



WHO Regional Director Arrives Nigeria, Supports Efforts To Bolster Health Services



Dr Matishidiso Moeti (Middle) arrives Nigeria and WHO Country Representative, Dr Walter Kazadi Mulombo (Right) receives her at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matishidiso Moeti, has underscored the Organization’s commitment to support Nigeria’s efforts in reinforcing its health system for better access to adequate and quality health services. Dr Moeti made the pledge during a visit to Africa’s most population country.

Dr Moeti met with His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, to discuss stronger collaboration to support Nigeria. Among the issues raised was the need to boost vaccine access and the uptake of immunization to reinforce the country’s capacity to fight vaccine-preventable diseases, such as vaccine-derived polio virus type 2 (cVDPV2). The delegation that visited the president also reviewed progress towards meeting Nigeria’s immunization accountability framework indicators.

“I assure you that the Government of Nigeria will sustain and improve our work on routine immunization performance; contain outbreaks of the circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus, strengthen surveillance against wild poliovirus and curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus,” President Buhari said.

Dr Moeti commended Nigeria for maintaining the state budget to Primary Health Care (PHC) despite the COVID-19 response and acknowledged the far-reaching impact of PHC revitalization on health service provision and community development. She emphasised the importance of affordable health infrastructure in addressing health access and quality needs in the country.

“I congratulate the government for ensuring that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria has continued with the policy of allocating 1% of consolidated revenue funds for Primary Health Care through the Basic Health Care Provision Funds, which holds the potential for changing the narrative in financing healthcare in Nigeria,” said Dr Moeti.

“We are committed to supporting the government of Nigeria to strengthen its public health system to ensure equitable access to quality health services, including immunization programmes which are crucial in safeguarding health and protecting lives. ...continue on page 2.

HIGHLIGHTS

Federal Government Targets Gender-inclusive Budget – Agba... P. 3

Despite Laws Against FGM, Practice Goes On In Secret...P.6

Let’s Express How Much Radio Means To Us – UNESCO DG...P.8

UN Donates 15 Mobile Midas Devices ...P.12

Federal Government, EU, UN launch The Jubilee Fellows Fund



L:R The Honourable Minister of State, Budget and Planning, Mr. Prince Clem Ikanade Agba; Mr. Matthias Schmale, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (a.i) in Nigeria and Mr. Mohamed Yahya.

The Federal Government, with financial support from the European Union (EU) and in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has launched the Jubilee Fellows Fund, an innovative financing instrument that will enable a diverse set of stakeholders to support the roll-out and implementation of the Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme (NJFP). Launched in August 2021, the NJFP is a government led youth employment initiative that will place 20,000 young Nigerians graduates annually with one-year paid work placements in private and public sector companies across the country.

There is critical need for diverse support and resource mobilization, beyond traditional public finance...continue on page 2.

WHO Regional Director Arrives Nigeria...continued from page 1

...As the continent's most populous nation, Nigeria has a pivotal role in helping to raise public health standards and practices for Africa," said Dr Moeti.

The Regional Director also held initial discussions with the Minister of Finance, Hajiya Zainab Ahmed, Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire, as well as leadership of the five Health committees of the National Assembly to advocate appropriate financing for health aimed to strengthen collaboration for health security and universal health coverage towards reducing incidence of poverty due to illness.

Dr Moeti also participated in the GAVI Alliance-Wide High-Level Mission. She also met with WHO Nigeria staff, whom she commended on supporting the government in its bid to achieve universal health coverage. She discussed the ongoing strategic repositioning to align with the WHO transformation agenda.

This mission was Dr Moeti's fourth to Nigeria and comes as the country has embarked on a mass vaccination campaign against COVID-19 to ensure that at least 70% of the eligible population is fully vaccinated before the end of the year.



Dr Matshidiso Moeti speaks at a press briefing engagement during her visit to Nigeria.

The Jubilee Fellows Fund...continued from page 1



Ambassadors and high-level representatives from Nigeria, the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Norway and United Nations as well as EuroCham Nigeria and private sector leaders, were present at the launch event.

...and international aid, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address some of the country's biggest challenges, like youth unemployment. The Jubilee Fellows Fund provides an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders, including private sector, start-ups, foundations, international financial institutions, philanthropists and multilateral and bilateral donors to contribute funding towards the implementation of the NJFP, helping to provide a solution to the high rate of unemployment of young people across the country.

"Youth unemployment continues to be one of the most ardent challenges facing Nigeria today. The Federal Government is working tirelessly to reduce unemployment through various policies that support existing businesses, encourage start-ups and build an efficient workforce.", His Excellency, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President of Nigeria declared in his written remarks. "It is my firm belief that the Jubilee Fellows Programme will provide a template for empowerment across the

continent. It is a true testament to how collaboration between government, development partners and the private sector should work."

In attendance at the high-level launch event in Abuja today was Mrs. Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice President, European Commission; the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment Mr. Otunba R. Adeniyi Adebayo who represented His Excellency, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, the Vice President of Nigeria; the Honourable Minister of State, Budget and Planning, Mr. Prince Clem Ikanade Agba; Her Excellency Samuela Isopi, Ambassador at the Delegation of the European Union to the Federal Republic of Nigeria & ECOWAS; Mr. Matthias Schmale, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (a.i), United Nations in Nigeria and Mr. Mohamed Yahya, Resident Representative, UNDP Nigeria.

Ambassadors and high-level representatives from the United States, United Kingdom, Japan and Norway as well as EuroCham Nigeria and private sector leaders, were also present at the launch event.



