

Oby Ezekwesili

Tasks media to lead reforms of Nigerian constitution



The founder of Human Capital Africa, Dr Oby Ezekwesili has emphasized the need for a fresh constitution that will help address all the imbalances and the inequalities besetting Nigeria. She appealed to the media to be in the forefront of the demand constitutional propriety. Ezekwesili made the call recently while speaking on the topic “Reworking Nigeria’s Federalism: Perspectives on Restructuring and Fiscal Federalism” at the 7th Pen pushing Media anniversary and annual lecture held in Abeokuta. She pointed out that a new constitution was a matter of life and death, stressing that having it in place defined the current constitution in Nigeria, and that there must be a constitutional conference that will enable citizens to have honest conversation

“The media should take the front seat and be at the vanguard of a demand for new constitution. We must have a constitutional conference that enables the people of this country to have honest conversation around things that will make us make progress and make Nigeria work for all of us”, “If there is anything that will come out of this annual lecture it must be that the media should be at the vanguard of a push for a constitutional conference, one that will enable the constituent part of this country, a constituent assembly elected by the people, they go, they sit, they have the discussion on the basis of the issues that makes fiscal federal system of government to work and come out with issues that are eligible for constitution which is put before the people to vote in form of referendum.

‘This is what Kenya did after almost collapsing, and since then, you never hear them talking about break-up, they will talk about the need for good leaders’, the humanitarian and an activist stated. The former Minister, pointed out that only a new

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constitution that prioritizes devolution of powers, justice, equity, and fairness to all irrespective of tribes and ethnicity will solve the agitation for secession by some part of the country, the problem of insecurity, the challenge of unemployment and poverty, and maladministration. The advocate for transparency, accountability, good governance berated the National Assembly efforts on the ongoing constitutional amendment, stressing that it is nothing but a charade and a conduit pipe to waste public funds. Ezekwesili, that accompanied by her

husband to the well organized and attended ceremony added that hijack of the nation's political space and, by extension, that of the continent by a set of criminal enterprise gangs who now sit at the table and slice governance in the direction that best suits them while the larger interest of the people suffers is worrisome.

She added that the National Assembly decided to embark on a venture that will do little or nothing to help address the need to restructure the country along the practice of true federalism, stressing that a fresh constitution that will help address all the imbalances and the inequalities. 'The ongoing constitutional amendment cannot work, it cannot address our problem, it is a charade and sheer waste of resources. The demand for a new constitution is a matter of life and death', Ezekwesili said "For instance, when the engineer tells us that the foundation of a building is structurally defective, is it not to take the whole building down because it will continue to constitute an endangerment to the people', she noted. "You won't say, Oga, can we just do some little adjustment to the building, no, it won't work, and this is same with nation building. So, this expensive charade that the National Assembly is embarking on and spending money on won't take us anywhere', Ekwesili stated.

Pen pushing further reports that she explained that there is nothing mysterious about good governance, as it has been done in other parts of the world and could be replicated in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

"Unfortunately, today's politics has been hijacked, what we

self-determination without breaking up the country, boost productivity and accountability, and improve leadership capabilities, among other things. The founder of Pen pushing Media, Prince Dimeji Kayode-Adedeji earlier in his welcome speech explained that the essence of the annual lecture is aimed at elevating conversation around issues that could further enhance the greatness of the country. She disclosed that the media outlet, which is the first online newspaper to start operations in Abeokuta, the town where journalism started in Nigeria in 1859 said the organization has continued to grow in leaps and bound. The founder added that the establishment has been contributing significantly to changing the narrative of the country through qualitative reportage and offering philanthropic gestures that are deliberately designed to uplift humanity. Kayode-Adedeji explained that Pen pushing Media as part of its policy, has trained over mass communication undergraduates from various tertiary institution, to contribute to their growth in the profession The Founder added that in addition to the developmental growth of the undergraduates the media organization has equally instituted an annual award honour for the best graduating mass communication students in the higher institutions. In goodwill messages by Funke Fadugba(Chairman Editorial Board Pen pushing Media), Dr Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi (Chairperson Planning Committee), Femi Adesina former Presidential spokesman to the late Mohammadu Buhari, Justice Deinde Soremi(retired Justice admitted, Princess (Dr) Ronke Ogunremi, Maureen Chigbo and Chief (Dr) Joju Fadairo admitted the positive relevance of Pen pushing Media in the media industry globally. The panelists at

"Unfortunately, today's politics has been hijacked, what we now have is a criminal enterprise gang and this is not only in Nigeria but across the continent. A criminal enterprise gang has taken hold of politics and excluded the society and these people just sit at the table and just slice governance in the direction that suits them but that must not be made to continue", she said The human capital development expert said there is a strong connection between the quality of African politics and its economic performance and prosperity, adding that this sad reality may, however, not change for a long time to come if nothing is done to improve the quality of its politics and the political leaders

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. The true practice of fiscal federalism will foster greater regional autonomy and collaboration, satisfy the demand for

the well packaged ceremony include Sir Eddy Aina (former Director National Broadcasting Commission), Hon Adijat Adeleye (Ogun State Commissioner of Women Affairs and Social Development), and Prof Abgail Ogwezy-Ndisika(Director Institute of Continuing Education, Mass Communication Department University of Lagos) and Fatai Owoseni(Retired Commissioner of Police) The members of the planning committee include Dr Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi (Chairperson), Sina Adefolahan(Secretary), Seun Sodiya, Otunba Gbenga Onayiga, Hon Remmy Hazzan, Toyin Ogunbomehin and Dr Adewunmi Alayaki Meanwhile, the editorial board include Dimeji Kayode-Adedeji (Founder), Funke Fadugba(Chairman), Eddy Aina, Barrister Benjamin Ogunmodede, Yemisi Fadairo and Femi Shodunke.