

June 2024



Newsletter



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The United Nations Country Team comprising of Heads of UN Agencies operating in Nigeria and led by the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mohamed Malick Fall, organised a two-day retreat to re-strategise and chart the road map to further strengthen its support to the government and people of Nigeria.

The Resident Coordinator opened the retreat with a remark and referenced the last UNCT retreat outcomes; the importance of linking discussions at the retreat with national priorities including the Renewed Hope agenda; and recognised the new Heads of Agencies.

"Nigeria is facing a myriad of challenges, but opportunities abound. United Nations in Nigeria is committed to pooling its resources and assets together, as always, to support the Nigerian Government in achieving the Agenda 2030 for the betterment of the people." Fall said. The retreat reviewed the UN relevance, key challenges, and lessons learnt in supporting Nigeria achieve the SDG targets; discussed Nigeria's development priorities in 2024 and beyond; and developed a strategic work plan for the UNCT to accelerate implementation of the transitions.

The retreat had a panel discussion which sought to gauge the perspectives of national counterparts from both government and civil society, both in terms of the current country context, as well as identifying and reflecting on opportunities for more effectively engaging with the government and civil society actors.

On the panel were the Special Adviser to the President of Nigeria on Policy and Coordination, and Head Central Delivery Coordination Unit, Ms. Hadiza Bala Usman; Chief Executive Officer, FSD Merchant Bank, Ms. Bukola Smith; Group Chief Executive Officer of SAO Capital, Mr. Ayo Sotinrin; a Professor of Economics at the Lagos Business School, Professor Bongo Adi; and the Director, CARE International Nigeria, Dr. Hussaini Abdu.

They also discussed how cooperation and partnership with the UN could be strengthened strengthened.



UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mohamed Malick Fall speaking at the retreat

UN launches 2024 rainy season input distribution to boost food security in Northeast Nigeria



The FAOR a.i. Dominique Koffy Kouacou is joined by dignitaries to kickstart the launch with a demonstration during the event in Maiduguri Borno state. At the background 2nd right in blue kaftan is the Secretary to the State Government, former Assistant Director General of FAO Bukar Tijjani and standing on his right also in blue kaftan is the Deputy Governor of the state Hon. Umar Usman Kadafur. Photo @FAO Nigeria/2024

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has launched the 2024 Rainy Season Input Distribution in Maiduguri, Borno State. This aims to bolster food security and resilience in the region. Held on Monday 10 June 2024 in Dusuman, Jere Local Government Area (LGA) of Borno State, the event marks the beginning of distributing essential crop production inputs for Nigeria main agricultural season across Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, and Taraba (BAYT) States.

This initiative, supported by the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and United State Agency for International Development's Bureau of Humanitarian Aid (BHA), in partnership with state governments, aims to provide lifesaving support to farmers, particularly those who have recently relocated to either their ancestral homes or resettled in new communities, and revitalize their livelihoods. The distribution encompasses high quality seeds of cereals, vegetables, and legumes and fertilizer, targeting 26,750 subsistence and small-scale farmers across 84 wards in the four states.

In March 2024, the Cadre Harmonisé (CH) food security analysis alerted that 31.8 million people in 26 states and the FCT are expected to reach crisis or emergency level of acute food insecurity during the lean season. More than 4.84 million of them live in Borno Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states. Without humanitarian support, these families face critical food shortages and malnutrition, forcing them to adopt desperate measures like selling off essential assets or skipping meals.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Umar Usman Kadafur, commended FAO for its support in addressing development challenges in the state, ac-

knowledging FAO's strategic role in assisting victims of insurgency and promoting peace and security.

Dominique Koffy Kouacou, the FAO Representative ad interim in Nigeria and to ECOWAS, emphasized the importance of input distribution to "reduce food insecurity aggravated by conflicts, natural disasters, and economic shocks. FAO's extensive program targeting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), returnees, and host communities in conflict-affected areas, stresses FAO dedication to procuring and distributing high-quality seeds and fertilizers towards a world with zero hunger."

Reacting to the inputs received, participants in Dusuman expressed gratitude and appreciate the assistance from the government and development partners, especially FAO, for providing them with seeds and fertilizer right in time to engage in the main agricultural season.

Yanziya Ali, one of these farmers, remarked, "Traditionally, we relied heavily on government and development assistance for our food supply. Now, with the agricultural inputs provided by FAO, we would have food to eat and even sale at the end of the harvest. This would help us to sustain ourselves and our families."

The distribution of crop production inputs represents a pivotal step towards revitalizing agricultural activities in the region, fostering resilience among farming communities. FAO remains committed to promoting sustainable agriculture, alleviating hunger, and building resilient food systems in collaboration with governments, partners, and stakeholders.

End child labour: FG, UN and partners advocate for Ondo State children



Left Photo: Participants in the road walk | Right Photo: The Deji of Akure receiving the stakeholders

In commemoration of the World Day Against Child Labour 2024, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment in collaboration with the US-DOL funded ACLAWA and GALAB projects, Save the children international's Future for Every Child (FuFEC) project, and the Lutheran World Relief's CLEAR project undertook a roadwork to advocate for eradication of child labour.

The World Day Against Child Labour (WDACL) is an International Labour Organization (ILO)-observation. It aims to raise awareness and activism to prevent child labor. The day, observed annually on June 12, fosters a global movement against child labor. Child labor deprives millions of children of education, health, and basic freedoms, violating their rights. The WDACL serves as a catalyst for change, urging governments, civil society, and organizations to address this critical issue and eliminate child labour.

Starting at the Oba Adesida market, stakeholders including the cocoa farmers association of Nigeria, Ondo state coordinating office, Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) and NGOs acting in the space, gathered to create awareness before heading to the Deji of Akure's palace and the State Government house.

At the place of the Deji, Oba Aladetoyinbo Ogunlade Aladelusi, Odundun II, pledged to support efforts to combat child labour. "I will inform my chief to report anyone hiring minors so we can take them to the appropriate Authorities."

