held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 11th – 14th May 2023.

The IAWJ, a body to which NAWJN is proudly affiliated, supports and empowers women Judges to advance the ideals of gender equality, access to justice for all, protection of women, children and vulnerable persons and greater representation for women in the judiciary and positions of leadership in general.

Incidentally, the IAWJ has partnered with a philanthropic collaborative fund, Co-Impact, to develop and implement a multi-year programme to enable, support and promote sustainable leadership pathways for women in leadership in the Global South. To this end, it is working with affiliate Associations in five countries (Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Mexico and the Philippines) to develop strategies to overcome the barriers that discourage and, in some cases, prevent women from aspiring to leadership positions in the profession. The initiative is called Women In Leadership In Law (WILIL).

After being sworn in, we held an inaugural meeting to determine the path forward. We resolved to align with this concept to lay the groundwork for NAWJN's participation in the WILIL project. We hit the ground running to fulfil our promise to elevate the Association. One of our major strategies was to hold workshops in each of the six geo-political zones of the country to identify the challenges preventing women in the legal profession from rising to leadership positions and to also proffer solutions that are uniquely suited to our own environment. The theme for the series workshops was “Breaking Leadership Barriers for Women in the Legal Profession.” The aim was to chart a roadmap for enhancing women in leadership in the Judiciary, with the broader goal of improving high-level decision-making and best practices in the profession.

The maiden workshop was held in Kano State for the North West zone from the 14th-16th of December, 2023 and I must confess, it was truly impactful. It revealed challenges unique to that part of the country. It brought to light challenges unique to that region and sensitized participants to the need for self-development.

The second workshop took place in Lagos State for the South-West zone, from the 13th – 15th of March, 2024.

The third workshop for the South-South zone took place in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State from the 4th – 6th of July, 2024.

The fourth workshop took place in Umuahia, Abia State for the South-East zone from the 24th-26th of October, 2024 and the final workshop was a combined zonal workshop held in Abuja for North Central and North East zones from January 30th - 31st 2025, thus concluding the nationwide series.

Each of these workshops was insightful and invigorating, featuring thought-provoking interactive sessions that brought to the fore the societal and professional challenges facing women in the society generally and in the legal profession. We found that certain challenges were unique to particular parts of the country or exist as a result of certain cultural and societal biases. A strong theme that emerged from all sessions was the urgent need for robust mentorship of the next generation. This realization inspired the theme of this Conference.

The WILIL team for Nigeria constituted during the South-South Zonal workshop held in Yenagoa. The following members were appointed to drive the initiative:

- i. **Hon. Justice Chinwe Iyizoba JCA Rtd, Judicial Coordinator**
- ii. **Hon. Justice Tani Hassan Yusuf JCA Rtd, Judicial Coordinator**
- iii. **Hon. Justice Tamunoigoni Susan Oji, Technical Committee Member**
- iv. **Hon. Justice Angela Moku Obi, Technical Committee Member**
- v. **Hon. Justice Binta Mohammed, Technical Committee Member**
- vi. **Hon. Justice Iyabode Oshodi, Technical Committee Member**

The WILIL team took off immediately with laudable plans to reach the nooks and crannies of the Nigerian Judiciary to ensure gender parity in the sector. They reached out to stake holders, policy influencers and decision makers to encourage a paradigm shift as it relates to the advancement of women in the legal profession to leadership positions. During our tenure we had two IAWJ-led training sessions in Abuja in February 2024 and February 2025.

The WILIL team commenced their assignment, starting from the grassroots, by collating data on women judges and magistrates, state by state as compared to their male-counter parts.

To date, 18 states have submitted their data. 6 States - Kebbi, Taraba, Jigawa, Zamfara, Ondo and Anambra States- found to have the most challenging gender parity issues were selected as pilot states for the second training session.

This has yielded positive results as Zamfara and Jigawa States are about to appoint more female Judges after years of male dominance. The data collection effort

is on-going. The WILIL team has a three-year tenure, which will end by February 2027.

The workshops and trainings have left a positive impact on various female lawyer organisations, such as: FIDA, AWLA, NBAWF as well as our female magistrates. For the first time, NAWJN embarked on a mentoring programme reaching out to female lawyers from all spheres and it has been a rewarding experience. At the workshops held in Yenagoa and Umuahia, I was able to personally hold short mentoring sessions with Judges and Magistrates of the lower courts.

