



Newsletter



FG restates commitment to nurture, sustain progress made by Spotlight Initiative

The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation, Mr. Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), has restated the commitment of the Federal Government of Nigeria to nurture and sustain the progress recorded by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls in the country.

“Let us also recognize that the impact of our collective efforts extends far beyond the lifespan of this initiative. The seeds of change have been sown, and it is our responsibility to nurture and sustain the progress we have made”. He said at the handover ceremony of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to the government of Nigeria, held on 28 November, 2023 in Abuja.

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With EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, we've made significant progress in fighting gender-based violence and discrimination – Mrs Sanwo-Olu

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SGBV One-Stop Centre, one of the greatest achievements in Adama-wa State

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Spotlight has achieved a lot in Cross River – Commissioner

and more stories.

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The collaboration, according to him, provided not only financial support but also invaluable expertise and technical guidance. The Ministry of Justice, Fagbemi added, remains committed to upholding the principles of justice, equality, and human rights, ensuring that the legacy of the Spotlight Initiative lives on in the fabric of our society.

To underscore the commitment of the government, the Attorney General disclosed that the “Federal Government is currently installing one each of DNA Forensic Laboratory in the National Hospital, Abuja and Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH).”

Furthermore, he said that the Ministry, within the next few weeks would be launching a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Prosecution of School Related Gender Based Violence in collaboration with Federal Ministry of Education, under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative funding. He added that the SOP would state guidelines for detecting and responding to GBV when it occurs in the nation’s schools.

UN Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr. Mathias Schmale said the spotlight initiative has contributed to changing laws and policies and has also enabled almost 16,500 women and girls to receive vital services at its centers.

“Since the beginning of the project in Nigeria in 2019, it is fair to say we’ve made a tangible difference in the lives of many in Nigeria. The Spotlight Initiative has made allies of traditional rulers and religious leaders, it has contributed to combating harmful practices, data collection and in fact, Spotlight has supported the integration of One-stop centers into the health system and strengthened the voice of women’s movement.” He explained.

“Yet, many women and girls as you know remain vulnerable to gender-based violence in Nigeria, harmful practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation is still prevalent in many regions. So, with spotlight coming to a close, what is important is that we secure commitment to continue the impact I’ve talked about.” Schmale said further.

European Union Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms Samuela Isopi, stated that, “The Spotlight Initiative began with a global investment of 500 million euros because we are convinced that this is what is necessary to make a transformative change. Of the 500 billion euros, 25 million have been allocated to support the fight against gender-based violence in Nigeria.”

She noted that a record number of 35 states have passed the VAPP act, making it the fastest bill to be passed at sub national level in the history of Nigeria.

Isopi added that the Spotlight Initiative had tested a new, holistic approach that brought all actors together to achieve critical results like the Child Rights Act which has been passed in almost all states.

“Today is the moment to look ahead and reaffirm the commitment to eradicate sexual and gender-based violence in Nigeria” she added.

Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu said the Spotlight project has been launched with the noble goal of assisting Nigeria in building a society where every woman and girl, especially those most susceptible, can live without fear of violence and detrimental practices.

“We are all aware that the project aims at supporting Nigeria to achieve a society where all women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable are free from violence and harmful practices such as domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence, early child marriage, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic exploitation through transformative interventions”.

According to Bagudu, represented by Director of International Cooperation of the Ministry, Dr. Lanre Adekanye, “the Government of Nigeria places high premium against all forms of violence against women and girls. The achievements of this project will no doubt serve as a base for strengthening capacity to investigate, prosecute, and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls in Nigeria.



The Attorney General of the Federation Mr Lateef Fagbemi SAN during his remarks at the event



European Union Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms Samuela Isopi

With EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, we've made significant progress in fighting gender-based violence and discrimination – Mrs Sanwo-Olu



A group photo of High level Dignitaries at Spotlight Initiative the Lagos Handover/ Close-out ceremony

The First Lady of Lagos State, Dr Mrs Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu has acknowledged that with the support of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls, Lagos State had made significant progress in creating a society where every woman and girl in the state could live free from violence and discrimination.

“Through our combined efforts, we have made significant progress in creating a society where every woman and girl can live free from violence and discrimination.” She said at the close-out and hand-over of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls to the Lagos State Government on 17 November 2023.

The ceremony held at the Lagos Airport Hotel, Ikeja was attended by senior government officials and other critical stakeholders including Civil Society Organisations, Secondary School students, among others.

According to Mrs Sanwo-Olu, represented by the Senior Special Adviser on Domestic Affairs, Mrs Motolani Ladipo, has witnessed the power of collaboration and transformative potential in ending gender-based violence since the launch of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in 2019.

“Lagos State with the support of UN women, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNICEF under the Spotlight project, witnessed interventions in several areas of governance including laws and policies focusing on access to justice for survivors of gender based violence.” She disclosed.

The First Lady expressed her belief in the power of collective action, emphasising the importance of addressing the root causes of violence against women and girls. “With a strong commitment to prevention, protection, and ensuring access to essential services, the partnership with EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is paving the way for a future where no woman or girl is left behind in Lagos State,” she added.

