



## UN helps students thriving with e-learning

Digital learning in Nigeria was on the fringes and exclusive to elite schools before Covid-19, but now a fundamental equity strategy in bridging the learning poverty gap. "We are shifting from fixed-time to personalized learning, with digital learning as the key enabler," says Dr. Afolabi Adejare, Director - Quality, Planning, Research and Statistics, Lagos State Ministry of Education. "This will empower students irrespective of backgrounds to take control of their learning and achieve their full potential."

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## Thriving with e-learning: How Bolade transformed her biology scores

An innovative digital learning platform, supported by UNICEF is helping students elevate their grades and achieve success in their studies in Lagos State.



Bolade Ayomide, Government Senior College Iyana Ipaja Agege

**B**olade Ayomide is a bright fourteen-year-old student at the Government Senior College Agege, Lagos. She is passionate about the Arts and aspires to become a lawyer. However, the subjects required for her transitioning from the junior to the senior secondary level include biology, and she lacked confidence in her abilities and feared that she could not keep up with the fast pace of her peers, whom she described as highly competitive. "I found biology tough and overwhelming and struggled to get average marks despite my best efforts," Bolade confessed.

But her situation rapidly improved with the Nigeria Learning Passport (NLP) deployment in her school. The platform provided Bolade and her friends with a new way of learning that is engaging, interactive, and personalized to individual needs and learning styles. The interactive quizzes, videos, and animations helped her to understand complex biological concepts in an engaging and fun way. "I was impressed at the selection of courses available on the platform— everything from biology to mathematics to entrepreneurial and secretarial studies," she gushed. The lessons are well-structured and easy to understand, allowing her to learn quickly. She told me the interactive quizzes provided a great way to check her understanding and reinforce her knowledge.

With constant learning, Bolade's efforts produced positive results. "It was a dream come true as I moved from below fifty percent in biology to above seventy percent in one academic year." As her grades im-

proved, so did her confidence and enthusiasm to make the most of the platform. She also learned a bit about designing using the Microsoft app on the NLP, the skill she now deploys to generate a little income by designing posters for her friends and family members celebrating their birthdays. "I got paid four thousand naira the other day for designing a birthday poster for a friend," she told me.

Bolade's favorite subjects on the NLP platform are biology, mathematics, and entrepreneurial studies. The entrepreneurial skills lessons come in handy with her mum's cosmetic business. After school, Bolade would first stop at her mother's shop to help out. She told me she and her mum acquired customer service skills and learned the right hair product for different hair textures on the platform.

### A New Fun Way of Learning

The power of innovation of the Nigeria Learning Passport is transforming education in Nigeria and providing students like Bolade access to helpful study tools such as multimedia content, including videos, animations, interactive quizzes, practice tests, and progress tracking. "I stay on top of my class work at home or school, and I like that they are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week".

Bolade told me that she downloaded the App on the google play store on her mother's phone and her elder brother's laptop —giving her a double opportunity to access the platform outside the classroom. She sometimes does group studies with her neighborhood class buddies because she can access her brother's laptop.



Bolade Ayomide (seated) with her classmate trying out the platform



Bolade Ayomide (seated) with her classmate

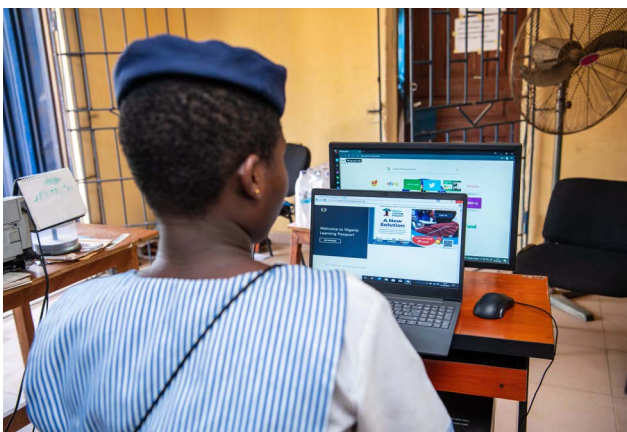
Digital learning is boosting the traditional classroom experience for students and teachers and making education more accessible, engaging, and practical. "Our work as teachers is now less stressful as the students do most of the course work at their own time and pace even before coming to the classroom," says Asimi Saheed Olajide, a teaching staff at the Senior Government College Agege. To Asimi, the visual content on the NLP platform is the most liked by students because it brings the topics to life, especially the sciences.

**Bridging the Learning Poverty Gap**

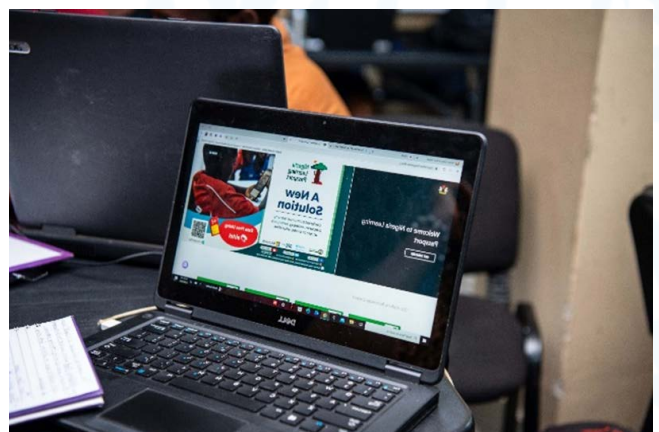
Lack of access to digital devices, stable internet connectivity, and the necessary digital skills to harness the power of technology for learning has hampered the ability of children and young populations to thrive in an increasingly digital world. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened the devastation of the education system and disrupted traditional learning models, yet also provided the right moment to reimagine education and ensure every child has an equal opportunity to succeed and to have access to localized digital content that aligns with the Nigerian curriculum and cultural context.

Digital learning in Nigeria was on the fringes and exclusive to elite schools before Covid-19, but now a fundamental equity strategy in bridging the learning poverty gap. "We are shifting from fixed-time to personalized learning, with digital learning as the key enabler," says Dr. Afolabi Adejare, Director - Quality, Planning, Research and Statistics, Lagos State Ministry of Education. "This will empower students irrespective of backgrounds to take control of their learning and achieve their full potential."

The Learning Passport, a partnership between UNICEF, Microsoft, Cambridge, and the Boston Consulting Group, seeks to bridge the digital learning gap, provide continuous access to education for students and teachers, drive improved learning outcomes through high-quality, portable education in formal and non-formal settings, enable learning in low to no connectivity areas, and deliver technical and vocational education to guarantee a brighter future for children like Bolade and ensure that they have access to best possible education, knowledge, and skills they need to succeed in the 21st century.



Bolade Ayomide working with the Nigeria Learning Passport (NLP)



Nigeria Learning Passport (NLP) Interface screen

*The Nigeria Learning Passport (NLP) is an online e-learning platform with mobile and offline capabilities, enabling continuous access to quality education. It is part of the Federal Government of Nigeria's education cloud project supported by UNICEF for providing all learners with e-learning from basic to tertiary levels of education. NLP is presently accessible free on the AIRTEL telecom sim card.*

# SWOP 2023: A case for rights and choices



Group photo of high level participants

**U**NFPA Nigeria in conjunction with the National Population Commission (NPC) launched the State of the World 2023 (SWOP) report in Abuja.

Titled 8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities. the case for rights and choices, the theme of the annual publication consolidated its previous edition, by amplifying the available opportunities and prospects for an increasing population to accelerate action towards attaining the 3 transformative results by guaranteeing reproductive rights and choices.

With projections indicating the global population figures stood at 8 billion in October 2022, the news generated mixed reviews globally. However, UNFPA and its partners through this annual publication have provided evidence-based advocacy indicating that with proper population management measures in place, the growing global figures, present latent opportunities for increasing reproductive health & rights; sustainable growth and development.

This was reiterated during the Nigerian leg of the global commemoration to an audience composed of government representatives, members of the diplomatic corps, UN sister agencies and humanitarian & development partners.

## Family planning can reduce maternal mortality

With the SDG target for maternal deaths set as a global maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of less than 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030, participants urged collaborations that would promote rather than hinder progress towards ending preventable maternal mortality in Nigeria. As the current national figure was 512 deaths per every 100,000 live births, there were also calls for deepening of platforms that would guarantee reproductive rights and choices that would translate into harnessing of demographic dividends.

## Census 2023 will provide crucial data for national planning

With the last Nigerian census conducted in 2006, the shortage of credible data for national planning made it imperative to have another housing and enumeration exercise. The SWOP launch was an opportunity to amplify this message to the new administration which resumed after the conclusion of the 2023 elections. With preparations for another census already at a crucial stage, it was important to finalise the process and prevent the loss of any progress already made during the build up to the eagerly-anticipated exercise.



