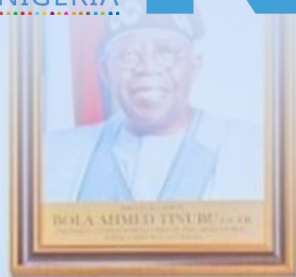




Newsletter



FG, UN launch states action plans for durable solutions to internal displacement

The Federal Government of Nigeria and the United Nations have launched the States Action Plans on Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, in North-East Nigeria.

"The plans you launch today provide a model of how governments can take responsibility for ending displacement. The plans recognise that displaced people can choose between going back home, properly integrating where they are right now or relocating elsewhere in the country," said Robert Piper, United Nations Assistant Secretary General, and Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, at the launch held at the Presidential Villa Abuja, Nigeria. *Continue on page 2*

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Group photography of high level dignitaries displaying the states action plans for durable solutions to internal displacement manual

The Vice President of Nigeria, His Excellency Senator Kashim Shettima, emphasised that “We must invest in sustainable development, education, and economic opportunities to build resilient communities. By doing so, we not only address the immediate needs of the displaced but also create a foundation for a more stable and prosperous future.”

The British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Ambassador Richard Montgomery, who spoke on behalf of the informal North-East Ambassador Group, emphasized that the group shared a collective interest in government’s efforts to bring peace to the North-East.

Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed commended the governments of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe for their actions to scale up solution pathways in their state action plans, noting that achieving durable solutions is a priority for both Nigeria and for the United Nations secretary general.



UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mohamed Malick Fall shake hands with Vice President of Nigeria, His Excellency Senator Kashim Shettima as Mr Robert Piper, United Nations Assistant Secretary General, and Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement watches on.

North-West Governors meet UN Country Team in Abuja, seek support for the region



Governors from the Northwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria on Friday 17 May 2024, met with the United Nations Country Team led by the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mohamed Malick Fall, and they have asked the UN to support their states to deal with the numerous development challenges they face.

The Chairman of the Northwest Governors Forum and the Katsina State Governor, Malam Dikko Umaru Radda, led other Governors in the zone, including Governor of Kaduna State, Senator Uba Sani; Governor of Kano State, Engr. Abba Kabir Yusuf; Jigawa State Governor, Mallam Umar Namadi; Sokoto State Deputy Governor, Alhaji Idris Muhammad Gobir; and Zamfara State Governor, Dauda Lawal, to the UN House Abuja,

The Governors highlighted the major challenges faced by the region, including insecurity, multidimensional poverty, a large population of out-of-school children, increased cases of illicit drug abuse, high child and maternal mortality, and a large youth population that is unemployed.

“The only way we can surmount the challenges of Northwest is through a regional approach which demands that we work together in a coordinated manner. We need to collectively fight poverty and unemployment being the major root causes of insecurity in the region”, said the Chairman of the Northwest Governors’ Forum.

The UN Resident Coordinator expressed his delight at receiving six of the seven Governors in the zone and he assured that the United

Nations family would support the Northwest region to address those development challenges.

“The UN in Nigeria is encouraged by the strong leadership and commitment of Northwest Governors to improving the wellbeing of their people. We will continue to support the government and people of Northwest Nigeria. Together, we will rescue and accelerate the agenda 2030 for sustainable development in the region.” Fall said.



UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mohamed Malick Fall

Succour as 200 women entrepreneurs enrol into NHIA GIFSHIP Programme



A cross-section of participants

A total of 200 ILO Women Entrepreneurs in three Pilot states of Nigeria have enrolled with the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) Group Individuals Family Social Health Insurance Program (GIFSHIP) under the name "NHIA-ILO Women Entrepreneurs Group".

The ILO, in collaboration with NHIA, through ILO's project "Promoting Gender Equality Through Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Enterprise Formalization" in Nigeria has successfully facilitated the enrolment of two hundred (200) Nigerian women entrepreneurs in the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) Group Individuals Family Social Health Insurance Program (GIFSHIP) to enable them to access health care services with ease.

The National Health Insurance Authority statutorily facilitate financial access to quality and affordable healthcare services for all Nigerians and legal residents through pre-payment mechanisms that would ensure significant reduction in financial barriers to access to healthcare services in line with the NHIA Act 2022. As part of the Authority's strategy to achieving its mandate, her flagship programme, the Group Individual and Family Social Health Insurance Programme (GIFSHIP) launched in November 2020, serves as an efficient platform for health insurance coverage for persons in the informal and formal sector not covered under any of the NHIA programmes.

GIFSHIP is health insurance taken up and paid for by groups, individuals, and families not covered by other NHIA programmes. The key attributes of GIFSHIP are social solidarity, all-inclusiveness and leaving no one behind.

Working in collaboration with Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), ILO social partners and other relevant stakeholders, the ILO Project empowered women through targeted financial support, business (skills) trainings, mentorship programmes and networking opportunities. It also supported SMEDAN in developing a comprehensive and implementable roadmap to drive women's entrepreneurship development and enterprise formalization.

With the enrolment of the two hundred women in Lagos, Rivers and Gombe States, the project has highlighted the importance of formal-

ization of businesses as it comes with more benefits than expected.

Acknowledging the ILO contribution which made the enrolment possible, the Director General of the NHIA, speaking through the Ag Director, Formal Sector Department, Pharm Makwe, C. N. said, "The Management of National Health Insurance Authority applauds the grant by the ILO to support the enrolment of 200 women entrepreneurs into the GIFSHIP programme of the Authority under the name, NHIA-ILO Women Entrepreneurs Group".

