



Newsletter



(L-R) Chief of Defense Staff, General Christopher G. Musa; H.E. Governor of Borno State, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum; UN Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator Mr Matthias Schmale; The Hon. Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu.

UN Resident Coordinator, Borno State Governor to co-chair Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) project

The Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator Mr Matthias Schmale chaired the inaugural Steering Committee for the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) project focused on the management of mass exits in Borno State.

The \$2.4 million PBF project titled "Strengthening reconciliation and reintegration pathways for persons associated with non-state armed groups, and communities of reintegration, including women and children, in Northeast of Nigeria" is implemented by four UN agencies (IOM, UNDP, UNODC and UNICEF) and runs for 24 months.

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Charting a New Path: Stakeholders Validate Blueprint for Women's Entrepreneurship Empowerment in Nigeria

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UN introduces the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine into Nigeria routine immunization system

● and more stories.

Cover story cont.



A group photograph of PBF steering committee members

In attendance are distinguished Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu (The Hon. Minister of Budget and Economic Planning); Chief Lateef Olasunkanmi Fagbemi SAN (Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice and General Christopher G. Musa (Chief of Defense Staff) in addition to donor representatives from Germany, EU, UK and Switzerland.

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A group photograph of PBF steering committee members

Ebonyi State Government has political will, commitment to make Spotlight Initiative 2.0 successful



As the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to End Violence Against Women and Girls closed and handed over to Ebonyi State Government on 26 October 2023, the State Governor, H.E. Francis Nwifuru, has reassured partners and other stakeholders of his government’s political will and commitment to ensure the success of the second phase of the Spotlight project.

Represented by the Speaker of the Ebonyi State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Moses Oduwa, the Governor informed that “the state is well prepared to take up the second phase of the SI project. The state government is well equipped to support the ministry and partners to make the second phase a success.”

Governor Nwifuru reassured all stakeholders and the people of Ebonyi that the signing of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, was not a joke, emphasizing that the law would be implemented and enforced. “The state government is committed to the full actualization of the VAPP Act. If there is any gap in the implementation of the VAPP law, the state government stand ready to address such gaps.” He pointed out, and later declared the project closed and committed to continuing its second phase.

The joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls and harmful practices was launched in 2019, with implementation focusing on five states: Adamawa, Cross-River, Ebonyi, Lagos, and Sokoto, plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). UNESCO representative at the event, Ms Regine Priso, urged the Ebonyi State Government to take active steps to sustain the gains of the first phase of the Spotlight project. “The state performed well, the next phase can only be better considering the enabling environment provided by the Governor and the First Lady of the state.

She highlighted some of the achievements of the Spotlight project in Ebonyi State: Establishment of the National Gender-Based Violence Data Situation Room and Dashboard; One-stop Centre; Safe spaces; and the Second Chance Education programme which reached 25,000 girls and young women, including boys and men in the state; among many others.

National Spotlight Coordinator Ms Anu John, noted that the Spotlight Initiative project had led to notable progress towards gender equality in Nigeria. “In 2020, the country saw a significant reduction in gender-based violence (GBV) cases, as well as an increase in reporting of such cases.” She said.

According Ms John, this progress is reflected in the Global Gender Gap reports, with Nigeria rising to 128 out of 153 countries in 2020. “Furthermore, Nigeria has climbed 16 places in the 2022 global gender gap index, reaching the 123rd position out of 146 countries. This represents a substantial improvement from its ranking of 139th out of 156 countries in 2021.” She added.

The hand-over ceremony featured screening of a TV Documentary on the achievements and impacts of Spotlight Initiative in Ebonyi State, and beneficiaries testimonials, while the State Cultural troupe also presented a stage performance on ending GBV.



A group photograph of dignitaries



UNESCO representative at the event, Ms Regine Priso

Charting a new path: Stakeholders validate blueprint for women's entrepreneurship empowerment in Nigeria



A group photograph of the stakeholders

A comprehensive roadmap and implementation monitoring framework aimed at fostering an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship development and enterprise formalization in Nigeria received validation from a consortium of stakeholders. This milestone initiative, led by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other key stakeholders, was supported by the ILO's "Promoting Gender Equality Through Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Enterprise Formalization in Nigeria."

The validation workshop convened in Abuja on September 29, 2023, convened high-level representatives from approximately 50 institutions, including federal and state ministries, regulatory bodies, financial institutions, and various associations. The purpose of the meeting was to scrutinize and validate an evidence-based roadmap and its implementation monitoring framework dedicated to addressing crucial national conditions for Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) and formalization of women-owned businesses in Nigeria.

This collective roadmap stands as a testament to the commitment of stakeholders towards creating an environment where women entrepreneurs can flourish and significantly contribute to Nigeria's socio-economic development. It acknowledges the unique challenges women entrepreneurs face and offers a strategic blueprint to address them comprehensively. Centered around six key pillars of the WED strategy, the roadmap focuses on gender-sensitive legal and regulatory systems, policy leadership, access to financial services, business development support, market and technology access, and representation of women in policy dialogue.

