



Newsletter

February 2023



Hate speech can be both a precursor and a trigger of atrocity crimes – UN warns

Abuja, 24 February 2023. The UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, has warned that hate speech, especially if accompanied by policies and practices that discriminate against populations based on their identity often results in hate crimes, discrimination, and violence and can be both a precursor and a trigger of atrocity crimes, in particular genocide.

“Countering and addressing hate speech is crucial. In the Holocaust, and the genocides in Rwanda against the Tutsi and in Srebrenica, Bosnia Herzegovina, hate speech and the dehumanization of ‘the other’ was present during, after and long before violence broke out and such crimes were committed.” She said at a press briefing held on 24 February at the UN House in Abuja.

Cont. on next page.

PG 03

UN encouraged by Oyo State key stakeholders’ commitment to violence-free elections

PG 04

UN Commends Signing of National Peace Accord, calls on all Parties to respect their commitment under the Accord

PG 05

NiMet predicts early onset of rainfall, above average temperatures, severe dry spells, and flooding in 2023



and more stories.



Alice Wairimu Nderitu, The UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Matthias Schmale, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria

Nderitu emphasised that action aimed at countering and addressing hate speech must be at the heart of all prevention efforts. "Indeed, it all begins with words." She said, "By addressing divisive and harmful language, we can avoid escalation of tensions that could result in violence. Measures to that effect can also help build societies that are resilient and inclusive."

She explained that her role as Under Secretary General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide was not to decide whether Genocide, had taken or is taking place. "This is the responsibility of independent courts of justice that have the jurisdiction to make those judgements," she informed, "Our focus is on prevention of genocide and related crimes, detecting risk factors with the objective of mitigating and deescalating them." She informed.

On the 2023 elections in Nigeria, the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide noted that election season in Nigeria had witnessed a surge in the use of inflammatory language, hateful and divisive rhetoric, and such hate speech was amplified at an unprecedented rate by digital technology.

Nderitu said further, "We know that the impact of hate speech makes those targeted more vulnerable to violence, exposes them to exclusion and discrimination, exacerbates underlying social and economic inequalities, and undermines social cohesion. We know too that hate speech particularly impacts on women differently as is often evidenced by their absence from political spaces. It also contributes to polarizing communities along identity lines, hampering dialogue and reconciliation."

The United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser of Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide Alice Wairimu Nderitu is on an official visit to Nigeria this week ahead of the 25 February general elections, and she has met with government authorities, political leaders, representatives of civil society, traditional and religious leaders, and members of the international community for a better understanding of developments and views in the country.

She called on the media to play their invaluable role during electoral processes in educating, informing, raising awareness, and alerting on situations at risk, and countering narratives of hatred and segregation with verified facts.

The Under-Secretary-General acknowledged the work done by "my UN colleagues in the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) led by Deputy SRSG Giovanni Biha and the UN Country Team in Nigeria led by Resident Coordinator Matthias Schmale in supporting Nigeria towards a peaceful election."



UN encouraged by Oyo State key stakeholders' commitment to violence-free elections



United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale (Middle), and other stakeholders in Oyo State at the signing of the state Peace Accord.

Abuja, 15 February 2023. The United Nations in Nigeria is encouraged by the commitment of key stakeholders to ensure violence-free elections in Oyo state.

United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria Matthias Schmale told a stakeholders' forum on 14 February 2023 in Ibadan that it was "good to see so many traditional & religious leaders actively supporting inclusive, transparent and credible elections in Oyo State".

The consultation organised by the National Peace Committee, Oyo State Peace Committee, the United Nations and The Kukah Centre, had in attendance the representative of the Oyo State Commissioner of Police; religious and traditional leaders; political parties, women and young people.

The UN Resident Coordinator noted that "the reputation of Oyo State would be at stake if violence and insecurity were to take hold in the state before, during, or after the elections and that is why it is good to observe members of the Oyo State Peace Architecture and other stakeholders already engaging in promoting social cohesion and enhancing the role of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms".

Representing the National Peace Committee, Emmanuel Nkanka, informed that the high-level consultative meeting was to consolidate the gains of democracy in Oyo State, and urged all to guide against violence before, during and after the general elections. "We are looking up to seeing a Nigeria, and Oyo State, where politicians can look at themselves and declare that it is Oyo, and public interest first, before personal interest," he added.

Chairman of Oyo State Peace Committee, Apostle Col. Joshua Akinyemi, urged heads of households in Oyo State to allow their spouses and children to vote according to their conscience. "There is no sacrifice that is too much for peace. Let's continue to devote time and engage towards ensuring sustainable peace before, during and after the elections." He said, "No political storm should be allowed to rage in Oyo State. Let's work together for the peace of the land."

Representative of the Oyo State Commissioner of Police, ACP Taiwo Kasumu, warned that enforcement of law would not be suspended

because of elections, rather, the law would remain potent to deal with any security breach including disturbance of public peace. He called on all Nigerians to respect unarmed police officers that would be deployed for election duties.

Of importance were the contributions of the representatives of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN); Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI); and other Christian and Muslim organisations. They unanimously alluded to religious harmony in Oyo State and advocated for the same to be carried over to political campaigns to ensure peaceful elections in the state.

Contributing to the discussion, National Coordinator, Civil Society Coalition for Sustainable Development, Dr Tola Winjobi, urged politicians in Oyo State to have a deeper understanding of the Agenda2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to enhance their programme design and delivery without compromising the future of coming generations.