One of the beneficiaries of GIFSHIP programme in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, in her testimony, said "I am expressing my gratitude to ILO for sowing a seed in my life which enabled me to enrol in the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). I was admitted in the Nigerian Naval Medical Centre on 15/05/2024, as we all know the nature of our country without a membership card you cannot see the doctor, but when I reached, I showed them my NHIS card, and the hospital card was given me to see the doctor and they started treatment immediately. The test was free, and I paid 10% of all my drugs". While thanking the ILO and NHIS for the health insurance scheme, she called on the ILO to accommodate more women in the insurance scheme.



Mrs Olawunmi Jimoh (Middle), TUC reciving GIFSHIP IDs for members

Enhancing impact through monitoring and evaluation: Strategies and insights from Nigeria's ACCEL Africa project



Group photo of participants at the M&E training

Child labour remains a significant issue that not only undermines the dignity of children but also hinders their education and future potential to contribute to global development. Recent estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicate that Nigeria has the highest number of child labourers in the ECOWAS region, with approximately 10.5 million children engaged in various exploitative conditions within global supply chains. This stark reality underscores the urgent need for decisive action to mitigate the impacts of child labour.

In response to the pressing need for impactful interventions and results that can portraint change, the ILO's ACCEL Africa Project, funded by the Government of the Netherlands and implemented by the ILO, recently organized a comprehensive three-day Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Training. The training focused on the ACCEL Africa Results Framework and Indicator Measurement Guidelines and took place at the in Abuja, Nigeria. The event saw participation from a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from government agencies (Federal Ministry of labour and Employment, Federal Ministry of Mines and Food Security, Ministry of Solid Mineral Development, National Social Safety Net Coordinating Office, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria), employers' associations (Nigeria Employers Consultative Association), organized labour (TUC/NLC), academia (FUTA, OAU, FUTMINNA), and civil society organizations (CSOs).

The capacity-building program introduced stakeholders to the Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the ACCEL Africa II Project. Participants were trained in the development of key performance indicators that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). Additionally, the training provided insights into innovative data collection methods, tools, and reporting guidelines. A key emphasis of the training was on the importance of accurate reporting to reflect the true impact of the interventions on the communities benefiting from them. Stakeholders were encouraged to report on actual changes achieved, rather than merely listing activities conducted. During the training, participants engaged in role-playing

activities designed to mimic field-level monitoring challenges, fostering a practical understanding of the tools and methods introduced. The training also included a session on innovative monitoring practices including artificial intelligence, and how to identify risks and opportunities. Participants also discussed the concept of impact measurement and the importance of having a clear exit strategy.

The importance of knowledge sharing and its critical role in project success was highlighted, emphasizing collaborative learning and adaptation, this segment included participatory activities such as a knowledge mapping. Plenary discussions provided a platform for stakeholders to voice common challenges encountered in the field and share best practices. Furthermore, participants were guided on effective communication techniques, learning how to craft impactful stories and articulate "good practices" and "lessons learned" from their experiences.

Following this training, stakeholders are expected to utilize the knowledge acquired to effectively implement the second phase of the ACCEL Africa Project. The goal is to align with global best practices and achieve the project's development objectives, ultimately reducing the incidence of child labour in the region.



Overview of participants at the training

New flagship report sheds light on displacement and data for solutions in Northeast Nigeria



IOM Nigeria/Elijah Elaigwu

The displacement crisis in north-east Nigeria is one of the world's most complex with more than 2.3 million people displaced by violence linked to the actions of non-state armed groups, intercommunal clashes as well the compounded effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

Since the onset of the crisis, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) has played an essential role in gathering and analysing data to disseminate critical multi-layered information on the mobility, vulnerabilities, and needs of displaced and mobile populations that enables decision-makers and responders to provide these emergency humanitarian assistance as well as longer-term solutions.

It is in this regard that IOM, the Government of Nigeria through the National and State Emergency Management Agencies, the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria Red Cross Society, and other humanitarian INGOs and NNGOs partners have recently published the new report "Intention Survey: Voices of Internally Displaced Persons in North-East Nigeria" to shed light on IDPs' preferred durable solutions among the three conventional options, namely voluntary return to places of origin, voluntary local integration, and voluntary relocation elsewhere in the country.

More than 25,000 IDP families living across 107 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 837 wards in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe States were surveyed between 16 November and 18 December 2023 as part of the report.

The cumulative findings across the six states showed that 38% of IDPs in both camps and camp-like settings and in the host communities would prefer to integrate within the host communities, citing security

as the major reason for this preference. The report also reveals that 37% of the IDPs surveyed wish to return to their communities of origin, providing that adequate living conditions are ensured. Only two per cent (2%) intended to relocate to another LGA or state.

"The publication of this report jointly prepared with Federal and State agencies as well as humanitarian partners in the north-east is a testament to our collective commitment to data-driven decision-making and underscores the necessity of listening to the voices of the displaced in the formulation of policies and interventions", said Laurent de Boeck, IOM Nigeria Chief of Mission.

Looking at displaced families' major concerns and challenges to return, the report ranks hunger and insufficient nutrition as the top issues mentioned by an overwhelming 90% of the respondents. Unemployment and housing conditions are also the cause of worry for a large percentage of the among them. For those wishing to return, most have declared the lack of financial resources, as well as the absence of basic social services and economic opportunities as barriers for them making the move.