Lagos State Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Ms Cecelia Bolaji Dada, highlighted notable achievements and significant milestones of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Lagos State. She stated the bolstering of essential services including the establishment of virtual clinics at the height of COVID19 pandemic; Strengthening

access to justice for survivors of GBV; Amplifying the voices of women groups, livelihood empowerment support for over 300 GBV survivors; and the creation of the GBV Situation Room which has helped in generating disaggregated data on GBV cases which in turn, reflected on the National Dashboard and in the National Bureau of Statistics reports.

The Chief Judge of Lagos State, Hon. Justice Kazeem Alogba, emphasised the pivotal role the Judiciary plays in addressing gender-based violence and discrimination in Lagos State.

Speaking through Hon. Justice Abiola Soladoye, he highlighted the importance of breaking the silence surrounding GBV and encouraged survivors to seek justice without fear.

“Gender-Based Violence should not be ignored, and when reported, victims should not hesitate to come forward”. He explained, “The police is also involved with the judiciary in helping to curb the cases of GBV.”

The Speaker, Lagos State House of Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa, emphasised the commitment of the Assembly to combat all forms of violence against women and girls.

Represented by Hon. Princess Omolara Oyekan, the Speaker emphasised, “The House of Assembly does not take any form of violence against women and girls lightly in any way. The establishment of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency stands out as a pivotal move in the House’s dedication to eradicating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence”.

He added that the legislative efforts of the Lagos State House of Assembly in passing laws for the protection of women and girls had elevated agencies like the Lagos State Sexual and Domestic Violence Agency and the Ministry of Women Affairs to stand tall among their counterparts.

SGBV One-Stop Centre, one of the greatest achievements in Adamawa State



A group photograph of High level dignitaries in Sokoto State Spotlight Initiative handover ceremony

At the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative Hand-Over/Close-Out ceremony in Adamawa State, the Honorable Commissioner for Women Affairs, Mrs Wunfe G. Anthony stated that 'The establishment of the One Stop Centre has been one of the greatest achievements ever recorded in the state. The State has faced many challenges, but Gender Based Violence has always been the most pressing issue. But with Spotlight Initiative, these issues have subsided'.

The Ministry of Women Affairs, including Min. Of Health, Education, Justice and the security forces in Adamawa have worked together and are still working together to make sure that Gender Based Violence is eliminated in the State.



Kaletapwa George Farauta, Deputy Governor of Adamawa State at the handover event



Spotlight has achieved a lot in Cross River – Commissioner



A group photo at the Calabar Spotlight Initiative Handover ceremony

The Cross River State Commissioner of Women Affairs, Hon. Edema Irom, has acknowledged that the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, has recorded a lot of achievements since inception in 2019.

“In the last five years, the Spotlight Initiative has recorded so much achievements: Existence of the GBV One-Stop Centre; availability of the VAPP law; improved GBV information management system; households economic strengthening and empowerment programme; among others.” She said at the close-out/ handover ceremony of the

EU-UN Spotlight project to the Cross River State Government. Head, UNFPA Nigeria Cross River Sub-Office, Dr Andrew Kirima, stated that Spotlight Initiative in Cross River State, has improved Gender Based Violence data collation and coordination in the State.

He also highlighted other notable achievements recorded in the State, including the passage into Law of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Bill and the Disability Rights Bill; Abolishment of the age-long practice of “money wives “; Increased literacy and numeracy skills for beneficiaries of the Second Chance Education Program; Improved Gender Based Violence Information Management with the existence of a central database; and Strengthened the capacity of 500 women’s rights groups on advocacy and the use of social accountability tools in ending Violence Against Women and Girls.



National Spotlight Coordinator Ms Anu John handing over documents of Spotlight Initiative to the Speaker of the House of Assembly Cross River State, Hon Elvert Ayambem



(L-R) Ms Anu John, National Spotlight Coordinator; Dr Andrew Kirima, Head of Office UNFPA Nigeria Cross River Sub Office; Hon Elvert Ayambem Speaker House of Assembly Cross River State.



HRM, Amos Item Uyumulan of Obanliku Cross River State.

With EU-UN spotlight initiative's support, we have enhanced service provision for SGBV survivors in sokoto – Governor Aliyu



A group photograph of the audience at the Spotlight Initiative Sokoto handover ceremony

With the support of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls, we have enhanced service provision for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) survivors ensuring that women and girls have access to the care they need to rebuild their lives.” Said the Governor of Sokoto State, Dr. Ahmed Aliyu, at the close-out/ hand-over of the Spotlight project on 11 November 2023, in Sokoto.

Represented by the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Alhaji Aliyu Dikko, the Governor further noted that Sokoto state government enacted laws and policies that protect women and girls, creating an environment that enforces accountability and justice for survivors of GBV.. Governor of Sokoto State, Dr. Ahmed Aliyu, represented by his Chief of Staff, Alhaji Aliyu Dikko.