Spotlight Initiative



EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls

Federal Government Targets Gender-inclusive Budget – Agba

High-Level Monitoring Visit to Adamawa by the Honorable Minister for Women Affairs, Federal Minister of State for Finance, Budget and National Planning, the European Union Ambassador and Head of EU Delegation in Nigeria, the UN Resident Coordinator, Heads of the Spotlight Initiative UN Agencies in Nigeria



A group photograph of the EU-UN and Government Delegation, with Beneficiaries of the Spotlight Initiative Second Chance Education Programme at Mass Education, Yola. Photo UN Women: Faremi Olanrewaju

The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria Mr. Matthias Schmale led a delegation of the EU Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms. Samuela Isopi, the Minister of Women Affairs, Hon. Dame Pauline Tallen, the Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Agba and the Heads of the Spotlight Initiative UN Agencies in Nigeria on a monitoring visit to Adamawa State, the importance of this visit was to ascertain challenges and provide forward-looking recommendations to assist in the effective management and delivery of the agreed results of the Spotlight Initiative.

The delegation was received by the Executive Governor of Adamawa State, H.E. Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri at the State Government House. The Minister of Women Affairs, Hon. Dame Pauline Tallen in her remarks commended the Governor for the passage of the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) and urged him to domesticate the Child’s Right Act (2003).

“I must commend you for the passage of the VAPP Act, this is a great step towards the successful elimination of Violence against women and girls in Adamawa State, with the dream of having a better environment for the people of Adamawa, this can be achieved with the passage of the Child’s Right Act, I know you are working assiduously with the House of Assembly to make sure this comes true”.

In response to the Hon. Minister for Women Affairs, Gov. Fintiri said “my administration has always shown zero tolerance

to Sexual and Gender-based Violence, as I signed the VAPP Act into law in Adamawa State, I can assure you that I will work with the House of Assembly to ensure we domesticate the Child’s Right Act in Adamawa State”.

Following this meeting, Governor Fintiri joined the delegation with a visit to the DNA Forensic Lab at Adama University, Yola. The Forensic Lab is reported to be a first of its kind in West Africa.

To further observe the impact and challenges under the Spotlight Initiative in Adamawa State and share a joint press statement, the EU-UN delegation joined beneficiaries and the media at a Town Hall meeting at the Women Development Center in Yola.

At this meeting, the Federal Minister of State for Finance, Budget, and National Planning, Prince Clem Agba said the Federal Government is working on attaining a gender-responsive budget.

“Federal Government is continuously working on attaining a gender-responsive budget and gender inclusiveness in government plans and actions including in public appointments. We must also work on strengthening coordination mechanisms across the 36 states and the major thematic areas because it is this effective coordination that will support sustainable results. I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in fostering transformative change and instituting meaningful milestones around the elimination of violence against women and girls”. *Continue on page 4.*

“I’m here to listen”



Martin Griffiths, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC) speaking with an internally displaced boy in Bama GSSS IDP camp, Borno. Photo: OCHA/Adedeji Ademigbuji

When Martin Griffiths, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC), travelled to north-east Nigeria last month, several people shared their life stories with him. He listened as they described their experiences of profound loss but also courage despite horrific circumstances: women held captive by Boko Haram for years, and parents trying to overcome the loss of loved ones. North-east Nigeria is enduring a large-scale humanitarian and protection crisis driven by violent non-State armed groups (NSAGs) such as Boko Haram, pervasive food insecurity, climate change and other chronic risks.

According to the 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 8.4 million people in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States need humanitarian assistance this year.

These are some of the stories that people in Bama and Damasak in Borno State shared with the USG/ERC:

Falmata

Falmata, 30, survived four violent years of captivity by Boko Haram. She and her five children had recently arrived at the Government Senior Science Secondary School (GSSSS) camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Bama.

When Falmata was abducted four years ago, she suffered the brutal loss of several family members. Her father-in-law was burned alive, and her husband was murdered after he tried and failed to escape.

Falmata also lost her home, her freedom and her sense of safety. Now that she has found security in Bama, she hopes to find a way to rebuild her life and care for her children.

At times, Falmata’s challenges seem insurmountable. She told the USG/ERC that she and her children do not have a shelter in the heavily congested camp, and they urgently need food and other assistance. Currently, they are squatting in a relative’s crowded shelter, which is not sustainable.

As outlined in the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for north-east Nigeria, launched in Abuja on 9 February, humanitarian organizations aim to provide 1.46 million vulnerable people with emergency shelter and other vital assistance, such as toiletries. This will help people like Falmata to start a new life with dignity and with the essentials they need to survive.

Falta

Falta is from Bumari in Bama Local Government Area (LGA). Six years ago, just after her husband passed away from an illness, Boko Haram attacked Falta’s village. She tried to escape but was caught by the armed fighters and abducted with her children. She was kept in captivity in the bush for six long years. Falta has many painful memories, but the group’s ruthless killing of her first-born son is a source of profound sorrow.

Late last year, Falta escaped Boko Haram with her two surviving children and arrived at the GSSSS IDP camp in Bama. Like Falmata, she now has security but still lacks the essentials needed to survive. When she and her children arrived at the camp, they were forced to squat at its severely overcrowded transit centre. One of Falta’s sons became seriously ill, and a relative in the camp allowed Falta to bring him to their shelter to recover. But staying there long term is not an option.

“In Bama, women told stories of having escaped from years of armed group captivity only weeks ago. It is our duty to help them rebuild their lives.”- Martin Griffiths, USG/ERC

Twelve years of conflict has resulted in a dire protection crisis in north-east Nigeria, where women like Falmata and Falta and their children face heightened risk of violence, such as abduction, rape and abuse. Gender continues to be a key factor in vulnerability, with about 80 per cent of people in need being women and children.

