



Newsletter



UN commends Nigeria's efforts in tackling terrorism, plans African Counter-Terrorism Summit next year in Abuja

The Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office on Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, has commended the efforts taken so far by Nigeria in tackling terrorism in the country, noting that Nigeria already has a framework on prevention, mitigation, and reconciliation.

“Of course, terrorism is part of the international agenda, and we had a successful meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, discussing how to enrich our agenda on international terrorism response,” he said.

PG 03

Spotlight Initiative calls for accelerating the fight against Gender-Based Violence in Africa

PG 05

FG, United Nations committed To The achievement of the SDGs In Nigeria

PG 06

UN, SMILE marks International Youth Day in Lagos

PG 08

Africa is the best investment proposition of the 21st century – UN Deputy Secretary-General



and more stories.

Cover story cont.



(L-R) National Coordinator, National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Rear Admiral YEM Musa (rtd); United Nations Under Secretary- General for Counter Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov displays signed MOU

“I can only mention that politically, and from the point of view of capacity building on activities for counter terrorism, Nigeria is one of the leading partners.”

Voronkov added that the UN was planning an African Counter-Terrorism Summit (Abuja Summit) in April 2024 in Abuja, the country’s capital city.

This Abuja Summit will be organized under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of Nigeria. It will provide a forum for Member States, International and Regional organisations and Civil Society to review the terrorism landscape in Africa and agree on concrete priorities and measures to address this scourge in a comprehensive manner.

President Tinubu said, “We appreciate all that you have been doing. We know that in the face of many demands and challenges, you can still do much better. We can score you ‘A’ in collaboration but ‘B’ in physical support. You have to do more because terrorism is an effective danger to democracy; terrorism is also an effective danger to development.

“Growth and prosperity can not be achieved until we banish terrorism. We have to equally look at other sides of the issue, and I have said it is the where, how, and when of terrorism,” the President said.

President Tinubu noted that in going forward, global peace and prosperity would demand the swift and comprehensive provision of the right answers to the challenge posed by insurgencies in parts of the world, which threaten universal stability.

“We must take into account the basic needs of our people. If out of the meagre resources presently available, we have to dip our hands without the steady support from organisations like the UN, then we are in trouble,” the President noted.

During the high-level visit, Under-Secretary-General Voronkov signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the Nigerian Government, met with Nigerian Youth leaders and took part in a wreath-laying ceremony with Nigeria’s First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu to honour the memory of 23 United Nations staff and civilians who died in the 2011 terrorist attack on the UN House in Abuja.

Under-Secretary-General Voronkov also travelled to Maiduguri, Borno State, to see first-hand the impact of terrorism on the local population and the international community’s support in its rehabilitation and reintegration processes, as well as to raise international awareness about the persistent insecurity in the Lake Chad region. In Maiduguri, he visited the Bulumkutu transit center, a UN-supported reintegration centre for women and children formerly associated with armed groups and the Joint Investigation Center, a multi-agency hub for screening and investigating individuals detained during counter-terrorism operations in the North East and onward referral for prosecution or rehabilitation and reintegration.

Mr. Voronkov emphasized that UNOCT, through its Global Programme on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR), continues to support Borno State and Nigeria in these efforts

Spotlight Initiative calls for accelerating the fight against Gender-Based Violence in Africa



2nd from left- Mrs Victoria LAR, of Ministry of Women Affairs speaks with participants during a presentation at the review

Spotlight Nigeria hosted a crucial workshop on August 22nd to 24th 2023, to review strategies and learn from best practices adopted by the Spotlight Initiative in Africa to combat violence against women and girls (VAWG). The workshop brought together delegates from eight Spotlight Implementing countries in Africa, as well as government representatives and civil society representatives from organizations working to end VAWG.

The workshop was not just a reflection of the successes and challenges of the SIARP, but a clear call to action. With each passing day, countless African women and girls face the grim reality of VAWG, making it more crucial than ever to build upon existing efforts and strategize for impactful, sustainable solutions.

"Our shared determination to create a better Africa is a call to action, emphasizing the potential of women and girls," said Ms. Victoria Maloka, Head of Division for the Coordination and Outreach Division, Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate at the African Union Commission (AUC). "This gathering is more than alignment with the African agenda; it urges strategic investments at all levels to drive positive change in the fight against VAWG. Collaboration is our strength, and we must work together to devise sustainable solutions for the challenges we face."

During the opening of the workshop, representatives from UNDCO, the EU-AU Delegation, the AUC, and the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency painted a vivid picture of the urgency of the moment. They emphasized the pivotal role governments play in fulfilling international commitments, such as the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the AU 2063 Agenda, and regional treaties

like the Maputo Protocol. The collective message was clear: inaction is not an option. "Violence against women and girls is a prominent global violation of human rights," said Mrs. Hadana Youssouf on behalf of Mr. Yacoub Ali El-Hillo, Regional Director for Africa at the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO). "This form of violence not only obstructs human rights but also acts as an impediment to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. It is essential that national governments not merely sign documents but tangibly display their commitment by aligning with aims such as the Maputo Protocol, investing in systems, laws, and data, and focusing on policies that effectively address gender-based violence."

A standout moment from the workshop was the acknowledgment of the significant strides made in Nigeria, with the implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) law in 35 states – a leap from 19 states in 2019. The ratification of the Maputo Protocol in South Sudan also marked a commendable feat, achieved through persistent advocacy by civil society organizations.

"The Spotlight partnership has revolutionized our approach to combating violence against women and girls, advancing sexual and reproductive health rights, and restoring optimism to many," said Ms. Marianne Foulah, Mali Spotlight Coordinator. "This collaboration significantly contributes to the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals and the 2063 African Union Agenda, solidifying stronger alliances and channelling collective efforts to protect women and girls."

Emphasizing the need for data-driven interventions, discussions revolved around the importance of legislative frameworks and bridging data gaps. Informed policies are essential, and harmonizing data

ensures coordination and effective programming against GBV and HP. "The Spotlight Initiative marks a pivotal step, but understanding the socio-cultural nuances influencing GBV is vital for effective interventions," said Dr. Anthony Ajayi, researcher from the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC). "By fostering a culture of research appreciation among policymakers and influencers, we amplify the impact of evidence-informed strategies to combat GBV."

