

NECA NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026 EDITION

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026S • WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE • CAREER RESILIENCE FOR WOMEN • INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES IN LAGOS • GENDER EQUALITY AS AN ESG PRIORITY • WORKPLACE ETHICS & INTEGRITY • THE AI GENDER GAP



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the March 2026 Edition of the NECA Newsletter.



Tomiloba Babarinde
and Damilola Jejeloye
- Co-Editors, NECA
Newsletter

Welcome to the March 2026 edition of the NECA Newsletter.

This edition arrives in the month of International Women's Day, and we have tried to meet the moment with substance rather than sentiment. The theme this year Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls set a high bar, and the articles in this edition reflect our genuine attempt to engage with it honestly.

We open with a reflection on what International Women's Day means for Nigerian employers in 2026 not as a calendar event, but as a prompt for real organisational change. From there, we move into the legal terrain: a detailed examination of the protections Nigerian law affords women in the workplace, the court decisions that have given those protections teeth, and the gaps that still exist between what the law promises and what working women actually experience.

Two articles in this edition deserve particular attention. The first, *Pausing, Not Stopping*, challenges the stubborn assumption that a career break signals diminishing professional value. For many women, time away from formal employment is a period of transition, growth, and quiet resilience and Nigerian employers who fail to recognise this are losing experienced talent they cannot afford to waste. The second, *When AI Meets Inequality*, draws on a landmark ILO Research Brief published this month to deliver a finding that should concern every employer in this country: women's jobs are exposed to AI-driven automation at nearly twice the rate of men's. The technology is not waiting, and neither should we.

EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the March 2026 Edition of the NECA Newsletter.

We also feature perspectives on gender equality as a core ESG priority, inclusive workplaces for persons with disabilities, the importance of building cultures of integrity beyond compliance, and NECA's recent strategic engagement with the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria on sustainability reporting.

Taken together, these pieces make one argument: that advancing women in the workplace is not a gesture of goodwill. It is a strategic, legal, and increasingly urgent business imperative.

We hope this edition informs, challenges, and moves you to act

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026:

RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND ACTION FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



Sule Emmanuel Ojochenemi
Membership & research Assistant.

This year's International Women's Day theme — Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls — is a challenge to be honest about how far Nigeria still has to go. Women drive activity across industry, services, agriculture, and entrepreneurship, yet too many still face unequal access to opportunities, underrepresentation in leadership, and workplaces that were not designed with them in mind.

At NECA, 60% of our leadership team are women. We have a crèche where employees can bring their children to work. These are not accidental outcomes, they are deliberate choices, and we share them not to celebrate ourselves, but to demonstrate that meaningful action on gender equality is possible.

Employers have a direct role to play in changing this. Fair recruitment, equal pay, flexible working, safe workplaces, and genuine investment in women's advancement are not aspirational ideals, they are operational decisions that every organisation can make.

NECA also recognises the many women building their own path through entrepreneurship. The NECA Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW) provides mentorship, networking, and capacity building to help women entrepreneurs grow sustainable businesses and contribute to national development.

On this International Women's Day, NECA calls on employers, policymakers, and stakeholders across Nigeria to move beyond commitments and take concrete action because advancing the rights of women builds stronger businesses, stronger communities, and a more prosperous Nigeria for all.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026: RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND ACTION FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



Rights. Justice. Action.
for all Women and Girls



Happy International Women's Day

March 8

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE :

LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND EMERGING CHALLENGES



Tomiloba Babarinde
Senior Executive, Legal, Regulatory and Taxation

Despite progress in workplace policies and legal protections, gender inequity remains a significant issue in many organizations. Women often face barriers that limit their career advancement. In many industries deeply ingrained biases in hiring, promotions and salary negotiations put women at a disadvantage. While labour laws provide a framework for addressing these challenges, enforcement gaps and deeply rooted stereotypes continue to hinder workplace equity.

Legal Provisions

Nigerian labour laws recognize the need for maternity protection and non-discriminatory workplace policies. The Labour Act (Section 54) provides that women are entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave with at least 50% of their salary, and it prohibits dismissal on the basis of pregnancy. In the public sector, the Public Service Rules grant women 16 weeks of fully paid maternity leave, offering a more progressive standard. However, enforcement remains a challenge, and many women in the private sector still experience unfair treatment upon returning from maternity leave.