Among its recommendations, the report calls for interventions to emphasize durable housing, livelihood development through vocational training, increased access to basic social services and social cohesion. It also recommends stronger synergies between Government and non-governmental actors to strengthen peace, security, and local economic development and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid.

UN, Ford Foundation hold first annual GBV prevention summit with traditional and faith leaders in West Africa



Traditional and religious leaders holding up their commitments at the annual GBV Summit. Photos: UN Women Nigeria

21st May, 2024 marked a significant milestone in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) as traditional and faith leaders from across West Africa, government officials, and representatives from international organizations gather for the inaugural Annual High-Level GBV Prevention Summit in Abuja, Nigeria. In Africa, many instances of GBV are justified under culture and tradition. Harmful gender norms and practices rooted in traditional customs and religious misconceptions perpetuate violence against women and girls. The authority and platforms of traditional and religious leaders can be instrumental in addressing the root causes of GBV, such as patriarchy and gender stereotypes, by mobilizing communities towards change.

Recognizing this, UN Women, with support from the Ford Foundation, organized a GBV prevention summit to take stock of achievements made by leaders in their respective jurisdictions and facilitate a space for sharing critical and inspiring insights.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Beatrice Eyong, UN Women Representative to Nigeria & ECOWAS, expressed her profound appreciation to the Ford Foundation for their unwavering partnership on the Traditional and Cultural Leaders for Ending GBV by Advancing Advocacy, Policy, and Social Norms Change in Nigeria and West Africa (LEAP) program. This initiative acknowledges the critical role of traditional and religious leaders in challenging harmful social norms perpetuating GBV, particularly violence against women and girls.

She emphasized the importance of challenging societal norms that condone violence, noting Africa's rich cultural heritage while acknowledging the imperative to confront practices that deny human rights and dignity. Ms. Eyong also highlighted the pervasive nature of GBV, stating that "GBV is not just against our women and girls, it's against our economic growth, stability, and our emergence to become a continent that has all it takes to be great and prosperous."

Also speaking at the event was His eminence, Alhaji (Dr) Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, CFR, the Sultan of Sokoto and President General, Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic affairs beckoned the traditional and religious rulers to work hand in hand to end all harmful practices against women and girls. "We are 100% behind you in this fight," he pledged. Echoing his commitment, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, CFR, the Ooni Of Ife, urged the traditional rulers to ensure that the outcomes of the summit are implemented in their various communities.



Ms. Beatrice Eyong, UN Women Representative to Nigeria & ECOWAS giving her opening remarks. Photos: UN Women Nigeria



His eminence, Alhaji (Dr) Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, CFR, the Sultan of Sokoto and President General, Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic affairs and His Imperial Majesty, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, CFR, the Ooni of Ife at the Annual GBV Prevention Summit. Photo: UN Women Nigeria.

Ford Foundation President, Mr. Darren Walker, who was also present at the summit, expressed the need to continue investing in the prevention of GBV to create a more equitable society for women and girls in Nigeria. Mr. Walker was also decorated as a He4She for his commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Nigeria and West Africa.

Despite some progress, disparities persist, with West Africa grappling with high rates of child marriage and female genital mutilation. There is therefore a need for radical shifts in mindsets to end violence against women and girls, which can be achieved through dialogue and knowledge sharing among distinguished leaders from Nigeria, Niger, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ghana.

This summit marks a critical moment in the ongoing efforts to combat GBV in Nigeria and across West Africa. It builds upon the momentum generated by initiatives like the Spotlight Initiative and the LEAP project, focusing on enhancing traditional leaders' skills and partnerships to prevent and shift harmful social norms and practices.

Action, not words: Laying the groundwork for the establishment of a parliamentary women caucus



Beatrice Eyong (Left) and others sing the Women's anthem, emphasizing the words 'equality, development, and peace'. Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu

“Action, not words, is what we need to escalate the advocacy for increased women's representation in parliament”, said H.E. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, wife of the governor of Lagos State, during a 2-day workshop aimed at laying the groundwork for the establishment of a women caucus in the National Assembly.

It is no longer news that very few women are in the National Assembly. 4.26% may not even qualify as 'few', with only 4 women in a 109-member Senate and 16 in a 360-member House of Representatives. The middle-class woman and the trader in a remote community would agree: “There is little or nothing 4.26% could do in the National Assembly to advance women's issues”. Fortunately, there is much these women could do.

One reason for the persistent clamour for increased women's representation in parliament is the need for gender-responsive legislation, where policies and laws consider existing gender gaps and critical issues that affect women and girls.

This is where the Parliamentary Women Caucus comes in.

The establishment of a Parliamentary Women Caucus is not just a symbolic gesture, but a powerful tool for change. When women in parliament unite and form a strong, collective voice, they can strategically strengthen gender-responsive legislation and significantly influence national policies. This is a tangible opportunity for change that can be realized with the right support and commitment, and it holds immense potential for advancing women's issues in the National Assembly and beyond.

The belief in the potential of a Parliamentary Women Caucus was the driving force behind the impactful 2-day workshop. This event was not just a gathering, but a crucial step in laying the groundwork and devel-

oping a framework for establishing a Parliamentary Women Caucus in the National and State Assemblies of Nigeria.

