AFRICA’S FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT
ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF OF LIBERIA
LIFE AFTER OFFICE!
I have always had a strong admiration for women who not only play in a male-dominated terrain, but also excel at it. Many a time, we never ask questions when a man is a good chef, or hairdresser or makeup artiste. They are not constantly watched for mistakes because of their gender. But when a woman is a General in the army, or a Firefighter or in a position where women rarely venture into, they are seen as aggressive and are watched eagle-eyed for any sign of weakness. Such women, especially very high up the ladder, have to work twice as hard to garner respect from the men who work with or under them.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the 24th President of Liberia from 2006 to 2018, the first elected female Head of State in Africa. Sirleaf was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with two other women as recognition for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work. She recently visited Lagos to speak at the Wiscar annual conference where she spoke to FUNKIE BABS-KUFEJI about her life after office, women in government and much more.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was the 24th President of Liberia from 2006 to 2018, the first elected female Head of State in Africa. Sirleaf speaks about what it takes to ‘break the ceiling’ in a male dominated sector. Against all odds, she ruled Liberia for 12 years! Also, with the emergence of Sahle-Work Zewde, present female President of Ethiopia, this trend is here to stay. It will not happen overnight but in a decade or so from now, female Presidency will not seem like an impossible task anymore. America almost got one in Hillary Clinton but alas, it was not to be. And with the antecedents of the current President, Donald Trump, a Harry was not such a bad idea after all. Truth be told, given the right opportunity, women will put in their best plus go the extra mile because they are built like that. Juggling so many balls at the same time is second nature to them. Women are nurturers. They build. They encourage. They listen. They push. They discipline. They can be soft as jelly one minute and hard as a rock the next. They are not afraid to fight for a cause they passionately believe in. They are naturally wiser than the male gender because after all, are they the mothers that made boys out of babies and men out of boys? There is a natural innate strength a woman has and if required to use it, she knows just what buttons to press and how hard or gentle this button needs to be pressed to get the required result. So women who aim for the highest seat of the land should be encouraged to get into the arena. If they have what it takes and given the opportunity to serve, chances are that they will perform. And perform well too.

So who knows, Nigeria too, might one day, just be ready for its own first female President. Hopefully, much sooner than later.
Commissioning Cocktail Night & Open House

The two-day commissioning event which held at The Bridge Peridot, Mbora District, Abuja, began with the cocktail party which held on the 18th of January 2019, and was graced by distinguished guests, esteemed clients with live performances by Ayo Makun and Timi Dakolo. The Open house event followed the next day, where guests were taken on an exclusive tour of the residence.
It was a fun night of glamour and electrifying excitement as the Nigerian Maritime Safety and Administration Agency once again gathered together an audience filled with the crème de la crème for its Annual Corporate Dinner and Awards ceremony. The event held at Eko Hotel and Suites in Lagos, Nigeria.

The NIMASA dinner and awards night is an initiative to reward and recognize industry players and staff who’ve put in quality years of service. Staff members, stakeholders, and friends were entertained and awards bestowed on the most impactful maritime industry players. There was a line up of A-list performers and chart toppers keeping guests entertained through the evening. Mr Eazy, Paul Okoye of the defunct PSquare, Flavor, Tiwa Savage, and celebrity disc jockey, DJ Lambo. The hosts of the evening were IK Osakioduwa, Chioma Omeruah (Chygurl), and Tobi Bakre (of BBN).

The event is the second one since Dr Dakuku Peterside assumed office as Director General and is an initiative he holds dearly to his heart.

PHOTOS: KUNLE OGUNFUPI

NIMASA DINNER & MERIT AWARDS

Scene and Be Seen
It was certainly a time of celebration for the Okeowo's as they hosted friends and close family members at their annual new year thanksgiving party. Sir Okeowo and family started the year off in gratitude to God on January 1st at the Palacio de Okeowo in Parkview.