Ibrahim Sesay, Chief Child Protection, UNICEF, representing the United Nations at the event, acknowledged that the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Sokoto State recorded some key achievements including the domestication of child protection and violence against persons' laws, establishment of a One-stop Centre for survivors of GBV, and the successful graduation of over 9,000 out-of-school women and girls from the Accelerated Second Chance Education Program.

“This close-out/hand-over ceremony serves as a call to action, urging all stakeholders to commit to upholding the rights of women and children”. He added.



Sokoto State Government Chief of Staff, Alhaji Aliyu Dikko representing the Governor at the event



UN Nigeria sensitizes young people on its aims and values



Students of Premiere Academy displaying the SDG goals

To sensitize and promote the aims and values of the United Nations amongst young people, students in the 7th and 8th grade of Premiere Academy Lugbe at an educational outreach 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 take action to protect their environment, by ensuring that all wastes are disposed properly.



UN - ECOWAS strengthen collaboration to combat child labour and promote free movement of persons in the region.



(L-R) Director Vanessa Phala, ILO Country Director for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Liaison Office for ECOWAS with Commissioner, Prof. Fatou Sow Sarr

The Commissioner, Prof Fatou Sow Sarr warmly welcomed the ILO delegate and emphasized the importance of the work done by both agencies in the subregion. Dr. Alves D'Almada Jorge, Principal Programme Officer of the Division, highlighted the significant multi-year financial and technical support from the ILO in pursuit of shared objectives. Over the past decade, the ILO and ECOWAS have achieved substantial progress, including the creation and validation of the Regional Decent Work Programme and the Regional Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour. They have also addressed the coherence of labour migration, employment, education, and training policies in the ECOWAS subregion, along with the development of social protection for migrant workers and their families in ECOWAS states.

Vanessa Phala, the ILO Country Director for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Liaison Office for ECOWAS, expressed optimism about the continued strong collaboration with ECOWAS through the joint work plan in 2024. The Director introduced two new projects, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8), the ECOWAS 4x4 strategic plan and Agenda 2063.

The Action Against Child Labor in Agriculture in West Africa (ACLAWA) Project aims to enhance the capacity of ECOWAS to implement its Regional Action Plan to eliminate child labour. The four-year initiative, funded by the United States Department of Labor, aims to improve the lives of 23% of children estimated to be engaged in child labour in West Africa focusing on the Agricultural sector.

The Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa (FMM2) Project, a project being jointly implemented by ECOWAS, IOM and ILO, seeks to maximize the development potential of free movement in the region. Focused on implementing ECOWAS Free

Movement of Persons' Protocols and the Common Approach on Migration, the project intervenes in areas such as labour migration, policy development, counter-trafficking, protection of migrants' rights, child protection (especially for children on the move/ child labour), and social security. The collaborative efforts of ILO and ECOWAS are aligned with SDG 8, promoting decent work and economic growth in the region.

As the ILO and ECOWAS forge ahead in their collaborative efforts, the commitment to shared goals and the pursuit of a region free from child labour and with appropriate Decent Work for All persons stand stronger than ever. The upcoming joint work plan for 2024 signifies a continued dedication to making a lasting impact. Through projects like ACLAWA and FMM2, the ILO and ECOWAS aim not only to address current challenges but also to lay the foundation for a more prosperous and equitable West Africa. The journey continues, united in purpose, towards a future where the rights and well-being of every individual are safeguarded.



UN Nigeria hosts tripartite workshop on sustainable business practices and decent work



Group photograph of dignitaries and participant at the workshop

The workshop, which took place from November 7 – 9, 2023, brought together representatives from critical entities such as the Ministry of Labor and Employment, the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria, the National Employers Consultative Association (NECA), the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), the Trade Union Congress (TUC), other crucial Government institutions. The central objective of this gathering was to establish a platform for collaborative dialogue and action in advancing sustainable business practices and investments, guided by the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration).

Josée Laporte, an ILO specialist in corporate social responsibility welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director of ILO Abuja Country Office, Vanessa Phala. She provided an overview of the uptake of the MNE Declaration across various countries stressing the importance of dialogue to translate the principles of the MNE Declaration into action.

Ms. Adenike Adebayo-Ajala, representing NECA, acknowledged the support of the ILO and the Federal government in the pursuit of decent work in the country. She highlighted NECA's annual awards being a platform recognizing businesses adhering to global standards in promoting decent work, expressing a commitment to integrating the MNE Declaration's recommendations for a prosperous Nigeria. Comrade Abdullahi Okonu, representing the NLC, recognized the ILO's support for Nigerian workers and expressed anticipation for a valuable learning experience to advocate for workers' rights towards decent work.

Ms. Olaolu Olaitan, the Director of the Labour Inspectorate at the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, conveyed the Ministry's gratitude to the ILO to organize this national workshop on the MNE Declaration and for the anticipated productive discussions to map out

the contextualization of the recommendations of the MNE Declaration within the Nigerian context.