Country presentations revealed the transformative role communities play in addressing these issues. From Liberia to Uganda, the consistent theme was the power of grassroots movements and collaboration between governments and community leaders. "Addressing SGBV and HP demands a comprehensive approach where government plays a pivotal role in ensuring perpetrator accountability and fostering survivor-centered services," said Ms. Titilola Vivour-Adeniyi, Executive Secretary of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency. "The commitment of the Lagos State Government is unwavering, as evidenced by our focus on evidence-based policies, sustained advocacy, and established initiatives like DSEA. Gender equality and social inclusion are not just words but integral pillars of our developmental agenda."

On the second day, field visits offered direct insights into the ground realities. Feedback from these expeditions highlighted the pressing need to amplify successful strategies and boost community involvement to tackle the pervasive issue of GBV.

The final day focused on innovative financial strategies for the upcoming Spotlight Initiative phase, SI 2.0, launching in 2024. This workshop signals a renewed dedication to combat GBV and HP across Africa. In a summary of the gathering, Mr. Julius Otim, the Regional Spotlight Initiative Coordinator noted, "The Spotlight Initiative regional programming is transitioning with a fresh approach. While its structure might change, it will stand on previously laid groundwork. Teamwork and sustainability are of the essence. Given the significant involvement of African nations, aligning strategies with regional blueprints becomes vital for a seamless shift and sustained cooperation."

Spotlight Initiative Overview: The Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme (SIARP) is a collaboration between the UN, EU, and AU, aiming to counteract violence towards women and girls and harmful practices. The programme amplifies strategies like the African Union's Gender Strategy, the UN Agenda 2030, and the Maputo Action Plan. With interventions in countries such as Uganda, Malawi, and Nigeria, the initiative strives for impactful outreach across the continent.



Group Photo of participants at the SI review meeting



R-L, Lasema Dg Dr. Oluwafemi Damilola Oke-Osanyitolu, Coordinator Lagos Dsva Titilola Adeniyi-Vivour And Anu John Of Un Nigeria Rc Office



Panel discussions at the workshop

FG, UN committed to the achievement of the SDGs In Nigeria



Precious Allison won the SDGs Short Film Challenge

To show the Federal government commitment to the achievement of the SDGs by 2030, the Senate President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Mr Godswill Akpabio, who was represented by the Chairman of Senate on the SDGs Dr Idiat Adebule at the SDGs award commended the UN and OSSAP -SDGs for organizing the SDGs Film Challenge. She congratulated all participants for giving prominence to the SDGs through storytelling and film to drive positive impact for the Goals in the country.

The Director UN Information Centre Abuja, Mr. Ronald Kayanja, who represented Mr. Matthias Schmale, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN System in Nigeria underscored the importance of communication using the film industry and having a winning mentality would promote and help us achieve the Global Goals.

Engr. Ahmad Kawu, the Secretary of Programmes OSSAP- SDGs in his remarks applauded the youths, especially the entrants of the challenge for using their creative potentials to raise the necessary awareness for the Global Goals. He called for continued support to young people with the skills and resources they require to deliver the sustainable development goals for Nigeria and the future generations.



Director, UN Information Centre (UNIC) Abuja, Mr. Ronald Kayanja



Nollywood actor, Francis Duru at the award ceremony

UN, SMILE mark International Youth Day in Lagos



Launch of SMILE Youth Lovers Tribe

“As our world undergoes a green transition, an estimated 8.4 million green jobs will be created for young people by 2030. But Green jobs require green skills.” Said the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale at the observance of the 2023 International Youth Day, organised by the UN Information Centre (UNIC) and Strategy for Mentoring Initiative and Leadership Empowerment (SMILE) in Lagos.

He noted that the demand for those skills is exceeding the supply. "And the UN foresees a major skills gap with 60% of young people lacking the necessary green skills by 2030."

“As our world undergoes a green transition, an estimated 8.4 million green jobs will be created for young people by 2030. But Green jobs require green skills.” Said the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale at the observance of the 2023 International Youth Day, organised by the UN Information Centre (UNIC) and Strategy for Mentoring Initiative and Leadership Empowerment (SMILE) in Lagos.