In his intervention, Director, National Orientation Agency in Oyo State, Mr Kayode Odedokun, called on residents of Oyo State to be tolerant of one another and eschew hate speech, misinformation and fake news.



United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale, addresses the audience at the signing of the Oyo State Peace Accord in Ibadan.

UN Commends Signing of National Peace Accord, calls on all Parties to respect their commitment under the Accord



A cross-section of Presidential candidates of political parties and their party Chairmen, at the signing of the National Peace Accord, in Abuja.

Abuja, 23 February 2023. Ahead of 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections in Nigeria, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Officer in Charge of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Giovane BIHA, has commended the signing of the Second National Peace Accord for peaceful elections in Nigeria under the auspices of the National Peace Committee (NPC).

Under the Peace Accord, the 18 presidential candidates and the Chairmen of their respective parties renewed their commitment to peaceful, transparent and credible elections. They further reaffirmed their commitment to fully abide by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to respect the rules and regulations as laid down in the Electoral Act 2022; and to adhere to best international standards, and best practices of our democratic processes.

“I am determined to place national interest above personal and partisan concerns, hereby commit myself to accept and abide by the outcome of the 2023 Presidential elections, and if issues should arise, I will deploy constitutional means and appeal to the courts rather than unconstitutional means.” The Presidential candidates reaffirmed.

Ms. Biha appealed to all candidates and their supporters to respect the terms of the Peace Accord with due respect for the rule of law. She further reiterated the importance of peaceful elections to Nigeria, the region and the continent while highlighting the centrality of peaceful elections to peace, stability and development of Nigeria.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General reassured of the United Nations support to the people of Nigeria and expressed the hope that the elections of Saturday 25 February would further deepen democratic consolidation in Nigeria and the African region.

President Muhammadu Buhari, charged the contestants and their political parties to respect the choice of voters and accept the result of the elections as announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, the agency empowered by law to do so.

He reminded Nigerians that they had no other country outside Nigeria, and urged them to do everything to keep it safe, united and peaceful. Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Prof.

Mahmood Yakubu, restated the readiness of the Commission to conducting the elections as scheduled. He reassured Nigerians of a transparent exercise.

Chairman of the National Peace Committee, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, in his welcome address, explained that the committee had been monitoring compliance with the first national accord by the politicians, and “we recorded some of the infractions that were a thing of concern.”

According to him, there was a lack of compliance by the major political parties. 44% of the violations were carried out by the spokespersons of the political parties; 26% by party members; 19% by the presidential candidates themselves; 11% by hardcore supporters and 4% by chairmen of the parties.

In her remarks, the European Union (EU) ambassador to Nigeria, Samuela Isopi, urged Nigeria to lead by example and send a strong message to the world about consolidating democracy.

She called on all candidates to accept the results of the elections and seek legal redress when dissatisfied.

In attendance were the UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu; UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale; Bishop Matthew Kukah, and Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Saad Abubakar III. Other attendees were the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Usman Alkali Baba, and former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, who leads the Commonwealth Election Observer Group to Nigeria.



Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Officer in Charge of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Giovane Biha, addresses the audience at the signing of the National Peace Accord in Abuja.

NiMet predicts early onset of rainfall, above average temperatures, severe dry spells, and flooding in 2023



(L) M. Katielou Gaptia Lawan, Permanent Representative of Niger Republic with WMO; Mr Lamin Mai TOURAY Permanent Representative of The Gambia with WMO; (M) Senator Hadi Sirika, Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Aviation; Prof. Mansur Bako Matazu, DG/CEO NiMet, and Permanent Representative of Nigeria with WMO; (R) Mr. Bernard Gomez, WMO Representative for North, Central and West Africa; and Dr Anthony Anuforom former DG of NiMet during the launch of the 2023 Seasonal Climate Prediction in Abuja on 24 January 2023.

The Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) released the 2023 Seasonal Climate Prediction (SCP) with the theme “Strengthening climate risk early warning services for improved food security and disaster risk reduction in Nigeria” on 24 January 2023 at a high-level event presided over by Honourable Minister for Aviation Senator Hadi Sirika.

The Director General of NiMet and Permanent Representative of Nigeria with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Professor Mansur Bako Matazu stated in his opening remark that the year 2023 would likely be a normal year unlike 2022 but that there would likely be some extreme events such as flash floods around urban cities and riverine floods in flood-prone areas. In most parts of the country, rainfall amount in 2023 is predicted to be average to above average with a range between 1190 – 2700mm. However, below average rainfall is likely in parts of Yobe, Jigawa, Kano, Bauchi, Jigawa, Kaduna states and the Federal Capital Territory.

Following these highlights, the detailed summary of the prediction was provided by the Honourable Minister of Aviation Senator Hadi Sirika. Rainfall onset dates have been predicted to be earlier than the long-term average in most parts of the country. Rainfall onset will begin from the coastal states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Rivers early in March and progress in June and July to the northern states such as Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe and Borno. The Onset dates for parts of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Kwara, Oyo, Ogun, and Lagos are likely to be near their long-term averages while parts of Katsina, Zamfara, Kano, Jigawa and Yobe in the north and Cross River, Ebonyi, Imo and Rivers in the south are likely to experience a delayed Onset.