South Sudan Ambassador to Nigeria, H.E Mr David Boam Choat



Country Director, Pathfinder International Nigeria, Amina Aminu Dorayi

## UN adopts strategic plan for Nigeria worth US\$2.56 billion



WFP Country Representative David Stevenson (Right) with the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Dr Nasir Sani-Gwarzo (Left) at the CSP Launch in UN House, Abuja

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has launched a new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for Nigeria worth \$2.56 billion over the next five years.

The new Country Strategic Plan, approved by WFP's Executive Board, defines WFP's entire portfolio of assistance within the country for 2023-2027. The CSP is valued at US\$2.56 billion and is designed to support Nigeria in achieving food security and improved nutrition by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2).

The CSP also seeks to contribute to progress in good health and well-being, inclusive education, gender equality and climate action and foster a reinforced partnership in strengthening the national humanitarian and development response, all in accordance with the SDGs. WFP's support is delivered through lifesaving crisis response and lifecchanging resilience building activities.

The CSP, which took effective from March 2023, is aligned with Nigeria's National Development Plan (2021-2025), Nigeria Agenda (2050), the National Multi-Sectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition (2021-2025) and the National Humanitarian Development Peace Framework. The CSP is also consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Nigeria (2023-2027).

On June 14, 2023, WFP hosted a Joint Media Briefing at the UN House, Abuja, with the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development – and the WFP Country Representative in Nigeria used the occasion to present the new CSP for Nigeria.

WFP Representative & Country Director, David Stevenson, said:

“As WFP, we deliver humanitarian frontline results, with our partners who share our goal of Zero Hunger in Nigeria, in line with our mandate of ‘Saving Lives, Changing Lives’. WFP operates a food system that sees conflict as the enemy of progress. WFP is also making significant investments in the Nigerian economy. We buy locally, we invest locally, helping to build up the national economy”.

The resources for WFP operations derive from voluntary contributions pledged solely to WFP. Disbursements under this CSP will therefore be

dependent on the level of resources provided by donors to WFP.

### WFP's work in Nigeria

The UN World Food Programme is the largest humanitarian organization fighting hunger worldwide. Since 2016, WFP has been working in Nigeria with the Government, partners and other stakeholders to deliver on its mandate of Zero Hunger.

WFP works in various sectors relating to the attainment of food security and Zero Hunger in Nigeria. WFP's biggest contribution in Nigeria remains the lifesaving and life-changing work it supports in the northeast and increasingly in northwest Nigeria. The conflict in the northeast has left millions of people struggling with hunger. As food insecurity continues to spike in Nigeria, over 25 million people are facing acute hunger at the peak of the June-August 2023 lean season. In Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states alone, some 4.3 million people face acute hunger at the peak of the lean season this year. Some 2 million children are projected to be acutely malnourished in the northeast alone. However, humanitarian aid has not kept pace with this sharp rise in hunger levels.

Overall, WFP is assisting some 2.1 million vulnerable people in Nigeria in 2023 – through food assistance and nutrition support, cash payments and livelihoods projects to help build back the resilience of the people affected by conflict. WFP also contributes to other durable solutions like support to small holder farmers; financial services; supply chain, support to the transport industry; social protection; post-harvest management and food security analyses. These initiatives are very much in line with WFP's mandate of Zero Hunger – within the framework of the new CSP.

The USA, the UK, the European Union (ECHO), Germany, Canada, France, Sweden, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Government of Nigeria and several other donors provide contributions to support WFP operations in Nigeria. But with increasing conflict and alarming hunger levels, more support is needed to continue providing lifesaving and life-changing assistance and helping to build peace in the conflict-affected states.

# Hope away from home - World Refugee Day 2023



World Refugee Day road walk in Abuja, Nigeria. © UNHCR

Each year on 20 June, the world celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. A day to shine a light on the rights, needs and dreams of refugees, helping to mobilise political will and resources so refugees can not only survive but also thrive. And while it is important to protect and improve the lives of refugees every single day, international days like World Refugee Day help to focus global attention on the plight of those fleeing conflict or persecution.

This year's World Refugee Day focuses on the power of inclusion and solutions for refugees, with a tagline "Hope away from Home. A world where refugees are always included." The 2023 theme "Hope away from home", highlighted the need to give refugees the opportunity to study, work and live healthy lives wherever they find safety. And amidst global forced displacement at record levels, the need for solutions and hope for millions of people fleeing conflict and persecution has never been greater.

Since the conflict escalated in the North-West and South-West region of Cameroon, large numbers of refugees have fled to Nigeria through the southern border states of Cross River and Akwa Ibom as well as in the Northcentral state of Benue and Northeast states of Taraba and Adamawa. Nigeria currently hosts some 96,000 refugees and asylum seekers, out of which over 87,000 are Cameroonians.

Over the years, Nigeria has showcased a deep-seated commitment towards the well-being of refugees, not just in terms of financial and moral support but also in their comprehensive approach to as-

sistance. Through the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), among other partners, the nation has offered refugees protection, access to social services, livelihood opportunities, and opportunity to work and become self-sufficient. Several advocacy walks were actively organized on June 19, 2023, each occurring in different locations such as Abuja, Mubi in Adamawa State, and Ogoja in Cross River State. These walks were organised by agencies and partners working to improve the well-being of refugees and other forcibly displaced people in Nigeria. The walk manifested solidarity with refugees and created awareness of the rising number of forcibly displaced people worldwide, especially in Nigeria, and the many complex challenges they face, ranging from stigmatization, inadequate access to education and healthcare, to mention but a few. The road walks also called on citizens to support refugees and other forcibly displaced persons as they strive to rebuild their lives.

The 2023 World Refugee Day continued its official commemoration on 20 June with a call by stakeholders for sustainable action in a collective responsibility to create opportunities that unlock the full potential of refugees and empower them to rebuild their lives. The Honorable Federal Commissioner for NCFRMI, Imaan Suleiman-Ibrahim, noted the need to open doors and tear down barriers that hinder refugees' integration and inclusion.

"On this important day, let us pause to acknowledge the immense challenges faced by those forced to flee their homes, leaving behind everything they once own. Let us stand together, not only in solidarity

but in unwavering determination, to foster a world where refugees are not merely survivors, but cherished members of our global community. Today serves as a powerful reminder that no one chooses to be a refugee. It is circumstances beyond their control that force them to leave everything behind—their homes, their loved ones, and their familiar surroundings.

“Today, let us remember that every refugee has a story, a dream, and a unique potential waiting to be unleashed,” she said.

According to her, refugees are not defined by their displacement but by their remarkable resilience, courage and unyielding humanity.

The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr Matthias Schmale in his message at the commemoration, said the theme for this year’s World Refugee Day reminds us of our duty to protect and support refugees – and our obligation to open more avenues of support.

According to Mr Schmale, “We need greater international support for host countries, as called for by the Global Compact for Refugees, to boost access to quality education, decent work, health care, housing and social protection for refugees and host communities.”

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Country Representative in Nigeria, Ms Chansa Kapaya said, including refugees in the communities where they have found safety is the most effective way to enable them to rebuild their lives and contribute to

local economies and the countries hosting them.

She said it is also the best way to prepare them to return home and rebuild their countries when conditions allow them to return safely and voluntarily.

“Concretely, refugees seek to thrive within our communities, just like you and me. This means obtaining decent employment, acquiring knowledge in local schools, and availing themselves of essential services like decent housing and reliable healthcare. They strive for nothing less than to be engaged, contributing members of our society. Inclusion also means forging friendships and showing solidarity with newcomers in our communities. We all benefit from human connections and a sense of belonging. For refugees far from home, feeling welcome sows hope, we give refugees hope when we empower them to take greater command of their daily lives”.

Refugees represent the very best of the human spirit. They need and deserve support and solidarity — not closed borders and pushbacks. We can all do more to give refugees more hope – and more opportunities – while they are away from home.



Cross-section of participants at the World Refugee Day commemoration held at the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria. © UNHCR

# Education is incomplete without life skills and critical thinking – First Lady of Lagos



(Front row L-R) Consul General, Cameroonian Consulate General In Lagos, H.E Manga Bessem; The First Lady of Lagos State H.E. Dr (Mrs) Ibijoke Sanwo-olu; Tutor General/ Permanent Secretary, Education District II, and Chairperson, Organising Committee, Mrs Anike Adekanye; and Tutor General/ Permanent Secretary, Education District VI, Dr Shareefah Adejoke Yusuf.

The First Lady of Lagos State, H.E. Dr (Mrs) Ibijoke Sanwo-olu has emphasized that “Education is incomplete without combining knowledge with life skills and critical thinking to empower students to navigate the dynamic world of the technological revolution.”