The event started off with a church service at the family chapel and evolved into a carnival. It was well attended and had the very best of drinks and food as always, with great music from evangelist Ebenezer Obey, Yinka Ayefele, Faith band, Mayorkun and Burna boy.
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Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is a Liberian politician who served as the 24th President of Liberia from 2006 to 2018. Sirleaf was the first elected female head of state in Africa. She was educated at the College of West Africa before moving to the United States, where she studied at Madison Business College and Harvard University. Sirleaf was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with two other women as recognition for their non-violent struggle for the safety and women's rights to full participation in peace-building work. She recently visited Lagos to speak at the Wiscar annual conference where she spoke to FUNKE BABS-KUFEJI about her life after office, women in government and much more.

If you look at the record of successes all over Africa, you will see that great strides have been made by all countries in varying degrees of course and enough to say that the road to women's full participation in society is well on the way and can't be stopped.

What's your advice for women who want to sit at the table with men in power? What are the qualities that they should possess to enable them get to the top?

First of all, as a woman, coming to a very high level position, you are always under the microscope. People will always watch what you say, what you do, what you wear, how you perform, but this is not what they do when men take office. So what you have to do is, knowing you have to be stronger, knowing that you have the ability, knowing you can do it and do it perhaps a bit better. If you have the backing of men, thank you and let them do it. You can demonstrate this through performance. Along the way they will fall in line and give you respect when you have earned it. You know every time a woman comes into a new high position she will face that but it's always short lived through good performance.

What impact did this deliberate decision have on your government as President of Liberia?

We broke the stereotypes by putting women in strategic positions, departing from the past as the number of women that normally will be male dominated sent a signal that women are equal and just as capable and I think our performance in Liberia demonstrated that the confidence we imposed in them were well earned. We wouldn't have solved our 4 Million debt if I didn't have a woman as a Minister of Finance.

What has life been after leaving the office?

What do you think women can do to increase their numbers in government?

Men have recognised that women are equal, some men do, look what is happening in Ethiopia. We have reached that point because women have pushed that hard enough and have proven to be leaders and not only me, but all over Africa and the world, have insisted that we are equal and we must demand equal place at the table. Some men are recognising it like in Ethiopia, Rwanda, increasingly in Senegal and other places. It is a trend that is on the track and can't be stopped. We just have to increasingly go faster until equality is fully achieved, it might take years, but it will happen.

What is your advice for the WISCAR mentees?

I advise them to take the training they have had, the experience they have gained from the workshop and put it to use. To set their goals, to determine what they want to be, commit themselves to be the best they can be in whatever is their chosen area of endeavour, to work hard for it, to know that obstacles can be overcome with courage and determination.

What has life been after leaving the office?

The young people represent the dynamics and the future of our countries. Now have the people provided the opportunities for them? The opportunities like education, health care, participation in governance, in which is what they demand. Countries have to be able to deliver on the promises to the young through their policies, actions, programs and support. It's going to take a little bit more because in Africa, the numbers of our young people are out pacing our growth domestic product and that means we have to watch out for the population. The young people are expanding and our ability to respond fully to their needs, desires becomes very difficult from year to year for all of African countries but they are the future and when we prepare them for the future, we have shown that our country will continue to be peaceful, democratic and open societies.

You said during your keynote speech at the WISCAR conference, that you were very concerned about putting women in key positions in your government. Did you face any opposition? And how were you able to balance it without causing frictions between genders?

First of all, as a woman, coming to a very high level position, you are always under the microscope. People will always watch what you say, what you do, what you wear, how you perform, but this is not what they do when men take office. So what you have to do is, knowing you have to be stronger, knowing that you have the ability, knowing you can do it and do it perhaps a bit better. If you have the backing of men, thank you and let them do it. You can demonstrate this through performance. Along the way they will fall in line and give you respect when you have earned it. You know every time a woman comes into a new high position she will face that but it's always short lived through good performance.

What's your one thing that stands out for you about the organisation WISCAR?

The strong leadership, which is what we all seek and recognise throughout Africa. We are always looking for that strong leader who will create, innovate, move institutions, make them successful and make them work and I applaud the organisers for that.