Furthermore, mild to moderate dry spells (8-16 days) have been predicted to occur in April 2023 in the south and a severe dry spell to last between 15 to 21 days or longer is expected in June through early July in parts of some northern (Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Jigawa, Katsina, Yobe, Borno, Kano) and central States

Early rainfall cessation is projected over parts of several states across the country including Osun, Ondo, Edo, Delta, Imo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Ogun, Lagos, Yobe, Adamawa, Niger, Nasarawa, and Kogi. However, an extended cessation period is predicted over parts of Anambra, Enugu, Gombe, Kaduna, Kwara, parts of Ogun and Lagos states.

There would likely be no significant change to the length of growing season in most places as predictions are near the long-term average, however, some parts of the northern states may experience shorter than long-term average length of growing season (Katsina, Jigawa and Kano).

In 2023, the SCP anticipates both daytime and night-time temperatures to be above the long-term average across the country in January, March and May with occasional cooler than long-term averages in February. High vigilance for malaria is anticipated in the coastal and north central zones of the country, while high vigilance for meningitis is anticipated over the extreme northeast and as the year progresses, vigilance threshold extends southwards till March 2023.

The Secretary General of the WMO Prof Petteri Taalas presented a recorded video statement at the event. In his statement, the WMO S-G appreciated the support NiMet has enjoyed under the leadership of Senator Hadi Sirika and the establishment of a Climate Change Act. He commended the various International Standard Organisation (ISO)

Certifications achieved by NiMet and the support provided by NiMet to sister countries in West Africa and beyond. He spoke of WMO's intention to cover the globe with effective Early Warning Systems which is a major gap in Africa as well. He noted that NiMet as an important partner with the WMO will support the implementation of the 'Early Warning for All' plan initiated by the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

The event was attended by the Minister of Interior Rauf Aregbesola, and the Minister of State Niger Delta Affairs Mrs Sharon Ikeazor. Other dignitaries included the Director General of the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Ahmed Mustapha Habib, the Director General of the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) Engr

Clement Nze, Traditional Rulers, Academia, Private Sector Executives, Farmers, Students, and the Media. The event was also graced by the Heads of the Meteorological Agencies in Niger Republic and The Gambia.

Other documents launched alongside the 2023 Seasonal Climate Prediction include a scholarly publication called 'Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability, Mitigation and Adaptation in Nigeria' and the 'State of the Climate in Nigeria 2022.' Through the WMO, NiMet accesses various weather and climate data products from global centres and capacity building to support forecasting and numerical weather prediction activities

Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls

EU UN

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GILS

GBV TOLL FREE HELPLINE : **08000-333-333**

Spotlight Initiative: Second Chance Education gets a boost in Obanliku and Obubra LGAs of Cross River State



Photo of Imabana-Itamtet centre 4

Towards enabling effective teaching and learning in the implementation of the Second Chance Education programme under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls in Cross River State, the Education Today for Sustainable Development Initiative (ETSDI), with the support of UNESCO Abuja, has distributed four thousand (4,000) copies of Spotlight Initiative branded exercise books and pens to learners in Obanliku and Obubra Local Government Areas of Cross River State.

Furthermore, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Life Skills Facilitator's Guide, Numeracy and Literacy Primers, NMEC Attendance Registers and Non-formal Education Curriculum were distributed to facilitators to enable them to effectively deliver lessons.

This programme is part of the second phase of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative Activity in Cross River State, with the aim of providing accelerated second-chance education opportunities to 2000 out-of-school girls and young women facing intersecting marginalization: living with HIV, disability, victims of EUP, child marriage, GBV and rural poor and

mainstream them back to formal school; provide livelihood skills to 50 women and girls in cross river state.

Earlier, the Cross River State Agency for Adult and Non-formal Education and the Ministry of Women Affairs embarked on a field monitoring and evaluation of learning centres in twenty communities in the two LGAs to ascertain the state of the delivery of the lessons by the trained facilitators.

UNESCO in collaboration with Mass Education and Ministry of Women's Affairs will, in March, be flagging off skills acquisition training programme targeting 50 women and girls in the state.



Ofodua Learning Centre, Obubra 2



Okorokpana Centre, Obubra 9

UN supports Nigeria to convene stakeholder's sensitisation workshops towards operationalising the revised National Policy on Labour Migration

Blurb: the need to avoid previous challenges and improve effective implementation of the revised labour migration policy informs convening two stakeholders' workshops in Lagos state and Abuja.



A cross-section of stakeholders at the sensitization workshop

In February 2023, the Government of Nigeria, under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, organized workshops in Lagos state and the Federal Capital Territory for stakeholders on the revised National Policy on Labour Migration. The workshops were supported by the International Labour Organization within the framework of the FAIRWAY Global Programme.

The Government of Nigeria has re-emphasized its commitment in ensuring the effective implementation of the revised National Policy on Labour Migration, especially in recognition of the significant positioning of the country in the global labour migration landscape. This commitment was made known by Mr. John Nyamali, Director, Employment and Wages Department of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, while delivering the opening remarks during two sensitization workshops convened by the Ministry in Lagos State and Abuja from 7th – 9th and 13th – 15th of February 2023 respectively.

While acknowledging the support and collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) during the policy revision, Mr. Nyamali noted that the Ministry had conceptualized the sensitization workshops to facilitate the operationalization of the revised policy, especially leveraging on collaboration, sensitization, and awareness raising for stakeholders.

Ms. Vanessa Phala, Director of the ILO Country Office for Abuja, while commending the efforts of the Government in recording the landmark achievement in the review of the policy, noted that the ILO is particularly delighted to witness advancements in the governance of labour migration at the country level. The agency continues to provide support to national stakeholders toward improvements in the areas of policy, law, and practice. She also acknowledged the contribution of the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for sustained collaboration and supporting the ILO's work in labour migration.