These protections are reinforced at the international level. Article 8 of ILO Convention No. 183 (Maternity Protection Convention, 2000) provides:

“It shall be unlawful for an employer to terminate the employment of a woman during her pregnancy or absence on leave referred to in Articles 4 or 5 or during a period following her return to work to be prescribed by national laws or regulations, except on grounds unrelated to the pregnancy or birth of the child and its consequences or nursing. The burden of proving that the reasons for dismissal are unrelated to pregnancy or childbirth and its consequences or nursing shall rest on the employer. A woman is guaranteed the right to return to the same position or an equivalent position paid at the same rate at the end of her maternity leave.”

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE :

LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

Beyond maternity rights, Nigerian law also provides protection against workplace harassment and gender-based violence. The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act) criminalizes sexual harassment, and courts have ruled against employers who fail to prevent or address such misconduct. Despite these legal provisions, many workplaces lack clear anti-harassment policies, leaving female employees vulnerable to exploitation. Without proactive enforcement mechanisms, women continue to face inappropriate behavior and unsafe work environments with little to no recourse.

Another major issue affecting women in the workplace is pay disparity. Nigerian laws do not explicitly mandate equal pay for equal work, even though Nigeria has ratified ILO Convention No. 100 (Equal Remuneration Convention), which promotes gender pay equity. The National Gender Policy (2006) advocates for equal remuneration, but without strict enforcement, many women continue to earn less than their male counterparts for similar work. Employers have a responsibility to ensure fair salary structures, but without proper accountability, wage gaps persist, limiting women's economic empowerment.

Judicial Decisions

The National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN) has made significant rulings that reinforce the need for gender equity in employment.

- In the case of *Mrs. Folarin Oreka Maiya v. The Incorporated Trustees of Clinton Health Access Initiative, Nigeria & 2 ors*, the NICN held that termination of employment on grounds of pregnancy is wrongful and will attract the award of heavy punitive damages against the employer, as pregnancy is not a valid reason for the termination of employment, and in fact, termination of employment on grounds of pregnancy amounts to discrimination on grounds of sex – which is unconstitutional.
- In *Omolola Olajide v. The Nigerian Police Force & 2 ors*[1]. The NICN addressed the dismissal of an unmarried pregnant woman based on Regulation 127 of the Police Act which prohibits unmarried police officers from becoming pregnant while not applying the same restriction to male officers. The court declared the regulation discriminating it and annulled it.
- Similarly, in *Ejike Maduka v. Microsoft & Ors*[1], the NIC addressed the issue of workplace sexual harassment and employer liability. Mrs. Maduka alleged that her employment was terminated due to her refusal to succumb to the sexual advances of the Country Manager. The court found that her rights to human dignity and freedom from discrimination had been violated and held both Microsoft Nigeria and Microsoft Corporation vicariously liable for the actions of the Country Manager.

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE :

LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

This case underscores the importance of employers not only establishing clear anti-harassment policies but also actively enforcing them to protect employees.

These cases highlight the judiciary's role in upholding women's rights at work, but they also reflect the ongoing struggles women face in asserting these rights.

Practical Steps for Employers

- Reviewing and updating maternity leave policies to ensure compliance with the Labour Act and, where possible, exceeding the statutory minimum.
- Implementing clear, well-communicated anti-harassment policies and ensuring they are actively enforced not just documented.
- Conducting regular gender pay audits and taking corrective action where disparities are identified.
- Ensuring that women returning from maternity leave are reinstated
- Fostering a workplace culture that supports women's advancement into leadership, not merely in policy but in practice.

The law provides the floor. Employers who are serious about building equitable, high-performing organisations must go beyond mere compliance and lead by example.

PAUSING, NOT STOPPING:

REDEFINING CAREER RESILIENCE FOR WOMEN IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR



Aminat Adekoya
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Introduction

For many women in Nigeria's private sector, career journeys are rarely linear. At different points in life, whether due to caregiving responsibilities, further education, health needs, or personal circumstances, women may step away from formal employment for a period. These breaks are rarely periods of inactivity. They are periods of transition, adaptation, and often quiet growth. Yet in many organisations, the gap on a CV still raises eyebrows before it raises questions. That needs to change.

The Stigma That Lingers

When a woman returns to the workforce after a career break, she frequently encounters a subtle but persistent assumption: that time away from formal employment means falling behind. Recruiters and hiring managers may wonder whether she is still current, still competitive, still relevant. What this framing misses entirely is what she was actually doing during that time.

Many women on career breaks remain deeply engaged, through informal learning, professional reading, volunteer leadership, entrepreneurial ventures, or the kind of high-stakes organisational management that comes with running a household and caring for dependants. These are not soft experiences. They build resilience, prioritisation, crisis management, and emotional intelligence, and these are capabilities that organisations spend considerable resources trying to develop in their employees.

The assumption that a career break signals diminishing professional value is not just unfair. In a Nigerian labour market where experienced talent is genuinely scarce, it is a costly mistake.