The workshop saw the active participation of women lawmakers from the National and State Assemblies and He4Shes, including Senator Dr. Midala Usman Balami, Senator Bello Isah, and Nollywood actor-turned-politician Desmond Elliot. The presence of lawmakers from other countries – Malawi, Kenya, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast, added an international perspective and shared valuable lessons.

“No more should we say there are no women to lead. Nigeria has women in high-profile leadership positions around the world – holding the positions of the Director-General of the World Trade Centre (WTO), the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, and CEOs of multinationals”, said Beatrice Eyong, the UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS.

Central to the discussions in the room is that increased representation of women in parliament is not a question of numbers but development. Therefore, the caucus will seek to advocate, guide, and influence the National Assembly towards improved gender-responsive legislation and budgeting.

During the workshop, a draft framework for the caucus was developed. The next step is to launch the Parliamentary Women Caucus after consultations with other critical stakeholders.

A new chapter of the advocacy for gender-responsive legislation has begun.

UN organizes regional training workshop on Integrated Global Earth Observing System in Abuja Nigeria.



Group Photo of Participants at the WIGOS Regional Workshop 28 – 31 May 2024, Abuja, Nigeria

A four-day training workshop held in Abuja, Nigeria, aimed at strengthening weather monitoring capabilities across West and Central Africa. The Workshop, co-organized by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet), focused on equipping participants with the knowledge and necessary skills to effectively operate and utilize WMO Integrated Global Observing System (WIGOS) functions and tools.

The WIGOS framework promotes integration of earth systems observing networks and partnership outreach through the engagement of the regional and national institutions essential for successful integration of these systems. These WIGOS partnerships allow WMO Members to build observing capabilities, achieve better national, regional, and global coverage, and improve economic efficiency in management and access to climate information and products.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mr Bernard Gomez, WMO Representative for North, Central, and West Africa, spoke on behalf of the Secretary-General of WMO Prof Celeste Saulo. He thanked the Federal Government of Nigeria, for hosting the regional training workshop, and for Nigeria's expression of interest to host the first Regional WIGOS Centre in West and Central Africa.

According to Prof Celeste Saulo, "We stand at the intersection of inequality and climate change, and our strategies must reflect the urgency of the times. Our commitment to reducing inequality and development gaps is unwavering. We will prioritize regional and on-the-ground initiatives, ensuring innovation reaches every member, especially those with a relatively lower degree of development. Early warning systems will be the linchpin in disaster risk reduction, transforming threats into opportunities for sustainable development. Under my leadership, we will fortify early warning systems, enhance data accessibility, and make science and timely life-saving information accessible to all."

Prof Charles Anosike Director-General/CEO of NiMet highlighted the challenges faced by the region due to diverse climatic conditions and extreme weather events. He emphasized the importance of the workshop in strengthening meteorological infrastructure networks and human capacity, which he said is crucial for mitigating the socio-economic impacts of such events in Africa.

The workshop offered participants a chance to gain in-depth knowledge of WIGOS functions and tools including their application within regional and national contexts. Participants enhanced their understanding of Regional WIGOS Center responsibilities to affiliated members. It was an opportunity to collaborate, share experiences and best practices with colleagues from other National Meteorological Services within the region.

The workshop was held from 28 – 31 May and brought together representatives from National Meteorological Services across West and Central Africa including a facilitator from the South African Weather Service. In addition to Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon also expressed interest in hosting Regional WIGOS Centers to support affiliated WMO members within the region.



L-R: WMO technical coordinator, Abubakr Salih Babiker; WMO representative for North Central and West Africa, Bernard Gomez; Director-general, Nigerian Meteorological Agency, Prof. Charles Anosike; WIGOS scientific officer, Luis Nunes; and Permanent representative of Cameroon with WMO, Tchinda Tazo Simplice during the workshop in Abuja.

Reform the Security Council – Gambari urges UN



L-R: Former Under-Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, UN Headquarters New York, Prof Ibrahim Gambari; The High Commissioner of the Rwandan High Commission in Nigeria, H.E. Ambassador Christophe Bazivamo; The Chancellor Covenant University, Bishop David Oyedepo

The call for the reform of the United Nations Security Council was once again on the front burner of discussions in the context of preventing genocide as witnessed against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Former Under-Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, UN Headquarters New York, Prof Ibrahim Gambari called on the UN to reform not only in terms of the use or misuse of veto power but in the expansion of its membership in both permanent and non-permanent categories.

He said at a public lecture organised at Covenant University, Ota Ogun State, by the UN Information Centre (UNIC), Rwandan High Commission in Nigeria and Covenant University, to mark the 30th Anniversary of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, that the membership of the UN Security Council should be reformed and democratized to reflect today's economic demographic and political realities, and Africa should be fully represented and taken into consideration.

"On this solemn day of remembrance, let's pledge to stand as one against all forms of hatred and discrimination. Let's ensure that the

acts that began on April 7, 1994 are never forgotten — and never repeated. Anywhere." UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

The High Commissioner of the Rwandan High Commission in Nigeria, H.E. Ambassador Christophe Bazivamo noted, "The path to lasting peace demands constant vigilance. As we renew, we restate our unbreakable pledge to fight intolerance, discrimination, ethnic hatred, hate speech, genocide revisionism, and denial in all their forms."

The Vice Chancellor, Prof Adebayo acknowledged that in all the conflicts leading to devastating loss of civilian life, massive displacement, capital flights, destruction of infrastructure and economic institutions, violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, the United Nations and its systems have always played a pivotal role in maintaining international peace and security, protect human rights, deliver humanitarian aid, promote sustainable development, and uphold international law.