Do you think we can achieve equal participation for women in areas of economy in Nigeria and Africa?

I believe in her because I saw her performance, I know what she did to promote women and promote new developments and I know she can do the job. Unfortunately I'm not a Nigerian voter, so I wish her well as a friend and I hope she will be able to present her vision to you the women voters so you will see reasons to support her.

What do you think women can do to increase their numbers in government?

Men have to recognise that women are equal, some men do, look what is happening in Ethiopia. We have reached that point because women have pushed that hard enough and have proven to be leaders and not only me, but all over Africa and the world, have insisted that we are equal and we must demand equal place at the table. Some men are recognising it like in Ethiopia, Rwanda, increasingly in Senegal and other places. It is a trend that is on the track and can’t be stopped. We just have to increasingly go faster until equality is fully achieved, it might take years, but it will happen.

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It is not an uncommon sight these days to see at least five socialites and celebrities clad in an LDA piece at an elite event. The eponymous brand, which has been in existence since 2005, has over time evolved not only in its style direction but more importantly its choice of fabrics. We believe it is this evolution beyond the regular, which has really seen Lanre da Silva Ajayi’s designs take flight. Whereas the lace fabric once seemed to define her label, it is now the shapes and the mixing of colours and print together which make her collections so waant-able. Her recent pieces haven’t been just about knockout dresses, but outfits, which are an inch away from becoming wardrobe staples.

As a result, real women with tons of style have bought into her emerald bonnets and flowing chiffon dresses in a big way. The forward-voices of any fashion show, which she chooses to showcase her pieces, are an indicator that the LDA brand which is now a favourite of many fashion forward ladies can not only work on a variety of ages and shapes but is also definitely here to stay.
In case you hadn’t already noticed, this season, stripes are having a serious moment. Here, there and everywhere. Stripes are not only the print of the moment, they’re immensely popular because of their slimming effect. Check out these fashion bloggers both wearing these red striped pants with frills attached at the sides that open at the knee giving that peek-a-boo effect in their legs. Who do you think rocked the trend best? Let us know.

Also known as the Lady Vodka, Jennifer Oseh is one fashion blogger who in a usually goes over the top with her looks but still owns it. Here she effortlessly blends two stand out print pieces without clashing. The typical woman would have gone for something safe like a white or red top, but Jennifer pushes the envelope with confidence by pairing her with a lovely billowy sleeved top in tiger print fabric. Who would have thought? That’s style right there for you.

Whoever thought stripes and polka would look so good together. Some women might not be brave enough to wear both looks together but Alero has done so with ease proving she knows just how well to combine colours and print. This look is no exception.

BY KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR

WHO WORE IT BETTER?

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BY DIAMOND
One of the biggest fashion trends of summer for 2018 was the off-the-shoulder outfit, so it’s no surprise that this trend has made its back in 2019. Depending on what you wear them with, one shoulder tops or dresses can be chic and glamorous or more casual and effortless. It’s a clever way to show some skin without being too obvious. For some reason, it is not frowned upon because it manages to combine sex appeal and subtlety in one fell swoop. Not as easy as it sounds to pull varying styles showcased to bring out the ‘inner’ you!

A one arm top with ruffles is a cool statement piece. Pair it with a fun flirty skirt like INI DIMA OKEJIE has done and VIOLA...you are ready to paint the town red!

Feeling all grown and sexy? Then pair your one shoulder top with high waisted pants or trousers. FUNKE HUNTDOIN.

A one shoulder jumpsuit is ridiculously cool and on trend. Wear it with bold earrings and a pair of heels for a fancy night out with your girlfriends.

A figure hugging one shoulder dress is always a classy and chic way to go when you aren’t sure what to wear for that dinner or cocktail.

A one shoulder top is a great way to show off a necklace. Some might prefer to go bare and wear big earrings instead. Either way is ok...just don’t do both.

“Create” your own one shoulder top by buying a big loose tee and let one side fall off your arm. This is such an easy outfit with joggers and a pair of sneakers.