PAUSING, NOT STOPPING:

REDEFINING CAREER RESILIENCE FOR WOMEN IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The Emotional Weight of Re-entry

Returning to the workplace after time away is not simply a logistical challenge, it is an emotional one. A woman stepping back into a fast-paced corporate environment may be navigating a confidence gap, adjusting to workplace dynamics that have shifted in her absence, and catching up with digital tools and systems that have evolved. She may be doing all of this while managing the same personal responsibilities that prompted the break in the first place.

Acknowledging this reality is not about lowering the bar. It is about understanding what support is actually needed to unlock full performance and providing it.

What Forward-Thinking Employers Are Doing

The organisations best positioned to benefit from returning female professionals are those that treat reintegration as a deliberate process rather than a sink-or-swim moment. This means structured returnship programmes that ease the transition back into the workplace, mentorship pairings that help returning employees rebuild confidence and professional networks, flexible arrangements during the initial reintegration period, and skills-refresh opportunities that address specific gaps without being patronising.

None of this requires an elaborate budget. It requires intention, and a decision, at the leadership level, that experienced women who stepped away and chose to return are an asset worth investing in.

A Broader Shift in How We Measure Professional Worth

Ultimately, the conversation about career breaks is part of a larger question: how do we define professional value? If the answer is uninterrupted tenure, consistent upward progression, and no unexplained gaps, we will continue to screen out some of the most capable, resilient, and self-aware professionals in the talent pool and they will disproportionately be women.

A more honest and more productive measure of professional worth centres on contribution, capability, and the capacity to grow. By that standard, a woman who paused, navigated a significant life transition with competence, and chose to return to her career is not a risk. She is a resource.

As we mark International Women's Day, the challenge to Nigerian employers is straightforward: do not merely welcome women back after career breaks. Actively invest in their return. The workplaces that do will be stronger for it and so will Nigeria's private sector.

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES: PRACTICAL STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS IN LAGOS STATE



Adenike Oyetunde-Lawal
General Manager, Lagos State Office for Disability Affairs (LASODA).

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, inclusion is not merely a social consideration, it is a matter of governance, operational efficiency, and competitiveness. Lagos State continues to strengthen its regulatory and economic frameworks to ensure that workplaces reflect principles of equity, accessibility, and non-discrimination. Employers who embrace these principles are not simply meeting a standard; they are gaining access to a broader talent pool, improving productivity, and strengthening their organisational reputation.

The Lagos State Special People's Law underscores the State's commitment to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, including their right to fair and equitable participation in employment. A recent viral video illustrates this powerfully: a visually impaired young professional was filmed efficiently navigating a colleague's damaged mobile phone screen with confidence and independence. It was a quiet but compelling demonstration of what becomes possible when barriers are removed and the right tools are in place. For employers, the lesson is straightforward when inclusion is actively fostered, talent and innovation follow.

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES:

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS IN LAGOS STATE

Practical Steps for Inclusive Workplaces

The Lagos State Office for Disability Affairs (LASODA) offers guidance to help employers translate these principles into action across workplaces of all sizes and sectors.

- **Leadership Commitment.** Inclusive workplaces begin at the top. Employers should develop and communicate clear non-discrimination and inclusion policies, integrate disability inclusion into broader organisational frameworks, and demonstrate visible support for inclusive practices at every level of the organisation.
- **Inclusive Recruitment.** Recruitment processes should provide equal opportunity to all candidates. Employment decisions should be merit-based, job postings and application processes made accessible to persons with disabilities, and interviews conducted in a manner that minimises barriers to participation.
- **Assistive Technologies and Accessible Workspaces.** Employers should implement assistive technologies such as JAWS and NVDA screen readers, braille displays, and speech-to-text software to support visually impaired employees. Physical workspaces should meet accessibility requirements, and digital platforms, websites, applications, and internal systems should comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- **Accessibility Beyond Employment.** Inclusion extends to services, facilities, and customer engagement. Workplaces and public-facing spaces should be physically accessible, incorporating ramps, appropriate signage, and accessible restrooms. Digital accessibility and inclusive service delivery should be considered as standard, not as afterthoughts.

A Partner in Building Inclusive Organisations

LASODA provides advisory and technical support to employers implementing inclusive workplace practices, working alongside organisations to ensure that policies are not only adopted but effectively operationalised.

As Lagos State continues to strengthen its economic and regulatory frameworks, inclusive workplace practices will increasingly distinguish resilient and forward-thinking enterprises. Employers who embed accessibility and equity within their organisational culture are aligning with the State's policy direction and building workplaces where every employee can contribute fully to Nigeria's economic growth.