She said this at the 4th Lagos Secondary Schools Model United Nations (LASSMUN), organised by the Lagos State Government through the Lagos Education Districts, in collaboration with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Abuja Nigeria, and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) Lagos, on 22 June 2023.

“Today’s world systems are changing and Education should not and must not only be treated as a human right but also improved upon to serve as a potent platform to arm the younger generation with the skillsets to cope and be steps ahead of the realities that we face.” She explained.

According to Dr (Mrs) Sanwo-Olu, the theme, “Education as a Human Right and Key Driver of Sustainable Development,” is not only apt but also critical in reinforcing the strategic position of education in fostering a better world for all.

UNIC Director Ronald Kayanja, noted that each edition of LASSMUN

had raised hundreds of future diplomats, confident of debating global issues and situating same in the context of their assigned countries.

“The World is witnessing a deepening climate crisis, widening inequalities, an escalation of threat to peace and security, and of course, rising challenges of human rights and gender equality.” He acknowledged, “Model UN is a platform for young people to discuss and proffer solutions to global challenges.”

Kayanja, who was represented by UNIC National Information Officer, Oluseyi Soremekun, observed that “This year, the total number of delegates to this LASSMUN conference is 3,860, thereby making LASSMUN arguably the biggest in the world. It is interesting to note that the key message of LASSMUN theme, was disseminated to thousands of students in Lagos State from whom the 3,860 delegates were selected.”

Tutor General/ Permanent Secretary, Education District II, and Chairperson, Organising Committee, Mrs Anike Adekanye, disclosed that Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu approved of the partnership with UNIC as “It adds to its achievements in educational facility renewal, methodological reengineering, human capital reinvention, rewarding and inspirational tourism for students achievers and upgraded



H.E. Dr (Mrs) Ibijoke Sanwo-olu, The First Lady of Lagos State



A cross-section of audience at the LASSMUN



technological- driven learning, among other innovative achievements in the education sector which have become most impactful, directional, realisable and a sustainable venture.”

The Director General of NIIA, Prof Eghosa Osaghae, represented by Associate Prof. Efem Ubi, underscored the importance of Model UN in the development of students as they would learn about diplomacy, tolerance and cooperation. He urged them to seize the opportunity of LASSMUN to network and learn new values.

The President of the Fourth LASSMUN General Assembly, Ambassador Oyinkansola Grace Olutoki, urged delegates to work and cooperate with multilateral institutions like the United Nations and other stakeholders, “to aggregate and amplify our collective strength and progress toward dealing with these challenges. Let this 4th session of the

LASSMUN be the take-off point of a new era of achieving these long term goals.”

In the resolution adopted by consensus at the end of the Fourth Session of the Lagos Secondary Schools Model United Nations (LASSMUN) convened at the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), on Thursday 22 June 2023, the General Assembly called on member states to invest in monitoring and management of educational institutions to ensure they are inclusive, responsive and of quality.

They further called on member states to enact laws that are clear and effective, Inclusive, Participatory, Rights-based, and capable of facilitating achievement of SDG 4 and upholding Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



## Impact of capacity building efforts on coordination of Mine Action activities in North-East Nigeria. Case Study



MA AoR LGA coordination meeting in Yobe state

Insurgent violence and terrorism carried out by Boko Haram (BH) and the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) have been the major drivers of conflict in the north-east, Nigeria. The conflict, which is in its thirteenth year, has resulted in the displacement of millions of people and created a large-scale humanitarian need. Since its deployment to the North-East in 2018, UNMAS has supported national capacity building efforts through the training of personnel of relevant national and state authorities as well personnel of civil society organizations.

UNMAS has provided explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) training-of-trainers and Non-Technical Survey (NTS) courses to personnel of national authorities including the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (MRRR), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). In addition, personnel of 10 Civil Society organizations (including CPWEI and AFRDEV) selected from across the Borno, Adamawa and Ba (BAY) states also benefited from the EORE ToT and NTS courses conducted by UNMAS. The training has further enhanced the capacity of the beneficiaries to not only deliver EORE to the at-risk population in a more effective and efficient manner, it has also equipped them with the skills to manage and coordinate EORE in their areas of operation.

To firm up coordination of mine action activities, foster collaboration among mine action operators, improve communication flow and information sharing among the community stakeholders and government agencies in the north-east, UNMAS established coordination meetings at the LGA level for the Mine Action Area of Responsibility (AoR) across the BAY states.

In Yobe state, two national NGOs namely; Child Protection and Women Empowerment Initiatives (CPWEI) and Africa Youth for Peace, Development and Empowerment Foundation (AFRDEV), that received EORE and NTS ToT from UNMAS leads the collaboration and information sharing efforts of mine action partners at the LGA level in the state. UNMAS through the training it provided has equipped CSOs (including CPWEI and AFRDEV) to not only deliver EORE but also the required skills to foster collaboration among the MA partners and promote local ownership of mine action activities.

This case study showcases the positive outcomes achieved through coordination meetings and the collaboration efforts among the MA partners at LGA level. As the lead organization for the LGA mine action coordination meetings, CPWEI conducted a series of consultations with government representatives, mine action partners and other community stakeholders to ensure their buy-in to the mine action coordination meetings. These consultations resulted in the meetings being held at the government owned premises and with their participation.

Furthermore, roles and responsibilities as it relates to reporting of EO incidents and sharing of information was delegated to field-based staff of MA partners, social workers from Yobe State Ministry of Youths and Sports. The meetings have successfully brought together various stakeholders, including representatives of LGAs such as the representatives of SEMA, Yobe State Ministry of Women Affairs, Yobe State Ministry of Youths and Sports, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community leaders. The coordination meeting forum provided the required platform to train the mine action stakeholders on EO incident and suspected hazardous areas reporting channels. It also provided an opportunity for the stakeholders to share their experiences, challenges, and best practices as it relates to EO incidents in their respective communities.

The CPWEI led LGAs level MA AoR coordination meetings emphasized the importance of affected communities and stakeholders' participation, this has resulted in the recognition and understanding of the threat of EO in Yobe state and has also resulted in increased support to the at-risk population in the state. The LGA MA AoR coordination meeting has resulted in substantial increase in information sharing among mine action partners and other humanitarian protection actors. Prior to the establishment of the LGA MA AoR coordination meeting, knowledge of EO and hazardous areas were very limited and there was no known channel of reporting EO incidents to the relevant authorities. However, with the establishment of this meeting platform, awareness of the presence and dangers of EO has increased and awareness for UNMAS activities has been raised among the local communities.

As a second outcome, the LGA level MA AoR coordination meeting led by CPWEI has strengthened community engagement. Through the involvement of community leaders and the sharing of experiences and lessons learned, mine action partners have been able to identify effective community outreach approaches and innovative ways to raise awareness about the dangers and risks associated with EO. As an example, during the commemoration of the 2023 International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, the LGA level MA AoR coordination meeting provided a useful platform for reaching out to the communities with EO risk awareness messages. It has also provided a platform for community leaders to voice their concerns and needs, enabling a more targeted and responsive approach to mine action interventions.

The third outcome of the LGA level MA AoR coordination meeting is it has equipped the community and the mine action partners with effective decision-making capacity. The LGA-level MA AoR coordination meetings played a crucial role in promoting evidence-based decision-making in mine action intervention. By harnessing the collective knowledge and expertise of all stakeholders about their context,

these meetings facilitated informed discussions on prioritizing mine action activities, timely reporting of EO incidents, casevac, referral of EO accidents and addressing emerging challenges. This collaborative approach ensured that decisions were based on accurate and comprehensive information, resulting in more efficient and impactful mine action interventions across the targeted LGAs in the state. The impact of the MA AoR coordination meetings was further reinforced by EORE mass media campaign that raised awareness about appropriate actions to take when a community member is involved in an EO accident. A key example was when an EO was identified by a farmer in Buni Yadi, Gujba LGA in Yobe state. The farmer promptly reported it to their community leader, who then informed the UNMAS Implementation partner (CPWEI) chairing the LGA-level MA AoR

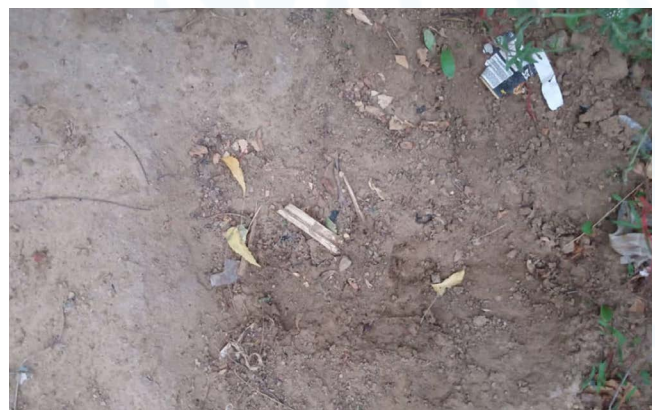
coordination meeting and conducting explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities funded by ECHO. CPWEI reported the incident to the security forces for safe detonation. Feedback given to UNMAS by the CPWEI team and the community leaders is that the military has safely detonated the explosive ordnance item.