The workshop facilitated an understanding of the distinct roles of governments, enterprises, and employers' and workers' organizations in leveraging the positive impact of multinational enterprises on economic and social development. Participants assessed the relevance of the principles of the MNE Declaration to achieve national development priorities, including for advocating for a more holistic approaches by businesses for the elimination of child labor and its root causes. Participants also appreciated the relevance of the guidance offered by the MNE Declaration for promoting responsible business conduct in the context of a just transition to an environmentally sustainable economy.

The workshop enriched participants' comprehension of various instruments and initiatives fostering sustainable, responsible, and inclusive business practices to realize decent work. Collaboratively, attendees worked on a roadmap to promote these practices, guided by the ILO MNE Declaration and other international instruments.

The commitment of the Nigerian government and the ILO to promote sustainable, responsible, and inclusive business practices for economic growth and decent work remains unwavering. This National tripartite workshop stands as a significant stride towards these crucial objectives.

UN celebrates community resilience in Borno State



From left: Zuwaira Gambo, Honorable Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development; Dr. Oliver Stolpe, UNODC Country Representative and Hajiya Zainab Jidda, State Director, National Orientation Agency

UNODC celebrates community resilience in Borno State. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), through its STRIVE Juvenile project, joined hands with the Borno State Government to celebrate the inspiring achievements of young people and communities in promoting peace and protecting children from conflict at an exciting event held on November 16, 2023, in Maiduguri.

Participants witnessed UNODC handing over three Community Dialogue Structures to the Borno State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and National Orientation Agency. The Community Dialogue Structures bring together selected STRIVE Juvenile 'Youth Peace Champions' – who have been trained and mentored by UNODC - and Community Leaders to facilitate crucial dialogue and conflict resolution. "Together, they form a formidable alliance in our journey towards a harmonious and united Borno State" noted Hajiya Zainab Jidda, State Director, National Orientation Agency.

The handover ceremony marked a significant milestone in UNODC's work to empower communities to achieve the vision of Governor Zulum's Borno Model by promoting a culture of peace and resilience. "Amidst this adversity, we have witnessed an indomitable spirit of resilience and determination among the young minds of Borno. They have proven themselves to be the torchbearers of hope, eager to bring about positive change and sow the seeds of peace." stated Zuwaira Gambo, Honorable Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development.

The event also saw the launch of a short video documentary, 'Stories of Resilience', directed by young local filmmaker Musa Gwary. The film reveals seldom-told stories of hope glimpsed through the shadows of Boko Haram's violence; and showcases the influential contribution that STRIVE Juvenile Youth Peace Champions' are making in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council and Jere Local Government Areas in Borno. It is

a call to action that will raise awareness; mobilize community support; and foster transformative actions.

An exhibition of photographs, produced by STRIVE Juvenile in partnership with the Borno State Art and Culture Council, concluded the event, providing attendees with a visual narrative that echoed the resilience and strength demonstrated by the people of Borno State.

The UNODC project, STRIVE Juvenile: Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups is funded by the European Union and works to develop and implement comprehensive national responses to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism affecting children, in full respect of human rights, gender equality and international law.

UNODC remains dedicated to supporting Nigeria implement the Borno Model; provide a secure and peaceful environment for children; and counter the effects of terrorism.

Positive change, one block at a time: Inspector Zarami's story

"I used to be caught in the routine of simply caring for inmates' welfare within the prison walls," says Inspector Babagana Zarami, an officer of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS). "Little did I know that a remarkable journey awaited me when I was selected for a life-changing opportunity."

Inspector Zarami works in the Maiduguri Maximum Custodial Centre in the north-east part of the country. Over the past decade, Nigeria

has been grappling with the threat of terrorism and violent extremism from groups such as Boko Haram, most active in north-eastern Nigeria. As a result, many people have been detained and prosecuted for terrorism and violent extremism-related crimes.

This has placed additional pressure on people like Inspector Zarami and the NCoS at large, which is already faced with obstacles such as overcrowding, poor prison conditions, limited rehabilitation facilities, and inadequate prison management capacity. These challenges undermine the primary objectives of incarceration.

A new outlook

Inspector Zarami found his career and outlook changed following a three-week training programme delivered by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for correctional officers responsible for vocational training. The training was part of a UNODC programme aiming to strengthen the capacity of the NCoS to effectively rehabilitate prisoners and support their reintegration into communities after their release.

To support the NCoS in addressing these challenges, from 2021 to 2023, UNODC implemented a programme on 'Strengthening the Capacity of the Nigerian Correctional Service to Effectively Rehabilitate and Reintegrate Prisoners Held for an (alleged) Association with Boko Haram (Phase I-III)'. Read the full report.

“The training opened my eyes to new ways of working with inmates” The training programme that Inspector Zarami attended is one exam-

ple of how prison staff can be supported to work with prisoners to help them develop new skills, thereby enhancing their prospects for successful reintegration into society.

“These three weeks opened a world of possibilities. I ventured into the realms of carpentry, masonry, and drywall installation. Beyond the technical skills, I acquired valuable knowledge on the proper use of equipment and the essential part of keeping oneself safe in both training and workplace environments.”