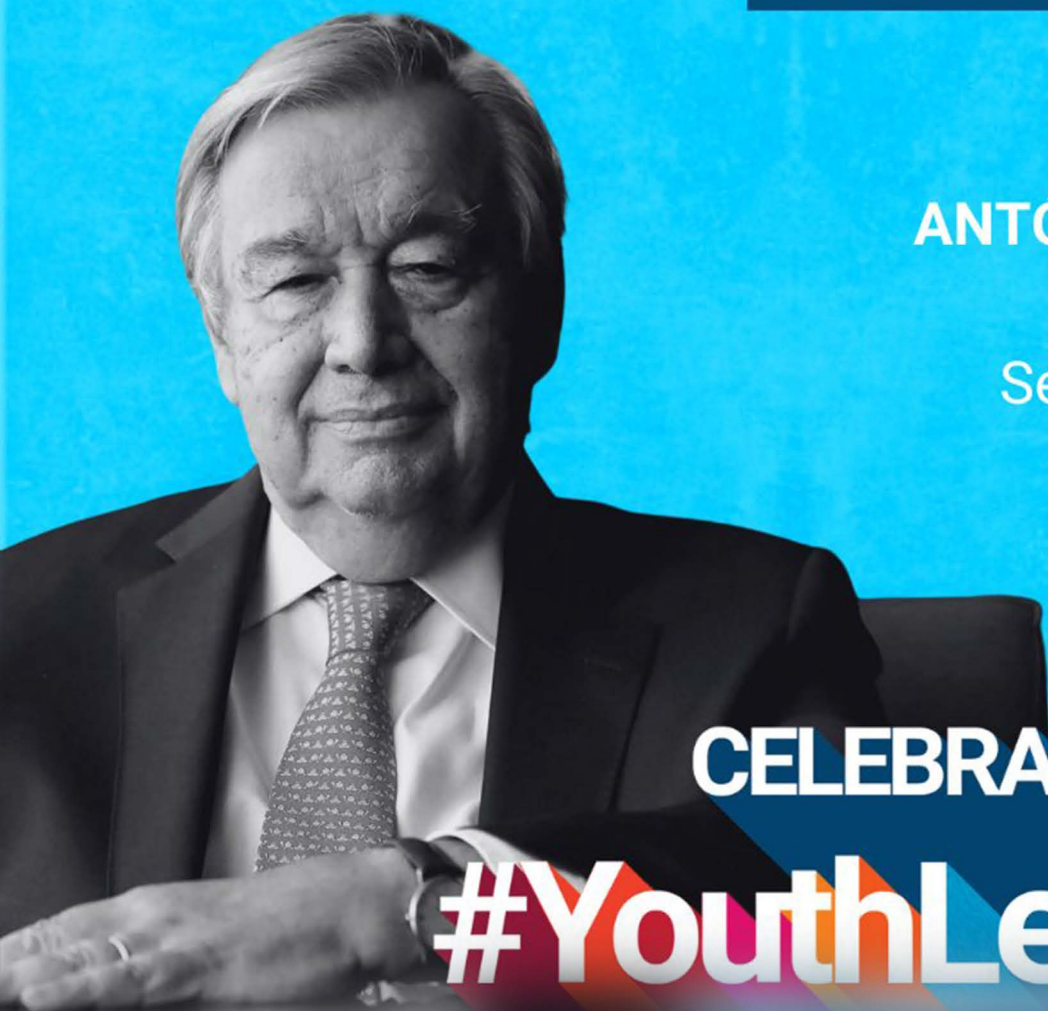
He noted that the demand for those skills is exceeding the supply. "And the UN foresees a major skills gap with 60% of young people lacking the necessary green skills by 2030."



Participants at the observance of the 2023 International Youth Day in Lagos

“
**Humanity depends on the
boundless energy, ideas and
contributions of youth
everywhere.**

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
United Nations
Secretary-General



CELEBRATING WAYS

#YouthLead 

Africa is the best investment proposition of the 21st century – UN Deputy Secretary-General



Video message by United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed has observed that Africa is the best investment proposition of the 21st century, in view of its natural resources, arable land and massive population.

“The long-term structural endowments of our continent are as strong as ever, most of the world’s natural resources are in Africa and 60% of the world’s arable land and a massive population of motivated youth, Africa is the best investment propositions of the 21st century.” She said at the second edition of the Africa Social Impact Summit co-convened by the Sterling One Foundation and the United Nations in Nigeria and held in Lagos.

However, she cautioned that investment in Africa must go beyond extracting raw material and emphasized that “It must build the roots of a modern economy, hard and soft infrastructure alike, and this must include bold investments into Africa’s strongest asset, its people at the continental, national and local levels.”

Mohammed advocated for channeling massive, targeted investments

into youth development, local employment and employability, climate smart solutions, education, health, renewable energy and improved water and sanitation facilities.

However, she cautioned that it would require the private and public sectors working together to scale the necessary financing instruments, guarantees de-risking mechanisms, to strengthen Africa’s development finance network and its institutions.

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, stressed the need for all to come together with a renewed spirit of collaboration, innovation, and determination, to build a prosperous and sustainable Africa for all.

Sanwo-Olu, who was represented by his Deputy, Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, said that the various projections suggested that Africa would be home to over half of the world’s poorest people by 2030, and that alone underscored the urgency and importance of the summit and the work all needed to do.



United Nations Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale



L-R: United Nations Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale; The Chief Executive Officer of Sterling One Foundation, Olapeju Ibekwe; Deputy Governor, Lagos State, Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat,

“I call upon the private sector, with its scale, sustainability, and innovation, to take the lead in driving change. We must harness the strength of our multi-stakeholder partnerships and leverage enterprise-driven innovations to create impact ecosystems that foster inclusive growth and recovery.” The Governor said.

The Chief Executive Officer of Sterling One Foundation, Olapeju Ibe-kwe, disclosed that the second edition of the Africa Social Impact Summit was a marked improvement on the 2022 edition. “I am also humbled by the intentionality of the private sector to own the sustainable development goals and move the needle. We are grateful to the partnership of the United Nations as our co-convenor for this conference.” She said.

Ibekwe expressed hope for several partnerships and innovations to emerge from the summit. “And we are also looking forward to existing social impact initiatives in different rural communities, accessing more resources, multilevel resources to be able to do more and spread their impact from communities to communities across the Africa.” She added.

Earlier, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale, emphasized that “You can’t do business on a dead

planet. Africa’s private sector can be a catalyst for change, supercharging our trajectory towards the 2030 Agenda.”

To achieve the pace and scale of transformative change that the world needs, Schmale noted that private sector investments must not just be motivated by profit but by considerations of what would have the greatest social impact.

He urged the CEOs and investors to embed sustainability into their decision making and align their business practices with the SDGs. The theme of the Summit held on 10 – 11 August 2023, was ‘Global Vision, Local Action: Repositioning the African Development Ecosystem For Sustainable Outcomes.’



(L-R) Audrey Akpewwe Odogu, Philanthropies Lead Nigeria, Microsoft; Ezejiakaku Nwonkolo, Founder Shade of Life Care; and Damilola Solesi, CEO Smids Animation Studio



A cross-section of dignitaries and participants



A cultural display at the event



Dr. Esther Somefun of UNFPA (Left) and Elijah Elaigwu of IOM (Right) attend to a visitor at the UN exhibition stand

UN urges investments in adolescent reproductive health for youth



A cross-section of panelist at the conferece on Adolescent and Youth Health and Development

UN sister agencies composed of UNFPA, UNICEF and UNESCO have called for urgent youth investments and nurturing of the youth demographic via the provision of economic, social and health benefits that guarantee they have ample opportunities to attain their optimal potentials and contribute to the development of society.