This image shows a planted IED - Photo credit - CPWEI



Half buried ERW reported by EORE beneficiary in Gujba LGA of Damaturu



A photo of the land after safely removal of the ERW by EOD police - Photo credit - UNMAS

**Outcomes achieved:**

- Increased Information Sharing and Visibility of UNMAS and MA AoR Partner CPWEI
- Improved Community Liaison and Participation
- Effective Decision-making capacity by the mine action stakeholders.

## Hate speech fuels conflict, undermines human rights – Schmale



(L-R) Senior Human Right Advisor UN Nigeria, Ms Adwoa Kufuor-Owusu; UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale; Executive Secretary National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Chief Tony Ojukwu (SAN)

“Hate speech fuels conflict, threatens, and undermines human rights and efforts to build an inclusive and just society,” said the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale, at the observance of the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, organised by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in collaboration with the United Nations in Nigeria.

He noted that hate speech was not only used to distract from important social issues but often used to stoke fear and division, incite violence and

exacerbate tensions. According to him, social media and digital platforms are being used to spread disinformation and hate to billions of people.

The Resident Coordinator emphasized that “States have the obligation under international human rights law to act against incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence, while fully respecting freedom of expression and to protect the rights that people have both offline and online.”

## UN, NHRC organise media roundtable on countering hate speech in Nigeria



UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale addresses the audience

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nigeria (OHCHR), in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) have organized a Media Roundtable workshop on the role of Media in Countering and Reporting Hate Speech in Nigeria.

The workshop, held on 15 – 16 June, aimed at stepping up efforts to prevent hate speech in the media, especially across social media platforms and to better understand the its triggers and mechanisms. Hate speech and incitement to hatred are on the rise across Nigeria and digital platforms are being misused to spread disinformation and hate speech. The role of media in addressing and countering hate speech is, therefore, critical and a necessity.

## UN Secretary-General launches a new Policy Brief



**U**N Secretary-General launches a new Policy Brief - 'Information Integrity On Digital Platforms'

'Digital platforms have brought many benefits, supporting communities in times of crisis and struggle ....they help the UN to engage people around the world in pursuit of peace, dignity and human rights on a healthy planet.

The proliferation of hate and lies in the digital space is causing grave global harm. This clear and present global threat demands coordi-

nated international action to make the digital space safer and more inclusive while vigorously protecting human rights'.

UN Secretary – General, Mr Antonio Guterres remarks at the Launch of the Policy Brief on ' Information Integrity on Digital Platforms'

<http://bitly.ws/lc9b>

## UN Nigeria celebrating 50 Years of the World Environment Day



UNDP Nigeria Resident Representative, Mohammed Yahya (Left) address the audience

United Nations Nigeria celebrating 50 Years of the #WorldEnvironmentDay and the dedication of environmentalists, educators, policymakers, students & individuals, championing the cause of sustainable living and restoring nature's resources for climate action.

## IP training for Nigerian Law School staff



A cross-section of resources persons at the training



A photograph of participants and dignitaries

WIPO Nigeria Office (WNO), in collaboration with the WIPO Academy, successfully conducted a hybrid Intellectual Property (IP) training at the United Nations House in Abuja, Nigeria. The training targeted the esteemed staff of the Nigerian Law School (NLS) and was delivered in cooperation with the Nigerian IP Offices, namely the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC), Trademarks Registry, and Patents and Designs Registry.

The event commenced with a warm welcome from Prof. Isa Hayatu Chiroma, SAN, the Director General of the Nigerian Law School. In his opening remarks, Prof. Chiroma expressed the institution's excitement to delve into the realm of intellectual property. He recognized the tremendous impact this knowledge would have on the staff and students of the Nigerian Law School and encouraged the participants to seize this opportunity for growth. Prof. Chiroma also urged WIPO Nigeria to organize more training sessions, not only for the staff but also for the students, fostering a wider understanding of IP in the academic community.

Mr. Oluwatobiloba Moody, the Director of the WIPO Nigeria Office, reiterated the office's commitment to organizing similar impactful training programs in the future. During the training, Mr. Moody delivered an enlightening lecture on the Global Challenges of Intellectual Property, with a special emphasis on the crucial aspect of protecting Traditional Knowledge. He defined traditional knowledge as a unique body of knowledge resulting from intellectual activity within a traditional context, passed down through generations, and reflecting the social and cultural identity of a community. Unlike conventional intellectual property, traditional knowledge does not have a single author or owner but evolves and thrives within the community.

Mr. Moody also addressed the delicate societal balance of ensuring legal certainty in bio-based innovation while preserving sustainable opportunities for indigenous livelihoods.

The primary objective of the training was to enhance the capacity and awareness of intellectual property among the law teachers from the seven campuses of the Nigerian Law School across Nigeria. To achieve this, the participants received comprehensive training sessions from esteemed experts in the field. Ms. Eno-Obong Usen, Assistant Director at the Patents and Designs Registry, Mr. Temitope Ogunbanjo, Principal Assistant Registrar at the Trademarks Registry, and Mr. Obi Ezeilo, Director of Operations at the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC), skillfully introduced the participants to various types of IP rights, including copyright, trademarks, patents, designs, traditional knowledge, and genetic resources. Additionally, they shed light on the registration processes and enforcement structures—both civil and criminal—relevant to Nigeria.

To cater to the specific needs of the Nigerian context, Ms. Altayework Tedla Desta, Head of the WIPO Academy, and Prof. Enyinna Nwauche from the WIPO Academy delivered a Nigeria-tailored DL-101 course—General Introduction to Intellectual Property. As a continuation of this valuable training, the WIPO Academy has generously provided the participants from the Nigerian Law School with access to the DL-101 course for a specified period, allowing them to further deepen their knowledge in the field of intellectual property.

The successful conclusion of the training marks another significant step towards empowering the legal community in Nigeria with the necessary expertise in intellectual property. WIPO Nigeria Office and the WIPO Academy remain committed to fostering such initiatives to promote awareness and understanding of IP, laying the groundwork for a thriving creative and innovation ecosystem in the country.

# UN workshop sparks excitement for creative intellectual property story-telling



Dignitaries at a workshop that addresses knowledge gaps in the academia on reporting labour migration.

**W**IPO Nigeria Office, in collaboration with the Art for Humanity Foundation, and Sony Nigeria hosted a three-day workshop at the United Nations House, Abuja. The workshop focused on providing training and mentorship to over a dozen talented female photographers and videographers, while yet upskilling them to support their documentation and development of intellectual property (IP) stories. The training focused on the art of effective IP-based storytelling, specifically tailored to female creatives, inventors, and business owners. It began with an inspiring opening remark from Mr. Steve Thom, Director of the Office of the Deputy Director-General, who warmly welcomed the attendees and offered a concise overview of WIPO's organizational objectives, one of which is to have a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by intellectual property for the good of everyone.

During the event, Mr. Edward Harris, Senior Communications Officer at WIPO, delivered a captivating presentation on the art of IP storytelling, providing valuable insights into both IP and WIPO's communication strategy. Ms. Aisha Augie-Kuta, a renowned Nigerian photographer, emphasized the importance of developing emotional intelligence and cultivating the right mental mindset for creative documentation.

The session also featured speakers from WIPO's News and Media Division, Ms. Ivy Kigundu Toure and Mr. Lotfi Oulebsir, who delved into the intricacies of sourcing, developing, and documenting noteworthy IP stories. Furthermore, Ms. Victoria Onyeagbako and Ms. Juliana Oboh-Joseph from the WIPO Nigeria Office discussed the understanding of Intellectual Property rights for visual creatives. They highlighted that Intellectual Property is a creation of the mind, encompassing various forms of IP, one of which is copyright (or author's rights). According to WIPO, copyright grants creators legal rights over their literary and artistic works, ranging from books, music, paintings, and sculp-

tures to computer programs, databases, advertisements, maps, and technical drawings. Their discussion shed light on how the project they are undertaking would be subject to several IP rights, with copyright being the most prominent.

For several participants, such as Ms. Fatima Yusuf, who were learning about WIPO and IP for the first time, this workshop was an eye-opening experience. According to Ms. Yusuf, "the 3-day workshop was an eye-opener. Prior to this, I had no knowledge of WIPO, but attending this workshop [has given] me a broad view of what WIPO stands for and has sharpened my knowledge in IP..."

Insights on the art of engaging storytelling were shared by Ms. Zoza Icha, Founder of Tori Town, inspiring participants like Ms. Lucy Ladi-di Elukpo-Ateko, who described the training as an "awesome experience" that opened her up to discovering more of her potential. She added, "As I go into the field, I go with a renewed mind and with more enlightenment on how to creatively tell my story."