The 2024 theme for the world day against child labour is "Let's Act on our Commitments: End Child Labour"! It urges us to take collective actions against child Labour. According to the National Bureau of Statistics Child Labour survey 2022, more than 30% of children in Ondo state are involved in child labour. Stakeholders are taking this opportunity to remind all actors to improve their implementation of the two fundamental ILO Conventions on child labour – ILO Convention No. 182 and ILO Convention No. 138 for Minimum Age for Admission to Employment or Work (1973)

In her interview, Dr Vanessa Phala – the Director of the ILO Country Office for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, represented by Dr Agatha Kolawole – the national project manager of the ILO ACLAWA project highlighted that the advocacy walk brought to light the adverse effect of child labour. She stated that child labour deprived children of the opportunity to be equipped with the necessary skills for the future while exposing them to health and security risk.

She stated that while children may support their families and build their social skills, they should not be allowed to undertake unacceptable form of work which is dangerous to the child and won't help the development of the child.

Olawale Awoyemi, Deputy Chief of Party, Lutheran World Relief stated that his organization was working to create awareness and advocacy amongst local stakeholders towards the elimination of child labour and its negative effects.

Similarly, Richard Nzomisaki, Programme Manager Save The Children International said that Child labour has bad influence in our society. He stated that his organization was willing and ready to support the government and the international organization towards eliminating child labour.

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, International Labour Organization and Save the children International continue to demonstrate commitment to support the Ondo State Government to eliminate child labour. This activity was made possible with the financial support of the United State Department of Labour

UN Collaborates with TUC and CFAN to curb Child Labour among cocoa farmers.



A group photograph of CFAN Members

To ensure the cooperation of cocoa farmers of Nigeria to effectively support the fight against child labour among cocoa farmers in Nigeria, ILO ACCEL Africa Project Phase II mobilized key stakeholders to work together to unionize to tackle child labour.

As part of efforts aimed at addressing child labour issues among cocoa farmers in Nigeria, the International Labour Organization (ILO) ACCEL Africa Project Phase II, in collaboration with Trade Union Congress (TUC) of Nigeria, convened a stakeholders' workshop from 13th – 17th May 2024 to map out strategies for unionizing cocoa farmers in Nigeria for the purpose of joining the fight against child labour. During the workshop, participants underwent training on Child Labour, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining

Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria (CFAN) is the umbrella body for the smallholder Cocoa Farmers in Nigeria. It has been one of the sectors where child labour thrived before the ILO intervention through ACCEL Phase I. Although the ILO has invested resources to check the prevalence of child labour in the sector, ACCEL II and Trade Union Congress of Nigeria deemed it necessary to unionize cocoa farmers with a view to harnessing resources to fight child labour in the sector.

Speaking on behalf of Ms Vanessa Phala, the Director, ILO Country Office for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Ms Inviolata Chinyangarara, ILO Senior Specialist, Workers Activities/ACTRAV, stated that the ILO was determined to strengthen workers Representation for improved advocacy to prevent and reduce child labour. She stated that the Strategic planning workshop was a critical platform for the Trade Union Congress to discuss strategies for the formalization of the cocoa sector through organizing the Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria (CFAN) into a registered Trade Union in Nigeria.

In his presentation, the President of CFAN, Mr. Adegoke Adeola, apprised participants of the history, mission, structure, and operations of the Association in Nigeria. He stated that cocoa was a valuable commodity globally with different interest groups involved in cocoa value chain. He regretted that while conducting activities in cocoa value

chain, he noted that cocoa farmers could operate their farms responsibly without child labour. He noted the right to freedom of association and said that joining the trade union would empower the cocoa farmers to ensure coordinated advocacy, collective bargaining, improved working conditions, and elimination of child labour and its worst forms in the sector. He pledged the commitment of CFAN to work with the ILO ACCEL Project Phase II and TUC to eliminate child labour amongst cocoa farmers.

Speaking through Comrade Tolu Akinmayowa, the Acting Secretary-General of TUC, Comrade Anka Hassan delved on the need to partner CFAN and promote freedom of association in the cocoa sector. He enlightened the cocoa farmers on the need to consider the enormous benefits of unionizing its members, highlighting innovative union services, recruiting, and retaining workers in the union, among others. He also educated them on Trade Union Operations and Administration (including requirements for Registration in accordance with the Trade Union Act), requirements for affiliation to TUC, TUC services to affiliated workers and trade union finance. The participants resolved to work with one another to end child labour among cocoa farmers.



Cross-section of participants

UN, EU ECHO partner to support humanitarian assistance in Northeast and Northwest Nigeria



A family resettled in Gumbi, Adamawa State, as part of IOM'S durable solution intervention to internal displacement in Northeast Nigeria. Photo: IOM 2024/Elijah Elaigwu

The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) has signed with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) a new partnership agreement to provide multisectoral humanitarian assistance to over 277,000 displaced persons, host community members and humanitarians in the North-East and North-West of Nigeria.

Over 14 years of ongoing conflict marked by violence and insecurity, continue to have profound effects on the lives and livelihoods of millions of individuals in Nigeria. As of 2023, more than 3 million people were displaced in the North-East, North-West and North-Central regions according to data from IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM).

Elsewhere in the country, intercommunal violence linked to dwindling access to land and natural resources is on the rise, forcing millions of people to flee their homes in search of safety.

The situation is causing several protection threats to the population, such as internal displacement, (forced) family separation, death and injury. Women, (unaccompanied) children and persons with disabilities are especially vulnerable to severe human rights violations and lack capacities and resources to cope, recover and adapt to the adverse impacts of their displacement.

The new IOM-ECHO programme will continue to support Federal and State actors in providing multisectoral life-saving assistance to internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities, and enable humanitarian partners to plan and implement their humanitarian activities.

"The needs of the affected populations are complex and require a comprehensive and coordinated approach from all humanitarian actors", said Laurent de Boeck, IOM Chief of Mission in Nigeria.

"We are grateful to the EU and its Member States for their generous support to IOM humanitarian response in Nigeria. With our colleagues in the field, side by side with the population, we remain committed to providing life-saving assistance and protection to the most vulnerable people, while also supporting their recovery and resilience in the long term", he added.