These were highlights of the UN Nigeria participation at EKO2023 the 3rd edition of the Nigeria Conference on Adolescent and Youth Health and Development which held in Lagos from August 15-20 and featured over 1000 participants.

With the theme "Achieving 2030 Targets: Driving Innovation for Adolescents and Youth Health, the 2023 edition had 8 sub-themes that focused on addressing the health and development needs of youth and adolescent in the modern era.

This guided the 4-day biennial event that featured conference plenaries and sessions from government, youth NGOs, public health agencies, development organizations and CSOs.

#Eko2030 Pre-Conference

Youths participated via physical and virtual modalities, and were given opportunities to meaningfully engage in conversations and deliberations underpinned by six of the sustainable development goals: Zero Hunger, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, reduced inequalities and climate action.

Speaking through the Officer in Charge Mr. Chris Sabum Macauley, UNFPA Nigeria reiterated the need to nurture the potential of the Nigerian youth by empowering them through informed policies, strategic investments, and innovative approaches that would position them to achieve their full potentials.

A sizeable number of youth and adolescent advocates were able to participate unhindered through watch party modalities established in UNFPA offices in Kaduna, Cross River and Lagos. This increased their proximity to proceedings, allowing them a space to network and also access resources from the event.



(3rd from Right) Health influencer Aproko Doctor during the Preconference session with UNFPA

Concurrent Sessions and Awards

In line with its 3 transformative results, UNFPA Nigeria participated in a sizeable number of sessions that focused on innovation; humanitarian programming; socializing family planning and ending GBV & Female genital mutilation. Innovative solutions such as the UNFPA Chatbox and Frisky App were also presented to the general public for downloads and feedback.

The UNFPA booth had a high footfall with participating youth able to access publications and manuals that provided instruction on how to maintain optimal SRHR (Sexual and Reproductive Health and rights). UNFPA officers were also on ground to respond to face-to-face enquiries in a confidential manner with health workers on standby to conduct HIV tests.

In line with its role as the United Nations global sexual and reproductive health agency, UNFPA provided scope for the event theme of driving innovation and empowering youth through participation in panel discussions alongside notable participants from government and private sector.

First Lady of Ogun State Mrs. Bamidele Abiodun added her voice to the calls for an end Gender-Based Violence. Citing current efforts in Ogun State- notably the establishment of a sexual assault referral centre with UNFPA collaboration- she urged greater interventions to address GBV, drug abuse and mental health issues which usually impeded the transition from healthy youth to adulthood.

She was a recipient at the event awards ceremony alongside UNFPA, UNICEF and other dignitaries.

Innovation, Reproductive Health & Youth Empowerment

The event featured breakout rooms with oral presentations on the intersections between innovation, reproductive health and youth empowerment. In keeping to the modality of working with government, UNFPA was able to present a comprehensive sexuality Education and GBV intervention tool.

This collaboration with the Lagos State Government would address perceived gaps in providing sexuality education for youths, adolescents and those transiting to adulthood through provision of vital information.

Social Media influencer Dr. Chinonso Egemba (Aproko Doctor), who was part of the UNFPA Nigeria panel discussion, urged the situation of messages in popular media to attract the attention and endorsement of youth.

Other influencers such as Guinness World Record Holder Ms. Hilda Bacci, Dr. Anto Lecky and actress Ms. Bamike Olawumi (Bam Bam) were also present to provide perspectives on how to increase the uptake and acceptance of life-saving health messages, and amplify the voices of youth and adolescents to catalyze national development.



First Lady Ogun State, H.E Mrs Bamidele Abiodun (Middle) with Participants at EKO2023

UN's 'GET Ahead' training targets women entrepreneurs with low literacy level



The Candidate Trainers with the Lead Trainer and ILO National Project Coordinator, Lagos Nigeria

Women constitute a disproportionate percentage of workers in the informal sector. The ILO (2018a) estimates that 82.1% of economically active women in Nigeria are engaged in the informal sector. One of the reasons for this is the flexibility that informal work engenders. This is because the traditional responsibility of unpaid childcare and domestic duties limits available time to participate in formal employment/economic activities, and thus, women engage in petty trading and similar enterprises to earn income (Olu-Owolabi et al., 2020).

Based on the outcomes and recommendations of the Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) and formalization assessments, the International Labour Organization has supported key actors in the business/entrepreneurship ecosystem to strengthen the capacity of women entrepreneurs especially in the informal economy to unleash their potentials to generate decent jobs at the country level through the training of trainers of 24 trainers on the ILO's Gender and Entrepreneurship Together Ahead (GET Ahead) modules. The 24 trainers were nominated by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Mariam Babangida National Center for Women Development, Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Rivers State Ministry of Women Affairs, Lagos State ministry of Commerce, Rivers State ministry of Commerce and Industry, National Directorate of Employment, Nigeria Labour Congress, Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association, Federation of Informal Workers Organization of Nigeria, Ogbonge Women's Group, Women Consortium of Nigeria, Solar Sister Nigeria, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria.

The overall objective of this activity was to build the capacity of service providers to offer relevant entrepreneurship training to women

with limited literacy and numeracy skills in Nigeria. This activity which took place in Lagos between 17th and 22nd July 2023, is part of the interventions under the ILO's Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) project "Promoting Gender Equality through Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Formalization in Nigeria".

The GET Ahead training-of-trainers is designed to capacitate services providers and ILO's partner organizations to provide business management and soft-skills training to women in the informal economy with basic literacy levels. The report of the recent WED assessment conducted by the ILO in Nigeria in 2022 reveals that the women business landscape is majorly informal sector with a small proportion operating in the formal sector. The study suggests that a differentiated strategy for empowering these two segments should therefore be explored by stakeholders, which necessitates that need for the GET Ahead TOT for service providers.