Goodwill messages delivered by Ms. Sandra Vermuijten and Mr. Chris-

tian Brügger of GIZ and SDC, respectively, reiterated the role rights-based labour migration policies play in fostering the protection of migrant workers while acknowledging the collaboration with ILO and leadership of the Government in reviewing and commencing implementation of the policy.

In 2014, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced a National Policy on Labour Migration with a vision to establish an effective, responsive, and dynamic governance framework for labour migration in the country. The policy provided for a periodic review, which informed the initiative led by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment and was based on an analysis report on the extent of its implementation. Conceptualized through a consultative process and based on the acknowledgment of limited levels of awareness about the existence and normative provisions of the 2014 policy, the sensitization workshops were convened within the framework of the FAIRWAY Global Programme supported by the Government of Switzerland. The activity package complements other significant and strategic support the ILO is providing to relevant national authorities having mandates related to labour migration, as well as social partners and other non-state actors that engage processes in the policy and practice landscape in this regard.

The revised national policy was approved by Nigeria's Federal Executive Council (FEC) in 2022, and the policy is divided into seven parts that include chapters that broadly illustrate the Governments' policy aspirations relating to safeguarding the rights of migrant workers, including a gender responsive approach to labour migration and grievance and justice mechanisms.

US \$1.3 billion needed to reach 6 million people in north-east Nigeria with humanitarian assistance in 2023

**HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSE PLAN
NIGERIA**

2023

PEOPLE IN NEED
8.3M

PEOPLE TARGETED
6.0M

REQUIREMENTS (US\$)
1.3B

The 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan for north-east Nigeria launched today requests US\$1.3 billion to provide critical lifesaving assistance to 6 million people suffering from the devastating impact of the continuing 13 year long non-international armed conflict. This is an increase of 500,000 people from the 5.5 million people identified for assistance in 2022.

“The large-scale humanitarian and protection crisis shows no sign of abating,” said the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Nigeria, Mr. Matthias Schmale. “An estimated 2.4 million people are in acute need impacted by conflict, disaster and disease and require urgent support.”

Some humanitarian needs of affected people are deepening and increasing, particularly those related to food insecurity and malnutrition. Approximately 4.4 million people are expected to face food insecurity in the 2023 lean season, up from 4.1 million in 2022. Without urgent action, 4,000 people in Bama, Borno State, are expected to be in ‘catastrophe’ (Phase 5) conditions, in which starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels become prevalent. The ticking time bomb of child malnutrition is escalating in Nigeria’s north-east, with the number of children suffering from acute malnutrition projected to increase to 2 million in 2023, up from 1.74 million

in last year.

The already high levels of severe acute malnutrition are projected to more than double, from 300,000 children affected last year to a projected 697,000 this year. “Women and girls are the hardest hit,” said Mr. Schmale. “Over 80 per cent of people in need of humanitarian assistance across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states are women and children. They face increased risks of violence, abduction, rape and abuse.” During conflict, children, girls, women and people with disabilities are the most affected groups of people. They require additional attention through enhanced access to protection and quality of basic health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene and learning services. Two million people are displaced due to conflict and face daily threats to their health and safety. Sudden and unpredictable attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure by non-state armed groups are continuing, and the recent closure of camps for internally displaced people are leading to new vulnerabilities. There are nearly 2 million returnees who lack essential services and livelihoods, and 4.8 million people in host communities or communities affected by the conflict. Over a million people are estimated to be in extremely hard-to-reach areas where they are unable to get to basic services or receive assistance and humanitarian actors are unable to reach them.

Federal Government cooperates with ECOWAS, IOM for voluntary return of 150 migrants back to Nigeria



Returned Nigerian migrants arrive at the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport. Kano - Nigeria. Photo: IOM 2023

On the 20 February the Federal Government of Nigeria, in close coordination with International Organization for Migration (IOM) and with the support from Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) have assisted the safe return of 150 Nigerians stranded in Niger.

The findings of a high-level study visit to Niger in late 2022 indicated that there was an influx of stranded migrants in Niger from Algeria. These migrants were living in difficult conditions as the transit centers hosting them were overcrowded, with the overall number oscillating around 4,300 persons for a capacity of 4,000. While the migrants from Guinea-Conakry, Mali, and Nigeria make up the highest numbers, their protracted stay in the transit centers is compounded by overall socio-political and security situation in the sub-region, as well as issues related to their travel documents.

Recognizing the urgent need of assistance, ECOWAS coordinated with the national governments of Nigeria and Guinea and is currently cooperating with IOM to support the urgent return of at least 250 stranded Guinean and Nigerian migrants hosted in transit centers all around Niger.

“This is a clear demonstration of the Economic Community of West African States’ commitment to support assisted voluntary return and reintegration of migrants, many of whom are ECOWAS citizens, vulnerable and include unaccompanied and separated children”, said Dr. Sintiki Tarfa Ugbe, Director, Humanitarian and Social Affairs, ECOWAS Commission.

Among the 150 migrants that have arrived to Kano on February 20, 2023 in a charter flight coming from Niamey, 89% are men and 11% women. This includes 13 minors coming with their family members. The top five states of origin of those returned are Kano, Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, and Borno: taken together these five states account for 91% of the total returns and the remaining 9% from other six states.