“The most rewarding part of this journey is what came next. Armed with these newfound skills, I returned to the Maiduguri Maximal Custodial Centre with a purpose – to teach inmates the art of block-molding.”

To date, the inmates under my guidance have produced more than 1,000 blocks, tangible evidence of the impact of this vocational training.

“Our plan is to showcase these accomplishments to the world, a testament to the transformative power of education and skill development.”

Before the programme began, only 291 out of 700 inmates who had expressed interest in learning vocational skills were registered. In contrast, since the programme has been in place, 706 inmates have been able to enroll, significantly improving the likelihood of a successful reintegration back into society.

“I have discovered the potential for positive change, one block at a time.”



STRIVE Juvenile Youth Peace Champion strike a pose with the STRIVE Team at the launch of short documentary and handover of Community Dialogue Structures in Maiduguri, Borno State



A group of men stand around a shallow hole in front of a line of cinderblocks, learning the professional skill of masonry

Empowering community's leadership: Last mile effort to ending AIDS in Nigeria



As World AIDS Day (December 1, 2023) approached, Nigeria embraced the global theme “Let Communities Lead”, recognizing the crucial role of community leadership in eradicating HIV/AIDS by 2030. Communities, comprising individuals living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV, are at the forefront of the HIV response. They collaborate with donor partners, government, public health systems, and societal institutions, ensuring the success of the global response to HIV. They play a significant role, especially in hard-to-reach areas where access to modern healthcare services is limited and where inequalities, stigma, and discrimination hinder access to HIV/TB services.

In Nigeria, community-led interventions are often driven by organizations such as NEPWHAN, ASWHAN, APYIN, and ICW-WA. These organizations aid the implementation of global and national strategies in the HIV response.

The Strategic Investment Framework on HIV identifies community responses as a “critical enabler” of service delivery. UNAIDS estimates that investments in community mobilization and services must increase more than threefold to achieve the ambitious HIV treatment and prevention targets set in 2015.

Statistics from the Global Fund show that community organizations in Nigeria reached over 1 million people with HIV testing and counseling services in 2020. These organizations also distributed over 5.5 million condoms and provided support to thousands of people living with HIV.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Nigeria demonstrated that centering people in the AIDS response advances HIV service delivery. While many countries experienced disruptions in HIV services, the PEPFAR-supported HIV program in Nigeria saw significant growth

and exceeded some targets due to community engagement. A people-centered package of services was designed and deployed, utilizing existing community network machinery to ensure uninterrupted delivery of HIV services.

There are several examples where communities have either sparked innovative service delivery for people living with HIV or are leading the implementation of services. In the regional southeast context of Anambra and Ebonyi States, Nigeria, where NEPWHAN implements the community component of the Global Fund’s NAHI grant, strides have been made in the pursuit of ending Mother-to-Child Transmission (MTCT) in these two states with a high burden of vertical transmission.

NEPWHAN established rigorous Testing Protocols, ensuring that HIV testing is a standard component of antenatal care and an integral part of the prenatal care journey for pregnant women. This resulted in an impressive PMTCT 1 coverage rate of over 80% in 2022 in Anambra state.

In Ebonyi State, the outreach activities of Mentor-Mothers have significantly reduced the vertical transmission of HIV in the last 3 years. Through their efforts, 12 clients who initially refused to accept their HIV status at Iboko General Hospital and Elunwovu General Hospital eventually embraced treatment and achieved viral suppression. All were led by the Community of People living with HIV (PLWH).

The community of PLHIV in the country have demonstrated evidently that they are not only beneficiaries of services but are contributing and driving the lead in the HIV/AIDS response in Nigeria.



However, barriers to communities' leadership roles exist and need to be removed. The leadership gaps in the communities which inhibit the performance of their roles have been recognized, dwindling resources, capacity constraints, and intermittent infringement on their human rights, as well as structural barriers in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria are some of the spotlighted barriers.

Communities will lead but need our support to overcome these challenges. Engaging and empowering diverse communities in a big country like Nigeria requires deliberate efforts in building strong relationships, continuous learning, adapting to changing circumstances, and celebrating incremental achievements.

Equally, as Nigeria makes an effort towards attaining the 95-95-95 target, community-led initiatives, supported by global donors like PEP-FAR, Global Funds, UNAIDS, government and other partners, are an indispensable component of Nigeria's HIV response in reducing new

infections and improving the lives of those living and affected by the virus.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

FG commends UN and other development partners for their support to Nigeria



A group photograph of dignitaries

The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Beta Edu, has commended development partners for their support to Nigeria to address the humanitarian challenges facing the country. Speaking at the first National Humanitarian and Poverty Alleviation Coordination Meeting held at the UN House in Abuja on 21st November,

Dr. Edu observed that an estimated 16 million Nigerians are affected by humanitarian crises around the country, emphasizing the need for durable solutions to address the conditions of displacement and vulnerability of such populations in a sustainable way.