The practical aspect of the workshop was enriched by the engagement of the Sony Nigeria team, led by Ms. Bukola Oloyede, the Country Manager of Sony Nigeria. Participants received guidance on optimizing the Sony camera to capture outstanding pictures and videos in a session facilitated by Mr. Adebayo Rotilu. Their practice efforts resulted in the production of a compelling mini-documentary. Sony has offered participants the opportunity to also enter their documentaries into the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards as well as join the female community and Alpha Creators Network on the Alpha Universe.

Mr. Osaze, CEO of the Art for Humanity Foundation, reaffirmed the Foundation's commitment to empowering women to tell stories of resilience and success. According to him, "empowering women to tell

stories of women is one of [the] primary focus [areas of] Art for Humanity Foundation”, who believe that “...stories of women’s resilience and success are not told enough to inspire public actions of inclusion and sustainable development.”

The impact of the workshop sessions on the participants was clearly reflected in the enthusiasm, determination and eagerness of participants to immediately step out and document impactful IP stories from the field. According to Ms. Yusuf, “I must say that with the knowledge I garnered from the workshop, I am excited and more equipped to go into the field to document women’s stories worth telling.” For Ms. Ekene May, “my experience has been, to say the very least, grand. I honestly can’t wait to document IP-worthy stories that have made and are making an impact in Nigeria. I also look forward to the positive change that this storytelling process would bring.” Maureen Ikoko similarly notes a renewed sense of purpose fueled by her experiences. “My mission now — and it won’t be easy — is to go overboard and give

full rein to telling the stories of creative/innovative women and girls, who are using their brain power to make something out of nothing. My goal is to use their stories as tools to shape mindsets and world-views, as well as add value to their works...”. In a similar vein, Ms. Khadijah Temitope Adebayo, noted: “through the lens of my camera, my goal is to create a body of work that not only informs and educates but also inspires action”.

Following this transformative training, the WIPO Nigeria Office is confident that these women are now equipped to venture into the field and capture IP stories of other women. We are indeed excited about the stories that will emerge from this project, and extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the partners, participants, and contributors for making this workshop an incredible success. Together, we have created a platform to amplify the voices and celebrate the creative contributions of women through stories captured and told by women.



Ms. Khadijah Temitope Adebayo, a participant at the Her IP Story Project Workshop (PHOTO: KAHLI BROWN)



Ms. Mary Ene Inalegwu, a participant at the Her IP Story Project Workshop (PHOTO: KAHLI BROWN)



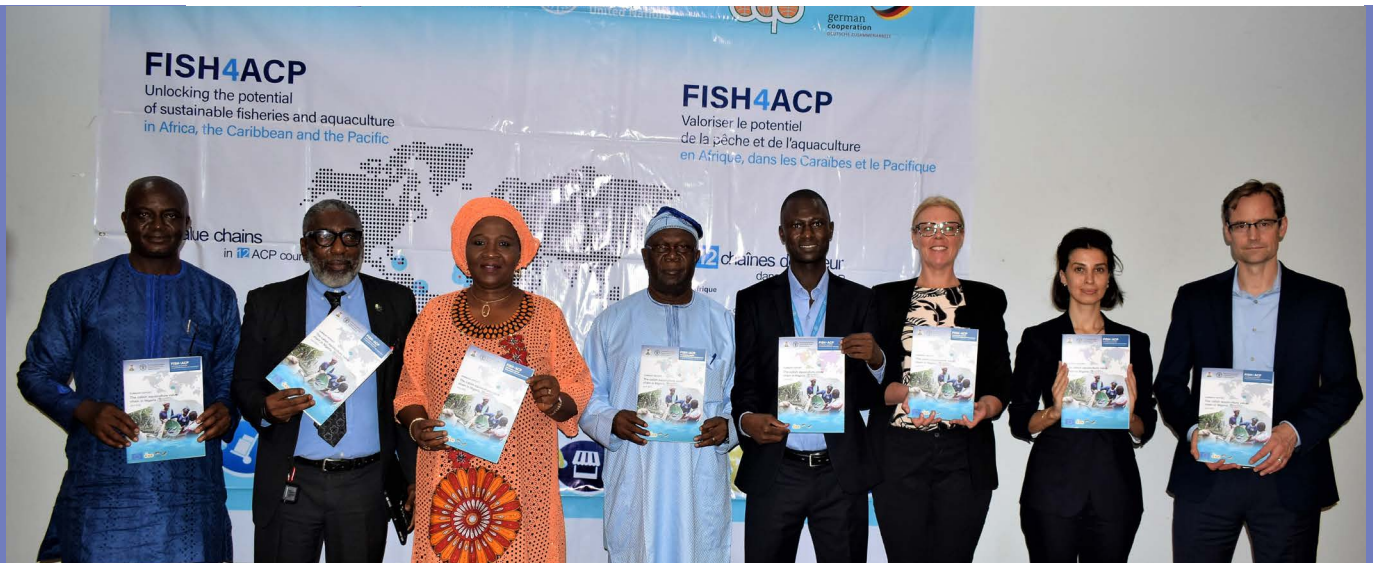
A cross section of participants at the Her IP Story Project Workshop (PHOTO: KAHLI BROWN)



L-R Ms. Eleojo Joyce Ameh, Ms. Adofikwu Aje (WIPO Nigeria Admin), Mr. Osaze Efe (CEO of the Art for Humanity Foundation), Ms. Victoria (WIPO Nigeria Partner Engagement and Project Officer), Ms. Oboh-Joseph Juliana Owajimam (WIPO Nigeria Intern), Ms. Aisha Augie-Kuta (Renowned photographer), Mr. Oluwatobiloba Moody (Director, WIPO Nigeria Office) (PHOTO: KAHLI BROWN)



# Federal Government, UN launch upgraded strategy to reinforce catfish value chain in Nigeria.



Stakeholders from government, the public-private partners and FAO at the presentation of the strategy.

A new plan to reinforce Nigeria’s catfish value chain has been launched in the country. It offers a roadmap to make this massive and vital sector more resilient and efficient in providing affordable food to Africa’s most populous nation, creating jobs and business opportunities, while reducing harm to human health and lessening the burden on the environment.

At the opening of the launch of the upgraded strategy of Nigeria’s catfish value chain in Abuja earlier in June 7, 2023 the Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) Dr. Ernest Umakhihe said “Catfish has been key in feeding Nigeria’s growing population and has improved the livelihoods of many people in our country...To maintain this vital role and face future challenges, new ways are needed to make fisheries and aquaculture subsector more resilient and efficient.”

With over 223 million people, Nigeria is Africa’s most populous nation. It is also the world’s largest producer of African catfish. Annual production was estimated at 1 million tons in 2021 worth around USD 2.6 billion, according to an analysis conducted through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) flagship project FISH4ACP and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, which underpins the strategy that was launched today.

The analysis also demonstrated the importance of catfish as a source of income: Nigeria has an estimated 285 000 producers of which small-scale farmers represent over 60%, while the catfish value chain offers employment to some 1 million people.

However, years of annual growth at over 20% between 2005 and 2015 ended when catfish production started declining in 2016. According to the analysis, increased production costs and a drop in demand fueled by inflation and devaluation of the national currency are behind this. In response, the upgrading strategy sees opportunities in efficiency gains, aimed at reducing production costs and bringing catfish prices down to a more affordable level in order to meet the strong market demand. These opportunities include improved practices in feed, fingerling and fish production, management and distribution.

The strategy is the result of a sector-wide dialogue between public and private sector stakeholders, spearheaded by FISH4ACP, a global fish value chain development programme led by the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), implemented by FAO and funded by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

“FAO is committed to support Nigeria in a blue transformation of the catfish sector, which is so vital for food security, the economy and people’s livelihoods,” said Fred Kafeero, FAO’s Representative in Nigeria, adding: “FISH4ACP can be an agent of this change and ensure that the benefits will be shared equitably and sustainably.”

Fred Kafeero explained that FAO-FISH4ACP will lead by example in working with selected groups of farmers, as well as with fish markets, on good practices, which would improve their performance, and could be adopted across the sector.

He added that the project would promote targeted policies to strengthen the enabling environment for catfish farming in Nigeria and work with partners, including in finance, on schemes to provide feed to farmers on credit. Lastly, he said that FISH4ACP would support fish processors to adapt cleaner smoking methods that would reduce harm to people’s health and to the environment.

FISH4ACP aims to make fisheries and aquaculture value chains more sustainable. It contributes to food and nutrition security, economic prosperity and job creation by ensuring the economic, social and environmental sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

FISH4ACP seeks to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of twelve fisheries and aquaculture value chains in twelve OACPS member countries, making sure that economic improvements go hand in hand with environmental sustainability and social inclusiveness. It will pay special attention to small and medium-sized businesses, because of their potential to deliver economic and social benefits, particularly for women and youth.

