

PROFILE
OF
MRS. DIIARAU DIDI ESTHER WALSON-JACK, OON, mni
Immediate Past Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Nigeria
August 2024 – August 2026

Mrs. Diiarau Didi Esther Walson-Jack, OON, mni, is a distinguished Nigerian public-sector leader, lawyer and institutional reformer with over three decades of experience spanning subnational and federal governance. Her career reflects a sustained commitment to strengthening public institutions, advancing administrative reform and building the human and institutional capacity required for effective governance in a complex emerging democracy.

Across a 34-year career, Mrs. Walson-Jack served at the intersection of law, policy, administration and executive leadership. Trained as a lawyer at the University of Lagos and as a legislative drafter, she played an important role in the formative years of Bayelsa State, where she led legal drafting functions supporting both the Executive and Legislative branches. This early experience placed her at the centre of institution-building in a newly created State and provided a strong foundation in constitutional governance, policy formulation and public administration.

She subsequently rose to serve as Solicitor-General and Permanent Secretary in the Bayelsa State Ministry of Justice, Commissioner for Science, Technology and Manpower Development, and Chief of Staff to the Governor of Bayelsa State. These roles broadened her experience in executive coordination, human capital development, legal administration and the management of government at the subnational level.

At the federal level, Mrs. Walson-Jack served as Permanent Secretary across a number of strategic ministries and institutions, including Niger Delta Affairs, Power, Water Resources and Sanitation, Education, and the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation. Her work across these portfolios gave her extensive experience in cross-sector governance and public-sector transformation, including national infrastructure, water security, sanitation, education, labour relations, workforce welfare and institutional reform.

In August 2024, she was appointed Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, the highest-ranking career leadership position in Nigeria's Federal Civil Service. In that role, she provided leadership to the federal bureaucracy and advanced reforms focused on institutional performance, workforce capability, employee welfare, productivity and the modernisation of the Civil Service. Her

leadership was grounded in the conviction that a professional, ethical, motivated and highly skilled public service is fundamental to national development and effective democratic governance.

Her career is particularly distinguished by an ability to operate across institutional boundaries and translate policy priorities into administrative action. Having served in legal, executive, sectoral and central coordinating roles, she brings a rare whole-of-government perspective to questions of state capacity, institutional resilience, leadership development and public-sector performance.

Mrs. Walson-Jack has complemented her extensive professional experience with executive and strategic education at leading institutions in Nigeria and internationally, including the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru; the London School of Economics; Harvard Business School; the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government in the United Arab Emirates; and Harvard Kennedy School. Her continued investment in learning reflects a longstanding commitment to adaptive leadership and contemporary approaches to governance and public management.

Drawing on more than three decades of leadership and public-service experience, Mrs. Walson-Jack contributes to international and national conversations on:

- Building resilient and effective public institutions in emerging democracies
- Public-sector reform and large-scale organisational transformation
- Strategic human capital development for a 21st-century Civil Service
- Women in leadership and executive decision-making
- Ethical leadership, integrity and public trust
- Policy implementation and whole-of-government coordination
- Leadership, resilience and legacy in public service

Her perspective is shaped not only by policy formulation, but by the practical realities of implementing reform within large and complex public institutions. She brings to these conversations a practitioner's understanding of how governments can strengthen institutional capability, improve workforce performance and create public systems that are more responsive, accountable and effective.

Beyond public administration, Mrs. Walson-Jack is also an author and thought leader. She is the author of the autobiography **Roses in the Thorns**, and in 2026 expanded her body of published work with **I Planted** and **Beyond**

the Mandate, works reflecting her experiences and perspectives on leadership, public service, faith, resilience and institutional transformation.

Mrs. Walson-Jack continues to contribute her experience to conversations on governance, institutional reform and leadership, drawing on a career that has taken her from the foundational work of building public institutions at the state level to leading one of Africa's largest federal bureaucracies.

She is married to Hon. Nimi Walson-Jack, whom she describes as her mentor and role model, and they have two children and two grandsons.