The series of workshops and the training highlighted the need to sensitize more women in the legal profession to aspire to leadership positions in order to participate in policy making in matters that affect women in the profession and beyond, not only in Nigeria, but also globally.

Proposals on how to tackle the highlighted barriers were considered and deliberated upon. Key points centred on mentoring, policy-making, addressing work-life balance and dismantling gender, societal and

culture-based biases. The issue of indigeneship as it affects judicial appointments was also a recurring subject of discussion.

The workshops ended on a note of optimism as participants urged that the resolutions reached be implemented. Some participants and resource persons also encouraged NAWJN to strategize by influencing policy making and working assiduously to change the public perception of the role of women generally. The WILIL project will enable proper follow-up of NAWJN's vision and resolutions in this regard.

The recent training session by IAWJ via the WILIL project was an eye opener regarding gender parity in the appointment of Judges and Magistrates. It was noted that while states like Lagos and Kano are now in the forefront and in fact female-dominated in terms of appointments, quite a few states are still lagging behind.

No doubt, Nigeria has come a long way but there is still much work to be done. The journey towards achieving true parity and inclusivity across the country may take some time but it is certainly achievable.

Women have been exceptionally blessed by God with innate skills and the ability to multi-task, which can enhance and support nation building. It is therefore important to recognize the imperative of women in policy making and to strive to ensure their inclusivity in the promotion of policies that are gender sensitive and which provide greater access to justice.

Our tenure as an EXCO has indeed been most fulfilling. We embarked on some other projects besides workshops and trainings. First, we commissioned new scarves, pins and a new NAWJN uniform, which will be unveiled immediately after this address. We also renovated the NAWJN offices at the NJI and NJC with state-of-the-art furnishing. We have been able to secure adequate staff to man these offices for NAWJN and the WILIL Project, with immense cooperation from the Administrator of the NJI and the Secretary of the NJC.

In the period of our stewardship, we did our best to improve upon the high standard set by the previous EXCO and by the grace of God, we believe we have not let you down. We believe the Association has attained higher and greater heights, giving us recognition globally. In fact, at the 17th Biennial Conference of the IAWJ held in Cape Town, South Africa last month, Nigeria (NAWJN) had a great outing in the quality of paper presentation, appearance and number in attendance. We were the talk of the conference and a standard to beat at the next Biennial Conference in Canada.

The secretary's report will highlight our activities, challenges and suggestions for the future.

At the time of assuming office, certain data was handed over to us. We are happy to note that we have improved on same.

For instance, the numerical strength of the Association has improved. Today we have over 433 registered members with IAWJ and about 449 serving female judges who are members of NAWJN. Our retired members who join us on the WhatsApp platform and attend our conferences from time to time are about 30 in number.

Other important data as at today is shown in the table below:

COURTS	TOTAL NO. OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS	NO. OF FEMALE JUDICIAL OFFICERS	PERCENTAGE
SUPREME COURT OF NIGERIA	20	6	30%
COURT OF APPEAL	88	28	32%
FEDERAL HIGH COURT	86	31	36%
NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL COURT	35	12	34%
HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE, FCT	67	31	46%
STATE HIGH COURTS	831	303	36%
CUSTOMARY COURTS OF APPEAL	116	38	33%
HEADS OF COURT FEDERAL & STATE	60	22	37%
TOTAL NUMBER OF SERVING JUDICIAL OFFICER, FEDERAL & STATE COURTS	1391	449	32%

By the grace of God, I am the second female to serve as the Chief Justice of Nigeria. The President of the Court of Appeal is a woman and we currently have 20 female heads of courts across Nigeria. This is a remarkable feat but it is not yet Uhuru. There are states with only two female judges amongst 15 to 20 male judges. We therefore continue to strive for gender parity, not because we are women but because we are deserving and qualified. That is why we must work harder, be more diligent, show skill and strive for excellence as female judges. We have no excuse but to excel at what we do to encourage more female participation and more appointments. We say Kudos! to Lagos and Kano States for leading the charge. I look forward to a time when we shall no longer have to count the number of women in leadership positions.

