



## **Press Statement of the Launching of Male Feminist Network (MFN) initiative among Southwest States by New Initiative For Social Development (NISD)**

Good morning, distinguished members of the press, partners, and stakeholders.

The Male Feminist Network (MFN), a project spearheaded by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) in Nigeria supported by the Ford Foundation while New Initiative for Social Development is the Southwest Zonal Partner. This project is a two-year nationwide initiative which is to mobilize Nigerian men as active partners in promoting gender equality and ending gender-based violence (GBV).

The MFN aims to disrupt patriarchal systems and challenge harmful norms by training 2,000 male leaders, professionals, and grassroots influencers across all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Rather than remaining silent bystanders, these male allies will be equipped to advocate for feminist values and lead by example in their communities.

"For decades, the conversation around GBV and gender equality in Nigeria has been driven, rightly, by women, but transformative change demands that men not only listen but lead with humility and responsibility. This project is rooted in the radical idea that men must be allies, advocates, and active participants in the movement for gender justice".

### **The MFN's strategy will involve:**

- **Targeting systems of inequality:** Engaging traditional, religious, trade unions, Drivers/transportation unions and professional leaders to shift cultural norms and institutional attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality.
- **Strategic awareness campaigns:** Using traditional and digital media to challenge toxic masculinity and promote inclusive gender narratives across the country.
- **Solidarity with women's rights organizations:** Amplifying the impact of existing women-led movements without overshadowing them.
- **Mentorship:** Fostering intergenerational leadership by mentoring young men to become gender justice advocates in their homes and communities.



**The New Initiative for Social Development (NISD) is launching and creating awareness of this project among Southwest states with the belief that men have a critical role to play in achieving this societal transformation.**

**As we navigate the complexities of modern society in Southwest Nigeria, it's essential to recognize the role men can play in promoting gender equality and supporting feminist causes. Male feminism is not about diminishing masculinity or undermining men's rights; rather, it's about challenging patriarchal norms and working towards a more equitable world for all.**

## **The State of Gender Equality in Southwest Nigeria**

**Research has shown that female-headed households in Nigeria are often poorer than male-headed households, with higher rates of poverty among women in rural areas. A study by the National Bureau of Statistics found that female-headed households account for just 15% of Nigerian households, and these households have fewer dependents and lower poverty rates than larger households.**

## **Benefits of Male Feminism**

**Reducing Gender-Based Violence: Male feminists play a crucial role in preventing violence against women and girls, promoting a culture of respect and empathy. Fostering Equality: By working towards gender equality, male feminists can help create a more just and equitable society for all. Promoting Healthy Masculinity: Male feminists should create a more inclusive and supportive environment for men and boys, challenging traditional notions of masculinity.**

## **Feminism in Action**

**Supporting Women's Economic Empowerment: Male feminists should support women's economic empowerment by promoting equal access to education, employment, political representations and resources.**



**Challenging Harmful Masculinity: Male feminists should challenge harmful masculine norms and promote healthy, equitable relationships between men and women.**

## CONCLUSION

**Male feminism is a vital component of the broader feminist movement in Southwest Nigeria, recognizing the importance of men's roles in promoting gender equality and challenging patriarchal norms. By working together, men can create a more just and equitable society, where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. We call on all men in Southwest Nigeria to join us in this effort, promoting gender equality and challenging patriarchal norms to build a brighter future for all.**

*"Feminism is not just a women's issue; it is a human issue".*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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