Read full story on UNOCHA Exposure: <https://unocha.exposure.co/im-here-to-listen>

Edo State Takes Important Step Towards Gender Equality Advocacy



Secretary to the Edo State government, Mr. Osarodion Ogie, representing Governor Godwin Obaseki, signs the #HeForShe commitment board

In the advocacy towards a gender-equal society, the Edo State government on the 24th of February 2022 launched the HeForShe Initiative in partnership with UN Women and the Italian Government.

Governor Godwin Obaseki said his administration has entrenched a culture that promotes gender inclusiveness to further support the emphasis that no society will achieve its potential while being reliant on one segment of the populace.

Governor Godwin Obaseki, represented by Osarodion Ogie, secretary to the Edo State government, said it has put structures in place to eliminate negative stereotypes and behaviour with the passage of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law 2021 and the reviewed criminal code which was recently forwarded to the Edo State house of assembly.

Since the assumption of office, he said deliberate steps had been taken to close the gap between men and women in appointive positions with more female commissioners, special advisers and permanent secretaries contributing to his successful administration in the state.

"When women are given equal opportunities in leadership and decision making, the society emerges better. This is something I have enjoyed since I began serving as the helmsman of Edo State. Under this administration, not on sentiment but on merit, the state judiciary has had a female chief judge. Currently, there are at least 18 female judges in Edo State.

The governor assured that he would continue to provide leadership to get more men and boys in the campaign of gender equality in all spheres of human life in the state.

"We realize that gender inequality is an issue that affects everyone socially, politically and economically. Therefore, as we seek to shift this norm, I want to assure you all that our government will continue to encourage men's movement for gender equality," he said.

Comfort Lamptey, the UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, in her remarks, said the "HeForShe" initiative is a solidarity movement for gender equality developed by UN Women to engage men and boys as advocates and agents of change in the effort to achieve gender equality.

Lamptey added that the launch of this initiative underscores the importance of outreach to strategic groups, men, young people, the media, the private sector, and other influential stakeholders on why the inclusion of men as allies would lead to the achievement of gender equality.

"The main objective and overall purpose of this launch are to strengthen male engagement and advocate for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in Edo State through the "HeForShe" initiative launch which is a key deliverable of the spotlight initiative.

"In this regard, UN Women, through the Italian Government programme on Preventing Forced Migration and Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria in partnership with the Government of Edo State has found it important to launch this initiative at a critical time in Nigeria, where gender inequality is widespread due to patriarchy, imbalance in socio-economic oppor-

unities, cultural and religious factors and inadequate enabling legal and policy frameworks, among other factors," she said.

With this launch, Edo State became the 8th state in Nigeria with the Executive Governor decorated as a HeForShe champion. This is a laudable step towards the elimination of violence against women and girls and more female representation in decision-making in Edo State.

Gender-inclusive Budget... *continued from page 3*

The European Union Ambassador and Head of EU Delegation in Nigeria, Ms Samuela Isopi said the Spotlight Initiative is a global multi-year partnership between the EU, UN and participating national governments.

Isopi elucidated that the fundamental objective of the joint initiative is meant to address the issue of gender-based violence not only in Nigeria but around the world.

"In Nigeria, the initiative has been working to build a momentum that drives attention to the scale of the problem as well as to catalyze sustainable actions that can address significant bottlenecks. I note several key achievements, like the passage of the VAPP act by the State House of Assembly and its subsequent ascent into law by the Adamawa state Governor, I want to congratulate the team here in Adamawa for the successful implementation of the Spotlight programme so far".

Matthias Schmale, UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator in Nigeria said that the approach of the Spotlight Initiative in Nigeria is traditional and innovative.

"It is traditional because it aims at addressing basic issues such as strengthening of GBV systems and services, this includes activities that raise awareness and enhance access to justice for GBV survivors. I would like to encourage all our partners in Adamawa state to not only leverage on the solid foundation that has been laid by the Spotlight Initiative, but they should also establish strong and sustainable measures that will help in consolidating these gains. Schmale said".

Despite Laws Against FGM, Practice Goes On In Secret In Parts Of Nigeria



Pauline Nwagu

Pauline Nwagu was 9 years old when she was cut. “I can’t explain how and why it happened. Much later, I came to understand that my private part, especially the clitoris, was totally cut off.”

Pauline Nwagu is now a teacher and champion to end female genital mutilation (FGM), advocating against the practice.

“I was lucky to survive. Many of us bled to death. Many are still surviving the side effects, including stigma and other untold pains,” said Nwagu.

“Today I teach against the practice of FGM during moral instruction class in school, urging girls to speak out when faced with this danger.”

Female genital mutilation (FGM) remains widespread in Nigeria. With an estimated 19.9 million survivors, Nigeria accounts for the third highest number of women and girls who have undergone FGM worldwide. The national prevalence rate of FGM in Nigeria stands at 18.4 per cent for girls and women aged 15-49 and 25.3 per cent for girls aged 0-14, according to the 2018 Nigeria Demographic Health Survey.

Girls and women in States such as the Ebonyi, Imo, Ekiti, Oyo and Osun, bear the brunt of this violation as the states with highest rates of prevalence. This is despite the legal prohibition of the practice of FGM by the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015, which these states have either adopted into law or enacted state specific laws abolishing the practice. The prevalence rate in Imo alone for women and girls aged 15-49 is 62 per cent, with Ebonyi at 53 per cent, Ekiti at 57.9 per cent, Oyo at 31.1 percent and Osun at 45.9 per cent.