Before I conclude, I want to say that it has been a great delight and a joy to be of service to this great Association. My EXCO members and I appreciate you all for your support and encouragement which made our task easier. We would also, as an EXCO, like to appreciate our own **Hon. Justice Binta Nyako** for a job well done as the International President of IAWJ from 2023-2025, for flying our flag high and for successfully handing over to the current President from Morocco. It is clear that we Africans are not doing badly. We pray that your present position as an ex-officio member of IAWJ will also be smooth. We also congratulate **Hon Justice Roli Harriman** on her re-election into office as our African Regional director of the IAWJ. We pray for grace to succeed.

I seize this golden opportunity to thank the exceptional, diligent and worthy members of the EXCO, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that we succeed as an Association. Despite my increased workload, which meant that I could not always be available for in-person or even virtual interactions, they ensured that we met our various obligations. Today, I can say with conviction, that we are now one big family. May the relationships we have built endure well beyond the life of this committee. May God Almighty reward you all bountifully.

I express our deep gratitude to the Administrator of the NJI for making the Institute available for our conferences and other programs and for his kindness in releasing his staff and all amenities needed for our use and comfort. I hope this kind gesture will be extended to the incoming EXCO.

We also thank the Hon. President of the Court of Appeal and all other heads of court who have consistently nominated and supported their Justices and Judges to attend our programs. We thank you most sincerely for your generous contributions to the success of this event.



I thank my Lords, Hon. Justices and Judges for attending this conference and for all your support throughout our tenure.

I also express appreciation to our NGOs and other invited guests whose unwavering support and goodwill messages are very encouraging.

I express our deep appreciation to our corporate sponsors, Coronation Group, United Bank for Africa Plc, Caverton Offshore Support Group Plc, Access Holdings Plc, Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc and Dangote Group Plc for helping to make this conference a reality.

Let us not forget that this is an election year. May we choose wisely and elect a new set of highly motivated judicial officers ready to take the Association forward to an even higher level.

It has been an honour to serve.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Long live NAWJN

Long live IAWJ

Long live Nigeria

It is my honour and privilege to declare this conference open!!!

Hon. Justice Kudirat M.O. Kekere-Ekun, GCON

Chief Justice of Nigeria and President, NAWJN



FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK:

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES NIGERIA (NAWJN) FROM MAY 23RD 2023 – MAY 31ST 2023.

INTRODUCTION: The current executive came into office on the 23rd of May 2023 during the general meeting of the association in Abuja at the 2023 Hybrid Biennial Conference tagged “THE WOMAN JUDGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY”. We give God all the glory that we are now winding up. Below are highlights of our activities during our tenure May 2023- May 2025.

COURTESY VISITS: We paid courtesy calls on several dignitaries of the Nigerian Judiciary. First, we visited the immediate past CJN who retired only last year Hon. Justice Olukayode Ariwoola GCON who received us with much warmth and glamour. In our company were Hon Justice Helen Morenkeji Ogunwumiju JSC and the then President of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) Hon Justice Binta Nyako of the Federal High Court, Abuja Division.

The CJN at the time promised to support our vision and goals. Next, we visited the President of the Court of Appeal our very own Hon. Justice Monica Dongbam-Mensem CFR who treated us to a wonderful feast and presentation of gifts. She commended NAWJN on its achievements thus far and expressed her delight in the fact that Hon Justice K. M. O. Kekere-Ekun, CJN, GCON, was now leading the association and that she was assured that her leadership will take the association to the next level.

Finally, we also visited the Administrator of the Judicial Institute Hon. Justice Salisu Garba Abdullahi (Rt) who pledged his support to the association and has been a pillar of strength to NAWJN all through our tenure. It is our prayer that the same support will be extended to the next executive committee. We are immensely grateful to the administrator of NJI.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONFERENCES: We attended the 18th IAWJ African Regional Conference from the 13th to the 17th of May 2024 at Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra, Ghana. The conference was under the theme

“Combating negative cultural practices in contemporary times – The role of women judges.”

NAWJN was well represented at the conference with about a hundred delegates led by none other than our CJN and President of NAWJN Hon Justice K. M. O. Kekere-Ekun GCON.