Upon their arrival, IOM works closely with The Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD), leading relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies like National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCRFMI), Nigerian Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), as well as Kano State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Department of State Services (DSS), Special Adviser to the Governor and Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) in close collaboration with IOM conducts an initial screening to assess primary needs, provides emergency mental health and psychosocial support services, offer immediate assistance such as food, medical screening, overnight accommodation, orientation for further in-kind reintegration assistance to follow, and delivers assistance for onward transportation to their homes. All these actions are done in alignment with Standard Operating Procedures put in place by the Federal Government of Nigeria to coordinate Return, Readmission and Reintegration of Nigerian returning migrants effectively and efficiently. Before departure, IOM provided them with counselling services and tailored support for the most vulnerable and transportation to their respective states.

In subsequent months, thanks to the support of European Union and in partnership with governmental agencies and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) partners, the returnees will receive in-kind reintegration assistance, including vocational education and training to help them start an income-generating activity of their choice for their sustainable reintegration in Nigeria.

“The Voluntary Return safeguards the human rights and preserves the integrity of migrants, while upholding international principles and standards”, said Laurent de Boeck, IOM Chief of Mission in Nigeria.

Sanitation business is good business



How Odigbo increased his income by keeping his community clean

When Odigbo Moses Edo first heard of SATO pans, he was a trader who sold cement and mattresses in AINU Council Ward, Oju Local Government Area, Benue State, north-central Nigeria. Going about his daily business and activities, he often wondered how he could contribute to making his environment cleaner in his own little way. This led to his interaction with the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committee (WASHCOM) in his community. He never imagined that he could make a lot of money and turn it into his major line of business.

On one of such interactions, he was invited for a training on selling toilet products, record keeping, innovations, and installation of SATO pans as part of UNICEF’s ‘Make a Splash!’ programme in the neighboring Ado local government area, in Benue State.

“The training opened me up to other building materials like rods, hand trowel pipes, tiles, etc., and I was empowered with 315 SATO Pans. Since then, my business has grown exponentially.”

As an ingenious businessman, Odigbo knew that the best way to grow his business was to add the old to the new. He combined his knowledge of selling cement with his knowledge of selling and installing SATO pans to produce and sell precast toilets fitted with SATO pans. This made his business a one-stop-shop for the sale and installation of toilets.

Odigbo started his sanitation business with 315 SATO pans and a workforce of two; him and his wife. His business has now expanded to employ 10 more workers, and they have installed over 4,000 SATO pans and stools in homes in Oju and Ado local government areas of Benue State.

“I am happy to install toilets because I contribute to the cleanliness of our community. Before now, the community was filthy, with people defecating openly. The case is different now. Our community has improved greatly in terms of hygiene. My workers also support many households by teaching them how to keep their toilets clean”

“The business has greatly improved my income. I bought a motorcycle with the money I made from the business, and I branded it with UNICEF as a form of appreciation and to also tell people about the impact of UNICEF in my life.”



UN facilitates delivery of icorp training of trainers workshop

In its continued efforts aimed at enhancing the institutional frameworks for the provision of income generating opportunities to returnee/ potential migrants and the local population in Nigeria, the ILO Abuja Office through its Employment and Reintegration Project delivered with funding from the GIZ, delivered a training of trainer's workshop on the ILO cooperative development tools.



Photo from icorp training

As part of effort to enhance the capacity of national stakeholders for the delivery of income generating opportunities to returnee/potential migrants and the local population in Nigeria, the ILO delivered its Cooperative Development Training of Trainers Workshop using the Think.COOP, Start.COOP and MY.COOP modules.

The overall objective of the activity was to conduct Training of Trainers workshop to build the capacities of cooperative support organizations, using ILO cooperative tools: Think.COOP, Start.COOP and My.COOP. developed to enhance the delivery of cooperative development and formalisation across the world.

The Training of Trainers workshop was also delivered to help fill the void in the select national stakeholders' knowledge and capacity on cooperative development and formalisation in Nigeria, using the globally developed module by the ILO, the participants were trained in key areas of their capacity needs following from a training needs assessment conducted prior to the commencement of the workshop.

The training workshop dwelled greatly on supporting the national stakeholders drawn from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employ-

ment, the National Directorate of Employment, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria and other local organisations providing income generating opportunities support to returnee/potential migrants and the local population on using the ILO module in facilitating cooperative development and formalisation in Nigeria.

The Think.COOP training module is specifically developed for individuals and/or associations interested in establishing or joining cooperatives, the Start.COOP module is a specialised training tool developed for individuals and/or associations interested in starting a cooperative in a participatory manner and My.COOP module is a training package and programme on the management of agricultural cooperatives.

At the end of the training workshop, participants were issued certificates of attendance and will further be supported to be certified as trainers using the specialised module.



Photo from icorp training

Vegetable production for improved income and nutrition in Yobe



Bali, a 55-years-old agile man in Kukareta community is among the recipients of the WFP Livelihood project who benefitted from the greenhouse construction in Yobe State. Farming has always been a major occupation in Bali's family as his father and grandfather were once farmers who made a living out of this. However, because of the crisis in the northeast, Bali had to go the extra mile to survive and feed his family.

Bali with his fresh picked vegetables.