The programme will directly benefit more than 277,000 people are directly targeted by the programme in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, Benue, Nasarawa, Zamfara, Plateau, Niger, Jigawa and Kogi States. It is also expected for the programme to indirectly impact over 5,480 000 persons across the aforementioned states.

Benue State, UN, USAID launch Rapid Response Fund for crisis-affected populations in Benue State



Distribution of non-food item vouchers at Ichwa Camp, Benue State, to provide essential household items to displaced individuals and families. Photo: IOM 2024/Elijah Elaigwu

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), together with the Benue State Government and USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), launched last week the Rapid Response Fund project to provide lifesaving multisectoral intervention to the crisis-affected population in Benue State and across the State.

Insecurity, intercommunal conflicts and climate-induced disasters remain major drivers of displacement across Nigeria. An assessment by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) estimates that more than half a million people are displaced and living in camps and camplike settings across 17 local government areas of Benue State alone.

"The needs of those affected by this displacement are immense, and IOM recognizes that rapid delivery of humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable is critical to strengthening resilience and meeting the most basic needs of those displaced," says Laurent De Boeck, IOM's Chief of Mission to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Rapid Response Fund will enable humanitarian actors, especially local organizations, to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to over 200,000 persons displaced persons along five key sectors, namely shelter and settlement, multi-purpose cash assistance, psychosocial support, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and biometric registration.

"This intervention is crucial in addressing the escalating impacts of displacement, especially for vulnerable populations whose lives have been altered by the conflict," said IOM's Laurent De Boeck. "We find it imperative to not only prioritize the well-being of the forcibly displaced population in Benue and Nigeria, but equally drive reconciliation, promote peace, and set the wheel for the recovery and rebuilding of communities and lives affected by conflict."

Represented by the Deputy Governor, Barrister Samuel Ode, His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Benue State, Reverend Father Alia Hyacinth, expressed the State Government's readiness to provide the enabling environment for effective implementation of the project. He maintained that "the Rapid Response Fund is not just a project but a lifeline for many of the communities in the State".

In addition to providing an all-encompassing and integrated strategy that aims to restore dignity and pave the way for the long-term recovery of people affected by conflict and climate shocks, the project will equally address urgent protection and gender-based violence issues and improve the hygiene conditions within camps.

"Providing life-saving humanitarian assistance and helping the world's most vulnerable and hardest-to-reach people become more resilient to humanitarian crises is a priority of the United States government", said Patrick Robin, Senior Humanitarian Advisor with the United States Agency for International Development's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Nigeria Office. "The U.S government, through the USAID/BHA is launching its first humanitarian response in the North Central region to respond to the needs of IDPs affected by years of intercommunal conflict, farmer-herder clashes and climatic shocks in Benue state. This is reflective of the U.S government's commitment to helping the world's most vulnerable.

The activation of the Rapid Response Fund for displaced people in Benue State is made possible with the funding from the USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance. The USD 3.8 million allocation will support the state government's efforts in responding to sudden emergencies by providing streamlined, flexible, effective, and need-based life-saving interventions that empower internally displaced persons to withstand the shock of displacement.

UN, FG and partners review the National Migration Policy



Participant at the National Migration Policy review workshop. Photo: IOM 2024

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Network on Migration have partnered with the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) to conduct a review of Nigeria's National Migration Policy (NMP). The 2-day review meeting held on 5-6 June 2024 brought together over 70 representatives from Ministries, Departments and Agencies, civil society actors, and the United Nations Network on Migration to evaluate progress made in recent years in enhancing migration governance across the country.

Launched in 2015, the National Migration Policy has been instrumental in ensuring coordination between Government and non-government actors in providing comprehensive protection to migrants, but also developing solutions to protracted displacement crises.

Recognizing the dynamic nature of migration, a mandatory 5-year post-adoption review clause was incorporated to ensure the policy accurately reflects contemporary migration realities, identify gaps, and make strategic adjustments in line with the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Opening the review workshop, the Federal Commissioner, NCFRMI, Mr. Aliyu Tijani Ahmed, reminded the participants of the importance of coordination to enable all actors to deliver on the promise of migration for Nigeria. "We intend to expand the review scope by identifying emerging migration trends, challenges, and opportunities that may not have been adequately addressed in the initial review plan", he said. "The world is constantly changing, and our policies must adapt to these changes to remain effective", he added.

Migration in Nigeria is a dynamic phenomenon with the potential to accelerate the country's development. According to the latest World

Migration Report, Nigeria received 20.13 billion USD in remittances from its diaspora, ranking it among the top remittance-receiving countries in the world. Other important migration dynamics observed across the country include labour migration, forced migration, trans-humance, regular and irregular migration.

With such a vibrant migration complex, evidence-based policies and strategies must be put in place to effectively harness the potential and realise the promise of migration in Nigeria.

"Together, we ensure that the revised National Migration Policy meets international standards and resonates with Nigeria's local realities and aspirations", said Paola Pace, Deputy Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration. "I am confident that our collective efforts will pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future for all migrants and the communities they interact with".

The process continues with engagement at the zonal level aimed at eliciting contributions from state governments and stakeholders at the state and local government areas ensuring a whole of government and whole of society approach in the review of the National Migration Policy.

The review of the National Migration Policy is supported by the Migration Mult partnership Trust Fund (MMPTF) within the framework of the project "Strengthening Fact-Based and Data-Driven Migration Governance and Management in Nigeria".

UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM: First Lady of Nigeria pledges support



Discussion moderated by actress Kate Henshaw

Partners have reiterated the urgent need to end Female Genital Mutilation by 2030 through concerted efforts and the promotion of movements at national, regional, and global levels. These were part of the recommendations during the 2024 annual technical consultation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, which was held from June 11 to June 13 in Abuja.

The First Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, one of the high-level participants, committed to using her office to support putting an end to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Nigeria. She also called on stakeholders to utilize their platforms to eradicate this harmful practice by creating transformative movements that would prevent FGM and empower survivors through the facilitation of comprehensive, legal, and psychosocial services that would restore their dignity.