My lord the Hon Justice Elfrida Williams–Dawodu PJCA chaired one of the sessions whilst two of our members presented papers; the Chief Judge of Cross Rivers State Hon Justice Akon Bassey Ikpe on

CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AND THE IMPACT OF FIGHTING SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST WOMEN AND THE GIRL CHILD

and the President of the Customary Court of Appeal Delta State Hon Justice Catherine N Ojughana-Orishedere on

REASONS FOR THE PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN AFRICA AND THE CULTURAL BARRIERS INHIBITING REFORMS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS.

NAWJN had a good outing in Accra Ghana. We also attended the just concluded 18th biennial conference of IAWJ which was held in Cape Town South Africa from the 9th to 12th of April 2025 on the theme

RESILIENCE: WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE.

Nigeria was well represented at the conference and we were led by our CJN and NAWJN President the Hon Justice K. M. O. Kekere-Ekun. My lord PCCA Delta state Hon. Justice Catherine Ojughana-Orishedere also presented a beautiful paper in South Africa on the topic

CULTURAL BELIEFS AND THEIR IMPACT ON FIGHTING SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST WOMEN AND THE GIRL CHILD.

Nigerian delegates were in their large numbers and were indeed the talk of the conference as we appeared in our beautiful outfits' day after day. The display on the screen is sufficient direct evidence. Our own Hon. Justice Roli Harriman was re-elected as Regional Director representing West and Central Africa whilst Hon Justice Henrietta Bulawayo of

Uganda was also re-elected as Regional Director for South and East Africa. My lord Hon Justice BintaNyako handed over her Moroccan counterpart and is now ex-officio.

IAWJ- WILIL AFFAIRS: NAWJN is affiliated to the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) and they have partnered with Co-Impact, a philanthropic collaborative fund to develop and implement a multi-year programme to enable, support and promote sustainable leadership pathways for women in leadership in the Global South. It is for this reason the IAWJ is working with affiliate Associations in five countries (Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Mexico and the Philippines) to address and work out strategies to overcome the barriers confronting women in leadership in the profession. The initiative is called Women In Leadership In Law (WILIL). WILIL has in line with their vision held two training sessions with NAWJN in February of 2024 and February 2025.

In the February 2024 training workshop, the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) successfully concluded the last of its workshops for the Women in Leadership in Law (WILIL) program in coordination with the National Association of Women Judges – Nigeria (NAWJN) in Abuja, Nigeria. IAWJ had previously conducted workshops with national associations in Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa, and Mexico, aimed at facilitating dialogue, sharing key institutional data, and developing strategic solutions to overcome barriers faced by women in law and the judiciary. The culmination of these workshops, and the themes that emerged, reaffirmed to IAWJ that having an association gives judges a platform from which to advocate for court reforms, including transformational institutional change. Not coincidentally, it can also protect individual judges from retaliatory actions they might otherwise experience for suggesting that change.

At the National Judicial Institute (NJI) in Abuja, prominent judicial figures from NAWJN led three days of proceedings, demonstrating strong support for advancing gender parity within the judiciary. These included Hon Justice Kudirat M. O. Kekere-Ekun, CJN, GCON, President of the Court of Appeal Nigeria, Hon Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem; then IAWJ President, Justice BintaNyako; the Administrator of the National Judicial Institute, Justice Salisu Abdullahi Garba; and NAWJN President.

During the workshop, NAWJN representatives presented data indicating that women make up 33% of state court judges and 36% of federal judges in Nigeria. Emphasizing the importance of comprehensive data, they advocated for evidence-based strategies to address gender disparities effectively.

In addition, participants, including representatives from women lawyer groups (FIDA, AWLA, & NBA Women's Forum) shared personal stories about their motivation for entering the judiciary. These stories also provided deep insights into the challenges and triumphs faced by women in the law, emphasizing the importance of mentorship and advocacy against pervasive sexual harassment. The WILIL-IAWJ representative Mrs. Jane Charles-Voltaire together with the NAWJN executive paid a courtesy call on the President of the Court of Appeal before the workshop took off.

The 2025 training workshop on WILIL centered on its project in Nigeria for the next three years which is on the need for gender parity in the judiciary and for women in leadership in law.

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS: We held impactful workshops in the six geopolitical regions from December 2023 to January 2025. The details are as contained in the president's address and the documentary on screen covering our tenure presently.