GENDER EQUALITY AS A CORE ESG PRIORITY:

WHY NIGERIAN EMPLOYERS CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO TREAT GENDER EQUALITY AS OPTIONAL



Tomiloba Babarinde
Senior Executive, Legal, Regulatory and Taxation

For many Nigerian employers, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments have traditionally centred on environmental stewardship such as waste reduction, carbon footprint, and energy efficiency. Yet one of the most commercially significant and globally scrutinized dimensions of the 'S' in ESG is rapidly moving to the front of the boardroom agenda: **gender equality**. With Nigeria ranked 123rd out of 146 countries in the World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Gender Gap Index, the urgency for Nigerian businesses to act is both a moral imperative and a competitive necessity.

The Business Case: More Than a Moral Argument

Gender equality is not merely a matter of social justice it is sound business strategy. Research consistently shows that companies with greater gender diversity at the senior level are significantly more profitable than their less-diverse peers.[1] In the Nigerian context, where women constitute approximately 36% of formal sector employees[2] yet are disproportionately underrepresented in leadership, the productivity and innovation gap is substantial.

Diverse leadership teams bring a broader range of perspectives to decision-making, improve problem-solving, reduce groupthink, and critically better reflect the consumer base. For Nigerian companies operating in sectors from financial services to consumer goods, women are both a major workforce resource and a primary customer segment. Ignoring gender equity is, in effect, ignoring business opportunity.

The Regulatory and Investor Landscape in Nigeria

Nigerian employers should be aware that regulatory expectations around gender reporting are strengthening. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Nigeria's Code of Corporate Governance recommends that companies target at least 30% gender diversity on their boards.[1] The Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) Sustainability Disclosure Guidelines likewise encourage listed companies to disclose gender representation at both board and management levels.

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Simultaneously, the investor community is paying close attention. Over 60% of Nigerian institutional investors now consider ESG factors including gender metrics in their investment decisions. For companies seeking capital from development finance institutions, multilateral lenders, or international equity partners, demonstrable progress on gender equality is increasingly a prerequisite, not a preference.

The Nigerian Legal Context

Gender equality in employment is not only an ESG consideration. It is also supported by several legal and policy frameworks within Nigeria.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees freedom from discrimination and affirms the dignity of the human person. While the Constitution does not regulate employment relationships in detail, it establishes a foundational principle of equality that influences labour jurisprudence.

The Labour Act of Nigeria provides certain protections for workers, including provisions relating to maternity protection and working conditions for female employees. Although aspects of the Act reflect older labour standards, it remains an important statutory framework governing employment relationships.

In addition, the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act criminalises various forms of violence and harassment, including conduct that may arise within workplace environments. This legislation reinforces the obligation of employers to maintain safe and respectful workplaces.

In addition, the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act criminalises various forms of violence and harassment, including conduct that may arise within workplace environments. This legislation reinforces the obligation of employers to maintain safe and respectful workplaces.

Integrating Gender Equality Into Corporate Practice

For employers seeking to align their operations with ESG principles, gender equality should be approached as part of a broader governance strategy rather than as a standalone initiative.

First, organisations should review their recruitment and promotion policies to ensure that they are transparent and based on merit. Structured hiring processes and objective performance evaluations help reduce unconscious bias and create equal opportunities for all employees.

Second, companies should consider leadership development and mentorship programmes that support the advancement of women within the organisation. Increasing female representation in management positions contributes to more balanced decision-making and stronger corporate governance.

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Third, employers should adopt clear workplace policies addressing harassment, discrimination, and employee welfare. Such policies should be supported by accessible reporting mechanisms and fair investigation procedures

Finally, businesses should periodically assess their internal data on workforce composition, pay equity, and career progression. Monitoring these indicators helps organisations measure progress and identify areas that require improvement.

Reporting and Accountability

Gender equality data should be integrated into annual ESG or sustainability reports. Relevant disclosures include: the proportion of women across all organisational levels; the gender pay gap; participation rates in leadership development programmes; and rates of parental leave uptake. UN Women's toolkit for African private sector organisations provides a practical framework for structuring such disclosures.

Conclusion

Gender equality is no longer a peripheral ESG consideration, it sits at the intersection of talent strategy, investor relations, regulatory compliance, and brand reputation. Nigerian employers who treat it as a genuine business priority, rather than a checkbox, will be better positioned to attract capital, retain top talent, and build organisations that reflect the full potential of Nigeria's workforce. The question is not whether gender equality belongs in your ESG framework. The question is how quickly you are willing to move.