The Minister informed participants that the Government of Nigeria has established the Humanitarian and Poverty Alleviation Trust Fund, worth US\$5bn annually for the next seven years. Government, development partners and private sector will contribute 30% each to the Fund, while the remaining 10% will be mobilized using innovative methods, including crowdfunding. Dr. Edu informed the gathering that the Nigerian Government will host the African Humanitarian Summit in 2024 as a follow up to the World Humanitarian Summit hosted by Turkey in 2016.

The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Matthias Schmale, welcomed the Government decision to establish the Humanitarian Fund, noting that donor funding for humanitarian work in Nigeria will reduce in the coming years, given the competing needs for humanitarian assistance around the world. Mr. Schmale also thanked the Minister for committing to ensuring the coordination role by the

Federal Government of all humanitarian assistance to the country. The meeting was attended by heads of UN agencies, members of the diplomatic community, international NGOs and relevant agencies of the Federal Government. Participants agreed to hold quarterly meeting with all stakeholders as a coordination mechanism for transparency and accountability.



Dr. Beta Edu, Honorable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation

Police-CSO Situation Room, UN meet to improve human rights



A cross section of participants at the training

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) in Nigeria and UNODC Nigeria under the PBF Project aimed at strengthening the oversight and accountability mechanisms of the Nigerian Police Force, hosted the POLICE-CSO SITUATION ROOM meeting today at the UN House.

CSOs and security operatives in attendance at the meeting discussed the recent development in the Police Complaint Response Unit and strategies taken by CSOs to collaborate with the Police on improving respect for human rights in Nigeria.

These strategies are the restructuring of the police compliant response unit as it is the entering point to the police force & capacity building for members of the police force not only for junior and senior officers. The discussion highlighted the challenges faced by the police and also suggested action plans and recommendations to promote human rights and support accountability.



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

Nigeria launches innovative E-CRVS system, sets new standard in civil registration.



President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu during his speech at the launch

His Excellency President Bola Ahmed Tinubu today, launched the Electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System (e-CRVS).

This quicker and more precise data system would enhance Nigeria's civil registration and vital statistics system, underpinning the nation's commitment to achieving SDG 16.9.2 for legal identity for all.

The President in his remarks stated that "This system is the basic building block that will assist the healthcare delivery system, INEC, and security outfits to generate vital statistics. We are determined to work with UNICEF to achieve the desired success."

This initiative aligns with the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda and the resolutions of the African Ministers' Conference in Addis Ababa, advocating for a technological shift in data generation.



A group photograph high level dignitaries at the launch

UN holds educational outreach in Government schools in Abuja



Mrs Bolanle Olumekor, Digital Media Assitant UNIC, lectures students at the outreach in Abuja

The United Nations Information Center (UNIC) in Abuja held educational outreach at Government Secondary School Gwarinpa held an educational outreach, Life Camp and Government Secondary School Wuse.

The students were briefed on the History and Organs of the UN; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, including the need to foster peace in their communities.

The students were advised to be heroes for the environment and understand how the SDGs are aligned with the objective of fostering a more sustainable and improved future for all.



A cross-section of students of Government Secondary School Gwarinpa, Life Camp and Government Secondary School Wuse

UN, partner mark World Development Information Day



UN Resident Coordinator Mr Matthias Schmale, during his remarks



UN Resident Coordinator Mr Matthias Schmale, with the organizers (ACDJ)

The Nigerian public must be well-informed about the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, the role of the Federal and State Government in achieving the goals, the benefits of pursuing the #SDGs to the Nigerian people, the struggles at the halfway point and the outcomes of the SDG Summit.

An informed public can help foster a sense of global solidarity and encourage governments to engage in international cooperation to address common challenges, such as climate change and conflict.' This was stated by the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations Nigeria Mr Matthias Schmale.

Mr Schmale was the keynote speaker at the Celebration of World Development Information Day organized by the Africa Centre for Development Journalism in Lagos.

The World Development Information Day is observed to draw the attention of the society to development problems; improve the dissemination of information and the mobilization of public opinion, with the aim of promoting efforts in the sphere of international cooperation for development.

Premiere Academy, UN commemorate World Science Day



In commemoration of World Science Day, UNIC Abuja joined the students of Premiere Academy Lugbe to celebrate the day themed “Building Trust in Science.”

The Guest Speaker Engr (Mrs) Uchenna Maduegbunam in her address, encouraged the students to choose careers in science and see science as an important subject that enables us to find novel solutions and tackle potential future problems; stating that everything we do involves science, and that it is science and technology that promote the advancement of nations.

The students exhibited their innovations, showcasing the practical application and utility of science.



Impacts of climate change on children on focus as UN marks World Children's Day

World Children's Day, organized by UNICEF Nigeria and UNIC Abuja focusing on child rights amidst the escalating climate crisis. Children from various regions, including Abuja, Kano, Lagos, Enugu, Sokoto, and Maiduguri, held discussions on the significant impact of climate change on their lives and futures.