PAYMENT OF DUES: It is worthy of record that our financial team made up of the financial secretary and treasurer saw us through a seamless financial standing. First, we recorded the highest amounts received as yearly dues, international dues and the regional dues in our tenure. This was as a result of the financial team's initiative to have a state and courts representative platform responsible for disseminating information and collection of dues. Every state and court had representatives on the platform and so we realized regular pay and almost 99% improvement in our finances. We paid over \$14,000 as our international dues and we were able to sell more NAWJN wrappers, scarves and sashes in our tenure so much so that the old uniform is exhausted as we unveiled a new uniform yesterday. We hope that the next EXCO will continue with this innovation.

DATA BASE FOR NAWJN: The last exco handed over a data base of women judges in Nigeria from

march 2021-May 2023 which includes the ratios and percentages of women judges in each court compared to their male counterparts as seen in the President's speech. We have improved on same and will be handing same over to the next EXCO.

WELFARE OF MEMBERS: Within our tenure, we lost some of our members, spouses of members, parents of members and children of members and we ensured to the best of our ability that we visited them. Furthermore, we also attended marriage ceremonies of our members children. The Photo-Speak section will reflect these visitations.

CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: We had issues coordinating the regions and states with ease. However, we are glad to state that the representative platform has been a panacea to the problem. Again, the lack of adequate staff specifically for NAWJN duties has also been a cause for concern because of paying them monthly remuneration but we thank the administrator of NJI and secretary of NJC for coming to our aid by providing staff paid by them. We however, still need more hands to run our secretariat effectively.

It is for the above reasons amongst others that as an EXCO we want to make some suggestions which we pray will be ratified in this general meeting to move the association forward. First that we increase our yearly dues from fifteen naira to fifty thousand naira or more as the association decides so we can comfortably in future self-sponsor our conferences without appealing for funds and pay our immediate staff where possible. Secondly that hand-over to a new executive committee should involve a bit of training and or in-depth handover briefings.

Thirdly, that NAWJN data be saved properly in the clouds for future use like the data collation ongoing for female judges and magistrates round the country by WILIL. The association can if it deems it fit employ just one staff for the secretariat to keep records of sales of our items and other sundry duties.

CONCLUSION: My President has said it all. We thank you all for your cooperation, support and understanding during our tenure, it was an honour to be of service to you all and we hope the same cooperation will be extended to the next EXCO.

Thank you for standing by us.