With Female Genital Mutilation internationally recognized as a violation of the rights of women and girls, Nigeria currently accounts for almost one in 10 of the 230 million FGM survivors globally and 22% of the 68 million girls at risk of FGM between 2015 to 2030. Despite recent data suggesting a decline in national prevalence from 25% to 20% among women (NDHS 2013, 2018), we must double our efforts to achieve progress and sustained gains towards the elimination of FGM in Nigeria.

The annual technical consultation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) brought together global experts, government officials, and representatives from 17 countries to share lessons learned, strategize, and strengthen collaborative efforts to end FGM by 2030. With a focus on "Local Solutions to Ending FGM," the consultation also highlighted the essential role of women-led organizations in driving change, with participants discussing evidence-based programming,

capacity building, and enhancing joint efforts between UNFPA and UNICEF at all levels. Participants were also able to share their experiences and achievements in addressing FGM within their contexts, as well as engage in discussions with international experts and stakeholders.

About the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM

The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme has been the largest global initiative to end FGM since 2008. The program supports comprehensive interventions in 17 countries and influences global efforts through knowledge sharing and advocacy. It is currently in its fourth phase (2022-2030), striving to realize a world where every girl and woman has a voice, choice, and agency.

Since 2014, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in partnership with the Federal Ministries of Women Affairs and Health, have been leading the largest global programme on eliminating Female Genital Mutilation (UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: Delivering the Global Promise).

In Nigeria as well as globally, the Joint Programme supports the development of enabling policies and legal frameworks, access to essential services, girls' and women's empowerment, and community-led social and gender norms change by working in partnership with governments, civil society, development partners, and communities—in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in five priority states in Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Imo, and Ebonyi. With additional plans to scale up the programme to other states where the prevalence of FGM is on the rise among girls aged 0–14.



First Lady of Federal Republic of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu(Center) with participants



Dr Walter Kazadi Mulombo, WHO Country Representative to Nigeria giving remarks on behalf of the UN Nigeria Resident Coordinator.



Panel Session with HRH Dr. Haliru Yahaya (Left) an official of the ministry of health (middle) and Dr. Costly Aderibigbe (right)



Learning session on #ENDFGM



UNFPA Nigeria Deputy Representative, Koessan Kuawu

ECOWAS donates \$2m to UN World Food programme, Red Cross



Guy ADOUA, Deputy Country Director of the World Food Programme, receives \$1m cheque from Valentine Ezulu, Director, Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has provided about USD 2 million to support humanitarian response in Nigeria by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the Nigerian Red Cross (NRC).

The Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation delivered the cheques totaling nearly 2 million dollars to the World Food Programme and the Nigerian Red Cross. The funding was made available by ECOWAS – which requested the Ministry to coordinate the project.

In an inception event held in Abuja, The ECOWAS Commissioner for Human Development and Social Affairs, Prof. Fatou Sarr, handed over both cheques to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, which then handed them over to the World Food Programme and NRC. While WFP received a cheque for \$1m, NRC got a cheque of \$906, 205.

The Deputy Country Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. Guy ADOUA, received the cheque on behalf of WFP. Adoua said:

“This partnership will continue to deliver essential food, nutrition and resilience-building support to the communities in Katsina and Sokoto states and strengthen state government institutions and programmes for greater sustainability. ECOWAS and the Government of Nigeria have once again demonstrated their unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people with a generous contribution. Together, we are creating sustainable solutions that will ensure long-term food security and resilience in the region.”

The project implemented by WFP will provide food and nutrition assistance to more than 14,000 individuals over a period of six months. It will also provide livelihoods support and psycho-social support to promote social cohesion and peace.

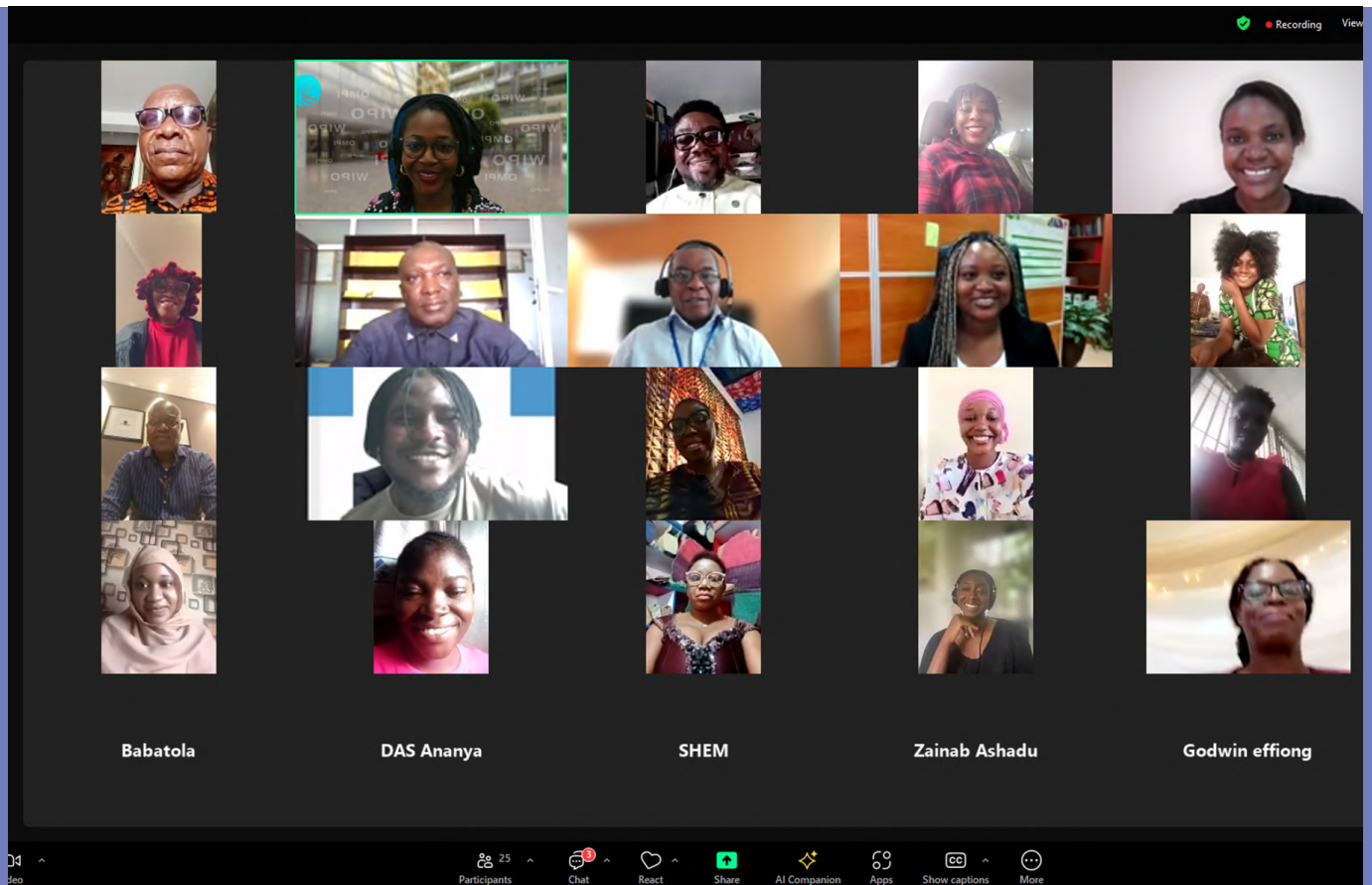
Nigerian Red Cross aims to reach 3,500 households in Adamawa, Anambra, Oyo, Kebbi, Kogi and Rivers states. The Red Cross will also provide water boreholes to ensure access to clean water, thereby reducing the risk of water-borne diseases in selected communities. The ECOWAS Commissioner for Human Development and Social Affairs, Prof Fatou Sarr, said:

“ECOWAS has reaffirmed its dedication to alleviating the suffering of people impacted by humanitarian crises. The ECOWAS Commission is set to provide financial assistance, including \$906,205 for flood disaster relief in Nigeria from 2022 and \$1,000,000 to support victims of violence in Nigeria in 2023. These funds aim to help stabilize the affected individuals.”

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Abel Enitan, said the project was timely.

“Suffice it to state that the lingering in our relief efforts, especially in combatting hunger, malnutrition and the shortage of essential non-food items, highlights the importance of these projects, supported by the ECOWAS Commission. This is a substantial support for the ongoing efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria and it is coming at a time when funding for Humanitarian assistance is dwindling globally.”

UN onboards small business owners into project on IP for SMEs in the indigenous fashion and craft industries



Participants at the virtual onboarding session for the WIPO Project on IP for SMEs in the Indigenous Fashion and Craft Industries in Nigeria.

WIPO in collaboration with the Nigerian Copyright Commission has formally onboarded twenty-two small business entrepreneurs from the leatherworks, Adire/Batik and Raffia sectors into the WIPO Project on IP for SMEs in the Indigenous Fashion and Craft Industries in Nigeria. The onboarding event took place virtually on July 3, 2024

The WIPO Project on IP for SMEs in the Indigenous Fashion and Craft Industries in Nigeria, launched on May 31, 2024, was designed to promote the use of intellectual property for enhanced outputs of SMEs in the indigenous fashion and crafts industries in Nigeria.

Over the next four months, the twenty-two selected participants will benefit from tailored IP and business mentoring through WIPO's IP Management Clinics aimed at supporting their business strategies, as well as their capacity to utilize the IP system.

This project, supported on behalf of the government of Nigeria, draws from WIPO's member states' commitment to addressing country-specific challenges post pandemic through the launch of new impact-oriented projects leveraging the effective use of IP via its Build Back Fund.

WIPO's new Build Back Fund was introduced to deliver targeted and impact-driven support upon request of member states, promoting the effective use of intellectual property (IP) to positively impact the lives and livelihoods of individuals, communities and societies.

UN engages with young creatives in Abuja on intellectual property and ownership rights



The United Nations has long recognized that the imagination, ideals, and energy of young people are vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live.

On Friday June 28, 2024, the WIPO Nigeria Office engaged with young creative professionals in Abuja in a vibrant afternoon of fun, conversation and learning at an Open House organized by MSwitch Media, a media production company in Abuja.

The Open House event aimed to provide an opportunity for creatives to connect, learn and network, as well as raise creatives' awareness

about intellectual property, ownership and artists' rights.

The enthusiastic participants, which included young music artists, graphic designers, writers, videographers and talent managers, expressed excitement at what they described as a much-needed exposure on IP and how it relates to their work.

Nigeria enjoys an abundance of creativity, especially among its youth. As a result, youth engagement remains one of the priorities of the WIPO Nigeria Office



Training on Cross-Cutting Approaches and Preconditions for Disability-Inclusive Development



In recognition of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, United Nations in Nigeria is hosting a Multi-Stakeholder Capacity-Building Training on Cross-Cutting Approaches and Preconditions for Disability-Inclusive Development to promote disability inclusion in Nigeria from 2 July to 5 July at the UN House Abuja.

Mr Mohamed Fall, the UN Resident Coordinator in his remarks at the opening of the Capacity - Building Training, stressed the commitment of the United Nations to 'fostering inclusive, accessible and equitable society where everyone can realize their full potential, regardless of any barriers they may face and to ensure all rights of the Disability community are met.

UNESCO Representative in Nigeria and the Chair of the UN Disability Interagency Group, Mr Abdourahamane Diallo stated that the training is a critical step to build capacity, strengthen partnerships, and create an enabling environment for disability-inclusive development and to ensure that persons with disabilities are also active contributors to the social, economic, and political fabric of the country.

The workshop organised by United Nations Agencies in Nigeria and other stakeholders aim to accelerate meaningful inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities and enhance understanding of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and Nigeria Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act.



Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mohamed Malick Fall



UNESCO Representative in Nigeria and the Chair of the UN Disability Interagency Group, Mr Abdourahamane Diallo

UN Nigeria Inter-Agency Youth Group holds National Consultative Youth Forum on the Summit of the Future



L-R: World Health Organization Nigeria Country Representative, Dr Walter Kazidi Mulombo; The Minister of Youth Development, Dr. Jamila Bio Ibrahim; UNAIDS Representative in Nigeria, Dr. Leo ZEKENG and Mr Koessan Kuawu, who represented the UNFPA Country Representative poses for a selfie

The UN Nigeria Inter-Agency Youth Group held a National Consultative Youth Forum on the Summit of the Future in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Youth Development and the Network of Youth for Sustainable Initiatives on Thursday, 20th June 2024, at the UN House Abuja.