World Press Freedom Day 2024



Thirty years have passed since the first World Press Freedom Day celebration in 1994. The historic Santiago Declaration adopted during the “Seminar on the Development of Media and Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean” (May 6, 1994), which marked a new phase in promoting the right to freedom of expression and of the press, as well as the development and recognition of community media, independence, and pluralism of the media in Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to UNESCO, the triple planetary crisis—climate change, biodiversity loss, and air pollution—along with their connections to public health issues, the need to strengthen democracy, to tackle dis-misinformation on digital platforms, among other issues have be-

come major challenges for humanity. This was the focus of the 2024 commemoration of the World Press Freedom Day with theme ***A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the face of the Environmental Crisis.***

This year was dedicated to the importance of journalism and freedom of expression in the context of the current global environmental crisis. The role of the press in shaping our world and ensuring democratic consolidation cannot be downplayed. Serving as watchdogs and instrument of change, influencing political decisions of leaders and administrations, calls for the need to desire their freedom. This year’s World Press Freedom Day provided an insight to the role journalism plays in combating current environmental crises, hence the need to champion a press free world, especially in Africa.



UNESCO Abuja office in commemoration of the day partnered with the Ministry of Information and National Orientation and the Ministry of Environment in holding a press conference in Abuja. This was a landmark event as journalists had the opportunity to directly communicate with the Ministers on issues that concerned them and the environment. The Minister of Information and National Orientation Alhaji Mohammed Idris and the Minister of State for Environment Dr. Izaq Adekunle Salako both stressed the need for Journalists to pay critical attention to reporting on environmental issues that keep threatening human existence. "This year's theme resonates deeply with our ministry's vision and President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's priority areas, which prioritize restoring trust, reorienting national values, and creating an enabling environment for the media. It underscores the crucial role of journalism in addressing the environmental crisis." Said the Minister of Information and National Orientation Alhaji Mohammed Idris.

The event witnessed the coming together of Journalists and media professionals, and relevant key stakeholders. It was widely characterized by many as timely and one of its kind in a long while whereby journalist had the opportunity to address key issues directly with the Minister, the need to provide a free operating environment for journalists in Nigeria to be able to discharge their duties without any fear of persecution was stressed. - Minister of State for Environment Dr. Izaq Adekunle Salako Noted that press freedom was indispensable to promote transparency, accountability, and social justice, and critical to communicating the threat posed by climate crisis and making informed decisions to be more environmentally responsible. "You as

journalists have a critical role to play in driving environmental policy formulation and implementation and in shaping public perception about the crisis". He added.

Other events in commemoration of the WPFDD was a webinar jointly organized by United States of America's Embassy, United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), and UNESCO. This was a gathering of media professionals and climate change actors drawn from all over the country. Consulate Public Affairs Officer Julie McKay gave the welcome remark while UNESCO Head of Office provided the keynote remark. It was well-attended with experts like Director General Nigeria Conservation Foundation, Dr Joseph Onoja, Environment Journalist/Head of Programs, Channels TV; Ms. Ayoola Kassim, and Program Director, Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development Mr. Babatunde Akintunde all gave their expert paper presentation on the theme.

This led to a vibrant question and answer session for clarity on grey areas. To further deepen public understanding of the magnitude of climate change impact on the environment and the role of the media in addressing the situations, UNESCO encouraged partner media organisations around the country to report situations of the climate change impact in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. UNESCO with its mandate to "promote the free flow of ideas by word and image" will continue to support Nigeria in its efforts for press freedom, freedom of expression and media pluralism in the country.



UN holds national workshop on the Budapest Treaty



Cross-section of participants at the WIPO National Workshop on the Budapest Treaty in Abuja, Nigeria

Creators and innovators worldwide use Intellectual Property (IP) to translate their ideas into assets. These properties create economic and social benefits that improve the lives of people everywhere.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the United Nation's global forum for IP services, policy, information, and cooperation, leads the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enables innovation and creativity.

WIPO currently administers 26 international treaties, as part of its activities. The Budapest treaty concerns a specific topic in the international patent process: microorganisms. It was created to allow those seeking for protection of their scientific innovation, specifically in relation to microorganisms, to do so in several states with a single application, thereby saving money and increasing their security.

On May 6, 2024, a national workshop on the Budapest Treaty was organized for members of government agencies, researchers, law pro-

fessionals and innovation experts in Nigeria by the WIPO Patents and Treaties Law Division.

The workshop, organized in collaboration with the Patents and Designs Registry of Nigeria, provided an opportunity to learn about the benefits of the Budapest Treaty, as well as operations of International Depositary Authorities.

During the event, experience on using the Budapest system was shared with participants, as well as the importance of biotechnology and deposit of microorganisms for patent procedures. The participants, fifty-three in total, engaged actively in the discussion during the workshop, with key stakeholders participating in a subsequent high-level conversation on next steps and further action.

WIPO engages Nigerian tertiary students in National Essay Competition on food security



One of the winners of the 2023 WIPO National IP Essay Competition on Study Tour in Abuja

To build our common future and achieve the SDGs, we need to re-think how we live, work and play. The SDGs are an interdependent blueprint for people, peace, prosperity, and our planet; yet the challenges we face are deep-seated and complex. Therefore, development efforts must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

WIPO Nigeria Office has again launched the annual National IP Essay Competition for students of tertiary institutions, providing an opportunity for young people to explore and amplify the innovative and creative solutions that are so crucial to building our common future. The excitement and engagement displayed by the students year after year, has proven the essay competition to be an effective tool to draw Nigerian youth into the conversation on global and national development.