GET Ahead was developed for women (and men) with basic levels of literacy and delivers a gender-sensitive curriculum that combines business management training with soft-skills development. GET Ahead aims to address some of the barriers women face in starting and running a business, including lack of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, low confidence, and gendered norms and roles that increase the burden of household and care responsibilities. GET Ahead bridges the gender gap in entrepreneurship support by offering women and men both the business management and key soft skills they need to start a business. GET Ahead also includes a coaching component, where entrepreneurs are given the option of attending one-on-one coaching sessions with GET Ahead trainers. The GET Ahead training programme was designed based on a multiplier strategy, meaning that the programme relies on a network of Lead Trainers and Trainers that can en-

sure rapid roll-out that maintains a level of quality and that is rooted in local ownership. This multiplier strategy works as follows:

The ILO identifies, trains, and certifies an international pool of Lead Trainers who support the implementation of GET Ahead in different national contexts. Through the network of Lead Trainers, the ILO builds the capacity of organisations providing business support and trainers to implement GET Ahead trainings. GET Ahead Trainers then deliver the GET Ahead training programme to established and aspiring entrepreneurs. By using this multiplier strategy and building the capacity of local actors, the ILO aims to ensure sustainability of GET Ahead delivery.

The 24 trainers participated in a six-day training covering but not limited to the following topics: Introduction to starting a Business, Business Plan (Marketing, Operations, Finance and People), Leadership qualities for successful entrepreneurs, setting goals, the SMART way, managing tasks, time, and responsibilities in the home and at the business, Identifying and Managing Risks, Decision making, good negotiation among others.



In the coming months, the trainers will complete the required steps for their certification which include conducting two Trainings of Entrepreneurs (ToE) each and Coaching at least six entrepreneurs each over a three-month period

National Commission for Persons with Disabilities commends UN Conventions on Disability



L-R Honourable Bashiru Dawodu, Federal House of Representatives; UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Mathias Schmale; Executive Secretary/CEO of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, James David Lalu

The Executive Secretary/CEO of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, James David Lalu, has commended the UN Conventions on Disability, noting that it is the guiding principle for the disability inclusion work in Nigeria.

He said this on 16 August 2023, during a courtesy visit to the the UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Mathias Schmale, in company of Honorable Bashiru Dawodu, the House of Representative member on disability; and six other members of the Commission.

The courtesy visit was to brief the UN on the mandates and the activities of the commission and explore ways of collaboration with the UN system.

Lalu informed that the Disability Act was enacted in 2018, and that an estimated 35 million Nigeria's were with disabilities.

The Commission, he informed, started operations in 2021, and was mandated to provide education for persons with disabilities; provide health care services; accessible and reasonable accommodation; ac-

cess to justice; capacity building; sensitization and enlightenment programmes; private sector engagement; and facilitation of employment for persons with disabilities

Honourable Bashiru Dawodu stated that the House of Representatives was very much committed to the issue of disability and have got a Standing Committee on disability which he is a member. He noted the following that:

Matthias thanked the Commission for the visit and for providing an insight on its mandate and work. He stated that the UN signed a new Cooperation Framework with the Federal Government to guide its operation in the country, also that an accessibility assessment of the UN building was recently conducted, and that UN will liaise with the Director of Compliance in the Commission to see what could be done to make the UN building compliant to the accessibility standards. Besides, he continued, "There are very few staff in the UN with disabilities and we will try to improve on recruitment of persons with disabilities."



Executive Secretary/CEO of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, James David Lalu



A group photograph of participants at the meeting

African Women Leaders Network re-strategises to advance gender agenda



Beatrice Eyong, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS speaks with Erelu Bisi Fayemi, Co-Founder of African Women Development Fund and former First Lady of Ekiti State, during the event. Photo: UN Women Nigeria

UN Women, in collaboration with the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), and with support from the European Union Spotlight Initiative and the Government of Canada, convened a roundtable discussion. The purpose of this gathering was to address the pressing need to intensify collective efforts against gender-based violence while strengthening collaboration to promote women's empowerment and enhance their representation in decision-making processes.

This significant event not only shed light on AWLN's remarkable accomplishments but also underscored the pivotal role of women's leadership in the fight against violence targeting women and girls. The African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) was established with a powerful vision: to unite African women leaders in addressing crucial issues such as peace and security, the eradication of violence against women and girls, inter-generational mentorship, and women's representation in leadership roles.

In her remarks, Beatrice Eyong, the UN Women's Country Representative, emphasized one of AWLN's standout achievements – its extensive reach. Through collaborative initiatives with the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs, AWLN has positively impacted the lives of over 15,000 women and girls through various programs. During the challenging times brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, AWLN played a pivotal role in identifying women-owned businesses and facilitating the distribution of essential supplies to households led by women. This highlights its unwavering commitment to practical solutions for women's empowerment and well-being.

The Honourable Minister of Women affairs Uju Ohaneye reiterated that 'Women's leadership and the elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls goes hand in hand. As such Increasing number of women in leadership positions has a direct bearing in the reduction of violence against women and girls in our society.'

Haj. Lami Adamu, the President of the National Council for Women Societies (NCWS), expressed her heartfelt appreciation to the women in attendance for their commendable efforts in addressing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) issues in the country. She affirmed her organization's continued readiness to collaborate with AWLN, particularly at the grassroots level, and extended her best wishes for a productive discussion.

During the AWLN Roundtable, participants also engaged in plenary sessions, representing diverse sectors of society. These discussions aimed to identify and address gender gaps within various sectors while strategizing effective ways to bridge them through multisectoral interventions. This collaborative approach recognizes the multifaceted challenges faced by women and girls and underscores the importance of a holistic response.

The African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) was officially launched at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in June 2017. It stands as a joint initiative of the African Union Commission through the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, and the United Nations through the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). At the global level, this initiative is supported by the Federal Republic of Germany. AWLN's primary goal is to provide African women with a platform to share their leadership experiences and lessons learned. This, in turn, aims to enhance their transformative participation in decision-making processes, aligning with the Africa Agenda 2063 and the Global Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, ultimately striving for inclusive and sustainable peace and development across Africa.

As Nigeria enters a new phase of government, AWLN will be instrumental in bringing gender issues to the front burner, providing practical support for women and girls initiatives and advocate for gender-responsive policies that will improve the standard of living for women and girls in Nigeria.