Resilience building interventions are taking place against the backdrop of the need for sustainable livelihood opportunities for improved socio-economic and nutrition outcomes. This includes adaptation approaches to mitigate climate change effects on food security and nutrition outcomes for populations affected by insurgency in Yobe. A Green House vegetable farming technology has been introduced to support IDP communities in Kukareta community maximize limited land, water sources, for vegetable production which has brought multiple benefits in terms of income generation and improved nutrition. The majority of the beneficiaries are women.

"My fathers were all farmers so automatically I am also a farmer but, the crisis affected a lot of things and I had to diversify to meet up with my responsibilities. I have over 20 children and 4 wives, so I just had to look for ways to feed my family. I sell traditional medicine from community to community, and I also engage in menial jobs just to ensure my family does not go hungry" Bali narrates

The 55-year-old Bali always wished to engage in a job he enjoyed doing but with the advent of the greenhouse in his community (Kukareta) he saw this as an opportunity to turn around his fortune.

"Looking at my age you will notice the strength is depreciating and I need to do something that I enjoy doing and that is farming but I did not have the tools and equipment then. But on hearing from the Bulama that COOPI with the support of WFP was making plans to build a greenhouse in our community, I was so happy and decided to participate. I was selected and provided with capacity training on vegetable production and farm inputs to start up. COOPI team provided everything we needed and was monitoring at every stage. It was a new experience because this was the first of its kind in Yobe state, so it was an exciting experience for me and the community at large. We experienced fewer effects of pests such as insect destruction compared to the open field cultivation we are used to.

The Green House initiative brought to communities of the dry lands fills a gap in food and vegetable availability throughout the year. The long and dry seasons are productively utilized in growing vegetables

in the facility provided to maximise use of limited water resource and protecting crops from being destroyed by animals. Inputs and extension services from Government complementary support are effectively managed to prevent plant diseases, and post-harvest losses. A variety of vegetables have also been introduced such as Amaranthus, Sorrel, Lettuce, Okra, carrots and Tomatoes which are not regularly available on the local market.

The project is experimental and benefiting a first batch of 71 farmers (50 men and 21 women). Seedlings are produced throughout the year with limited impact of pests, diseases and the perennial drought condition. It has significantly improved the quality of household meals of IDPs involved, and especially helped to integrate them into the local economy with their produce to raise small incomes. With these additional innovations brought by WFP, the emphasis is to achieve sustainable impacts through long-term and climate-smart livelihoods strategies.

"I have planted variety of crops in the greenhouse, and this has helped me and my family in battling poverty. I sell some of the best vegetables in Kukareta now because of the freshness of the vegetable. My tomatoes are big, fresh and so far, this year I have made over ₦70,000 compared to the inadequate income I got from my traditional drug sales. I am very grateful to WFP/COOPI for this wonderful initiative which has helped families in Kukareta community. We now have a sense of dignity, belonging and I can send some of my children to school. Also, I have rest of mind as I do not have to start trekking miles to sell drugs anymore.

UN collaborates with Nigeria Immigration Service to commission Reference Centre in Abuja



Reference Centre at the NIS Headquarters in Abuja. Photo: IOM 2023

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) on February 23 commissioned the Reference Centre at the NIS Headquarters in Abuja to support border management and border security efforts by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

IOM works closely with NIS and other government agencies on issues of migration management, immigration, and border management to strengthen its personnel capacity, enhance border security, improve border surveillance and patrol.

The Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) was adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGoN) as its national Border Management Information System (BMIS) in 2016. IOM, in cooperation with the NIS has equipped five international airports in Abuja, Lagos, Kano, Port-Harcourt, and Enugu, fourteen land borders, four sea borders and eight State Commands, and the NIS headquarters with MIDAS, making Nigeria the largest MIDAS architecture in the world.

“The collaboration with the Nigeria Immigration Service has enhanced the capacity building of staff through improving the existing facilities and establishing additional components to create a robust learning environment”, said Laurent de Boeck IOM Nigeria Chief of Mission. The establishment of the NIS Reference Centre is a testament to the Federal Government of Nigeria’s commitment to enhancing border security and border management, he added.

The newly commissioned Reference Centre which is located at the NIS headquarters comprises of a training hall, a forensic lab, an e-learning library, a MIDAS desk Office, a server room and a power room. The Centre will not only serve as a training and capacity building hub for NIS officers but also as an avenue for collaboration and exchange with other agencies and partners within the country, in the region and the continent at large.

“It is my expectation that this Training and Reference Centre will provide sustainable e-training platform for our Officers and Men, strengthen the capacity of our Officers to handle the various MIDAS equipment and be a foremost Reference Centre for forensic examination of Travel and Identity documents, such as International Passports, Visas, entry permits, and drivers’ licenses” said Idris Jere, the Comptroller General of the Nigeria Immigration Service.

“Denmark is proud to be a close partner of IOM and a close partner of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Nigeria Immigration service. We are delighted to follow the progress made towards more robust border management and improve border security”, says H.E Sune Krogstrup, Ambassador of the Government of Denmark to Nigeria.

“We are pleased to support Nigeria in its efforts to strengthen its border controls and curb the fight against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, in partnership with the IOM through the ‘MIDAS Expansion at Air Borders’ project,” said Cindy Brouillette, Representative of the Government of Canada.

A major aim of this project is to enhance the capacity of officers to ensure a faster, safer and more reliable facilitation of traveller processing at international borders through strengthened national data architecture, relevant legal framework and inter-agency cooperation as well as promoting regional and continental cooperation.

The Government of Canada and the Government of Denmark provided funding support to this effort through the projects “MIDAS Expansion at Air Borders in Nigeria” and the “Enhancing Air Border Data Systems in Nigeria - Phase 2 (EABDS-II).