“The figures are likely worse. FGM is often practised in secret with untold numbers of girls the victims of this practice,” said Dr Emmanuel Abah, an EndFGM advocate and former Coordinator of an End FGM campaign in Ebonyi State, south-eastern Nigeria supported by UNICEF, UNFPA and the National Orientation Agency.

“In 2014, FGM was rampant, devastating the social fabric of our society,” said Dr. Abah. “It is a social menace, and you cannot consider yourself to be developed or growing unless you stop this harmful practice,” said Dr. Abah.

“When a practice is a social norm, people just accept it – accept that it is ok to cut or mutilate the female genital, as a generational tradition that must be kept, without caring about its dangers,” Dr. Abah said.

Every February 6, the world commemorates the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. In Nigeria, a lot of awareness is being created to sensitize the public against the harmful practice and ensure all hands are on deck to end FGM by 2030.

To mark this year’s commemoration, UNICEF is initiating a community-led movement to eliminate FGM in five Nigerian states where it is highly prevalent: Ebonyi, Ekiti, Imo, Osun and Oyo. The movement aims to reach 5 million people (adolescent girls and boys; women - including pregnant and lactating women; men; grandparents; traditional, community and religious leaders; youth and women-led groups), who will pledge to say, “no to FGM” and to engage in community action, with a view to bringing the practice to an end at the household level.

“UNICEF is working closely with communities to help end FGM in Nigeria. Progress has been made - it is now illegal across Nigeria to practice FGM,” said Victor Atuchukwu, UNICEF Nigeria Child Protection Specialist.

“Nevertheless, a lot more work needs to be done to accelerate community ownership and investment in ending the practice, in-



cluding mobilizing community structures to provide solutions to tackle age-old beliefs and traditions that harm children and limit their potential to thrive.”



Empowering Smallholder Fish And Vegetable Farmers With Multiple Streams Of Income



Hon Commissioner, Adamawa State Ministry of Livestock and Aquaculture Development makes the first purchase of fish from the farmers.
Photo: FAO/Opeyemi Olagunju

Beneficiaries of an initiative by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Yola, Adamawa state have reported to have added more sources of income and therefore improve the welfare and nutritional status of their households.

Through the Integrated Homestead Gardening and Aquaculture Livelihood Incubation Model (IHGALIM), funded by the People and Government of the Kingdom of Norway, FAO is empowering the conflict-affected households to optimize returns from the agricultural inputs they receive to integrate vegetable gardening and aquaculture

“This is important for income, dietary diversity in households and for sustainability in managing soil productivity,” says the FAO Nigeria’s Head of Office for the Northeast Programme, Al Hassan Cisse.

Explaining, Mr. Cisse said that the fish produces wastes, that release nutrients into the water, which when released as wastewater, is immediately used to irrigate vegetable gardens. “The integration promotes the sustainable use of water, and further enlightens the beneficiaries on the importance of recycling scarce resources for sustainable development,” he pointed out.

In September 2021, FAO distributed fingerlings, assorted fish feeds, vegetable seeds, hand tools, and supported the construction of earthen ponds among 300 households in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states. The beneficiaries were also provided with skills to effectively practice the integration.

Just two months later, the beneficiaries began earning income from the sales of vegetables and four months down the line they started harvesting their fish.

During the launch event of the harvesting and selling season, the Adamawa State government was represented by the Commissioner, Ministry of Livestock and Aquaculture Development, Honourable Usman Diyajo. Besides the flagging-off event for the sales, the Honourable Commissioner made the first purchase as a way of supporting the farmers.

Hon. Diyajo commended the initiative and its positive impact on the people, especially at the grassroots level.

Some of the beneficiaries have a lot to testify about as to how the initiative has impacted on their livelihoods. Lydia Obed said: “Since we received this support, I have been gainfully employed and I have extra income because I do not buy vegetables again.”

On his side, Abdulahhi Karim is delighted to have made about NGN 50 000 from the sales of vegetables alone. Alongside the economic benefits, the intervention has also enabled the households to enhance their dietary diversity and increased soil fertility through organic inputs.

Under the initiative, the first batch of 300 households across BAY states is getting a yield of nearly 13 000kg of fish worth about USD 40 000 at a unit cost of USD 3.138/kg and about 114 metric tonnes of vegetables generating nearly USD 42 000. The integration also enables the beneficiaries to save the earnings they would have used to purchase vegetables for their food or fertilizer for the gardens, increasing their profit margins significantly.

With the income from fish and vegetable harvests, the beneficiaries independently restock new batches of fish and re-cultivate their vegetable farms without input support from FAO. This testifies to the self-sustainability of the initiative, the financial empowerment of farmers and improved nutrition through dietary diversity.

To build on the success, FAO is up-scaling to reach an additional 1 000 households across the BAY states in 2022.

Let's Express How Much Radio Means To Us – UNESCO DG



National Information Officer of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos, Oluseyi Soremekun, addresses the audience at the observance of the World Radio Day at Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH) Ikorodu. Photo: UNIC/ Akinyemi Omolayo

In commemorating the 2022 World Radio Day, the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Ms. Audre Azoulay, has called on everyone to join hands to express how much radio means to them.

"This February 13, let us all join together to express how much radio means to us. A medium over 100 years old, radio is today more relevant than ever." She said in her message on the World Radio Day, read by the National Information Officer of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos, Oluseyi Soremekun.

The World Radio Day observance was organized by the Department of Mass Communication, Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH) Ikorodu, in collaboration with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Expatriating on the theme, 'Radio and Trust', Ms Azoulay noted that radio continued to be one of the most trusted and used media in the world, according to different international reports.