This article was prepared for informational purposes. ESG standards and regulatory guidance are subject to change. Employers are encouraged to consult their legal and sustainability advisers.

BEYOND RULES AND REGULATIONS: BUILDING A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY IN THE WORKPLACE



Jejeloye Damilola
Social Labour Affairs & Industrial Relations Officer

Introduction

In many organisations today, compliance is defined by policies, procedures, and regulations designed to guide employee behaviour. These frameworks are necessary they establish accountability, set expectations, and provide recourse when things go wrong. But they are not sufficient on their own. What truly sustains ethical workplaces is something that no policy document can manufacture: a genuine, personal commitment to doing what is right.

What Workplace Ethics Actually Means

Workplace ethics refers to the moral principles that guide professional behaviour integrity, fairness, accountability, and transparency. When employees and leaders internalise these values, they contribute to a culture of trust that extends well beyond written rules. Rules tell people what they must do. Ethics shapes what they choose to do.

The distinction matters enormously. An organisation can have an elaborate compliance framework and still experience fraud, manipulation, and misconduct because individuals found ways around the rules. Conversely, organisations where employees hold themselves to high personal standards tend to be more resilient, more trusted, and better governed, even when formal oversight is limited.

A Practical Illustration:

Some of the most revealing tests of workplace integrity do not involve grand acts of misconduct. They appear in ordinary, everyday situations and in how individuals choose to respond when no one is watching.

Consider a procurement officer who receives an unsolicited gift from a vendor whose contract is under review. No policy explicitly anticipated this exact scenario. The gift is modest. The chances of discovery are low. The officer faces a straightforward choice: disclose it, decline it, or quietly accept it.

BEYOND RULES AND REGULATIONS: BUILDING A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Or consider a manager who submits expense claims that include personal costs alongside legitimate business expenses, reasoning that the amounts are small and the approval process is largely administrative. Again, no alarm is triggered. No audit flags the claim. The question is not whether the system caught it, the question is whether the individual knew it was wrong and proceeded anyway.

These scenarios are not hypothetical in Nigerian workplaces. They are familiar. And they illustrate precisely where rules reach their limit. No policy document can be written with enough specificity to cover every situation an employee will encounter. What fills that gap or fails to, is character.

Where Rules End and Character Begins

Laws and policies provide structure, but they cannot regulate every possible human behaviour. Legislators cannot anticipate every loophole. Internal policies cannot cover every scenario. This is precisely why character and the culture organisations build around it matters so deeply.

When individuals deliberately manipulate systems designed to provide fairness or relief, they do more than break a rule. They erode public trust, undermine the purpose of the policy, and shift the burden onto those who comply honestly. In a workplace context, the same logic applies: an employee who circumvents an expense policy, inflates a timesheet, or withholds critical information may not always be caught but the cumulative effect of such behaviour corrodes organisational culture from within.

Genuine ethical behaviour, by contrast, is not contingent on detection. It is consistent whether or not a supervisor is watching, whether or not an audit is underway, and whether or not a system is technically enforceable.

What Employers Can Do

Building a culture of integrity is an active responsibility of leadership, not a passive outcome of having the right policies in place. Several practical steps can help:

- **Model ethical behaviour from the top:** Culture flows downward. When senior leaders demonstrate transparency, acknowledge mistakes, and hold themselves to the same standards they expect of others, it signals that ethics is not performative.

BEYOND RULES AND REGULATIONS: BUILDING A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY IN THE WORKPLACE

- **Create safe channels for raising concerns:** Employees who witness misconduct must feel confident that reporting it will not harm them. Whistleblower protections and anonymous reporting mechanisms are not bureaucratic extras they are essential infrastructure for ethical organisations.
- **Reward integrity, not just results:** If performance is measured solely by outcomes, employees learn to achieve results by any means necessary. Recognition systems should explicitly value how results are achieved, not only what is achieved.
- **Invest in ethics training that is contextual and practical:** Generic compliance training has limited impact. Ethics conversations that use real scenarios including those drawn from the Nigerian professional context are more likely to shape genuine behaviour.



THE AI GENDER GAP:

WHY WOMEN HAVE MORE TO LOSE FROM THE GENAI REVOLUTION



Laretta Osifo

Learning and Development Assistant

Drawing on the ILO Research Brief - Gen AI, Occupational Segregation and Gender Equality in the World of Work (March 2026)

Generative Artificial Intelligence is reshaping the global labour market at speed. But its impact is not falling equally. According to a March 2026 ILO Research Brief, women are significantly more exposed to AI disruption than men, and without deliberate action from employers and policymakers, the technology risks widening gender inequality rather than closing it.