From tragedy to entrepreneurship: Maagaji's journey in the face of adversity



The smile that defies challenges. @UNHCR/Francis Garriba.

Maagaji Bana has finally found a glimmer of hope after nine long years of grief, thanks to the training and empowerment in poultry farming provided by UNHCR and its partner, the American University of Nigeria (AUN). Her smile shines through her veil, reflecting her joy and optimism about her future.

Maagaji and her family were forced to flee their village in Marte Local Government Area, Borno State, in 2014 after Non-State Armed Groups attacked. Together with many others, they endured a gruelling journey for days, sleeping in the bushes until they finally reached the Teacher's Village IDP camp in Maiduguri.

The family had a difficult time at the camp as they relied solely on humanitarian aid, which was not always available. Unfortunately, they could not even afford a single meal per day, placing her newborn baby at a greater risk of malnutrition, which could have lifelong consequences. To make matters worse, her other children were unable to continue their education because of a lack of school fees.

Things took a turn for the worse when the Borno State authorities closed the Teacher's Village IDP camp in 2021 to resettle the IDPs in their ancestral homes. Unfortunately, Maagaji and her family chose not to return to Marte due to the precarious security situation and lack of basic needs and services back home. As a result, they decided to stay behind and seek refuge in the host community. It was a difficult decision, as they had no means of sustaining themselves and were at the mercy of the community.

"I was in a fix when the camp was closed", said Maagaji. "We have no house to return to, and our safety if we returned is not ascertained," she added.

Fortunately, in 2022, the American University of Nigeria (AUN), one of UNHCR's implementing partners, selected Maagaji to participate in livelihoods training. Following the training, she received a start-up kit to help her set up a poultry farming enterprise. This has turned her fortunes around and helped her, and her family become self-reliant.

"After my training, I was given farming tools, feed, and some money

with which I bought ten chicks for a start," she said.

Since her livelihood training, Maagaji has flourished in her poultry farming venture, purchasing more chicks and using her profits to support her family and children's education. Each chicken she sells earns her approximately 7 USD or 3,000 Nigerian Naira, and she has already raised four cycles, adapting to the seasonal demands of the business. With a wide grin, she shares how she and her husband enjoy slaughtering one of the biggest chickens every time they mature for a special family meal. Maagaji recounts the pure happiness on her children's faces when they indulge in chicken and rice, a meal they had not enjoyed for quite some time.

Maagaji also has 25 four-month-old layer chickens at home, at their point of lay stage. She is excited about expanding her business as the chickens are on the verge of starting to lay eggs. This diversification of her enterprise will allow her to continue earning money in between the maturity cycles of her broiler chicken.

"Words are not enough to appreciate UNHCR for restoring joy and dignity in the lives of my family and me, after several years of pain and misery," she says



Maagaji Bana cannot wait to have her chickens start laying eggs. @UNHCR/Francis Garriba.

Maagaji is one of 400 people who have benefited from UNHCR's urban IDP outreach and cash-based programs in Borno State's Maiduguri Municipal Council and Jere Local Government Areas. Some 110 IDPs received vocational training, 231 received micro-business training, and 59 were trained in animal husbandry.

UN convenes stakeholders' engagement on the premiere of anti-trafficking film 'Dangerous Hope'



Cross section of dignitaries at the "Dangerous Hope" film premiere. © UNHCR

An anti-trafficking short film directed by Nollywood filmmaker Judith Audu premiered in Abuja on February 2, 2023, in a stakeholder event facilitated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in collaboration with the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). The short film, titled *Dangerous Hope*, explores deceitful ways that human traffickers use to entice and entangle community members to human trafficking, including displaced populations.

The film premiere is part of UNHCR's enhanced efforts to constructively engage with the public on the problem of human trafficking through increased sensitisation and awareness campaigns. Speaking at the event's opening, the UNHCR's Representative, Ms Chansa Kapaya, highlighted that "forcibly displaced persons, such as IDPs, refugees and asylum-seekers, are easy targets for traffickers who take advantage of their precarious situation to exploit them." She mentioned further that the anti-trafficking film was borne from an information campaign (supported by the European Union) dubbed, *Telling the Real Story* which has been implemented in Edo State since 2018. This project enabled the UNHCR and its partners to mainstream anti-trafficking messaging in its refugee programme.

Addressing the event as a special guest, Vice President Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, who was represented by the Deputy Chief of Staff, Mr Ipaye, remarked on the importance of sensitisation in curbing trafficking in persons. "While prosecution and punishment can serve as a useful deterrent of the crime, prevention is even more important – to stop the outcome before the process begins," he stated.

As co-hosts of the premiere, the Director of the NAPTIP, Dr Fatima Waziri stated that "the internet has made it possible for traffickers to have a wider pool of potential victims as the world wide web has no geographical boundary" and lauded the NAPTIP's partnership with UNHCR in mitigating migratory risks of people forced to flee. Speaking shortly after, the UN Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator (a.i), Mathias Schmale, remarked that while crisis and conflict increased the risk of trafficking, sensitisation campaigns were equally critical as Nigeria pursues its SDG 16 objectives.

In a goodwill address from the Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Hajia Sadiya Umar Farouq, it was emphasized that there was a need to learn from the regrettable experiences of trafficked victims at a time when trafficking was expanding at worrying scale in Nigeria, and that sensitisation programmes like these [through films] cannot be over-emphasised. Similarly, the Minister for Women's Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen, called on well-meaning Nigerians to condemn the deadly issue of human trafficking. "There is an urgent need to intensify advocacy against the crime and to educate our communities," she noted.