"For trust is the product not only of a constant effort to be independent, but also of better representation of diversity in terms of language, gender and ideas." She emphasized and added, "Many radio stations have already taken up these issues; whatever their audience ratings, they will have UNESCO's solid support."

The Acting Vice Chancellor of LASUSTECH, Dr. Oluremi Nurudeen Olaleye, represented by his Deputy, Mr. Kolawole Godonu commended the impact of radio as one of the most reliable sources of information.

The Chief Press Secretary to the Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Gboyega Akosile, highlighted the importance of

radio as a medium that promote the sustenance of democracy; inclusion and its ability to reach the farthest places to bring about desired change.

He lauded the contribution of radio to the society. He emphasized on the need to build trust in radio in order to avoid getting exposed to false information which characterized the internet- particularly the social media.

In his remarks, the Assistant General Manager of Operations, Channels Television, Kingsley Uranta, called for strict adherence to ethics of broadcasting as one of the pathways of building trust in radio. "In order to sustain listeners' trust, journalism must be based on verifiable information." He said.

Mr Uranta further emphasized the journalistic trust function played by radio in the society stressing the significance of radio not only as a channel for receiving news but as a channel for education and its capacity to bring people and communities from diverse backgrounds together for positive change.

He advised the students of mass communication to think radio and come up with creative programme ideas that would target their



Dignitaries at the observance of the World Radio Day in Lagos.

UN, ACCEL Africa Empowers 1,000 Pupils To Break Free From Child Labour

The ILO ACCEL Africa Project in Nigeria has supported 1,000 identified pupils in Ondo and Niger States with back-to-school kits, spearheading an exodus from cocoa farms and gold mines to classrooms while influencing how communities relate with child labour.



Left: St. John's Anglican Caring Heart Mega Primary School, Fagbo, Ondo State. Right: Day Secondary School, Kpmakpma, Niger State

Towards the end of 2021, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Dutch Government funded ACCEL Africa Project in Nigeria distributed new school uniforms, sandals, socks, school bags, exercise books, and textbooks to identified pupils within cocoa producing and Artisanal Gold Mining communities covered by the project.

From 22 to 23 October 2021, profiled pupils of L.A Primary School Ita-Olorun, Idanre; L.A Primary School, Oke-Agunla; St. Patrick R.C.M Primary School, Aponmu; Community Primary School, Wasimi Odunwo; Sokoto Ogundele Community High School, Wasimi Odunwo; Muslim Primary School, Bamikemo; Ademulegun High School, Bamikemo; St. Williams Primary School, Omifunfun, St. Michael Primary School (RCM) Paadi, Ekimogun Comprehensive Secondary School, Bolorunduro, and St. John's Anglican Caring Heart Mega Primary School, Fagbo-Oja received the back-to-school kit support.

In Niger State, pupils of Day Secondary School, Kpmakpma; Kpmakpma Primary School; Government Junior Secondary School, Kuchiko; UNICEF Pilot Primary School, Kuchiko; and Government Day Secondary School, Maje received their back-to-school kits on 3rd November 2021. More pupils identified have been scheduled for the intervention.

Addressing beneficiaries, parents, guardians, community leaders and residents on behalf of Vanessa Phala, the Country Director of the ILO Office for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone during the distribution, Agatha Kolawole, the National Project Coordinator for the ILO ACCEL Africa Project in Nigeria, identified an overall improved learning experience, reintegration of out-of-school children back into the system, ensuring their retention in school and reducing the exploitation of children in Nigeria's ASGM and cocoa value chains as the aims of the intervention.

According to Alhassan Mohammed, the Child Labour Desk Officer for the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment (FMLE) in Niger State, members of the receiving communities in Niger State are now changing their attitude towards child labour and education since the distribution of school kits in, leading to a replacement of children in the mines by adult workers.

"It's a 'trickle-down effect', Alhassan said, noting that although all the children who benefitted from the back-to-school kits were regular miners at some point in their lives, the culture of engaging children in mining was reducing noticeably, as people now wanted their kids to go back to school.

Olutayo Wunmi, the Community Engagement Officer (CEO) for the ILO ACCEL Africa Project in Fagbo 1, Ondo State also observed that the campaign against child labour was changing



LA Primary School Oke Agunla Ondo State

the community, as children now understood the significance of the project.

"The difference is clear, and the bad practices have reduced considerably. This project has helped a lot but there is more to be done", said Wunmi.

The C.E.O. said although the campaign against child labour has relieved a lot of children most of whom were previously engaged in hazardous work, there was a pressing need to support the parents and guardians to keep the children in school for the long term.

Afolabi Mary, a parent whose seven-year-old child attends St. Patrick R.C.M Primary School, Aponmu still reveling in the excitement of inclusion of her child confirmed that the children were being constantly monitored for attendance and performance by members of the Child Labour Monitoring Committee (CCLMC) in the community.

For Balogun Abel, a Class Teacher at St. Patrick R.C.M Primary School Aponmu, the support by the ILO ACCEL Africa Project in Nigeria has encouraged even non beneficiaries and their parents to yearn for education.

Mr Abel attributed the increased attendance, social engagement, and participation in the classroom to improved self-esteem arising from the support and expected a clear reflection in performance assessments during, and at the end of the current term.

In the coming months, the ILO ACCEL Africa Project would expand the intervention to include psychosocial support for child labour victims, vocational skills training and startup capital for youths and children within the legal working age for alternative livelihood.

The Project also considers an extension of the campaign to accelerate the elimination of child labour to Ibalá, a community in Obokun Local Government, Osun State - blessed with cocoa and gold, yet plagued by the child labour scourge.