The Minister of Youth Development, Dr. Jamila Bio Ibrahim, in her remarks, urged Nigerian youths to articulate their expectations for the future, promising to convert these into actionable policies. Ibrahim emphasized the pivotal role of the youth in shaping a sustainable and prosperous Nigeria. The forum was set to capture young people's visions to influence the UN Summit of the Future and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ibrahim highlighted the importance of addressing current global challenges like climate change, digital transformation, and social justice. She called for innovative and inclusive solutions, while stressing the need for technology, entrepreneurship, education, and inclusivity to help the youth thrive.

The UN Resident Coordinator, who was represented by the World Health Organization Nigeria Country Representative, Dr Walter Kazidi Mulombo, reiterated support for Nigerian youths, emphasizing their role in driving transformative change and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr Koessan Kuawu, who represented the UNFPA Country Representative, Ms. Gifty Addico, called on the youth in their deliberations to focus on effective multilateral solutions to address the array of challenges ranging from climate change and economic instability to technological disruption and social inequalities for the UN Summit of the Future in September.

At the Panel session of the National Consultative Youth Forum, youths vented their opinions on challenges faced by young people in Nigeria with concrete sustainable solutions.

The outcomes from the forum will serve as Nigeria's contributions towards the Summit.

UN unveils knowledge products & resources on Labour Migration Governance in Nigeria



Director of ILO Nigeria Country Office, Vanessa Phala (4th from the right) along side other dignitaries unveils the publications/ Labour migration report and the revised code of conduct for private employment agencies in Nigeria

ILO Nigeria unveils knowledge products & resources on Labour Migration Governance in Nigeria at the UN House in Abuja.

These resources provide data and insights from research that presents incontrovertible facts, informing engagement on advancing social justice through decent work agenda which safeguards the rights of all working people, including migrant workers.

Director of ILO Nigeria Country Office, Vanessa Phala, in her remarks highlighted that 'Labour migration continues to play a significant role in our national mobility landscape, informing evolving dynamics in global labour markets and the availability of accurate, comprehensive data and statistics is crucial in addressing the challenges and opportunities labour migration presents'.

The Chief of Mission IOM Nigeria, represented by Paola Pace, emphasized the need for data in revising legal or policy framework for migrant workers to have better working conditions. She urged all partners to work together for a progressive impact in the life of migrant workers.

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment represented by the Director Employment and Wages Department stated that 'There is a need for collaboration to make migration a win-win situation for parties involved as migration is an issue that falls within the jurisdiction of many ministries, social partners, International Development partners and civil societies'.

The publications /resources unveiled are:

- Findings from the 2019 Labour Migration report developed by National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria in collaboration Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment
- A Study on the Landscape of the Working Conditions of Migrant Workers in Nigeria produced by Nigeria Labour Congress and
- A revised Code of Conduct for Private Employment Agencies in Nigeria by ILO Nigeria, HuCaPAN, National Employers Consultative Association, and other partners.



Director of ILO Nigeria Country Office, Vanessa Phala giving her remarks

UN, NHRC commemorates the Day for Countering Hate Speech



L-R: Thembekile Dube-Ncube, Office of the UN Nigeria Resident Coordinator; The Executive Director of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Dr Tony Ojukwu; UN Resident Coordinator Mohamed Fall who was represented by Mr. Philippe Delanghe, Culture Programme Specialist UNESCO Regional Office Abuja

The UN in Nigeria with National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) have organized a dialogue with young people to commemorate the Day for Countering Hate Speech themed– ‘Investing in the Power of Youths for Countering and Addressing Hate Speech’

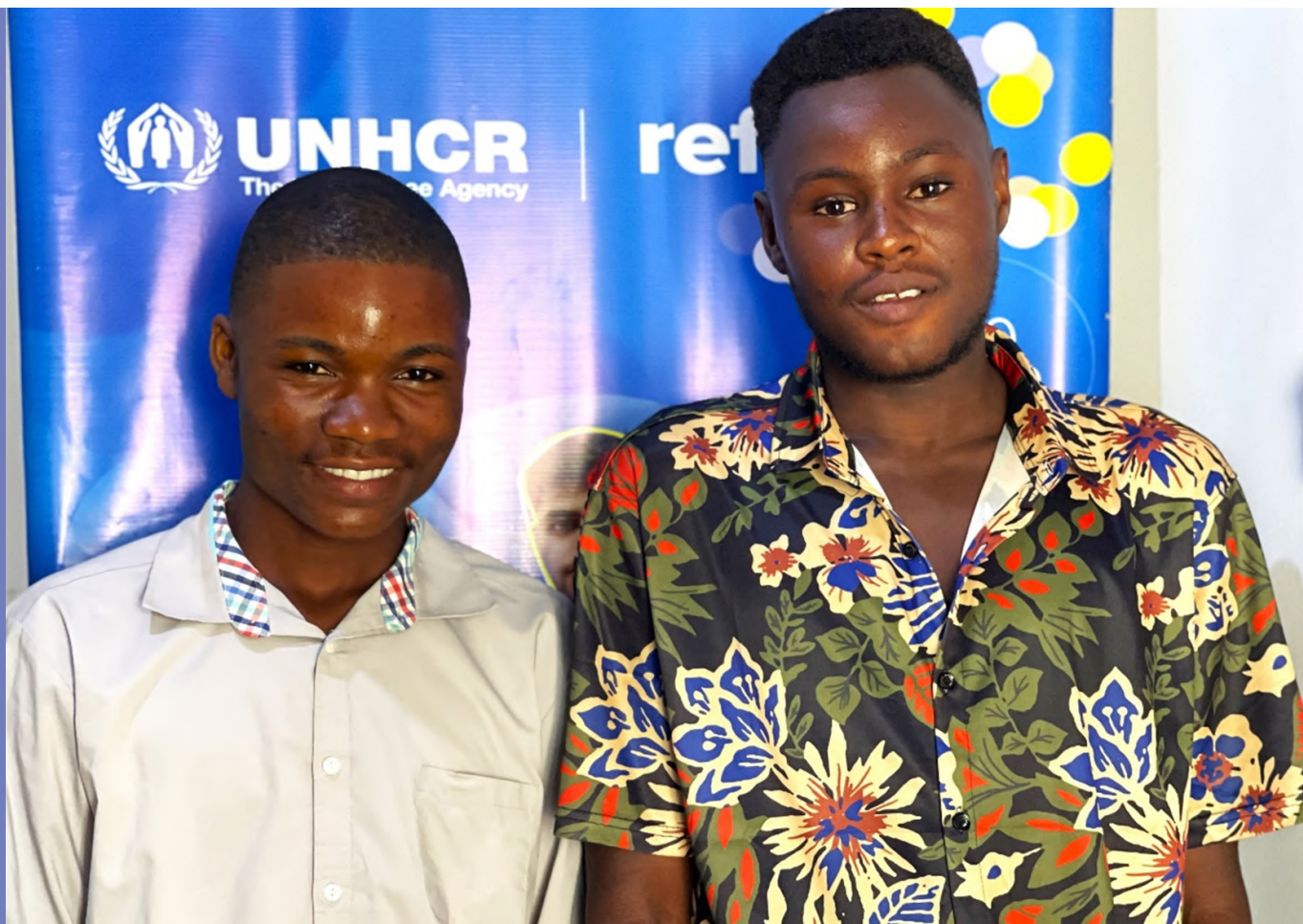
The Executive Director of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Dr Tony Ojukwu in his remarks urged young Nigerians not to be used to incite hatred, emphasizing their role in combating hate speech. He highlighted the importance of mobilizing youth for social and economic development and preserving national unity and called on all stakeholders to raise awareness and counter hate speech, emphasizing its threat to human rights and societal cohesion.