During the workshop, Dr. Vanessa Phala, Country Director of the ILO Country Office for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, emphasized the importance of addressing gender-based barriers hindering women's access to resources and opportunities. She expressed optimism in the roadmap's potential to catalyze the thriving of women's entrepreneurship in Nigeria through its implementation under the coordination of SMEDAN.

Representatives from various entities, including government ministries, financial institutions, and international organizations, expressed their commitment to supporting women's entrepreneurship in Nigeria through their organizational commitments and ongoing collaborations. Each underscored the importance of empowering women entrepreneurs and addressing their challenges.

In his keynote address, Mr. Wale Fasanya, the Director-General of SMEDAN, highlighted the substantial participation of women in entrepreneurship globally and emphasized the need for tailored support to overcome the challenges faced. He encouraged utilizing networking, mentorship, and association linkages to transform challenges into opportunities for sustained business growth.

Following the presentation of the roadmap and its implementation framework, stakeholders pledged their commitment to its implementation over the next three years. The validated statement was read and signed by participants, marking a significant commitment towards unleashing the potential of women's entrepreneurship and fostering sustainable business growth and job creation in Nigeria.

UN introduces the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine into Nigeria routine immunization system



A vaccinated girl displays her card with excitement

To safeguard our girls from the grips of cervical cancer & drive against the virus that causes nearly all cases of cervical cancer, the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine has been introduced into Nigeria routine immunization system, aiming to reach 7.7 million girls.

Girls aged 9–14 years will receive a single dose of the vaccine, which is highly efficacious in preventing infection with HPV types 16 and 18 that are known to cause at least 70% of cervical cancers.

The vaccine is being provided for free by the Federal Ministry of Health through the National Primary Health Care Development Agency with support from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners.



Vaccination being administered.

UN, stakeholders commemorate the Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2023



Director of UNESCO Regional Office Abuja Mr. Diallo Abdourahamane (Right)

UNESCO Abuja Office in collaboration with the Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Information and National Orientation, commemorated the Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2023 with a symposium. This was held in reaction to the rise of online misinformation and hate speech and the need for all stakeholders to massively upscale efforts to teach people of all ages to think critically and click wisely in online spaces, and to understand the algorithms and processes that underpin them. In other words, empower people with media and information literacy.

The hybrid symposium which took place in Abuja on 25 October 2023, brought together 71 persons drawn from media partners, civil society, UN agencies, Human Rights Commission, academia, youth led organizations and other stakeholders, to deliberate on the national theme ‘Youth, MIL, Digital Space, and Nigeria’s Transformation’. This comes as the digital revolution has enabled the spread of democratic ideals and the diversity of cultural expression.

Mr. Abdourahamane Diallo, the Head of UNESCO Office in Abuja and UNESCO Representative in Nigeria, in addition to reading the UNESCO Director General’s message, reminded the Government of Nigeria of the commitment made on the establishment of a Media and Information Literacy institute in Nigeria, which was reaffirmed at the Global Media and Information Literacy Week hosted by the Nigerian Government in 2022.

“Youth, Media and Information Literacy (MIL), Digital spaces and Nigeria’s transformation, is a recognition of the great potential available

to our youths in the digital sphere, and as a government, we remain committed to pursuing the ideals of MIL. Undoubtedly, our Country, Nigeria is home to one of the largest youth population on earth. Our youths are our greatest asset and equipping them with the required digital skills and harnessing their potentials in this digital age will be the required key to unlocking vast economic, social and political development of our country. We are persuaded that Government’s resolve to working with UNESCO and partners to establish the UNESCO International Media and Information Literacy Institute in Nigeria remains a significant milestone in our course to reposition the lot of our teeming youth”.

-Minister of Information and National orientation who was represented by Director of ICT, Ms. Comfort Ajiboye

These words were re-echoed by the Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Olagunju, Idowu Lateef represented by Mr. Omale, Peter, head of the Communication and Information Sector in the Commission. He said, “it is imperative that we empower citizens with media and information literacy skills as this would enable them become active participants in the digital space, capable of harnessing its power for positive change and transformative development”.

A lecture titled Youth, MIL, Digital Space and Nigeria’s Transformation was delivered by Dr. Desmond Onyemaechi Okocha, Associate Professor and Dean, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Bingham University, Nasarawa State, set the pace of the discussion. He underscored the need to place emphasis on the population of Nigerians who are not in the digital space and the need to highlight the Media and

Information Literacy matrix, which covers Critical literacy, Computer literacy, Copywrite literacy, Data literacy, Disaster literacy, Financial literacy, Health literacy, Media literacy, Trans literacy, Visual literacy, Cultural literacy and Self literacy.