## UN and Nigeria Conservation Foundation (NCF) train community members on efficient wood stove production



Training ongoing for Becheve Community Youths and Women

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) partnered with the Nigeria Conservation Foundation (NCF) to implement a pilot project on Fuel Efficient Woodstove Production Training in Becheve community, Obudu cattle ranch, Cross River state, Nigeria. This activity was implemented under the ILO Just Transition and Green Jobs for Nigeria Project, which is an ILO regional project, the Social Dimension of Ecological Transition. The pilot project trained youths and women in the business of producing fuel efficient wood stoves. This is also key action as specified in the Nigeria revised Nationally Determine Contributions (NDCs), and the Green Jobs Assessment Model (GJAM) which was conducted in 2020 by ILO, UNDP and NDC Partnership.

The choice of Obudu was informed as Cross River State holds the last remnant tropical rain-forest of the country. These forests support several rural communities in livelihood and jobs for young men and women, ranging from tourism to trade in forest products. This forest is also vital in combatting climate crises and building resilience for locals. The current energy crisis is promoting the rapid depletion of these forests at an alarming rate to cater for household cooking. Furthermore, changes in weather conditions resulting from climate change because of forest degradation are causing an increased demand for wood for cooking. The situation is leading to forest depletion, which aggravates

the area's climatic condition. While the communities are encouraged to stop cutting trees for energy, an alternative for them is critical, thus, the technical capacity development for selected persons in Becheve Community on fuel efficient woodstove production was proposed.

The training was also used to create awareness on the importance of the use of fuel-efficient wood stoves to minimise the use of wood fuel in cooking. This is also meant to reduce deforestation in the target community, other forested communities, and Nigeria at large. The training was carried out in Becheve community, Cross River state from 29th May to 2nd June 2022.

The main purpose of the training is to train 30 youths (men and women) with the requisite green skills and capabilities of producing fuel efficient woodstove and to create awareness raising campaign to inform local community members about safe access to clean cooking energy solution.

A selection process was carried out from 26 – 27 April 2023 to identify youths and women with considerable interest and zeal to learn this trade. The Becheve community consists of six (6) villages out of which five (5) participants were selected per village for equal repre-



Some of the participants with the produced fuel-efficient wood stove

sen-tation. The villages under Becheve community are Keji-Ukwu, Okwa-Amu, Okpazange, Kigol, Anape, Apah –Ajili. Each community was requested to nominate at least two (2) female participants to ensure that at least 30% of the participants are women. In all, sixteen (16) female and fourteen (14) males were nominated.

Preparatory activities such as production of training moulds, sourcing of clay, procurement of production tools and accessories were carried out from 19 - 25 May 2023 by JG Synergy. The production training was carried out in Obudu Mountain Resort, Becheve community, Cross River state.

At the end of the training, stove moulds, metal clads, and stove liners were presented to the participants, grouped according to their villages. This is premised on further production and step down of skills learned to other people in their respective communities.

Thirty (30) participants, across six villages that make up the Becheve Community, were selected for training of fuel efficient cookstove production with adequate inclusion of female participants (over 50%) and emphasis on youths for ease of learning, expected utilisation of skills acquired and sustainability



## UN organizes roadmap development workshop in Keffi



Training in session

It is confirmed as well as documented in the National Gender Policy of 2021, that while women entrepreneurs can play critical roles in enhancing a country's productivity and level of development, structural inequalities continue to systematically disadvantage women in Nigeria. There are lots of interventions, female-focused policies, programmes and initiatives instituted by the government, social partners and private sector organizations to support women entrepreneurship development. However, the effectiveness of these support is in question as a huge percentage remains informal.

It is costly for the Nigerian economy to have two - third of her economy operating sub- optimally/informally because of the obvious distortions it imposes on the effectiveness of macroeconomic and development policies. Informality is drag for a society as it adds to less competitiveness and low productivity at all levels.

Based on the outcomes and recommendations of the Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) and formalization assessments, the International Labour Organization is supporting the government of Nigeria as well as Social Partners to develop an evidence-based roadmap to address key national conditions for women's entrepreneurship development and enterprise formalization in Nigeria.

The ILO in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprise Development of Nigeria hosted a 4-day technical workshop in Keffi, Nassarawa State to support relevant stakeholders to develop an evidence-based three-year roadmap for addressing the barriers to women's entrepreneurship, gender equality and formalization in Nigeria as well as its implementation monitoring framework. This is an activity under the ILO Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) funded project "Promoting Gender Equality through Women Entrepreneurship Development and Formalization in Nigeria".

The Workshop which took place from the 13th to 16th June 2023, had its objective to support the relevant stakeholders to develop evidence-based roadmap as well as implementation monitoring framework to support WED and formalization of women-owned businesses in Nigeria. The stakeholders were high-level and medium managers from about 23 institutions including but not limited to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, Bureau of Public Procurement, Joint Tax Board, Bank of Industry, Keystone Bank, Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning, Bank of Agriculture, Abuja Enterprise Agency, National Directorate of Employment, Federation of Informal Workers'

Organization of Nigeria, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Women Consortium of Nigeria, Women in business (WIMBIZ), Pan African Women Empowerment of Nigeria (PAWEN), Lagos State Employment Trust Fund, National Social Safety Net Coordinating Office, National Health Insurance Authority, Nigeria Export Promotion Council, Federal Ministry of Budget and Planning, as well as Bank of Agriculture.

Six technical areas on conditions for Women entrepreneurship development and formalization as well as three cross cutting areas had inputs which emanated from dialogues between the different stakeholders according to their organizational mandates and priorities for WED and formalization. The Six technical areas/conditions are Gender-sensitive legal and regulatory system that advances women’s economic empowerment and formalization, Effective policy leadership and coordination for the promotion of WED and formalization, Access to gender-sensitive financial services for WED and formalization, Access to gender-sensitive business development support for WED and formalization, Access to markets and technology for WED and formalization and Representation of women entrepreneurs and participation in policy dialogue for WED and formalization. The cross-cutting areas include: Emergency preparedness and response, Arrangement for oversight, monitoring and the implementation of the roadmap and Research, data and management to support continuing improvement. Consequently, all the stakeholders contributed to the draft of the implementation monitoring framework.

In her welcome remarks, the ILO Director for Abuja Country Office for Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra-Leone and Liberia as well as the Liaison office for ECOWAS, Dr. Vanessa Phala stressed the importance of improving the overall conditions supporting WED and formalization in Nigeria. Speaking through the National Project Coordinator on the project, Ms. Chinenye Anekwe, Dr. Phala mentioned that , women have a high level of interest in becoming entrepreneurs but face challenges related to

the business and regulatory environment, including access to financial and business development services critical to formalising and growing their businesses. She added that when these challenges are lifted, women through their enterprises will unleash their potentials to generate decent jobs at the country level.

Speaking through Prof. Yinka Fisher at the occasion to declare the workshop open, the Director General of SMEDAN, Mr. Wale Fasanya, appreciated the ILO for their support on this activity which he described as a laudable one. While commending the enthusiasm and support of other relevant stakeholders present, Mr. Fasanya noted that women entrepreneurs make up about 60% of 39.6 million number of MSMEs in Nigeria and re-affirmed the commitment of the agency to work collaboratively to ensure the implementation of the three-year road map. He however requested the support of the ILO during the implementation of the roadmap.

SMEDAN is the secretariat of the National Council on MSMEs in Nigeria which is chaired by the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Further engagements will be made with relevant stakeholders in the areas of ICT and social protection to complete all aspects of the roadmap and finalize the document. The final drafts of the roadmap and the implementation monitoring framework will be validated in the coming months.



Group photo of participants

## Riyom, where women are advancing women's inclusion in peacebuilding and decision-making



Cross section of the women, during an inter-faith meeting in Riyom. Photo: UN Women/Oluoma Ali

In the heart of Riyom, a small village in Jos Plateau state, a formidable peacebuilding reform is taking place. Led by a group of determined women, this movement aims to break down age-old traditional barriers to women's participation in leadership, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding efforts. Through training, advocacy, and persistent efforts, these women are steadily claiming their rightful place in local decision-making.

This began with the intervention of the Norwegian Government-supported UN Women's Peace and Security (WPS) project in the Riyom Local Government area. UN Women has been actively working across states in Nigeria to promote women's inclusion in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and security processes. To advance this objective and enhance sustainability, UN Women, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, established structures and networks that consists of community leaders and gender champions. This includes the Women Peace Mentors, HeForShe Network, and Women's Peace and Security Media Network in Plateau State and other focal states.

