

**GOODWILL MESSAGE BY THE NATIONAL LIBRARIAN AND CHAIRMAN OF THE INFORMATION FOR ALL PROGRAMME (IFAP), PROF. CHINWE VERONICA ANUNOBI, AT A TWO-DAY WORKSHOP ON THE IMPACT OF SAFE JOURNALISM AND GENDER EQUALITY ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA ORGANISED BY THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO, FROM 13<sup>TH</sup> TO 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2023 AT THE NIGERIAN ARMY RESOURCE CENTRE, ASOKORO, ABUJA.**

Protocols

It is heart-warming to be here with you this morning at the commencement of this two-day workshop which sets out to look at the impact of safe journalism and gender equality on democratic governance in Nigeria.

This workshop, on this particular theme couldn't have come at a better time than now. I say this because our country is in a transition period when a new leadership has just taken over and is setting its priorities for moving our country forward. Our brand-new president, after setting his agenda, will select and appoint people to drive and execute these policies. After that, it will behold practitioners of journalism to shape the discourse about these policies as well as enlighten the public about them. Of greater importance is to hold the appointed officials accountable in accordance with the president's promises to Nigerians. And that is where the issues of safety and gender equality becomes crucial.

While carrying out their duties, journalists are sometimes exposed to threats to their safety of which female journalists are sometimes most vulnerable. Consequently, they tend to avoid certain areas or are withdrawn from risk-prone assignments as may be directed by their editors. Whichever is the case, it stifles women voices and overtime could obliterate them from the profession. At the same time, it affects the media's duty as the watchdog and agenda setter for the society.

This workshop will therefore afford journalist especially the female folks an avenue to learn as well as cross-fertilize ideas on how to courageously carry out their duties while staying safe.

Before I sit down, I want to thank NATCOM-UNESCO for choosing this auspicious moment in our national life, to hold a workshop on this theme, and I urge participants to sustain this discussion even beyond this venue, in the media space and beyond.

Thank you all.