Editorial Suite

Contributed by Maureen Chigbo
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The powers of the first lady and that of the wives of governors are enormous and they have used such to generate a lot of money

There is no provision for the office of the first lady in the Nigerian Constitution. It is also not officially classified as a ministry, department or agency, MDA, under the executive arm of government. This must be the reason it is not included in the budget submitted by the executive branch to the legislature either at the national or state level. But the powers of the first lady and that of the wives of governors are enormous and they have used such to generate a lot of money to run their offices, and also charity programmes. Philanthropists, corporate organisations and other donors both local and international, have donated monies to them, especially at the launching of the pet projects during which billions of naira are raised. Over the years, the monies have remained unaccounted for while some of the projects die with the expiration of the tenure of the first lady and wives of governors. There is no record so far of their handing over of such funds to their successors. Of recent, there have been allegations of outright embezzlement or misappropriation of the donations levelled against first ladies and wives of governors. Newswatch decided to investigate the basis of the allegations, what has happened to all the pet projects initiated by present and past first ladies and wives of governors, the current state of the projects and what became of the money raised to implement the programmes. The outcome of the very revealing investigation is what we have captured in this week’s cover story of the magazine titled: Their Excellencies’ Charity Programmes: How First Ladies Con Nigerians. It was written by Dike Onwuamaeze, principal staff writer.