Long live NAWJN
LONG LIVE NIGERIA

Hon Justice Hannatu Balogun JCA
Secretary May 2023 - May 2025

PHOTO SPEAK

EXCO





PHOTO SPEAK

SWEARING IN

OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA





PHOTO SPEAK

IAWJ CONFERENCE CAPE TOWN
SOUTH AFRICA 2025/ACCRA GHANA 2024



PHOTO SPEAK



PHOTO SPEAK



PHOTO SPEAK





PHOTO SPEAK

— NORTH-WEST REGIONAL —
WORKSHOP (KANO) DECEMBER 2023



PHOTO SPEAK





PHOTO SPEAK

— SOUTH-WEST REGIONAL —
WORKSHOP (LAGOS) MARCH 2024



PHOTO SPEAK





PHOTO SPEAK

— SOUTH-SOUTH REGIONAL —
WORKSHOP (BAYELSA) JULY 2024



PHOTO SPEAK





PHOTO SPEAK

— SOUTH-EAST REGIONAL —
WORKSHOP (ABIA) OCTOBER 2024



PHOTO SPEAK





PHOTO SPEAK





PHOTO SPEAK

NORTH CENTRAL & NORTH EAST REGIONAL WORKSHOP (ABUJA) JANUARY 2025





PHOTO SPEAK

NORTH CENTRAL & NORTH EAST REGIONAL WORKSHOP (ABUJA) JANUARY 2025



PHOTO SPEAK

IAWJ/WILIL
WORKSHOP



PHOTO SPEAK

— COURTESY VISIT TO PCA —

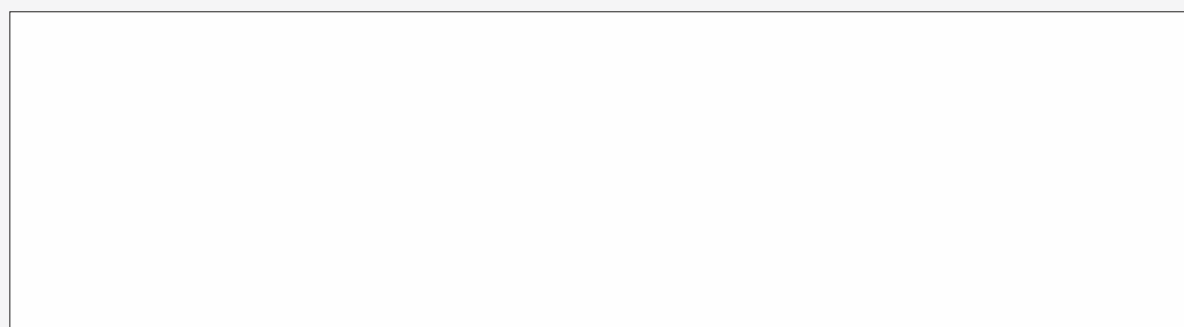
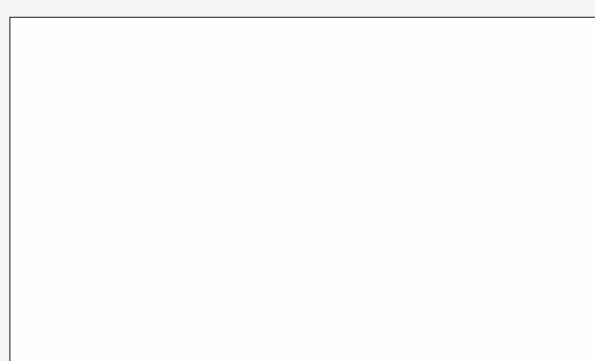




PHOTO SPEAK

BURIAL OUTING



PHOTO SPEAK

—WEDDING/BIRTHDAY—
OUTING

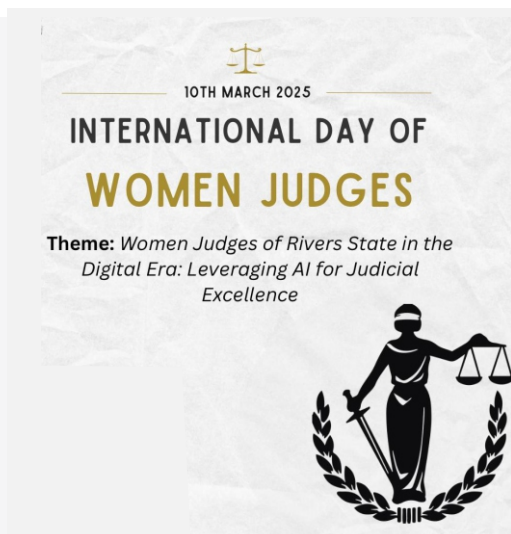


PHOTO SPEAK

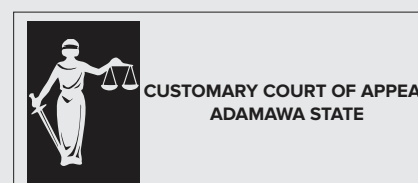
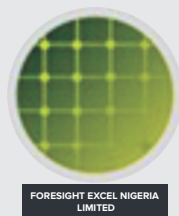
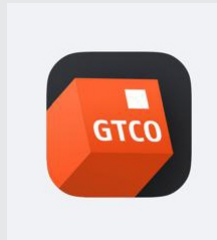


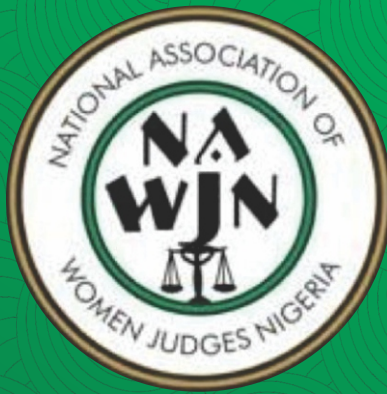
PHOTO SPEAK

RIVERS WOMEN JUDGES CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN JUDGES



APPRECIATING OUR SPONSORS





National Association of
Women Judges, Nigeria



NORTH CENTRAL/NORTH EAST ZONAL WORKSHOP