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For information email: secretariat@wilpf.org

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Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

Adoption of the UPR outcome of Nigeria

This statement follows on WILPF Nigeria's engagement with the UPR in coalition with seven other Nigerian NGOs.¹ We welcome Nigeria's support to recommendations on legislative measures to address gender-based violence, including those on the need for domestication (incorporation into domestic laws) of international instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, for the implementation of the Violence against Persons Prohibition Act and the Child Rights Act in all 36 states, and for the adoption of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill and the Disability Rights Bill.

Women continue to experience persistent discrimination in the public and political spheres. The electoral system still poses impediments towards women's political participation.² As a result, women's representation does not only remain far below the target, but it has actually declined during the past administration. Moreover, seemingly gender-neutral decisions can impact women disproportionately. For example, the Electoral Commission's decision to postpone at the last minute the dates of the recent national elections disproportionately impacted both women candidates, who typically have fewer resources than their male counterparts, and women voters who often bear the responsibility for childcare and may find it more difficult to travel to vote. For all these reasons, WILPF welcomes Nigeria's support to recommendations 148.193 and 148.197³ on measures to increase women's participation in public and political life and calls for decisive action to address the impediments women face to meaningful participation.

We recall efforts made to support women political aspirants through Nigeria's Women Political Trust Fund,⁴ despite the challenges to its effectiveness. We also welcome the government's engagement with the Independent National Electoral Commission and the National Human Rights Commission in last month national elections as a measure towards ensuring free and fair elections.

However, we regret that Nigeria only noted without even providing an explanation recommendation 148.194 to "increase the number of women engaged in decision-making bodies in order to promote gender equality." Nonetheless, in light of Nigeria's commitment to progressing, we call on Nigeria to:

- ensure the adoption of legislation on temporary measures aimed to increase women's participation in political and public life and especially in areas where women are underrepresented and disadvantaged;
- support the passing into law of the Women's Participation in Elections Support Bill of 2018 as one of the concrete ways of increasing women's representation and participation in elective and appointive positions;
- conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of women's political participation; and
- support networks of women in government and non-government groups.

¹ See Women, Peace and Security. Joint report for the UPR of Nigeria, available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/UPR-Nigeria-Final-1.pdf>

² For example, it is impossible to make provisions for independent candidatures and, in some instances, married women cannot contest in the states where their husbands hold any elective position.

³ 148.193. Adopt legislation that includes special measures to increase the participation of women in political and public life.

148.197. Further consolidate the legal electoral framework in order to improve the inclusivity and transparency of the electoral process and equal political participation.

⁴ <http://nigerianwomentrustfund.org/about-us/>