

# PROJECT ALERT COMMEMORATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



**Break the cycle of violence. Keeping it quiet is participating.  
Call the Hotline: 234-08180500788; 08180091072**

The International Women's Day celebration was held at the Rotary District Centre on the 8th of March, 2023. Project Alert collaborated with Lions Clubs and Rotary Clubs in organising a symposium on the IWD 2023 theme “DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality”, focused on #EmbracingEquity. Being the first of its kind, it was attended by members of the host organisations, with three reputable guest speakers and a training session.

The first speaker for the day was Rotarian Olayinka Patunola-Ajayi, who took the stage to speak on equity in girl child education (Increased access to digital skills). She gave a history of girl child education in Nigeria and how gender disparity existed because native traditions believed a woman's place to be in the kitchen. However, she spoke on how purposeful planning and government intervention led to an increase in females in schools as there was a need to identify and eliminate policies that hindered girl's full participation in education.

The second speaker, Past Council Chairperson (Dame) Adetope Tychus, began her speech with an exercise as she led the audience to close their eyes and think of the word “disability.” Afterwards, she asked the audience to open their eyes and implied that their mind may have wandered to various

forms of physical deformity. However, she challenged the audience to see beyond the standard concept of disability. She defined disability in two different variations: physical disabilities that we can see and disabilities that are unseen 'invisible disabilities. As an organisation, we fail to accommodate both visible and invisible disabilities when we fail to recognise and acknowledge those with both these disabilities.

Finally, the Executive Director of Project Alert, Mrs Josephine Effah-Chukwuma, spoke on Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and inequality in the workplace. She began by giving an insight into the IWD celebration and critical issues women face in the workplace. Gender discrimination, she said, is an unequal treatment or prejudice towards an individual based on their gender. Sexual harassment involves unwanted sexual advances, and it can take different forms. Inequality is the unfair treatment of employees based on certain factors. At the same time, non-inclusiveness in the workplace is a deliberate act of implementing policies that tend to leave out a particular group of people or create offence. She recommended positive steps to address such situations, which



include fair compensation and promotion procedures, a deliberate attempt to advocate equal opportunity, more actions and words, implementation of strict policies against harassment, similar training and development opportunities, diversity in the workspace, and unity amongst workers, better communication and inclusiveness.

An appreciation award was presented to the executive director of Project Alert on Violence Against Women, Mrs Josephine Effah-Chukwuma. It was indeed an impactful event. In her response, the O/C

Gender thanked the WG8 for the visit and affirmed her willingness to work with the group. She explained that VAW issues were prevalent in the society and Gender Unit is poised to take the bulls by the horn, hinting that a lot of women victims do not know which office to go when they come to police station. As such, she promised to create awareness of Gender Unit and replicate same in the various area commands within Lagos State. These way women-victims would not be turned back at the counter, urging the group to send forward the Organisations' IEC materials for referrals.

## PROJECT ALERT PAYS A CONDOLENCE VISIT TO THE FAMILY OF THE LATE MRS SUSAN BALOGUN (SURULERE SURVEILLANCE TEAM MEMBER)

The Executive Director of Project Alert on Violence Against Women, Dr Josephine Effah-Chukwuma, on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, paid a condolence visit to the Balogun family over the demise of their mother, grandmother & sister, Mrs Susan Balogun, who passed on Friday 17th February 2023. During the visit, the Executive Director consoled Mrs. Susan's children while praying that God would grant repose to the departed soul.



Mrs Susan Balogun, until her death, was the women leader of the Surulere Sexual & Gender-Based Surveillance team. She was a very vibrant, pleasant and friendly person. A great team player who served her community selflessly. An astute of community development, a credible voice in the community, working with others to campaign for zero tolerance against all forms of violence against women and young girls in Surulere. She will be greatly missed.

# COMBATING CYBER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

On March 9, 2023, Project Alert organised a "Combating Cyber Violence against Women and Girls" webinar in honour of International Women's Day. The theme was 'DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for gender equality.' The event, hosted by Mrs Nsini Udonta, featured guest speakers Mrs Njemanze Dorothy and Mr Olusegun Medupin.

highlighting instances of partners restricting social media accounts without consent. She addressed the role of yahoo boys in scams and called for increased awareness and sensitisation by the National Orientation Agency. The Q&A session covered topics like protecting teenagers from social media violence and

defining the line between freedom of speech and cyber-violent speech.

Mr. Medupin discussed the various forms of cyber violence, including online harassment, stalking, revenge pornography, and doxxing. He emphasised the negative impacts, such as PTSD, anxiety, and damaged reputation, and urged listeners to treat cyber violence as criminal acts. He advocated for stricter policies, encouraged reporting, and emphasised community support.

Contributions from the audience included discussions on body shaming, the effects of stigma on victims, and the importance of guarding online activities. Personal stories were shared, including one about blackmail at age 16. The webinar concluded with a reminder to be cautious about online activities, including downloads and sharing, to avoid potential implications.

Mrs Dorothy focused on creating a safer online space for women and girls,



Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation, and it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace

- KOFI ANNAN (FORMER UN SECRETARY GENERAL)