UN Resident Coordinator Mohamed Fall who was represented by Mr. Philippe Delanghe, Culture Programme Specialist UNESCO Regional Office Abuja, defined hate speech and warned of its dangers to peace, development, and human rights. He stressed the role of youth in creating hate-free spaces and highlighted ongoing UN efforts, including UNESCO’s Media and Information Literacy initiatives and a UN-wide Hate Speech Strategy.

He called for collective action to counter hate speech, echoing the UN Secretary-General’s view that fighting hatred is a universal responsibility.



Mastercard Foundation offers higher education opportunities to refugees



Cameroonian Refugees Rene and Shalom at pre-departure orientation, Ogoja, Cross River State, Nigeria. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

Rene and Shalom are eager as they look forward to a farewell and orientation session from UNHCR at the Ogoja Sub Office, Cross River State. Once unattainable, dreams are now becoming reality. These 21-year-old Cameroonian refugees survived gunfire in their community and a harrowing journey through dense bushland. "On that fateful day, we were awakened by gunfire. While fleeing, my younger brother was shot and died. My father couldn't handle it, so we fled to Nigeria," Rene recounts.

Their future looked uncertain until they found refuge in Nigeria. Adding to their challenges, their parents couldn't afford tuition fees. Among Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, only 1.4% are enrolled in higher education through scholarships. With UNHCR's support, Rene and Shalom completed secondary education and excelled in their final exams, seeking scholarship opportunities to further their education. UNHCR also helps refugees secure scholarships through awareness sessions, information dissemination, and application support, increasing secondary enrollment from 33% to 40% and tertiary enrollment from 1% to 1.5% since 2022.

With support from the Mastercard Foundation, Shalom and Rene received scholarships to study Software Engineering and Accounting at the United States International University in Nairobi, Kenya. They de-

parted Nigeria in April 2024 to begin their studies. "Studying Software Engineering is a dream come true. Since childhood, I've been fascinated by computers and technology," Shalom expressed. His passion began at the ICT centre set up by UNHCR in Adagom community, CRS. Rene chose Accounting due to his interest in business. "I enjoy doing business, and this course will help me develop and manage business plans," he explains.

Financial constraints force many Cameroonian refugees to depend on scholarships. Limited opportunities push refugee youths into harmful coping strategies, highlighting the need for more higher education scholarships. Upon graduation, Shalom and Rene hope to give back to their communities by mentoring youths in ICT and creating business plans to support local businesses.

Scholarship programmes like the Mastercard Foundation scholarship are vital for refugees and their host communities because they enable forcibly displaced youths to pursue education, gain employment, and make meaningful contributions to their communities and host countries.

Associations of women-led businesses form a coalition to push for affirmative procurement



Group photo of participants at the coalition for women's economic empowerment meeting in Lagos.

Photo UN Women/Anthony Abu

On the 26th of June, representatives of associations of women led business arose from a coalition meeting in Lagos supported by UN Women Nigeria, We-Fi, and the African Development Bank Nigeria. This group has resolved to push for the implementation of government policies that allocate quotas for women in public procurement and provide other fiscal benefits that aims to reduce the gender gap in the economy.

Nigeria boasts one of the highest numbers of female entrepreneurs globally. Despite this, women-owned businesses face significant challenges in securing procurement contracts. Systematic gender disparities in procurement systems hinder the participation of women in both public and private sector opportunities. To address these gender disparities and enhance economic opportunities for women, a coalition of women business associations, networks, and relevant stakeholders convened in Lagos. Their primary goal is to advocate for the implementation of gender-responsive economic policies.

The low participation of women in procurement is a direct result of systematic gender disparities ingrained in the procurement processes of both government and private sector organizations. These disparities create barriers that women-owned businesses struggle to overcome.

The newly formed coalition aims to intensify advocacy for the operationalization of affirmative procurement policies. These policies are designed to increase women's participation in public and private procurement, thereby promoting greater economic equality.

In its pilot phase, the coalition will focus on Lagos State. Efforts will be directed towards promoting the domestication of the Women Economic Empowerment Policy, securing the approval of the Lagos State Affirmative Procurement Policy, and implementing policies that recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work in Lagos State.