Women's Jobs Are in the Firing Line

The numbers are stark. Female-dominated occupations are nearly twice as likely to be exposed to generative AI as male-dominated ones — 29% compared to 16%. The automation risk is even sharper: 16% of female-dominated occupations face high displacement potential, against just 3% of male-dominated roles.

The jobs most at risk are familiar: secretaries, receptionists, administrative assistants, accounting clerks, payroll officers, and data entry workers, roles in which women are heavily concentrated globally. The jobs least at risk such as software development, engineering, ICT systems management, remain predominantly male.

This is not coincidence. It is the direct consequence of occupational segregation: the long-standing pattern by which women cluster into roles involving routine, codifiable tasks, precisely the tasks AI can most readily replicate, while men occupy roles involving technical reasoning and high autonomy, which AI tends to complement rather than replace.

The Structural Problem Behind the Statistics

Women's disproportionate exposure to AI disruption is inseparable from the structural inequalities that shape their working lives. Globally, women perform more than three-quarters of unpaid care work, constraining their access to full-time employment and high-growth sectors. Social norms, discriminatory hiring practices, and unequal access to training further concentrate women in lower-paid, routine roles that are most vulnerable to automation.

THE AI GENDER GAP:

WHY WOMEN HAVE MORE TO LOSE FROM THE GENAI REVOLUTION

The underrepresentation of women in AI itself compounds the problem. Women make up only 30% of the global AI workforce and less than 10% of software developers and engineers. When women are absent from the rooms where AI systems are designed, the technology reflects that absence. The ILO documents the consequences: recruitment algorithms that penalise female candidates, healthcare systems that underestimate women's needs, and credit-scoring tools that perpetuate gender disparities. AI trained on biased data reproduces and amplifies the biases already present in the world.

Quality of Work, Not Just Job Losses

The headline risk is automation-driven job loss, but the ILO is careful to note that for most workers, the more immediate impact of AI will be on how work is done, not whether it exists. AI reshapes tasks, alters skill requirements, and transforms workplace management. Done well, this can reduce workloads, support decision-making, and improve productivity. When done poorly without worker consultation, adequate training, or inclusive design, it intensifies pressure, reduces autonomy, and entrenches existing hierarchies.

Women, who make up the majority of workers in care, administrative, and service roles, are most likely to bear the costs of poorly managed AI implementation.

What Employers Must Do

Responding to this challenge requires action, not observation. Three priorities stand out:

- **Invest in reskilling now:** Female employees in high-exposure roles need access to digital upskilling before displacement occurs, not after. Waiting is both costly and unfair.
- **Audit AI tools for bias:** Before deploying AI in recruitment, performance management, or service delivery, employers should verify that systems have been tested for gender bias and that affected workers, disproportionately women have been consulted.
- **Close the internal STEM gap:** Actively supporting women's access to technology roles, digital training, and AI-adjacent career pathways is not a long-term aspiration. It is an immediate competitive necessity.

The AI revolution will not wait for workplaces to catch up. The question for Nigerian employers is not whether generative AI will reshape their organisations, it will. The question is whether women in their workforce will be protected, reskilled, and repositioned to benefit from that change, or left to absorb its worst effects alone.

This article draws on the ILO Research Brief: "Gen AI, Occupational Segregation and Gender Equality in the World of Work", March 2026. Available at ilo.org.

NECA UPDATES

NECA, FRCN DEEPEN COLLABORATION ON CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

The Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA), led by its Director-General, Mr. Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde, held a strategic engagement with the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRCN) in Lagos to strengthen collaboration on corporate reporting, sustainability practices, and the promotion of a more transparent business environment.

During the meeting, the Chairman of the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria, Dr. Rabiun Olowo, highlighted the Council's ongoing capacity-building programmes for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), reaffirming FRCN's commitment to supporting smaller businesses in meeting required financial reporting standards.

Speaking on the forthcoming mandatory Sustainability Reporting framework, Dr. Olowo confirmed that the Council will roll out a structured readiness programme for the private sector ahead of implementation, to ensure organisations are adequately prepared when the new regime takes effect.

He also commended NECA member-companies that have distinguished themselves as early adopters and voluntary sustainability reporters, and further acknowledged NECA's establishment of an ESG Advisory Board. According to him, the Council will align with the initiative, describing it as a positive step toward strengthening responsible and sustainable business practices in Nigeria.

As a key outcome of the engagement, both institutions agreed to establish a NECA-FRCN Joint Technical Committee to facilitate sustained collaboration, coordinate capacity-building initiatives, and ensure that private sector perspectives are reflected in the Council's regulatory processes.