UN partners the Government of Germany to advance gender equality in Nigerian security



(Second from left) Assistant Inspector-General of Police Aishatu Abubakar-Baju, Beatrice Eyong, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, and Olufunke Oladipo, representative of the Minister of Women Affairs, Nigeria

In a significant stride towards gender equality and security reform, UN Women, in collaboration with the Government of Nigeria, launched the second phase of the Enhancing Gender-Responsive Security Operations and Community Dialogue Project on the 17th of August 2023. This transformative initiative, supported by the Government of Germany, is poised to make a lasting impact by enhancing gender responsiveness within security sector institutions and addressing the unique security challenges faced by women and girls, particularly in Northeast Nigeria.

The project's launch event, marked by insightful speeches and unwavering commitment, underscored the importance of this endeavour. Beatrice Eyong, UN Women's Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Germany for their steadfast support. She passionately articulated the project's overarching goal: to bolster gender-responsive security operations and foster community dialogue in Nigeria. A pivotal focus of the project is to validate the 2nd Gender Policy of the Nigeria Police Force, a critical instrument in addressing the pressing security concerns confronting women and girls, especially in the Northeast region.

Monilola Udoh, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Women Affairs, lauded UN Women and the Government of Germany for their invaluable support. She emphasized the need to instill gender sensitivity in boys and girls from an early age, highlighting the project's role as a vital platform for advancing gender mainstreaming within the security sector.

Mr. Peter Mancha, UN Women's Project Manager, took a moment to acknowledge the achievements of the first phase while candidly acknowledging that significant efforts are still needed. One of the glaring gaps was the minimal representation of women in strategic and decision-making positions within security institutions. The second phase of the project is geared towards bridging these gaps in gender representation and building capacity within security institutions.

The Inspector General of Police, represented by AIG Aishatu Abubakar, reiterated the police's unwavering commitment to gender issues. She announced the initiation of a mentoring programme for the Nigeria Police Force, a crucial component of the adopted gender policy's implementation. She extended heartfelt gratitude to UN Women for their support in reviewing the police's gender policy, marking a pivotal step forward in this transformative journey.

The Chief of Defense Staff's representative, Air Commodore A. V. Ndace emphasized the pivotal role of women in promoting peace and security, particularly in mediation and reconciliation for conflict prevention. He reiterated the armed forces' dedication to upholding and implementing the gender policy for all members of the armed forces, further underscoring the nation's collective commitment to advancing gender equality.

In closing, Mr. Lansana Wonneh, the UN Women Deputy Representative, appreciated the heads of security agencies and the Government of Nigeria. In particular, he acknowledged the invaluable support of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and fervently called for their continued support to ensure the success of the second phase of the project, to advance gender equality and security reform in Nigeria.

The launch of the second phase of the Enhancing Gender-Responsive Security Operations and Community Dialogue Project stands as a testament to the unwavering commitment of Nigeria, its international partners, and the tireless efforts of the United Nations in promoting women's peace and security. Together, they are forging a path towards a safer and more equitable future for all, where the security sector reflects the diverse needs and voices of its entire population.

UN, Nigerian Rights Commission trains Soldiers on Human Rights and Civilian Protection



Government security forces receiving training on civilian protection and mainstreaming human rights in North-East Nigeria. @UNHCR/Francis Garriba.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Nigerian National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) conducted a two-day training program in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, to develop the capacity of over forty Nigerian security personnel on the importance of integrating human rights and safeguarding the civilian population while combating Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) as part of their ongoing efforts to combat insurgency in North-East Nigeria. The training, which took place on August 23-24, 2023, aimed at ensuring that the participants were better equipped to protect the rights of civilians.

“The asymmetric nature of the conflict complicates the war against insurgency,” said Chief Tony Ojukwu, NHRC Executive Secretary. “The insurgents live within us, and there is hardly a clearly drawn battleline between the insurgents and the civilian population,” he added.

He emphasised the importance of conducting operations to earn the trust and support of the civilian population. This underscores the vital need to uphold human rights and ensure the safety of civilians, especially during counter-insurgency activities.

The NHRC Executive Secretary used the occasion to acknowledge UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, for its partnership and support for the training and encouraged the trainees not only to engage in the training sessions actively and discussions but also to put the knowledge gained from the training into use by ensuring the protection of civilians and respect for human rights in their daily operations.

Mr. Ramsey Bryant, Senior Protection Sector Coordinator at UNHCR, emphasised the importance of the close relationship between protection provided by humanitarian organisations and security, which is the responsibility of security personnel, such as the military. He noted that the training would focus on these two intertwined aspects.

“Security is the preservation of lives, but when you are not alive, how do you live a fulfilled life? How does your life become meaningful? That is where protecting your human rights comes into play,” Ramsey noted. He described the crisis in the North-East as a protection crisis, emphasising that the civilian population bear the brunt of it. He added that in some LGAs where the civilian population are, the relevant law enforcement bodies of the government are not fully functioning, and the military is relied

on for law enforcement and ensuring that lawlessness is controlled. “We know that most often, non-state armed groups perpetrate human rights violations, but we also know that in some areas, they are committed by the military at the undergo counter-insurgency activities,” he stated, adding, “This is not unique to Nigeria; it happens globally during conflicts as civilians become victims of insurgency and counter-insurgency measures.”

Mr. Bryant emphasised that military counter-insurgency operations often lead to people being displaced from their homes. When they move to unfamiliar places, protection and human rights issues often arise. The training aimed to identify ways the military and the humanitarian community can address these issues when they arise. Mr. Bryant urged participants to work with the humanitarian community to find solutions to the rights and protection challenges civilians face.

Speaking on behalf of the trainees, Lt. Col. Johnson Akinola Dada, Ag. Deputy Chief of Staff, Civil-Military Relations of the 7 Division Headquarters in Maiduguri, thanked the training organisers for the opportunity to enhance their knowledge about civilian protection and mainstreaming human rights. He called on his fellow participants to apply whatever they learned in the field.

Trainers from UNHCR, NHRC, UNICEF and others presented on various thematic areas. Topics included UNHCR’s mandate and the humanitarian situation in the northeast, gender-based violence (GBV) and conflict-related sexual violence, child protection in conflict situations, protection of civilians in armed conflicts, guiding principles on internal displacement, the definition of human rights and their legal framework at various levels, mainstreaming human rights into law enforcement during counter-insurgency operations, and standards of detention in armed conflict.