Keep things simple by wearing a one shoulder top with high waisted pants and a pair of heels. This look is for those who like to keep things sweet and stylish.

Hugging one shoulder can always be a way to go when you aren’t sure what to wear for that dinner or cocktail.

“GRECIAN IS HERE TO STAY!!!”

BY FUNKE BABS-KUFEJI & DIOMA USIADJE
 SHAPE YOUR EYEBROW LIKE A PRO

No matter if yours are naturally wild or have been victims of over-plucking, perfectly shaped and groomed eyebrows are possible to achieve. So, if you’re struggling to keep your eyebrows neat or want quite a plain and perfect arch, it may be time to seek assistance. By learning the correct methods and techniques for shaping your eyebrows, you’ll be able to create the most flattering appearance for your face. So, before you go pulling out the tweezers and start attacking every little hair, take the time to break up your skills and perfect your technique with this handy guide. From finding the best tools for the job, we can show you how to shape eyebrows like a pro.

BYFUNKE BABS-KUFEH

Eyebrow shapes

Before you can even start thinking about removing unwanted eyebrow hairs, you need to decide upon the shape that you want your eyebrows to be. Having a clear vision of the final form of your brows before beginning will help you to create the best results. While everyone’s eyebrows are slightly different, most fall into one of six main categories. They can either be S-shaped, hard-angled, soft-angled, straight or rounded. In general, the most flattering shape for you will be the one that most closely resembles the natural contours of your brows. However, there are other factors to take into consideration, such as your face type.

Best eyebrow shaping kits

To get the best results when shaping your eyebrows, you need to have the right tools for the job. Firstly, a high-quality pair of slanted tweezers will be invaluable when you need to target small and stubborn strands. A spoolie or eyebrow comb will also help you groom your brows to precisely see what needs to be removed. Eyebrow scissors will allow you to trim any long strands, while an eyebrow razor will quickly remove excess fuzz. For those who aren’t yet confident in their shaping abilities, eyebrow stencils can help ensure that you get things right. Don’t forget about makeup, either. Filling in your brows when shaping them will leave you with a beautiful and full appearance.

How to shape thick eyebrows

If you have naturally thick eyebrows, it can be both a blessing and a curse. Although it may take a bit of work to shape your brows and keep them looking neat, you will have a naturally full and thick appearance. If your brows are messy and have an undefined shape, start grooming them by marking out and removing hairs where your eyebrow begins. Then, tidy up the excess strands across the top of your brow, ensuring that your arch is in the correct place. Next, remove extra hairs under the arch. Repeat this process on the other eyebrow, working to make them even and matching. Finally, trim any strands that are longer than the rest to achieve a neatly-groomed appearance.

What Eyebrow Shape Should I Have?

While it’s always ideal to work with the natural shape of your eyebrows, to achieve the most flattering appearance, you also need to consider your face type. For example, if you have an oval face, most eyebrow shapes will suit you. However, it’s best to avoid those that are overly arched or overly straight. If you have a square face, try to balance your look by ensuring that your brows appear soft with a smooth arch. For those with a round face, making sure that your eyebrows aren’t too thin or too thick is essential. Also, ensure that the beginning and tail of your brows are in line with an arch in between for the best look. If your face is long, on the other hand, aim for slightly thick eyebrows that aren’t too long or arched.

How to shape thin eyebrows

If you have naturally thin eyebrows or have over-plucked in the past, it can be tricky but not impossible to achieve beautiful and full looking brows. While it may be tempting just to leave your thin eyebrows unattended to make the most of every strand, this will only lead to a messy appearance. Instead, carefully groom and fill in your brows for a lovely look. To start, apply some eye primer to lay your hairs flat and make shaping easier. Next, use tweezers to tidy up stray strands below your brow and carefully trim any long strands. If you need to tidy up the top of your eyebrow, very carefully use an eyebrow razor to do so. Finally, fill in your brows using a pencil to make them appear thicker and fuller.

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