NECA UPDATES



Mr. Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde - Director-General, Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) and Dr. Rabiu Olowo - Chairman of the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria



NECA UPDATES



NECA SOUTH-WEST IBADAN GEOGRAPHICAL GROUP

Navigating Nigeria's New Tax Law

Practical Compliance and implementation strategies for HR,
Finance, SMEs and Entrepreneurs

Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) invites member-companies and employers across the South-West States of Nigeria to a focused and practical webinar on the implications of Nigeria's new tax law for business operations.

This session is designed to help HR, Finance, Payroll, and Compliance professionals understand what has changed, what actions are required, and how to implement the new provisions effectively within their organisations.

Key Discussion Areas

- ✓ Overview of key changes under the new tax law
- ✓ Implications for payroll administration and employee taxation
- ✓ Employer compliance obligations and reporting requirements
- ✓ HR and Finance coordination under the new tax regime
- ✓ Managing compliance risks and avoiding penalties
- ✓ Practical steps for immediate implementation

Event Details

 Wednesday, 25th March 2026
10:00 am (Prompt)

 Format: Virtual (Online)

Who Should Attend:

- ✓ HR Managers and Officers
- ✓ Finance Managers and Accountants
- ✓ Payroll and Compliance Officers
- ✓ Business Executives and Operations Managers

 **Participation** is open to employers across the South-West States of Nigeria.

SPEAKER



Mr. Adeyemi Adediran
Partner, Commercial Practice
Group Andersen in Nigeria

HOST



Mrs. Adenike Agiri
Chairperson, NECA IGG

CHIEF HOST



Mr. Adewale-Smatt
Oyerinde
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, NECA

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OMOLOLA OLOWORARAN
DIRECTOR GENERAL PENCOM



ANTHONIA IFEANYI OKORO
COO, PENOP



ADEWALE OYERINDE
DIRECTOR GENERAL NECA

Attendance is free



DATE
THURSDAY, 26TH
MARCH 2026



TIME
10AM



VENUE
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Registration link:

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NECA UPDATES



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2026**



**10.00AM
PROMPT**

SPEAKERS



Mr. Amos Falonipe
Director, Trade Union Services
and Industrial Relations Federal
Ministry of Labour and Employment



Chief Nzeribe Okegbue
President, Employers Association
for Private Employment Agencies
of Nigeria (EAPEN)

HOST



**Mr. Adewale-Smatt
Oyerinde**
Director-General, NECA

SCAN ME



REGISTRATION LINK:
<https://bit.ly/NECA-MSME>
Compliance

NECA UPDATES



SECURING YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

PROTECTING PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY
IN A CONNECTED WORLD



WEDNESDAY

8TH

APRIL 2026



11am



VIRTUAL

REGISTRATION LINK

<https://bit.ly/SecuringYourDigitalFootprint>

SPEAKER



**MR. TOKUNBO
SMITH**

PRESIDENT DKIPPI

SPEAKER



**ALERO LACHERIE
MOGBEYITEREN**

CYBERSECURITY
PROFESSIONAL

HOST



**MR. ADEWALE-
SMATT OVERINDE**

DIRECTOR-GENERAL,
NECA

**SCAN QR CODE TO
REGISTER**



PARTICIPATION IS FREE

www.neca.org.ng

NECA UPDATES



**ARE YOU A JOB SEEKER,
OR ARE YOU LOOKING
FOR QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES?**

**JOB
& EMPLOYABILITY
FAIR 2026**

**13TH-VIRTUAL
14TH-PHYSICAL
MAY, 2026**

**NECA HOUSE, PLOT A2
HAKEEM BALOGUN,
ALAUZA, IKEJA LAGOS**

9.00 AM

**THEME:
EMPOWERING TALENTS,
BUILDING SKILLS AND
DRIVING INCLUSIVE
GROWTH**



SCAN ME



JOBSEEKERS

REGISTRATION LINK:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/NECAJOBFAIR2026JOBSEEKERS](https://bit.ly/NECAJOBFAIR2026JOBSEEKERS)

SCAN ME



EMPLOYERS

REGISTRATION LINK:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/NECAJOBFAIR2026-EMPLOYERS](https://bit.ly/NECAJOBFAIR2026-EMPLOYERS)

OPEN TO GRADUATES AND TECHNICIANS



For participation, kindly contact:
Oluwaseun 08160600305,
Yemisi 08131191568
Opeyemi 0803 531 8892

NECA UPDATES



 29TH-30TH JUNE 2026

 Abuja Continental Hotel



Theme:

**LEVERAGING REFORMS AND ESG
FOR ENTERPRISE COMPETITIVENESS
AND INCLUSIVE NATIONAL GROWTH**



REGISTRATION LINK:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/EMPLOYERSUMMIT2026](https://bit.ly/employersummit2026)

*Save
the Date*

FOR SPONSORSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND
EXHIBITION ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL:

 Adenike: 08023449145, Isabella: 08065954707,
Femi: 09060008293, Oluwaseun: 08160600305

POWERED BY:

NECA
...the state of business since 1957

**NIGERIA EMPLOYERS'
CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION**

L&D TRAININGS

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, organisations must continuously strengthen their leadership capacity, operational efficiency, and compliance awareness. Our upcoming Learning & Development programmes are designed to help organisations equip their workforce with practical skills that enhance performance, reduce risks, and promote sustainable growth.

- **Corporate Drivers Development: Attitudinal Skills Improvement and Safety Consciousness for Drivers and Dispatch Riders**

Drivers and dispatch riders play a critical role in business operations. This Physical programme scheduled for March 28th focuses on improving safety consciousness, professional driving behaviour, and preventive vehicle maintenance practices. The training helps organisations reduce accident risks, protect corporate assets, and promote a culture of safety and responsibility among operational staff.



CORPORATE DRIVERS DEVELOPMENT COURSE:

Attitudinal Skills Improvement and Safety Consciousness for Drivers and Dispatch Riders

Drivers and dispatch riders are essential to business daily operations, yet unsafe practices and poor vehicle maintenance pose significant risks. This training builds attitudinal discipline, safety awareness, and professionalism, teaching defensive driving, ethical conduct, and preventive vehicle maintenance to protect lives, corporate assets, and reduce organisational liability.





28th MARCH

Member: N120,000
Non Member: N135,000
Venue: NECA House
Duration: 1 Day

 yemisi@neca.org.ng;
neca@neca.org.ng

 **08131191568**

L&D TRAININGS

- **NECA Retreat for Business Executives, Managers and Technical Committees (Residential)**

Scheduled for April 16th – 18th, this residential retreat offers a valuable opportunity for business leaders and technical committee members to step away from routine operations and engage in strategic discussions that enhance leadership effectiveness and organisational resilience. Participants will benefit from peer learning, networking, and practical insights that support better decision-making and long-term business sustainability.

NECA
...the voice of business since 1957

2026 Retreat
FOR BUSINESS MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES

The Retreat provides a platform for industry experts, business and public sector executives to examine key socio-economic, labour, and human capital issues affecting private and public sector sustainability. It fosters learning, meaningful discussions, effective strategies and professional networking.

The Resilient Enterprise, People and Systems
Building and Managing Businesses that Outlive Seasons, Cycles and Crisis

16TH-18TH APRIL 2026

COURSE FEE:
MEMBER: N300,000
NON-MEMBER: N320,000

AAE & T (Formerly ParkInn by Radisson)
1, Ibrahim Babangida Boulevard,
Kuto, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

For further details call:
0813191568, 08065954707
Email: yemisi@neca.org.ng;
isabella@neca.org.ng;
neca@neca.org.ng

Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/NECAretreat2026>

L&D TRAININGS

- **Mastery and Practice of Nigerian Labour, Employment and Current Social Laws**

Taking place on the April 28th – 29th (Virtual), this programme equips managers and HR professionals with a deeper understanding of Nigerian labour and employment laws. Participants will gain practical insights into managing workplace relations, ensuring legal compliance, and navigating contemporary labour challenges effectively.

Organisations are encouraged to take advantage of these programmes to strengthen their workforce and position their businesses for continued success.



MASTERY AND PRACTICE OF NIGERIAN LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND CURRENT SOCIAL LAWS: Understanding the Risks & Maximizing the Opportunities

SCAN ME



REGISTRATION LINK:
[https://bit.ly/Labourlaw
april2026](https://bit.ly/Labourlawapril2026)



This training is designed to equip business owners, managers, supervisors, and team leads with a comprehensive understanding of key legal provisions governing the workplace. It provides an in-depth exploration of contemporary labour relations issues, enabling participants to manage people, policies, and organizational risks with confidence, clarity, and full compliance.



**28th-29th
APRIL**

Member: N180,000
Non Member: N195,000
Venue: Virtual
Duration: 2 Days



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neca@neca.org.ng



08131191568

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- International Labour Organization (ILO), 'Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change', 2019.

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Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX), 'Sustainability Disclosure Guidelines', 2021. Listed companies are encouraged to disclose gender representation at board and management levels.

PwC Nigeria, 'ESG in Nigeria: The Business Imperative', 2023. Over 60% of Nigerian institutional investors now consider ESG factors in investment decisions.