As a curtain raiser to the screening of the short film, the filmmaker narrated her experience working for the first time visiting the Adagom refugee settlement in Ogoja as part of her work with UNHCR. Her personal contact with Cameroonian refugees in the settlement formed the live realities of forced migration captured in the film.

The post-screening panel discussion featured individuals from different agencies such as Network Against Child Trafficking, Abuse and Labour (NACTAL), Great Esan Returnees Association (GERA), Caritas Nigeria, National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and IDPs (NC-FRMI) and a voluntary returnee who was a victim of trafficking, Mr Desmond Osarodion Liberty.



UNHCR High Profile Supporter, Nollywood filmmaker, and Director of "Dangerous Hope" anti-trafficking film, Judith Audu (Black shirt in the middle) flanked by cast and crew of the "Dangerous Hope" film. © UNHCR

UN Women, UNDP and Female Ambassadors Host 2nd International Women’s Day Awards Gala in Lagos



From left: Ms. Beatrice Eyong, UN Women Representative to Nigeria & ECOWAS, Mr. Ari Aisen, IMF Resident Representative for Nigeria, H.E. Samuela Isopi, EU Ambassador to Nigeria & ECOWAS, H.E. Amb. Mary Beth Leonard, US Ambassador to Nigeria, Hon. Prince Clem Agba, Minister of State for Budget & National Planning, Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, President of Human Capital Africa & Senior Economic Adviser at Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative (AEDPI), H.E. Dame Pauline Tallen, Minister of Women Affairs, Mr. Mohammed Yahya, UNDP Resident Representative to Nigeria, H.E. Ihab Awad, Egypt Ambassador to Nigeria.
Photo: UNDP/ UN WOMEN Nigeria

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commemorated 2nd edition of the International Women’s Day Awards Gala in Lagos. The event was convened by UN Women and UNDP in Nigeria in partnership with the Diplomatic Missions and Delegations of Australia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the European Union, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

The 2023 Awards Gala leveraged on the influence of female ambassadors and heads of missions to Nigeria to advocate for increased women’s participation in decision-making across all sectors. The event also provided a platform to highlight the invaluable contributions of Nigerian women and raised awareness about the major challenges they continue to face.

This year’s theme: DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality celebrates the women and girls who are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education brought together high-level champions, thought leaders and partners

working tirelessly to accelerate gender equality in Nigeria and globally. Amongst the distinguished guest in attendance was Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, President of Human Capital Africa & Senior Economic Adviser at Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative, who gave the keynote address on Women’s Representation in Leadership and Gender Equality in Nigeria.

The Awards Gala set out to highlight ground-breaking achievements for women’s leadership and social inclusion; to incentivise leaders to take further actions toward gender equality; and to advocate for women’s increased representation in governance.

Awards were presented to recipients across the categories of: Political Leadership and Governance, Private Sector, HeForShe Champion, Media and Culture, Grassroots & Civil Society, Feature Award – DigitALL, Outstanding Leader, Lifetime Achievement Award.

UN Inter-Agency Group on youth reiterates support for Nigeria's youth aspirations and development



Dr. Babatunde Adelekan of UNFPA



A cross section of participants at the event

In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF: 2023-2027) for Nigeria, the UN Inter-Agency Group on Youth has organised a retreat for the UN Agencies' focal persons on youth. The retreat, held on 1 February 2023, at the UN House in Abuja, underscored the importance of young people to the work of the United Nations in Nigeria.

Dr. Babatunde Adelekan of UNFPA who presided over the retreat, reiterated the UN's support to the aspirations and development of Nigerian Youths.

The retreat reviewed the 2022 activities of the group which included reports, programmes, success stories and challenges. Retreat participants later developed a work plan for 2023.

Dr Adelekan thanked all the focal persons for their contributions and unflinching support

75 UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
DIGNITY, FREEDOM & JUSTICE FOR ALL

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

There is no sustainable peace without women.

Women play a critical role in preventing conflict, building peace, and helping countries recover from crises.

PEACE BEGINS WITH ME

UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez

Photo News



Captions, from left to right in a clockwise direction

1. L-R: Resident Representative of UNDP Nigeria, Mohammed Yahya; UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu at the signing of the National Peace Accord in Abuja, ahead of the 2023 general elections.

2. L - R: Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire; Country Representative of UNFPA Nigeria, Ulla Mueller; and the Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Dame Pauline Tallen, at the 2023 International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation organised by UNICEF, UNFPA and partners.

3. L - R: Former South African President, Thabo Mbeki; Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu and the Former Nigerian Head of State, General Abubakar Abdulsalami, at the signing of the National Peace Accord in Abuja, ahead of the 2023 general elections.

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 & Faith Bwibo (UN Women); Kori Habib & Adewole Ajao (UNFPA); Pius Udo (ILO); Edward Ogolla & Gabriel Adeyemo (UNHCR); Mariam Owoeye (IOM); David Tsokar & Uloma MezieOsuocho (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

Website: nigeria.un.org

 [unigeria](https://www.instagram.com/unigeria)

 [@UN_Nigeria](https://twitter.com/UN_Nigeria)

 [United Nations Nigeria](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedNationsNigeria)

 [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/UnitedNationsNigeria) United Nations Nigeria