

## Introduction

The Affirmative Action Initiative for Women (NCAA) remains unwavering in its aspiration to ensure the elimination of all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex and gender in private and public spaces. It recognises the fact that the first step to achieving this is to put in place the legal framework to support the aspiration. In pursuance of this agenda, the NCAA put together the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill (GEOB) which seeks to incorporate into national and state laws the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of women in Africa and National Gender Policy (NGP). Over the years, NCAA in collaboration with the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and Ipas has made remarkable progress in this direction. The bill has been passed in Imo, Anambra (not assented to), Kogi and Ekiti states. It is still pending in Lagos, Edo, Plateau, Rivers, Enugu and Kaduna states.

Presently, NCAA is partnering with Voices for Change (V4C) with funding support from DfID towards the passage of the GEOB at the national level as well as in two states - Enugu and Kaduna as pilot at the state level.

NCAA, through the V4C funding will explore innovative strategies such as the use of new voices, male champions and new actors and extensive use of social media. As a step towards this, a power mapping was conducted to identify the key players in the National Assembly and in the state Houses of Assembly who are returning the second or third time. It will also explore the recruitment of celebrities as **new voices** into the demand for the bill. They will be engaged during visits to the leadership of the House and Senate, and during the public hearings to speak out in support of the bill through media platforms.

One of the strategies of the project is increasing the support base for the demand for the passage of the bill into law through sustained partnership with stakeholders (Religious and Traditional Leaders, women's groups, CSOs, New Voices – (Okada riders, traders, Nollywood actors, celebrities), Legislators and relevant MDAs.

The project **activities** in the project include the mass production and distribution of the bill in simplified and illustrated versions to create awareness of its

progressive and beneficial provisions as well as other legislative advocacy activities.