The discussions highlighted critical issues, including the direct health impacts of climate change on children, such as increased physical dangers, waterborne diseases, malnutrition and lack of accessibility to school. The event also shed light on the alarming rate of child displacement due to floods, drought, and severe storms.

The children are demanding answers from leaders and government on what action they are taking to secure the future of Nigerian children. They called on decision makers to address #climatechange & follow through on their commitments to protect the planet.



Educational outreach: Skyline University Kano visits UN House Abuja



Group photo with Student from Skyline University, Kano State

The United Nations Information Centre Abuja, Nigeria at an educational outreach engaged with students of Skyline university Kano Nigeria to learn more about the United Nations. Mr Ronald Kayanja, Director UN Information Centre Abuja highlighted the foundational principles enshrined in the UN Charter and emphasized the United Nations commitment to fostering and maintaining international peace and security, including the protection of human rights and the promotion of sustainable development for a healthy planet.

At the briefing, Head of Office WIPO Nigeria gave an overview of World Intellectual Property to promote intellectual property and emphasizing the importance of safeguarding intellectual creations. The educational briefing underscored the importance of upholding human rights, discussed Sustainable Development, and Youth Peace and Security Agenda- YPS

An overview of the YPS agenda was delivered, and the positive role of young people in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism and building peace was stressed. The students gained valuable insights into potential careers within the UN and the organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce. The United Nations Information Centre Abuja, Nigeria at an educational outreach engaged with students of Skylineuniversitynigeria Kano to learn more about the United Nations. Mr Ronald Kayanja, Director UN Information Centre Abuja highlighted the foundational principles enshrined in the UN Charter and emphasized the United Nations commitment to fostering and maintaining international peace and security, including the protection of human rights and the promotion of sustainable development for a healthy planet.

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Mr Moody Tobi, Head of Office WIPO Nigeria during his presentation



During a Q&A session.

Rebuilding Dreams: Hafsat's Journey from Loss to Empowerment



Hafsat Adam in Maiduguri during an exhibition of crafts such as bags, soaps, rubbing oil, sandals, beads, bedsheets, and flower holders produced by her and other IDPs. @ UNHCR/Francis Garriba.

Hafsat Adam, a 34-year-old resident of Maiduguri in Borno State, North-East Nigeria, represents the resilience and fortitude of the many beneficiaries of UNHCR’s Urban IDP outreach program. Committed to building a brighter future for her family, Hafsat is leveraging the support and opportunities provided to transform their lives.

In 2014, Hafsat’s life took a drastic turn when her family, including her parents, spouse, children, and siblings, were uprooted from their home in Baga village, Kukawa Local Government Area, due to an attack by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs). The harrowing experience was marked by profound loss; her young daughter and elderly mother both tragically lost their lives during the escape.

For seven years, Hafsat and her family relied on humanitarian and government support at Bakassi IDP camp in Maiduguri. Their reliance on this support became a lifeline, sustaining them through challenging times until the camp’s eventual closure. This closure marked a significant turning point, prompting their relocation back home.

“We were informed that Baga community was now safe for our return, but when we got there, we saw insecurity, ruin, and lack staring at us,” says Hafsat.

They were forced to return to Maiduguri and sought refuge in Muna Ethiopia community, where they used part of the money given to them by the government to rent a room. But feeding, medical consumables, and education for their children remained a riddle to solve. “As my two neighbours and I sat in front of our houses discussing how to pick up the bits and pieces of our lives, a man and two women approached us and asked to know if any IDPs from Bakassi camp lived in the area. Our visitors turned out to be UNHCR and American University of Nigeria (AUN) workers,” Hafsat recounts.

Hafsat was trained in cap making and thereafter received a start-up kit from UNHCR and AUN. Each cap she produces fetches 20,000 Nigerian naira, money she has used to gradually diversify her business. She is now producing liquid soap, oils and cosmetics. The growth of her business has been remarkable, covering her family’s housing rent, the educational expenses of their six children and six dependents, daily meals, and medical bills.

Furthermore, the income generated from her business venture has also been a catalyst for educational advancement within her family. It enabled her younger brother to pursue higher education, culminating in his graduation with a degree in Business Administration. This success story has been a source of inspiration for Hafsat, bolstering her commitment to supporting her daughter’s educational aspirations. Her daughter’s academic excellence, consistently ranking at the top of her class, is a source of pride and motivation. “I will help my daughter fulfil her dream of becoming a medical doctor,” Hafsat says, her face glowing with glee.

The livelihood support provided to Hafsat extends far beyond mere economic activity; it represents a vital protection safety net. Her growing business not only provides for her family’s needs but also brings stability, dignity, and a sense of normalcy. It’s a testament to the power of self-reliance in fostering resilience against future uncertainties. Hafsat’s story highlights how skill development and entrepreneurial support can transform lives, offering not just a means of income but a foundation for long-term security and hope.