UN Trains NAPTIP, NIS, On Data Gathering And Analysis



Officers of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking In Persons (NAPTIP) and the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) during the training on data gathering and analysis. Photo: UNODC

To successfully combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, the role of data gathering, and analysis is critical. Mastering this skill will enable relevant agencies to better understand trends and patterns of trafficking, as well as to evaluate more accurately the effectiveness and impact of government policies and legislation.

Therefore, with the support of the Government of Canada, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC embarked in

2021 on the training of officers of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking In Persons (NAPTIP) and the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS). Following an initial training of trainers, workshops were organized across the six geo-political zones, NAPTIP and NIS officers were trained on data collection methods, tracking and mapping offenses, profiling victims and migrants, analyzing perpetrators' backgrounds, understanding, and categorizing forms of exploitation, and learning best practices in data collection, processing, analysis dissemination in support of strategic, tactical and operational planning.

Training sessions were facilitated by NIS and NAPTIP trained officers, who had attended an intensive training-of-trainers workshop.

The training session in Kano brought together NAPTIP and NIS officers based in Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto and states. In total, 123 officers from NAPTIP and NIS field commands nationwide, as well as Edo state Taskforce Against Human Trafficking have benefited from the six training sessions.

Commenting on the training, Sudan Aliyu Abubakar, Head of ICT unit, NAPTIP Kano Zonal Command, and data officer for investigation and monitoring department, stated that he had learnt new areas on data entry and analysis.

For Ekure Franca, NIS Katsina state command; "The training is an exposition into areas which were otherwise silent in the delivery of our job."

George Akalonu, of NIS Jibia special border command, Katsina state: "I really appreciate this programme. The training has broadened our experience and knowledge. It provided an opportunity to interact and share ideas with the facilitators. This training will help us in the future".

Implementation of Global Compact on Refugees: Focus on Cameroonian Refugees in Cross River



UNHCR's Deputy Representative (Protection), John McKissick (centre), partners and government officials listen to Cameroonian refugees and locals as they share their challenges on access to education, health care, sanitation and livelihoods in Agbokim community, Cross River State. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende

A joint UNHCR/Government of Nigeria mission to Cross River State (CRS) took place from 13 to 19 February. Led by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, the mission which also included officials of the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons, was based on a request from CRS Ministry of Health officials "to assess the urgent humanitarian situation caused by the influx of refugees."

The mission examined opportunities for implementing the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) Nigeria Roadmap (adopted in November 2021) in the Nigerian State that hosts the largest number of refugee women, men and children. The mission met

with key stakeholders, including the Cross River State Deputy Governor, Prof. Ivvara Esu, several Commissioners and partners, and visited the four refugee-hosting communities, Ilang, Calabar, Agbokim, Ikom as well as refugee settlements, where the mission participants conducted focus group discussions with local government authorities, host community leaders and refugees which brought insights into protection, health/water/sanitation/hygiene, education and livelihoods needs.

Protection challenges highlighted included harassment by security officials who are not familiar with international refugee rights or national refugee policy, the expiration of the current 2-year temporary protection status in June 2022 and the short validity of refugee ID cards. The government was encouraged to decide on the 5-year extension soon in order to guarantee effective protection for Cameroonian refugees.

The Deputy Governor reaffirmed the commitment of the State Government to implement the GCR pledges and include refugees in State programmes. The State Government was encouraged to take increased actions for host communities to address gaps, and reach out to development partners for support to the GCR implementation.

UN Steps Up Effort To Protect Child Victims And Witnesses In Terrorism-Related Proceedings In Nigeria



Officers of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking In Persons (NAPTIP) and the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) during the training on data gathering and analysis. Photo: UNODC

In the past years, multiple armed groups, including Boko Haram and its splinter faction ISWAP, have used children as strategic pawns for their terror tactics in Nigeria. Boko Haram has abducted, recruited, and exploited thousands of children since the group began attacks around the Lake Chad Basin in 2009. From 2017 to 2019, the UN verified 5,741 grave violations against children in north-east Nigeria: 1,385 children had been recruited and used by Boko Haram. These numbers are likely to be far higher owing to access constraints in monitoring.

Some boys have been forced to attack their own families to demonstrate loyalty to Boko Haram. Girls have been killed when forced to carry out roles as fighters and suicide bombers, in addition to being subjected to forced marriages and sexual violence. When these children exit the groups, they have experienced prolonged violence, their bonds to the communities have been severed, their personal development has been warped, and they continue to face stigma and social exclusion.

UNODC has been supporting the efforts of Nigeria in preventing and responding to violence against children by terrorist and violent extremist groups, under a new European funded project called “STRIVE Juvenile”. The project aims to increase resilience of children and society against violent extremist and terrorist tactics. From 25 to 27 January 2022, STRIVE Juvenile implemented in Nigeria its first ‘Capacity-building Workshop on Protecting child victims and witnesses in terrorism-related proceedings’. The workshop trained 29 professionals from the security sector, the justice system, and child protection, on strategies to improve the protection of child victims and witnesses of recruitment and exploitation by terrorist groups.

Acknowledging that protecting society from the threats associated with terrorism goes hand in hand with protecting children from being recruited and exploited by terrorist groups, Nigeria has recognized the urgency of appropriate responses. Rear Admiral YEM Musa, from the Office of the National Security Adviser, emphasized that “Investment in rehabilitation and peace, especially as it concerns our children, is essential to end the cycle of violence that is generated and exploited by the terrorists and violent extremists”. This was also echoed by the representative of the European Union, Mr. Jerome Rivière by

stressing that the STRIVE Juvenile project “recognizes the importance of children’s role as agents of peace and in their potential to transform societal dynamics. (...) When children and families do not feel safe, counterterrorism cannot work”.