While intermittent pockets of conflicts persist in the state, the WPS program has provided women in Plateau with a platform to voice their concerns and actively participate in conflict resolution and reconciliation processes. By empowering women who are leading advocacy for women's inclusion in decision-making processes, UN Women has paved the way for more sustainable women's participation in decision-making and peacebuilding.

At the forefront of this movement is a remarkable woman, Chong-Lyop Samuel and other women who participated in the capacity-building training workshops and subsequent routine technical programme support by the UN Women, with funding from the Norwegian Government. Several other women in the State have had their capacity strengthened from participation in this training workshops for gender-responsive peacebuilding interventions.

Central to this empowerment journey was the need to sensitize women on their rights and responsibilities. Through workshops and awareness campaigns, these women, who are drawn from different faiths, were educated on gender-based violence (GBV) and the significance of their role in the community, especially in peacebuilding. Previously seen as inferior, the women of Riyom started to realize their true worth and importance. Chong-Lyop and other women, as trained UN women mentors, transferred essential security and peacebuilding skills, knowledge, and confidence to at least 80 women in Riyom. These women are currently working as mentors in their own immediate communities.

In times of crisis, when villages were attacked, and chaos ensued, the unity forged through these initiatives became a lifeline. Coordinated rescue activities and communal support systems sprang into action, ensuring the safety and well-being of all. In the face of overwhelming odds, the once-disparate communities became a united front, showing unwavering strength and resilience.

No longer content with being spectators, the women of Riyom bravely embraced their newfound knowledge and confidence. Previously, women were denied entry to these crucial gatherings, effectively silencing their voices. However, with the training and advocacy efforts, they successfully broke down these barriers. Now, women in Riyom actively participate in youth meetings, security meetings, and even local government-level security discussions. Their efforts paid off as eight villages in Riyom now have women representation in their traditional councils.

The peacebuilding reform of Riyom is a testament to the power of empowerment, advocacy, and perseverance. The journey is far from over, but the women of Riyom have become beacons of hope, inspiring others on the path to gender equality and social change. Their story serves as a reminder that every voice matters and that when women are empowered, whole communities thrive.

# North-east Nigeria: Ringing the alarm bell on the malnutrition crisis



Falmata Goni and her baby at a stabilization center managed by International Rescue Committee in Bama local government area, Borno State. UNOCHA/Adedeji Ademigbuji

*So how far away are we from a crisis? We are in the middle of a crisis. We need to be clear on that. We are ringing the alarming bell. There are people close to or dying right now as we speak in north-east Nigeria."*

Those were the stark words of Matthias Schmale, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Nigeria, in reference to the grim projection that hangs over north-east Nigeria: 2 million children under age 5 may suffer from acute malnutrition in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states this year due to a lack of nutritious food. About 700,000 of these children may suffer life-threatening severe acute malnutrition (SAM). This is more than double the number of SAM cases in 2022 and the highest levels projected since the nutrition crisis in 2016.

### Rising levels of complicated acute malnutrition

In Maiduguri, Borno State's capital, there was 48 per cent increase in the number of children with complicated acute malnutrition requiring inpatient care during the first quarter of this year, compared to the same period last year.

This increase is visible at the stabilization centre, managed by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), in Gwoza General Hospital, Borno. Mothers line up with their malnourished children, and distraught mothers from nearby camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities rush in with their malnourished children. The heat is sweltering. Sunlight filters through the windows, casting long shadows on the children's beds, which are covered with paediatric scales and measuring tapes.

At one end of the stabilization centre, women quietly wait and observe. Their expressions are a mix of worry and hope as they watch their children being moved from one intensive care room to another for emergency life-saving treatment.

Aisha Mohammed, 26, clasps her eight-month-old son, Ali, in her arms. Ali has sepsis – a serious infection stemming from a compromised immune system due to acute malnutrition. His small, frail body bears the tell-tale signs of poor nutrition.

"I just want my child to get better," says Aisha. "Life has always been harsh and continues to be so. During the time when we were held captive [by a non-State armed group], our diet primarily consisted of guinea corn and various soups prepared with zobo [hibiscus] leaves. We have been unable to eat the way we used to."

Aisha is one of many people who arrived in Bama from inaccessible areas in Borno to find help.



Aisha's son, Ali, receives treatment at the stabilization centre. Photo: UNOCHA/Adedeji Ademigbuji

There are places where people’s vulnerability has increased. In 2022 there was a huge increase in the number of patients treated by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) for severe malnutrition; more than 8,000 children were hospitalized for intensive nutrition care. And between January and May 2023, some 2,530 malnourished children were admitted for intensive care at the MSF stabilization centre. That’s an increase of about 120 per cent compared to the same period last year. Since late April 2023, almost all of the stabilization centres in Maiduguri have been full, leaving many children waiting in line for an available bed.

The nutrition sector urgently needs approximately US\$4 million to increase bed capacity (by about 220 beds), support the operational costs of stabilization centres and implement a harmonized nutrition response across Borno State during the lean season.

Additionally, \$4 million is needed to ensure a secure pipeline of life-saving nutrition commodities.

**Responding to the lean season nutrition crisis**

Efforts are urgently required to prevent a food and nutrition crisis in north-east Nigeria from turning catastrophic.

Some 4.3 million people in the BAY states face the risk of severe hunger at the peak of the lean season, from June to August. More than

half a million of these people may face emergency levels of food insecurity, with extremely high rates of severe acute malnutrition that could result in death.

In response, partners have developed a lean season food security and nutrition multisector crisis plan, drawn from the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan.

Humanitarian organizations urgently need \$396.1 million to scale up food, nutrition, health, protection, and water, sanitation and hygiene support in the BAY states over the next six months.

The early disbursement of funds is critical to scale up preventive services and case management, including support to stabilization centres that are either non-functional or operating at suboptimal capacity due to a lack of funding. Delayed funding will have devastating consequences for millions of children.

The World Food Programme aims to provide 2.1 million people with emergency food and nutrition. The UN Children’s Fund and partners aim to provide nutritional services to more than 1 million malnourished children and pregnant or breastfeeding women. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN aims to assist 2 million people with seed packages for cereal production.



Ummi Ali with her malnourished daughter at the stabilization center at Bama General Hospital. UNOCHA/Adedeji Ademigbuji



# UN restoring emergency, maternal and child health services in northeastern Nigeria



A cross-section of participants at the project launch event

UNOPS hosted a Project Launch event for the Restoring Emergency, Maternal and Child Health Services in Yobe State, Nigeria. The event was held at the UNOCHA facility in Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria. The participants included His Excellency Mai Mala Buni - Governor of Yobe State (Represented by Dr Muhammad Lawan Gana - Senior Special Assistance to the Governor on Health), Mr. Matsunaga Kazuyoshi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Japan in Nigeria (who attended the meeting virtually), and Ms Ifeoma Charles-Monwuba, Director and Representative of UNOPS Ghana Multi-Country Office.

Using nearly \$1.1 million in funding from the government of Japan, UNOPS will procure and install medical equipment for eight primary healthcare centers and two general hospitals in six local government areas (LGAs) of Yobe State. The damage from the decade-long conflict in northeastern Nigeria has severely hampered the ability of many local governments in Yobe State to provide maternal, child and emergency healthcare services. Although some of the healthcare infrastructure has already been rebuilt, there is still an urgent need to re-equip health facilities.

"It is an honour to stand before you today to mark this important milestone in the partnership between the North East Development

Commission (NEDC), the MOH Yobe Health Service, the Japanese Embassy in Nigeria and UNOPS for the implementation of the Restoring of emergency, maternal and child health care services project in eight primary health facilities and two general hospitals in Yobe State." said Ifeoma Charles-Monwuba.

Dr Muhammad Lawan Gana described the project as "Very timely, because it fits very conveniently into the vision of the government of His Excellency Mai Mala Buni to ensure the provision of standard and functional health systems across the all LGAs of Yobe State".

"After being posted to Nigeria, I was [...] very shocked to hear about the large number of pregnant women who cannot go for regular checkups in small villages in rural states because there are often no hospitals in the vicinity, and the lack of private vehicles and ambulances, which means that they have to travel to the hospital by motorcycle when giving birth.

Government of Japan quote, Maternal and infant mortality rates can be greatly improved simply by regular visits to a hospital with appropriate equipment. I am hopeful that this project will greatly improve the wellness of women and children in Yobe State." said Mr. Matsunaga Kazuyoshi.



A photograph of participants and dignitaries

## Rebuilding lives of forcibly displaced communities in Adamawa State



New beginning for Dudu Usman and her family at the Labondo Local Integration Pilot Project. © UNHCR/Gabriel Adeyemo

In the midst of the devastation caused by displacement, heartening stories of resilience and rejuvenation emerge from Nigeria's Adamawa State. The Labondo Local Integration Pilot Project, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in collaboration with the Adamawa State government, shines as a beacon of hope, providing a renewed sense of purpose to many affected by the displacement crisis that has displaced over 3.6 million people.

