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57th Independence: Women Group Organises National March For Peace



Nigeria

Women For Peace, a coalition of women representing all parts of Nigeria converged in Abuja to plan a nationwide march on Independence Day to sue for peace in the country.

The group at the news conference on Thursday, called on all women across the 36 states of the nation to join the “White Blouse Day Campaign” on Sunday being the 1st Oct. 2017.

According to the group, the objective of the campaign is parts of the activities to mark the National Independence Day Celebration.

Mrs Stephanie Apel, Executive Director, Glamorous Mother Development Initiative said women are concerned with the current state of affairs in the country and the group had determined to campaign for a peaceful coexistence among Nigerians.

Apel said the group was birthed in response to the growing wave of hate speeches and violence against the backdrop of the current ethnic tensions in the country.

“We believe that Nigerians have a right to reside and conduct business with dignity and safety in any part of the country.

“Nothing good comes without hard work and sacrifice and thus we, the Nigerian women declared that we must build the country of our dreams without sacrificing the lives of innocent citizens, “ she said.

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She explained further that the campaign would notify Nigeria and the international community on Nigerian women's demand for peace, zero tolerance for violence and hate speeches.

Speaking earlier, Mrs Prescilla Achakpa, Executive Director, Women Environmental Programme, explained that the Northern Central region, had since the transition to democracy, witnessed a mirage of violent conflicts in the region.

Achakpa enumerated conflicts raging from increased electoral violence, ethnicity, religious, herdsmen clashes with farmers, the activities of book haram sect among others..

“The resultant effects of these conflicts have led to displacement of millions of people especially women and children, loss of lives and property, economic activities coming to a standstill and force migration of the people from the region.

“On this note, on Sept. 7, 2017, women from across the country met in Abuja to discuss the need for women to air their concerns about key issues which negatively impact on Nigerians, especially women and children.

“We acknowledged the efforts of the security sector, the humanitarian community, CSO, religious and traditional authorities and individuals who are trying to manage the problems.

“We have to mobilise to add our voices and assert our right as citizens, as mothers, as women and as one half of the population of this nation in pursuit of peace, dialogue and de-escalation, “ she said.

Achakpa also used the occasion to demand active inclusion of women and full participation in politics, peace and security negotiations, decision making and conflicts resolution.

Mrs Anne Addeh in her contribution noted the level of marginalization of women's participation in politics and other key positions, adding that the campaign would also serve as a mean to enlighten women on their rights.

“The march is going to take place in all the 36 states of the federation and the women are expected to wear white blouse – representing peace.

“And they are going to use the opportunity to voice out on the level of marginalisation in terms political positioning and to create awareness on women's participation in the key national issues in the country, “ she said.