The recent workshop held in Abuja allowed Nigerian and international experts from the security sector, the justice system, and the child protection sector to discuss national context and practices, strategies for child sensitive and trauma informed interaction with children, as well as means of protection of these children throughout the justice process. “Terrorism remains one of the most potent challenges to Nigeria” commented Doctor Ifeakandu, from the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Nigeria, while participating in the workshop: “children are disproportionately affected by it, and we need to find responses in line with their best interests”.

WITHOUT GENDER
EQUALITY TODAY,
A SUSTAINABLE,
MORE EQUAL FUTURE
REMAINS BEYOND
OUR REACH.



UN Donates 15 Mobile Midas Devices To Nigeria Immigration Service, Kano Command



Handover of the Mobile device to the CIS Kano State Command

Every year, many young Nigerian migrants embark on treacherous journeys as they leave their country searching for a better future abroad. Migrants travelling via irregular routes face risks such as trafficking in persons (TiP), extortion, physical abuse, torture, forced labour, rape and even death. Nigeria's border with Niger and the Republic of Benin have been major gateways for traffickers, smugglers and migrants taking on irregular routes in search of greener pastures.

As part of efforts to curb the issues of smuggling of migrants and irregular migration through land borders, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) handed over 15 mobile Border Management Information System (BMIS) devices to the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Kano, on 4 February 2022. These devices will be used for border patrol at the unmanned land borders for registration of migrants at the points of entry in Sokoto, Jigawa and Zamfara States.

Twelve out of fourteen ground crossing points and four of six State Commands where Migration Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS) is installed, are located in the Northern border that Nigeria shares with Niger in Kebbi, Sokoto, Katsina, and Jigawa States. The Border Management Information System (BMIS) plays a crucial role in enabling and securing cross-border movements while preventing irregular migration and transnational crime.

The provision of these devices aims to further improve border security and management to facilitate safe and orderly migration and enhance the capacity of Nigeria border officials to better manage territorial borders.

The Acting Comptroller General of Immigration Service represented by the Comptroller of Immigration Service Mr. Muazu Abdulrazak, NIS Kano State Command expressed his profound appreciation of the service for IOM's contribution to border secu-

urity and for equipping the service with MIDAS infrastructure. "The mobile MIDAS kits will boost national security as the unmanned porous entry points will be patrolled and travellers using those routes will be documented," he said.

Prior to the handover, IOM Nigeria in coordination with the NIS organised a five-day training in Kano from 31 January to 4 February 2022, for 15 NIS ICT officers from the Sokoto, Jigawa and Zamfara State Commands as well as the NIS Headquarters, on the use and installation of the mobile MIDAS devices.

To date, MIDAS has been installed at 29 locations; 14 land border crossings, four seaports, eight State NIS Commands, the NIS Headquarters, and the country's five international airports.

This activity is funded by the Government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and implemented within the framework of the project "Enhancing cross-border cooperation on border management and counter-trafficking between Niger and Nigeria" (UK CATS).

Safer Internet Day

February 8 was the Safer Internet Day with the theme "Together for a better internet". The Day focuses on creating a safe internet especially for children by raising awareness about the issue, sharing solutions, and calling everyone to take action to #ENDviolence against children online.

UNICEF has created an online resource that brings together specialists, international cyberbullying and child protection experts, and teamed up with Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter, to answer questions and offer advice: https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying?utm_campaign=safe-internet&utm_medium=unicef-network&utm_source=referral#11

Nigerian Meteorological Agency Predicts Normal Rainfall Season In 2022



(L) Prof. Mansur Bako Matazu, DG/CEO NiMet, and Permanent Representative of Nigeria with WMO; (M) Senator Hadi Sirika, Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Aviation; and (R) Mr. Bernard Gomez, WMO Representative for North, Central and West Africa during the launch of the 2022 Seasonal Climate Prediction at the NAF Conference Centre in Abuja on 15 February 2022.

The Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) released the 2022 Seasonal Climate Prediction (SCP) with the theme “strengthening climate actions through timely and impact-based climate predictions for economic recovery” on 15 February 2022 in a high-level event presided over by Senator Hadi Sirika, Honourable Minister for Aviation. The event was attended by Ministers, Senators, Parliamentarians, Traditional Rulers, Academia, Private Sector Executives, Farmers, Students, and the Media.

The Director General of NiMet and Permanent Representative of Nigeria with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Professor Mansur Bako Matazu stated in his opening remark that the release of the 2022 SCP was in fulfilment of the Agency’s mandate to provide timely, accurate, and user friendly weather and climate advisories to Nigerians on possible weather and climate events that may affect communities and various sectors of the economy.

The summary of the 2022 SCP was presented by the Honourable Minister of Aviation Senator Hadi Sirika. The onset of planting season is expected to be normal over most parts of the country. The earliest onset of the planting season is expected about 28 February in the Coastal parts, April and May in the Central states, and June and July in the Northern states. The growing season is predicted to last between 250 – 300 days in the southern parts, and 100 to 200 days in the northern areas. Kwara, Oyo, Lagos, Nasarawa, Benue, Bayelsa, and Rivers are likely to experience a shorter than normal length of the growing season.