“When I saw the topic, I was elated, I was happy because it was something I was into. It was like merging two of my interests together.” Adebola Oriolowo-Niyi, 2023 WIPO National IP Essay Competition finalist. The essay competition topic this year, “IP and Sustainable Agriculture:

Combating Food Insecurity in Nigeria” is an opportunity for students to reflect on the relationship between IP and SDG’s, with a primary focus on the opportunities and challenges for harnessing IP towards achieving food security in Nigeria.

Essay entries will be assessed for factual accuracy, imagination, originality, creative and innovative thought, by an independent expert Panel of Judges drawn from leading IP practitioners and entrepreneurs, academics, policy experts, scholars, and regulators across the country.

Participation in this competition will provide students with an excellent opportunity to research and learn more about the field of intellectual property and its interaction with SDGs, while yet contributing directly to policy making as they explore policy ideas along the lines of this year’s essay topic.

Educational outreach in Abuja by United Nations



Students of Junior Secondary School Karonmajigi

To promote the #ActNow and the Climate Action Superheroes campaign, UNIC Abuja at an educational outreach briefed students of Junior Secondary School Karonmajigi and Junior Secondary School Gosa , on the importance of being superheroes for the environment and encouraged the students to be aware of the difference they can make through their everyday actions, to protect the environment from wastes and plastics.



Students of Junior Secondary School Gosa displaying the superheroes flyer

Finding purpose amidst despair: Young Nigerians charting their own destinies



“Looking inward has made me realize that there are opportunities around me...”

Festus has lived in Uromi, a suburb town in Edo State, in Southern Nigeria all his life. A graduate of Health Education his ambition was always to leave his small town and achieve his dream of becoming a professional multimedia artist outside Nigeria.

“I am sure a lot of people like me would agree that the economic situation in Nigeria isn't quite encouraging, but when I look back at it now, I feel these hard lessons are valuable ones that have helped me become independent and strengthen my character”, he remembers.

Festus' dream was to travel to Europe but the journey through the Sahara and Libya would cost him 1 million Naira. Having just declined a training opportunity to fulfill his lifelong dream of becoming a professional videographer & photographer, he wondered whether the amount was worth the risk.

Being from a modest family, taking a loan was not feasible considering the high repayment options and the fact that he didn't have a job at the time.

As Festus weighed his options, he met friends whose small businesses were thriving in Uromi. Among them were returning migrants who had endured the traumatic migration journey through Libya and had returned with IOM's support. With their encouragement, Festus participated in community outreach sessions organized as part of the “Edo Sure 4 You” campaign rolled out to encourage safe migration and youth empowerment. The campaign features screening a documentary video which showed the challenges experienced by irregular migrants, a short film on the need to explore local opportunities present in the state.

For him, the campaign was a moment of revelation. “I learnt that the challenges in life are learning curves, they are designed to make us grow and derive useful life insights”, he says. Following the outreach session, Festus registered for photography and videography training offered free of charge to local youths and bought a small camera with the money he intended to use for his travel.

“I have embraced them for they are for my growth. Looking inward has made me realize that there are opportunities around me and today I am a professional photographer and as we speak, I have an event to cover”, Festus proudly says.

Across Nigeria, a growing number of youths like Festus are tempted to brave irregular migration routes in search for better economic opportunities. This phenomenon is fueled in part by growing unemployment and the limited opportunities for technical and vocational education and training.

Since 2017, IOM has partnered with Edo State in Southern Nigeria to roll-out a multidimensional programme aiming to raise awareness for safe migration but provide youth with upskilling opportunities to empower them to become self-sufficient. The programme provides technical and financial support to EdoJobs, the State Government's flagship agency is tasked with tackling unemployment by connecting youths both in rural and urban communities to jobs, skills, and business opportunities.

The partnership has so far helped 1,074 young Nigerians establish successful small ventures across 18 local government areas. Like Festus, Victory, a 31-year-old graduate of Public Administration, also nursed the idea to travel to Europe via Libya because of failed attempts at securing a job. In 2022 he decided to sell off some valuables and gathered 800,000 Naira, determined to pay a boga to get him to Libya. But following counselling from friends and peers, he visited the Edo State Skill Development Agency Centre in Uromi where he received counselling and professional guidance to help him grow his skills and earn a living.

Today, he owns a Point of Sale (POS) stand where he provides guidance on small-scale financial transactions to a growing customer base. “I'm happy because I didn't risk my life for an uncertain irregular journey abroad”, he says.

UN trains and empowers lab experts on combating pests of small ruminants



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), through its Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) has strengthened laboratory capacities for diagnosing small ruminants' pests, commonly referred to as peste des petits ruminants (PPR) in West, East and Southern Africa.

The training conducted in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture (CJN, IAEA) held in Jos Plateau state. FAO aims to enhance national veterinary services and improve disease surveillance to effectively combat PPR.

FAO orchestrated a pivotal workshop on advancing laboratory capabilities for PPR diagnosis hosted by the National Veterinary Research Institute in Vom, Plateau state, Nigeria. Supported by the Defence Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the European Commission (EC), this five-day hybrid gathering convened from 29 April to 3 May 2024 brought together laboratory experts and technicians from Burundi, Esawatini, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe.