The coalition's strategic plans include pressuring heads of agencies and the private sector to enhance the implementation of economic frameworks that support women. By championing these affirmative policies, the coalition seeks to transform the economic landscape for women in Nigeria, beginning with Lagos.

Cameroonian refugee turns garden into a livelihood support



Blessing, the 37-year-old mother of three who turned her fortune around with a garden.

Photo: UN Women/Roxie Ojoma

Blessing, a 37-year-old mother of three, faced an uncertain future. She and her family were among thousands of Cameroonians displaced by conflict, forced to seek refuge in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The journey to the Ikoy Eyon camp marked a dramatic shift in their lives. Bereft of a livelihood, Blessing and her husband struggled to provide for their family in the unfamiliar and challenging environment of the refugee camp.

However, in 2023, a beacon of hope emerged through the efforts of CASWI (Center for Advancement and Sustainable Welfare Initiatives), a UN Women partner organization, with funding from the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF). Recognizing the potential of sustainable agriculture to transform lives, CASWI organized a comprehensive training program for 250 women. This initiative aimed to equip them with modern agricultural techniques for cultivating high-value garden crops. Consequently, it also established a mentorship system where 40 selected women farmers, including Blessing, received ongoing guidance from trained local women.

With newfound knowledge and confidence, Blessing began applying modern agricultural techniques to her farming practices. She learned about efficient water management, soil health, pest control, and crop rotation. Furthermore, Blessing took the lead within her community, to share her insights and encouraging other women to adopt these innovative methods. Together, they decided to practice the cultivation of high-value crops such as cassava and household vegetables.

Blessing's newfound skills has also had a positive impact on her family. Consequently, she has taught her husband how to plant cucumbers, okra, and peppers. His support was not only learning to plant but he helped her make the ridges on their farm. Their joint efforts bore fruit—literally—when Blessing harvested 80 sizable cucumbers, weighing up to 50 kilograms. Selling them for 200 naira each.

Reflecting on her journey, Blessing shared, "When we arrived at the camp, I had lost hope. But the training and support from UN Women and CASWI have transformed my life. Today, I not only feed my family but also can teach others what I have learnt. I am proud that even as a refugee, I can contribute to the community. It feels empowering to be able to make a difference."

Despite the challenges that come with being a refugee entrepreneur, such as not being able to access financial services, Blessing remains optimistic about the future of her business and its potential to help create a stable economy for the people of Akpabuyo.

Looking at the future, Blessing expressed her aspirations, "I hope that I can grow this into a business that will continue to support not only my family but other women here too."

From scraps to treasures: Ibrahim's expedition as an entrepreneur

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“There was nothing for me there in Libya. It's better I stay in my country with my family who loves me”



Ibrahim

Up until late 2019, Ibrahim lived a serene life with his parents in his native Kano State, in northern Nigeria. His father, a self-proclaimed “nature lover” recycled scrap plastics to make pellets which he would sell to support the family.

This serenity was disrupted when Ibrahim's father tragically passed away in 2019, the young man and his siblings were hit with the hard reality of fending for themselves. Unable to make ends meet, Ibrahim, the eldest among his siblings, made a fateful decision.

“I decided to go to Libya to be able to take care of my siblings,” he says. Filled with hope and expectations of greener pastures, Ibrahim gathered his savings, about 150 US dollars, and embarked on a journey across the border towards Niger.

The journey through the Sahara Desert was nothing compared to what he had imagined.

“I never expected the journey through the desert to be this hard,” Ibrahim recalls. “We saw corpses of people on our way, there was no water, and we were packed like sardines in the truck”.

When he got to Libya, Ibrahim's experience was that of agony, torment, and regrets as he was forced to work in harsh conditions with little or no food for days.

With the support of IOM, Ibrahim returned to his hometown of Kano in 2023.

“There was nothing for me there in Libya. It's better I stay in my country with my family who loves me,” Ibrahim recounts. Upon his return, Ibrahim went through a business skills training programme and received support to set-up a recycling business, following in his late father's footsteps. Through his business, he transforms scrap plastic

waste into raw materials (pellet) for plastic production companies, filling up the gap in Kano state's plastic production value chain.

“We recycle 1,000 Kilo grams of plastic in a day. This is the only business I know of. I learned from my father while he was alive”.

For three months, he was also mentored by IOM experts on basic business administration, ensuring the sustainability of the business. Through his business, Ibrahim employs 12 young men and women from his community, and uses the knowledge gained from the business skills training and mentoring in business administration. From how to calculate his production cost, to evaluation and payment of workers and reinvestment of profits. The training and mentoring have enabled Ibrahim to scale up his business and make it more sustainable. “At a point in time, when I started this business, I had 20 persons working with me and I was unable to generate enough profit. Everything we make as profit was used in paying staff. So, the IOM case manager during their monitoring visit, advised me on how to reduce my staff and increase productivity.”

Like Ibrahim, nearly 4,000 Nigerians who were stranded outside the country have returned to Kano State since 2019 with IOM's support. As part of IOM's efforts to ensure sustainable reintegration of migrants into society, IOM provides economic support alongside business skills training to returned migrants to enable them start up their businesses.

Today, over 2,700 of the returning migrants in Kano have received business skills and reintegration support in fields such as recycling, agriculture, fashion, provision stores business while some have been supported to start Non-Governmental Organizations (NOGs), raising awareness on dangers of irregular migration and trafficking in persons in their communities.

Photo News



Photo news captions,

1. UN Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Fall (Middle) and other Stakeholders gathered at the UN House in Abuja last week to discuss Nigeria's contributions to this important thematic issue. They made proposals on risks posed by new technologies and social media, which can exacerbate hate speech, dealing with underlying causes of violent conflicts, roles of state and non state actors and climate change as a threat multiplier.
2. The United Nations in Nigeria holds a 3-day retreat to strengthen Gender Equality and Women Empowerment component of its work and enhance gender mainstreaming capacity to provide support to Nigeria.
3. The International Labour Organization (ILO), through funding from the US Department of Labour, has concluded a Communication For Development (C4D) training workshop for journalists in Akure Ondo State, to ensure a more effective reporting towards ending child labour in the state.

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