“I wish to say a big thank you to UNHCR for lifting me and my family out of the abyss of life. Instead of giving us fish, they have taught us how to fish,” Hafsat concludes,

Connected Learning: Transforming Education for Refugees and the Host Community



Cameroonian refugees and locals learn using digital methodologies in St. Eugene Primary School Ukende, Cross River State. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

The pursuit of quality education for refugee children in Nigeria is a tale marked by both adversity and optimism. Nigeria is home to nearly 99,000 refugees, over half of whom are of school age and mostly come from Cameroon.

Despite concerted efforts following Nigeria's commitment at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum to enrol all refugee children in primary schools by 2023, there remains a notable gap in actual enrollment rates. Currently, only 49% of refugee children are attending primary school, a figure that stands in stark contrast to the national enrollment rate of 86%. This disparity becomes even more pronounced at the secondary education level.

In areas that host refugees, the educational system faces many difficulties such as overcrowded classrooms, limited resources like textbooks and computers, and a severe lack of basic infrastructure like electricity and internet access. Additionally, the absence of playgrounds and sports facilities deprives students of opportunities for a well-rounded education.

In an effort to turn the tide, UNHCR in collaboration with ProFuturo Foundation, is implementing a unique educational project in Benue and Cross River States. Eileen Akintemi, UNHCR's Assistant Education Officer, describes this as a first-of-its-kind initiative in these regions, aiming to revolutionize the learning experience with modern technology and solar energy. Over 3,500 children and 90 teachers have benefited from this project, gaining access to tablets, laptops, and a more interactive learning environment.

Eight-year-old pupil Gift from St Peter's Primary School Adagom shares, "I learn faster through pictures." Gift, like many other chil-

dren, benefits from the innovative teaching methods introduced by the project. These methods, which include the use of visual aids and interactive digital content, have proven to be particularly effective for young learners.

The initiative also fosters active participation among students in the classroom. By capturing their interest and motivation to learn, it aims to not only boost student enrollment and retention rates but also to expand their understanding and skills in using digital tools and navigating online platforms.

Despite these efforts, the reach of this project remains limited, highlighting the need for broader, more inclusive educational initiatives. Many refugee children still find themselves outside the purview of these advancements, underscoring a pressing need to expand the program's scope.

The educational plight of refugee children in Nigeria mirrors a global challenge. This highlights the importance of effective programs and innovative educational approaches that leverage technology and digital platforms such as this one. However, such approaches must be beneficial for both the refugees and the host communities, ensuring mutual growth, and enabling them both to thrive together.

Somali female parliamentarians study tour to Nigeria



Group photograph of participants and dignitaries at the UN House Abuja

A delegation of Somali female parliamentarians with support from UNFPA Somalia are visiting Nigeria on a study tour. The purpose of the study tour is to empower female parliamentarians with capacities in gender sensitive legislative practices and parliamentary procedures through knowledge sharing/exchange.

The Delegation had an interactive session with UN agency officials and CSOs. The session entailed key discussions focused on gender sensitive legislation, parliamentary actions safeguarding women & girls in humanitarian crises, counterterrorism measures and sociocultural collaborations between Nigeria and Somalia.

They also engaged with high level government officials, including meetings with the leadership of the Nigeria Legislative Assembly.

The choice of Nigeria for the tour is premised on its similarities with Somalia in terms of governance structures, bicameral legislature, cultural values, and religious systems.



A cross section of audience

Photo News

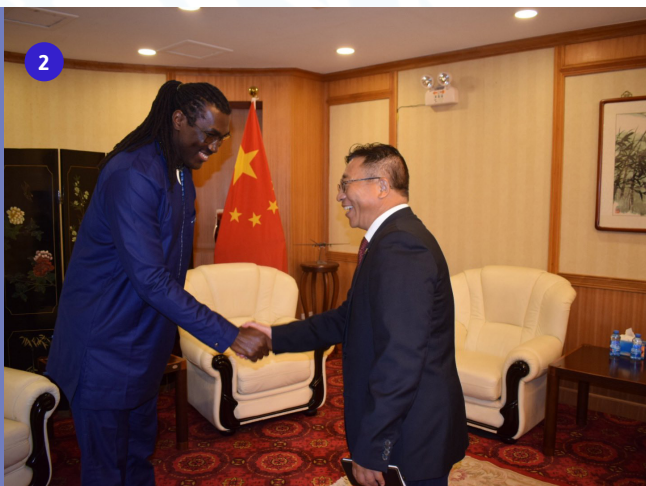


Photo news captions,

1. (R-L) Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale at the meeting of the UN-FG Cooperation Framework Steering Committee at the UN House Abuja on 28 November 2023.
2. FAO Representative ad interim in Nigeria and to ECOWAS, Dominique Kouacou; and the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, H.E. CUI Jianchun, meet to discuss the potential of agriculture in Nigeria to help curb food insecurity.
3. (L-R) European Union Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms Samuela Isopi; Director, International Cooperation, Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Dr. Lanre Adekanye; UN Women Representative in Nigeria Eyong Beatrice; UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmale during the Orange the World Campaign 2023 activities aimed at increasing awareness of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence.

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