Eradicating PPR and Strengthening Veterinary Services for Small Ruminants

The Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) Global Control and Eradication Strategy, endorsed in 2015, underscores the imperative of eradicating PPR by 2030 and strengthening veterinary services to mitigate the impact of infectious diseases among small ruminants. To achieve these objectives, countries must advance through the stages of assessment,

control, eradication, and maintenance of an official PPR-free status. At the heart of this strategy lies the enhancement of laboratory capacities for PPR diagnosis. Effective diagnostic systems are vital for promptly detecting suspected cases, confirming outbreaks, identifying circulating strains, and monitoring vaccine effectiveness.

Empowering Africa to catalyze changes

Participants gained further knowledge on the PPR global eradication program, molecular epidemiology and diagnosis of PPR through hands-on laboratory training on diagnostic methods and sequencing. Additionally, through proficiency testing facilitated by the IAEA/FAO joint center or reference laboratories, diagnostic capabilities are poised for further enhancement.

Equipped with newfound knowledge and expertise, workshop participants can catalyze changes in their respective countries, fostering intra-laboratory networks and strengthening PPR surveillance and diagnosis across the region.

FAO ECTAD's leadership in strengthening laboratory capacities PPR diagnosis in West, East and Southern Africa reflects its commitment to advancing global veterinary services and disease surveillance. This initiative not only reinforces regional disease surveillance but also aligns with the broader goal of achieving a PPR-free status by 2030, promoting the health of small ruminants and enhancing global food security.

Addressing environmental challenges in refugee communities



Victor Nfor produces cooking fuel from organic waste in Adagom 3 refugee settlement, Cross River State, Nigeria. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

It's a typical day in Adagom 3 refugee settlement, Cross River State. Amid the scorching heat, children play in the sand while women prepare meals for their families using wood. The heat, warmer than previous years, serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing impacts of climate change on the environment.

"It worries me to see the settlement littered with organic and inorganic waste that could be utilized, and to witness conflicts between refugees and hosts over the cutting of trees for cooking fuel," says Cameroonian refugee and environmental activist, Nfor Victor.

In 2021, Victor and his family fled their home in the Southwestern region of Cameroon to Nigeria after a traumatizing experience. He recalls that unknown individuals had delivered a letter threatening to kill him and his children. Shortly after, his wife was raped, and eight neighbours were killed.

As he began to rebuild his life, Victor turned to his passion for renewable energy. Driven by a desire to address deforestation, cooking fuel scarcity, and environmental pollution from plastics and domestic waste, he founded the Community-Based Organization (CBO) GROFLINE, enlisting the help of both refugees and host communities.

"I trained in renewable energy and established a similar CBO back home in 2014. Unfortunately, my dreams and everything fell apart due to the war," he said.

Founding GROFLINE marked a new chapter for Victor, filled with hope and progress. He hired 12 dedicated staff members and brought renewable energy solutions to the community using locally sourced and inexpensive materials. He installed 25 biogas plants, a prototype solar dryer, and a plastic recycling machine.



A solar dryer preserves food to prevent contamination in Adagom 3, Cross River State. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

They have trained over 70 refugees and host community members in recycling techniques. Additionally, they have conducted awareness sessions on caring for the environment, reaching thousands of refugees. The solar dryer has also been particularly effective in preserving food, thereby contributing to a reduction in illnesses caused by bacteria among refugees.

Scaling up these seemingly small renewable energy efforts can significantly address environmental challenges, benefiting thousands of refugees and host communities. As we face the devastating impacts of climate change, expanding such initiatives is crucial for building resilient communities and ensuring a sustainable future.

Forcibly displaced individuals like Victor are at the forefront of pioneering sustainable solutions to the environmental issues driving climate change globally. They bring valuable skills, talents, and a strong desire to create positive change and contribute to their host communities. Victor concluded, “My dream will be finally fulfilled if every refugee household can afford clean cooking fuel, deforestation is eradicated, and the settlement is free from plastic waste.”

UN hands over first fully solar-powered oxygen plant to Oyo State Government



Photo: UNICEF/Ibrahim

In a groundbreaking development for healthcare delivery, UNICEF has handed over the Nigeria's first fully solar-powered Pressure Swing Adsorption Oxygen Gas Plant to the Jericho Specialist Hospital, Ibadan in Oyo State. This innovative solution, created by EM-ONE, emerged as the winner of UNICEF's innovation challenge and was funded by the Government of Norway and other partners. Alongside Oyo State, another fully solar-powered plant will soon be handed over in Kano state, showcasing a revolutionary approach to sustainable healthcare.

The oxygen generation plant is designed to provide a consistent and adequate supply of oxygen to the hospital, essential for patients with respiratory issues, post-surgical patients, those in intensive care, and others needing supplemental oxygen. By producing oxygen on-site using solar power, the hospital can reduce its dependency on external suppliers, resulting in greater autonomy, cost efficiency, and minimized risk of supply chain disruptions, ensuring continuous patient care.

The solar-powered oxygen plant offers numerous benefits. It provides a reliable energy source, reducing the risk of treatment interruptions due to power outages. The use of solar energy significantly lowers operational costs, freeing up resources for other essential healthcare needs. Additionally, solar power is an environmentally sustainable choice, aligning with global efforts to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change. Furthermore, these energy solutions can be replicated and scaled to other locations, expanding the reach of these life-saving oxygen plants.