The 2022 onset of rainfall is expected to be normal with the earliest onset around 4 March 2022. The annual rainfall amount is expected to be normal with rainfall deficits expected in parts of Yobe, Sokoto, Zamfara, Gombe, Adamawa, Niger, Kebbi, Kaduna, and the FCT. Rainfall amounts is expected to range from 390 mm in the North to over 2790 mm in the South. The day-time and night-time temperatures from January to April were

predicted by NiMet. A warmer January, cooler February, and warmer daytimes and cooler nights in March and April are expected. Rainfall cessation is predicted to be near the long-term average conditions and anticipated to begin early in October to mid-November in the north and central states, and gradually move southwards to the coastal areas in mid-December. Prolonged rainfall cessation may be experienced in parts of Cross River, Imo, Plateau, Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi and Yobe. Rainfall cessation in parts of Nasarawa, Benue, Kwara, Oyo and Anambra is predicted to end earlier than the long-term average period.

Dry spells are expected to occur between May and August 2022. Between May and June, a mild dry spell of less than 8 days is predicted to occur in parts of Taraba, Nasarawa, Oyo, Niger, Ekiti, Plateau, Ogun, Osun, Edo and Anambra states. Moderate dry spells of about 15 days is predicted over parts of Adamawa, Benue, Kogi, Ekiti, Sokoto, Kebbi and Gombe states. Severe dry spells which may persist for about 20 or longer is predicted to occur in part of Kebbi, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Nasarawa, and Plateau states.

The Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization, Professor Petteri Taalas presented a goodwill message virtually. Prof. Taalas commended the Honourable Minister of Aviation and the Federal Government of Nigeria for its support to the meteorological community and capacity development support provided to other countries in the region. The WMO S-G spoke about the increasing trend and impacts of extreme weather and climate events and emphasized the need for effective forecasting services to support climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience. He announced the commencement of a UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund under the Sustainable Observations Financing Facility to support observations capacity development in developing countries and small Islands states.

Through the WMO, NiMet accesses various weather and climate data products from global centres to support the development of the SCP and various forecast bulletins. The 2022 SCP can be accessed from the NiMet website.

‘Just Transition and Green Jobs for Nigeria’ Project’s Steering Committee Charts Implementation Pathway



A group photograph of members of the Steering Committee on 'Just Transition and Green Jobs for Nigeria' Project'.

The Steering Committee of the ILO Just Transition and Green Jobs for Nigeria Project met on 27th January 2022 to map out strategies for effective implementation of the project in Nigeria. This followed the appointment of a National Project Coordinator (NPC), whose main function is to manage the implementation of the project.

The overall objective of the project is to mobilize government, workers' and employers' organizations and development partners to accelerate climate action with decent work and just transition for all. Other objectives include:

Strengthen institutional capacity for the design and implementation of integrated evidence-based just transition policies; Promote social dialogue platforms to help lay the foundation for a just transition, through the resolution of social, environmental and economic conflicts;

Developed and pilot just transition policies conducive to job creation, skills development in green sectors, and adoption of social security measures in sectors impacted by climate change and ecological transition policies; and

Disseminate lessons learned from the intervention to inspire other countries and institutions in Africa to initiate just transition mechanisms and policies.

Ms Inviolata Chinyangarara representing the Director of ILO Country Office for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and Liaison Office for ECOWAS, Ms Vanessa Phala, congratulated participants for being part of the team. She noted that the actions planned under the project would contribute to strengthening the resilience of local economies and expansion of opportunities for decent job creation.

She stated that the Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all, adopted by the ILO constituents in 2015 had provided for a framework to guide this transformation.

She drew the attention of the members of the committee to the 2019 UN Climate Action for Jobs initiative which aimed at ensuring climate action that delivers decent jobs and social justice; supporting countries to provide solutions for a transition towards a sustainable future that is just and enjoys broad-based support; and facilitate an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the

COVID-19 crisis. She urged them to promote social dialogue and national consultations to ensure the achievement of the project.

The PSC members include, Dr. Martina Nwordu, Director, Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, who was also nominated as the Chairperson of the committee. Iniobong Abiola-Awe, Ph.D., Director, Department of Climate Change, Federal Ministry of Environment (Member), Dr. Sanjo Faniran Director, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning (Member), Comrade Echezona Asuzu, - AGS, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) (Member), Comrade Anka Hassan, - DSG, Trade Union Congress (TUC) (Member), and Mr. Olusola Ayodele, Nigeria Employer's Consultative Association (NECA), (Member). Members of the ILO, including the Project Coordinator, Mr. Stephen Agugua, and Mrs. Josephine Okoh, the Finance and Admins Assistant, will manage the committee's secretariat. One of the highlights of the PSC inaugural meeting was the agreement to establish an Inter-Ministerial Working Group which will accommodate other relevant government ministries and agencies to ensure a robust consultative forum is established for the project.

The Committee nominated Dr. Martina Nwordu, a Director with Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, as the Chairperson of the Committee. In her speech, Dr Nwordu thanked the ILO and French Government for approving the project for Nigeria. She urged the Committee members to invest their best to ensure achievement of the objectives of the project in Nigeria.



PHOTO NEWS



Captions, from left to right in a clockwise direction

1. CEO of Sustainable Energy for All Organisation and Special Representative of the @UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, Ms Damilola Ogunbiyi, in a group photograph with young social entrepreneurs and innovators after an interactive dialogue in Abuja.
2. UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Matthias Schmale (Left) receives the CEO of Sustainable Energy for All Organisation and Special Representative of the @UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, Ms Damilola Ogunbiyi in his office at the UN House Abuja.
3. L-R: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Nigeria, H.E. Kazuyoshi Matsunaga; Hon. Minister of State at Federal Ministry of Environment of Nigeria, Ms. Sharon Ikeazor; and Director and Representative of UNIDO Nigeria, Mr. Jean Bakole, at the signing of an agreement to promote sustainable plastic value chain through circular economy practices between the Federal Government, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and Government of Japan on Thursday, February 10, 2022.

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