In the past, UNHCR has facilitated capacity development initiatives for various groups of security personnel across the North-East. Despite these efforts, there have been ongoing reports of human rights challenges, particularly during counter-insurgency operations in remote communities. Recognising the importance of addressing these challenges, this training was organised for soldiers and officers, often on the frontlines. The participants demonstrated a keen interest in the subject, as evidenced by their curious questions during the session.

UN Joint team on AIDS commends Lagos State Government's achievements in aids response



Dr. Leo Zekeng Country Representative of UNAIDS (Left); and H.E the Executive Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu

The UN joint team on AIDS commends the Lagos state government in its multi-sectoral approach in AIDS response. The UN team led by Dr. Leo Zekeng at Lagos House, Marina, noted that Lagos State is one of the fast-track cities states in Nigeria, taking the lead in service delivery and health systems strengthening.

Dr Zekeng spotlighted the need to scale services in PMTCT coverage which stands at about 25% in the state, and also speaks to the dismal outlook of 25% of babies born with HIV in Nigeria.

The governor, while receiving the commendation promised that the state would sustain the integrated action plan that provides resources for response, advocacy, communication and information on the disease.

He also pledged his administration's commitment to reducing mother to child transmission and ensuring robust engagement with the private sector for provision of test kits for residents in all its primary and secondary healthcare initiatives.

The city of Lagos excelled in moving the AIDS response forward and was awarded the distinguished "Circle of Excellence" Award by the Fast-track Cities Institute in October 2022, in Sevilla, Spain, during the 2022 Fast-track Cities Conference.



A group photo of the UNAIDS Team with the Governor and his team.



Dr. Leo Zekeng Country Representative of UNAIDS (Left); and H.E the Executive Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu

FAO appoints new Country Representative a.i.



FAO Country Representative in Nigeria, Dominique Koffy KOUACOU

A new Country Representative has been appointed for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representation in Nigeria and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) following the retirement of Fred Kafeero, he is Dominique Koffy Kouacou.

Dominique Koffy KOUACOU is a national of Cote d'Ivoire and an Agronomic Engineer with over 18 years of experience in humanitarian resilience and development program management in several sectors such as Agriculture, Water and Sanitation, Cash Transfer, Community Development, Peace and Emergency response.

Having worked in complex Humanitarian – Development – Peace nexus settings, he has vast experience in strategic planning and managing country offices, monitoring and quality control of programmes, alliance building and UN System coordination, private sector engagement, partnerships and innovation among many others.

Over the course of his career, he has worked in Sri Lanka, Yemen, Central African Republic, and several countries in the West African sub-region.

He was FAO's Head of Emergency and Resilience in Burkina Faso from 2019, before he was appointed as the Head of Emergency and Resilience ad interim (a.i.) at the FAO Sub-Regional Office for West Africa in 2022. His appointment as the FAO Representative (a.i) in Nigeria and to ECOWAS became effective from 1 August 2023, pending when a substantive FAOR would be appointed.

INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF
PEACE **21**
SEPT.

TIME: 3PM Prompt
VENUE: Twitter Space
@UN_Nigeria

#PeaceDay #GlobalGoals

How training changed our perspectives, journalists share experiences on impact of ILO FAIRWAY project in Nigeria



A group photo of facilitators and participants at the training

The ILO FAIRWAY project will wrap up by December of 2023, but journalists in Nigeria say the four-year project has been impactful.

The project, which provided capacity building opportunities for journalists, trade unions and civil society organisations, has led to an improvement on the use of terminologies and framing of news labour migration stories that tend to create awareness around fair recruitment practices in Nigeria.

Though much still needs to be done. However, for many media practitioners in Nigeria, they now have a better understanding of the issues.

“Before the ILO FAIRWAY training, my understanding of labour migration was quite limited. I could not put things in perspective as regards labour migration” says Tersoo Zamber, a journalist with Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria stated.

Tersoo, along with several other journalists is a member of a community of practice set up by the FAIRWAY project. The community also has members of trade unions and CSO groups working around migration.

“But now, following the training, I can put issues on labour migration in better perspectives,” Tersoo says.

He adds that, “As a journalist, with the new understanding I have about the issues, I frame my stories such that those listening to me as per radio, can now understand what is being discussed. By doing so, it will help them make better choices as regards labour migration.”

For many journalists, the training couldn’t have come at a better time,

especially with the new wave of the japa syndrome in Nigeria.

Helen Shok, a Senior editor with Voice of Nigeria who has also benefited from the training says before the training she viewed labour migrants from a negative perspective of only those mostly fleeing from hardships.

“I report and write now from the point of knowledge using the right terms to describe situations where necessary,” she said.

Indeed, Labour migrants need the right information to make better choices and journalists with better understanding are now in pole position to offer that information as a result of the training that they have received.

Apollos Christian with the Nigerian Tribune Newspaper says, “There is no doubt that the role of the media is very important in helping labour migrants make better decisions. Through our reportage, we make the public become more aware of laws and treaties and guidelines that concerns labour migration. This FAIRWAY project has helped to build our capacity in a way that we now have a better understanding of many of these laws and guidelines”

“The awareness created by the media around dangerous migration routes has without a doubt helped to reduce the number of young persons that would have taken such dangerous journeys.”

In some instances, the journalists who benefited from the trainings have become the focal points for reporting within their newsrooms, and been active in pushing for an increase in stories on labour migra-

tion within their outlet – ensuring that these stories align with international labour standards and best practice in ethical journalism.

“From the training I could see that labour migration is a vast terrain but not many journalists had paid interest to this terrain,” Tersoo adds.

He suggested that in the future, “the training could be spread across for more days. Sometimes, the two days is not enough to dissect the issues. If they can make it in one week. If they can also bring returnees or victims of migration exploitation during training to share their experiences, it will be nice”

Tunde Salma is one of the trainers engaged by the ILO FAIRWAY project to build capacity for journalists. He says he is impressed with the “increasing consciousness with regards to terminologies that several trainings have pointed out to.”