In addition to the oxygen plant, UNICEF has furnished an advanced Level-2 newborn unit in the same hospital. This facility will provide specialized medical attention and care for small and/or sick newborns with severe complications. The unit will be supported by oxygen produced from the plant, enhancing the hospital's capacity to provide comprehensive care for these vulnerable patients. The newborn unit

is funded by generous contributions from The Gates Foundation.

"On behalf of UNICEF, I am proud to inaugurate this pioneering solar-powered oxygen plant in Oyo State. This innovative solution, made possible through our partnership with the Government of Norway and the ingenuity of EM-ONE, marks a significant advancement in our mission to provide reliable and sustainable healthcare solutions. This plant will ensure that children and other patients receive uninterrupted, life-saving oxygen," said Ms. Cristian Munduate, UNICEF Representative in Nigeria.

The Oyo State Government expressed gratitude for this transformative addition to its healthcare infrastructure.

"The handover of this state-of-the-art Oxygen Gas Plant is a monumental achievement for Oyo State. We deeply appreciate the efforts of UNICEF, IHS Towers, and the Governments of Canada and Norway. This is in line with the Oyo States' Omituntun 2.0 commitment to ensuring that every citizen has access to quality healthcare. This plant will significantly enhance our capacity to provide essential medical care, ensuring our healthcare system's resilience and sustainability," said Engineer Seyi Makinde FNSE, DSC, GSSRC, the Executive Governor of Oyo State.

These oxygen plants are among many being constructed by UNICEF, with generous support from partners including IHS Towers, and governments of Canada, and Norway. So far, oxygen plants have been constructed and handed over to state governments in Ogun, Kaduna, Cross Rivers and Ebonyi. Additional plants in Bauchi, Yobe, Rivers, and Kano are in the final stages of completion and will be handed over to state governments in 2024.

Stronger than tetanus: Sunday Ayuba's dedication to vaccination, community, and compassion



“
For me, it's not just
a job—it's a calling.
”

Photo: UNICEF/ Aremu

"Most mothers are scared of needles, especially tetanus shots," "But somehow, they muster the courage to roll up their sleeves." He recounts the amusing escapades of Madam Fear Fear of TT, who, true to her name, sprinted to the back of the line when her turn for the tetanus vaccine came. "It was like watching a comedy show," he adds with a hearty laugh. "But she faced her fear, and that's what matters." It's an ordinary day, and Sunday is dressed in a pristine white lab coat and a vibrant orange shirt peeking out like a pop of joy. His day at the health center is filled with caring for those in need. Today, he attends to Aishat and her young child, Hafsat. At just 6 weeks old, the little one is receiving the DTaP vaccine, protecting against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough). Aishat received her Tdap vaccine during her pregnancy and lingered in the health centre's lobby, hoping to reconnect with the kind face that offered so much support. When Sunday arrives, his confident yet easygoing demeanor reaffirms his expertise, and the vaccine box in his hand appears to be what it is: a little box of hope, the kind that promises better days for little Hafsat.

Sunday's journey began as a volunteer, lending a helping hand at antenatal sessions. "Back then, we were short-staffed, but we made it work." The stories of those who suffer needlessly tugged at his heartstrings. "I've seen the pain and suffering it causes," he says softly, "and it fuels my passion to make a difference." Nowadays, he's mostly found in the dispensary, where he keeps records of vaccines, when he is not actively immunising women and children.

But it's not all smooth sailing. Despite the challenges of persuading people to vaccinate, he has witnessed heartwarming acts of kindness. "Mothers often help each other out," he shares, "letting those in a rush jump the queue. It's these little moments that keep me going."

Improving vaccine literacy and fostering a trustworthy relationship between health and the public is a vital step towards increasing vaccine acceptance. This is why Sunday and his colleagues, after their clinic duties, go into communities armed with megaphones and vital information. Their goal is simple: to spread the word and empower communities to take charge of their health.

Nigeria has made significant progress towards eliminating maternal and neonatal tetanus, but the task is not yet complete. The generous funding from USAID has made the support from UNICEF crucial. Their assistance has enabled widespread vaccination campaigns and other important health initiatives that are essential for addressing and overcoming this challenge throughout Nigeria.

Looking ahead, Sunday's mission is clear: "Raise awareness, empower communities, and ensure no one falls through the cracks." For him, healthcare is more than just a job; it's a lifelong commitment to serving others with compassion and dedication.



Bameyi Sunday (healthcare worker) with a vial of Pentavalent vaccine in Lugbe PHC, Abuja, Nigeria

Photo News



Photo news captions,

1. The Vice President, Senator Kashim Shettima (8th from the left) hosts the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall (7th from the left) and the UN Country Team at the Presidential Villa Abuja.
2. L-R: Bolaji Balogun, the Chief Executive Officer of Chapel Hill Denham; David Stevenson, World Food Programme Country Director Nigeria; Mohamed Malick Fall, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria; Mr Wale Edun, Minister of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning of Nigeria; Elsie Attafuah, Resident Representative, UNDP Nigeria; Princess Adejoke Orellope-Adefulire, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals at the launch of the Integrated National Financial Framework Steering Committee inaugural meeting.
3. L-R: UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall; Signs the condolence register at the Iranian Embassy in Abuja, in honor of the President, Islamic Republic of Iran H.E. Ebrahim Raisi; the Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and others who died in a plane crash.

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