The discussion that followed featured panelists from government, civil society, journalists, academia and a media house manager. During a healthy and vibrant discussion, the panelists proffered recommendations ranging from: the need for the establishment of the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Institute, investment in education, inclusion of MIL in the education curriculum, improved government policies, fact-checking initiatives, mentorship, advocacy for digital ethics and for ethical behavior in the media space.

At the end of the symposium, stakeholders agreed that there was a need to engage in grassroots advocacy as destructive discussion starts offline before coming online. Stakeholders were also enjoined to come up with strategies to implement the recommendations.

“This year’s MIL commemoration is a testament of the power of unity and what we can do if we work together as a team for the realization of national goals. There is need for government, organized private sector, civil societies, multilateral institutions to collaborate more often in conceiving and implementing national policies and programs. We must be deliberate in engaging our youths to see the limitless opportunities that MIL holds in creating a sustainable society where infodemic will not thrive.”



A cross-section of the audience



A group photograph of dignitaries

UN and Nigerian government proposes large scale green jobs for Nigerian youths



Stakeholders at the event included Heads of Government Agencies, Members of the House of Rep, ILO constituent partners, and the private sector

Stakeholders in Nigeria's Labour sector have identified the creation of green jobs as a means of balancing the unemployment challenge as well as countering the effects of the ongoing climate change which has also to some extent negatively affected Nigeria.

This was the main discourse at a one-day national consultative meeting for the Alliance for Green Jobs Nigeria, driven by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). This event was also used to present a proposal to create massive green jobs for Nigerian women and youths, tagged "Alliance for Green Jobs". The alliance is designed as a Public Private Sector Initiative, also involving government institutions and the organised labour. The focus of the meeting is to get the input of key stakeholders at the planning stage of the project.

In her opening remarks, the ILO Country Director for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra-Leone and ECOWAS, Ms Vanessa Phala, affirmed that the Alliance for Green Jobs Creation is built on the Paris Agreement which highlighted a just transition and decent work as essential elements to responses to climate change. She also expressed optimism that the alliance will contribute to strengthening the resilience of the nations' local economy and expansion of opportunities for decent job creation.

The Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr Chris Ngige who was represented by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Ms Kacholom Daju, delivered the keynote address, and asserted that the current economic growth model is highly vulnerable since it is based on only two major unsustainable energy resources; Wood, and Oil & Gas, which are primarily produced through deforestation and highly unsustainable with high rate of natural resource consumption. The Minister admitted that Nigeria faces waves of severe impacts of the climate

change phenomenon as well as social economic issues in which mass unemployed and underemployed of youths are high on the agenda.

There were other good will messages from the organised labour, employers' association, the Climate Change Council and the Chairman, House Committee on Labour and Productivity in Nigeria's House of Representatives, and the Senior Special Advisor to the President on job creation. Some of the speakers commended the government for its commitment on climate change including the establishment of the Climate Change Act, while others called for proper inclusion of the private sector in the implementation of the proposed initiative.

The high point of the event was the presentation of the proposal which showcased a strategic approach towards large scale green job creation linking entrepreneurship and skills development. It is envisaged that the alliance will be a public-private sector driven initiative, involving government institutions, organized labour and business with a view to harness significant economic growth opportunities in the emerging green climate economy. It seeks large scale job creation in sectors of Climate Smart Agriculture and Agro-Processing, Sustainable Forestry and the Clean Cookstove technology, Fish Production and Renewable Energy.

The next phase of the initiative is the mobilisation of funds for the project which will be jointly pursued by the federal Ministry of Labour and employment and ILO.

UN Day commemoration with Dove Land International School, Abuja



Student of Doveland International Schools after the observance of the UN Day

The United Nations Information Centre Abuja in collaboration with the students of Dove Land International Schools Abuja commemorated the #UNDay2023.

The students were briefed on the history of the UN, including the different ways the UN is taking action to address climate issues and promote peace across the world.

The students rendered "We Are the World" song by Michael Jacksons and held a talk show on Conflict Resolution, highlighting the importance of dialogue to resolve conflicts.



A cross-section of students of Doveland International Schools

UN Resident Coordinator hosts town-hall meeting with all UN Staff in Nigeria



A cross-section of staff members at the town-hall meeting



(L-R) Mr. Matthias Schmale, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria; Mrs Beatrice Eyong, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS; Margaret Adaba-Soyemi, President UN staff association

As part of activities to mark UNDay, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Nigeria Matthias Schmale held a Townhall meeting with staff of the UN in the country.

He thanked the staff for their tireless efforts to implement the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work of the United Nations in the country.

He urged them to continue to uphold United Nations values of impartiality, professionalism and integrity, while endeavoring to leave no one behind.