But there are rooms for improvement, he says, adding that “the depth of reportage is still more of routine reporting”

According to him, there are plethoras of issues that journalists can focus on.

“Many of the reports still focus largely on japa of Nigerians abroad. Perhaps, due to the fact that people hardly talk about the benefit of migration at individual level when things are going fine, it is only when things are not going fine that they voice out and media latch on to that to report what may now term as largely negative stories around the issue of irregular migration”

He said further, “If you look at some of the tools that the FAIRWAY program has produced in the last few years, particularly the media tool kit contains resources tools and tips that can aid journalists and it approaches the issue from different thematic areas that can serve as inspiration for journalists. I will advise media practitioners to always consult and read through these resources when developing stories along this subject matter.”

“The training has helped me to have better understanding on remote causes of Labour Migration, regular and irregular migration,” Samuel Adeyinka of Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, adds



A group photo of facilitators and participants at the training

Schmale urges academia to rescue 2030 Agenda, suggests three ways



Vice Chancellor LASU, Prof. Ibiyemi Oltunji-Bello (mni), addresses the audience

The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr Matthias Schmale, has called on the academia to rise and contribute to the global efforts to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the overall Agenda 2030.

“As a trusted advisor, academia will have the opportunity to shape the designs of solutions and policies that can rescue the SDGs and have a genuine social impact in Nigeria.” Schmale noted on 28 August 2023, at a two-day National Conference on Agenda 2030 and SDGs, organised by Lagos State University Centre for the Actualization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (LASU-SDGs), in collaboration with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Nigeria.

Schmale explained that universities could be catalytic in three important ways: Firstly, according to him, “Nigeria has the largest youth population in Africa. 60% of Nigerians are under 25, and the median age is just 18. This huge generation of young people can drive transformational change in Nigeria and across Africa.”

He emphasised the importance of integrating sustainable development into education, conducting university-based research that con-

tributes to the SDGs, and fostering innovative interdisciplinary approaches to longstanding challenges.

Furthermore, he highlighted universities’ role in guiding public policy towards sustainability, suggesting that specialized talents and analytical tools from academia could lead to policy transformation. Schmale further called for self-reflection and close study of existing methods and processes as many have not sufficiently worked for the country. “We look to centers of learning such as yours for new pathways to achieve the SDGs and new interdisciplinary approaches to old problems.”

Vice Chancellor LASU, Prof. Ibiyemi Oltunji-Bello, emphasised the university’s commitment to innovative research and solutions that contribute to a better world and empower future generations. The conference, was held at the Aderemi Makanjuola Lecture Theatre on the Ojo Main Campus of Lagos State University, with the theme, “At The Midpoint of Agenda 2030 And The Sustainable Development Goals: Which Way Nigeria And Africa?”



Cross-section of audience



Cross-section of audience

UN calls on youths to find joint solutions to global crises as 7th session of BIMUN opens



A cross-section of delegate at BIMUN

The Director of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Nigeria, Ronald Kayanja, has called on young people to find joint solutions to global challenges.

He said this on Monday 7 August 2023, at the Babcock International Model UN (BIMUN) organised by Babcock University Ilishan-Remo in collaboration with UNIC Abuja.

Represented by UNIC National Information Officer, Oluseyi Soremekun, the Director urged all delegates to BIMUN 2023 to unite and be decisive in discussing challenges and proffering solutions.

"Let's seek joint solutions to global crises and build a more sustain-

able and resilient world for all and for generations to come." Kayanja added.

Deputy Consul General/ Head Economic Department, Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lagos, Ms Leonie van der Stijl, noted that global solidarity was essential. "We need to invest in clean, resilient and inclusive economy, fitting not only this 21st century but also the centuries to come." She said.

Earlier, the Chief of Staff to the President/ Vice Chancellor of Babcock University, Prof Alao David Oladimeji, commended UNIC for its consistency in supporting BIMUN since inception.



Dignitaries and members of the simulated International Court of Justice



UNIC National Information Officer, Oluseyi Soremekun addresses BIMUN's delegates

Photo News



Photo news captions,

1. Her Excellency, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria laid wreaths at the wreath-laying ceremony in honour and memory of UN Staff and partners who lost their lives during the bomb attack incidence of August 26 2011 at the UN House Abuja.
2. The United Nations Under Secretary- General for Counter Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov is on official visit to Nigeria. He visited the UN House in Abuja and held a meeting with the UN Nigeria Country Team. The discussions at the meeting focused on strengthening support to Counter -Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism efforts in Nigeria and the preparations for the upcoming Africa Counter Terrorism Summit in Abuja.
3. The United Nations Under Secretary- General for Counter Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov at the wreath-laying ceremony in honour and memory of UN Staff and partners who lost their lives during the bomb attack incidence of August 26 2011 at the UN House Abuja.

Editor: Oluseyi Soremekun (UNIC), **Layout:** Michael Achimugu (UNIC)

Editorial Team: UNCG members— Ronald Kayanja (Chairman) - UNIC; Charity Warigon (WHO); Rajat Madhok & Geoffrey Njoku (UNICEF); Stella Onah (UNAIDS); Christabel Chanda-Ginsberg & Rejoice Emmanuel (UNDP); Anthony Abu (UN Women); Kori Habib & Adewole Ajao (UNFPA); Pius Udo (ILO); Edward Ogolla & Gabriel Adeyemo (UNHCR); Elijah Elaigwu (IOM); David Tsokar & Oluoma Mezie-Osuocho (FAO); Yachat Nuhu (UNESCO); Ann Weru & Christina Powell (UNOCHA); Chi Lael & Kelechi Onyemaobi (WFP); Katrien Nollen (UNMAS); Vera Onyeaka-Onyilo (IFAD); Roland Abah (WMO); Oluwatobilola Moody (WIPO).

Advisory: United Nations Country Team (UNCT)

All correspondence should be directed to **The Editor, UN Nigeria Newsletter, United Nations Communication Group (UNCG) c/o United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Abuja.** E-mail: unic-lagos@un.org