Dudu Usman, a 40-year-old widow, is one such individual. Following the tragic loss of her husband in an insurgent attack, Dudu's life felt shattered. "It was a traumatic experience for me," she recalls. "But here in Labondo, I feel a new beginning, a new peace."

This innovative initiative based in Adamawa State serves not only as a safe haven but also as a launchpad for self-reliance. Dudu, trained in skills such as tailoring, soap and hand fan making, now supports her nine children and two grandchildren. "The training I received from the UNHCR, and the opportunities here in Labondo, have given me the means to rebuild my life and support my family," she shares.

Adamu Gwama's story is not very different from Dudu's. Forced to flee his home following a brutal attack on his community, the once-successful farmer was rendered homeless. With the Labondo project, he has found not just a home but also a livelihood. Trained as a bricklayer by the project, Adamu was engaged in the construction of the settlement, thereby earning a wage to support his family. "With UNHCR's support, I have a home and a means of livelihood to support my family again. My life was almost over after the attack, but here I am today, having my life back," says a grateful Adamu.

The Labondo Local Integration project is an innovative, comprehensive approach that transcends the provision of immediate relief. It provides permanent housing, fosters sustainable livelihoods, and includes displaced individuals in government systems and services.

"The Labondo project embodies our shared commitment to sustainable solutions for displaced families. It is not just about immediate relief, but ensuring a transformative, sustainable impact," says Chansa Kapaya, UNHCR's Representative to Nigeria. "This project aligns with the UN Secretary-General's action agenda on internal displacement, linking humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. It is about ending people's displacement situation and preventing future displacement," she added.

At the launch of the project on 27 June 2023, Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri of Adamawa State also expressed satisfaction with the Labondo project's quality and comprehensive offerings. "Our people deserve the best - IDPs or not," Governor Fintiri observed. "I urge development partners to remain attuned to the needs of our communities. To the families benefiting, please ensure proper maintenance for lasting sustainability."

The Labondo project is a testament of the power of innovation and collaboration. Funded by the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund, Central Emergency Response Fund, and UNHCR, the project has transformed the lives of many, like Dudu and Adamu. Despite its transformative impacts, the Labondo project requires continued support and funding from development partners, the private sector as well as government investment to sustain its efforts.

This initiative demonstrates the change we can foster when we pool our strengths, transitioning from managing crises to laying the foundations for a brighter, more sustainable future. It serves as a model for similar initiatives across the country, emphasising the importance of a comprehensive and sustainable approach to tackling the pressing challenge of internal displacement.

The Labondo Local Integration pilot project is more than just a response to a crisis; it is a story of resilience, a tale of transformation, and a call to action. It illustrates that, amidst adversity, with the right support and opportunities, lives can be rebuilt, and a sense of home can be re-established. It is a reminder that even in the direst of circumstances, there is always hope for a fresh start and a brighter tomorrow.



65-year-old Adamu Gwama & his family have a renewed sense of hope and have begun to rebuild their lives thanks to the Labondo Local Integration Pilot Project. © UNHCR/Gabriel Adeyemo

## SRSR Simão arrives Nigeria, meets UN Country Team

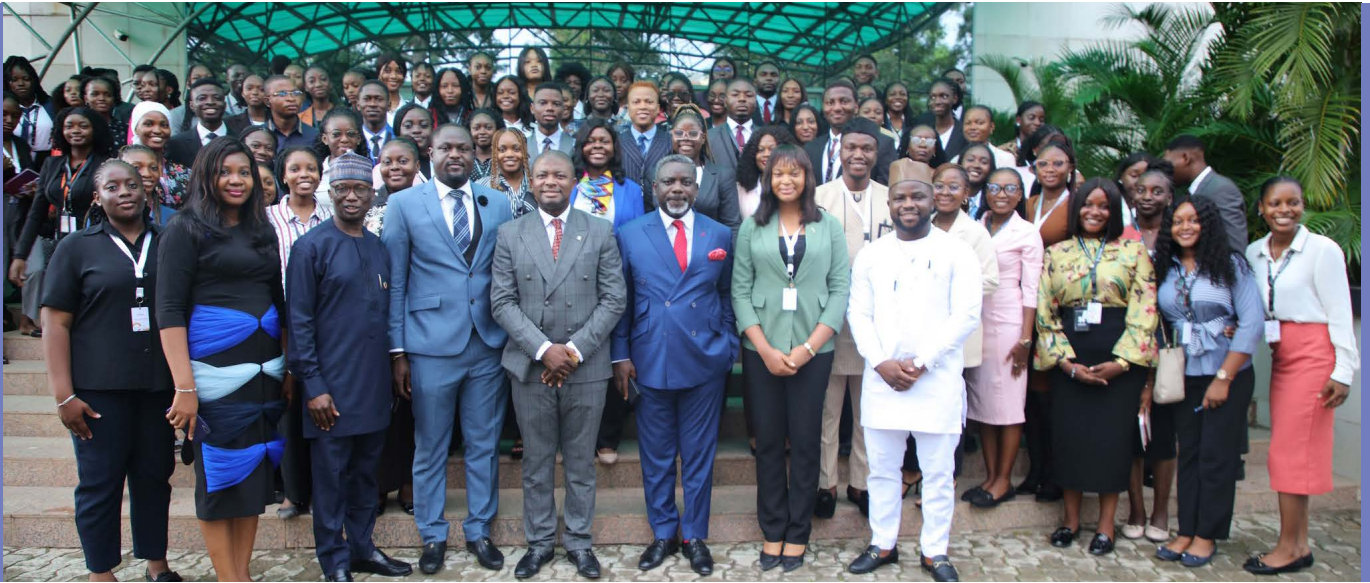


SRSR and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão and UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Matthias Schmale

Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão, has arrived Nigeria for the second stop on his regional familiarization tour. Meeting with the UN Country Team in Abuja on Monday, 19 June, the Special Representative commended the work of the UN in Nigeria. "United Nations is an important partner of Nigeria and providing support in addressing her development and humanitarian challenges." He said. UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Matthias Schmale thanked

the SRSR for acknowledging the work of UN in Nigeria. He informed that the Country Team was working on how best to support the new government, in accordance with the UN Cooperation Framework 2023 - 2027. Members of the UN Country Team in attendance discussed issues around peacebuilding, health, migration, livelihood, education, child labour, and demography.

# Find common ground for global peace – Covenant University VC urges delegates



A group photograph of officials and some delegates

As Covenant International Model United Nations (CIMUN) opened on 6 June 2023, the Director of United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Nigeria, Ronald Kayanja, has emphasised that finding solutions to new and emerging global challenges remained a shared responsibility that would be best nurtured by multilateralism.

He said this at the CIMUN conference organised by Covenant University Ota in collaboration with UNIC Abuja Nigeria.

Represented by the National Information Officer, Oluseyi Soremekun, the Director assured that

“We will continue to support CIMUN and other Model UN that we have collaborated with other universities to establish. Our commitment to Model UN is unwavering and total. We are available. We are accessible. We are responsive.” He added.

Vice Chancellor of Covenant University, Prof. Abiodun Adebayo, urged the conference delegates to find common ground for global peace, development, and progress.

“As you deliberate on diverse and significant topics, I urge you to look beyond sectional interests and find common ground for global peace,

development, and progress.” He said in his keynote address at the conference, organised by the university in collaboration with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Nigeria.

He noted that the concept of Model UN aligned with the university’s vision to raise a new generation of leaders by employing innovative, leading-edge teaching and learning methods, research, and professional services that promote integrated, life-applicable, life-transforming education.

“We need your engagement and ideas today more than ever. We need your creativity, courage, and commitment.” The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, told the delegates in his message.

According to him, humanity has shown time and again that we are capable of great things when we work together –across geographies and generations.

“To do so, we need an inclusive and networked multilateralism – one that ensures young people have a seat and a say in shaping our common future.” He said.

CIMUN 2023 ran from 5th to 10th June.



UNIC National Information Officer, Oluseyi Soremekun, addresses the audience at CIMUN



A cross-section of resource persons with the Covenant University VC (4th from the left)

## Photo News



### Photo news captions,

1. Governor of Adamawa State, Rt. Hon. Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri (2nd right); UNHCR Representative in Nigeria, Chansa Kapaya (front row left); at the launch of the Labondo Local Integration Pilot Project aimed at advancing Durable Solutions in the state. © UNHCR/Gabriel Adeyemo.

2. In observance of #worldblooddonoraday2023, the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Nigeria, Mr Matthias Schmale donates blood at the UN House Abuja.

3. Prof. Obas John Ebohon, Professor of Sustainability and Environmental Law at London South Bank University, and Chairman of GreenHub Africa, speaking at the World Environment Day at the UN house, Abuja.

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