In Nigeria, there are 21 resident UN Agencies working in all parts of the country. The UN and Nigeria recently agreed a new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) which will guide UN work in the country for the period 2023 -2027

Start Rite Schools Abuja commemorates UN Day



Start-Rite Schools students

Today the United Nations Nigeria joined students of Startrite Schools to commemorate the UNDay.

There were series of activities including poems on Peace and Justice, Dance, a short drama on the importance of gender equality, a panel discussion around climate change , the dangers of misinformation and hatespeech.

The students also showcased the cultures and languages of selected UN Member States.

The students were briefed about the History of the United Nations, Organs of the UN, the Sustainable Development Goals, Human Rights, Peace and Climate Change.

The students were urged to shun all forms of violence, racism and discrimination and ensure to only pass on verified information amongst themselves.



Students of Start-Rite Schools



Start-Rite Schools students in colourful display

UN organises mental health training for journalists



A cross-section of journalists at the training

In commemoration of World Mental Health Day, World Health Organization Nigeria with the United Nations Information Centre, Abuja have organized a 2-Day training for journalists to build capacity of journalists mental health and the capacity of journalists on respectful reporting of mental health issues.

World Mental Health Day 2023 is an opportunity for people and communities to unite behind the theme ‘Mental health is a universal human right’ to improve knowledge, raise awareness and drive actions that promote and protect everyone’s mental health as a universal human right.



Senior Human Rights Advisor, UN Nigeria, Ms Adwoa Kufuor-Owusu makes a presentation at the training

UN supports promotion and protection of older persons' rights in Nigeria.



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

Ageing is accompanied by challenges and vulnerabilities which can lead to human rights violations if there are no proper national protection systems in place.

The United Nations in Nigeria is committed in supporting Nigeria's efforts towards the promotion and protection of older persons' rights." This was stated by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria Mr. Matthias Schmale at the commemoration of Older Persons Day in Abuja.

The theme of the 2023 observance is "Fulfilling the Promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for Older Persons: Across Generations."

The objectives include, to increase global knowledge and awareness of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and generate commitments among all stakeholders to strengthen the protection of the human rights of current and future generations of older persons around the world; to share and learn from intergenerational models for the protection of human rights around the world; and to call on Governments and UN entities to review their current practices with a view to better integrate a life course approach to human rights in their work, and to ensure the active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, including civil society, national human rights institutions and older persons themselves, in the work on strengthening solidarity among generations and intergenerational partnerships.



A cross-section of audience at the event



(L-R) Dr. Emem Omokaro, Director General, Nigeria's National Senior Citizens' Center; Dr. Betta Edu, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation; Mr. Matthias Schmale, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria addresses the audience

UN, IITA AND CGIAR marks World Food Day and the International Rural Womens Day 2023



A group photograph of participants

As part of activities to mark the World Food Day and celebrate the International Rural Womens Day, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) with Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR) and Partners supported by FAO Nigeria showcased climate change smart technologies and innovations at an Exhibition and Open Day held at IITA Abuja.

The Open Day showcased processed fish products of the Gongulong Lawanti Women Fish Processors from IDP camps in Borno supported and trained by FAO Nigeria on improved fish processing and equipped them with the FAO-Thiaroye fish processing machine, an environment-friendly fish processing kiln through its aquaculture initiative.



A display of products at the event



A display of products at the event

UN commemorates International Day of the Girl Child



A cross-section of student panelists

To commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child, UNFPA Nigeria in collaboration with Illmi Children’s Fund organized a panel discussion with students focusing on 'School Related Gender Based Violence' (SRGBV) perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes & a way to curb it.

The panelists who are students, in their discussion highlighted ways to curb school related gender based violence (SRGBV) called for more sensitization & awareness of SRGBV.

It also called for more actions from school counsellors, government agencies, CSOs, personalities & parents to eliminate GBV from our schools.

In attendance were students, and Directors from the FCT Secondary Education Board.

On December 19, 2011, United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 to declare October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognize girls’ rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.

The International Day of the Girl Child focuses attention on the need to address the challenges girls face and to promote girls’ empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights.



One of the panelists addresses the audience



Emmanuel Egorp, UNFPA Gender/GBV Analyst making a presentation

Photo News



Photo news captions,

1. Reflecting on the incredible Mental Health Day **Sip and Paint event** organized by the World Health Organization Nigeria with the UN Information Centre Abuja and the UN Clinic.
2. (R-L) UN Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr Matthias Schmale; Chief of Defense Staff, General Christopher Musa; Peace and Development Advisor UN Nigeria, Ms Kimaris Toogood.
3. (R-L) UN Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr Matthias Schmale; The Executive Governor of Katsina State, His Excellency Dikko Umar Radda at the inauguration of the first Steering Committee for the Peacebuilding Fund project titled "Strengthening Local and State Level peace architectures for Peacebuilding and Prevention in Katsina and Kaduna states."

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