

April 2025



Newsletter



UN is proud to be your ally – Resident Coordinator Mohamed Fall assures youths

At the sixth edition of the Lagos Secondary Schools Model United Nations (LASSMUN) conference in Lagos, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall, assured young people that the UN was proud to be their ally. “The United Nations is proud to be your ally. And we count on you to be a force for positive change, now and in the future.”

“Young people are not just the future; you are the present. Your voices matter. Your ideas can shape policies, transform communities, and drive progress.” He said in a video message to the LASSMUN 2025 General Assembly, convened by the six Lagos Education Districts; the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Nigeria; and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) on 8 April 2025.

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GOAL OF THE MONTH



APRIL, 2025



GOAL OF THE MONTH [#SDG16PEACEJUSTICEANDSTRONGINSTITUTIONS](#)

Ongoing and new violent conflicts around the world are derailing the global path to peace and progress on Goal 16. In today's divided world, our clarion call for peace should echo louder than ever.

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UN IS PROUD TO BE YOUR ALLY – UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR MOHAMED FALL ASSURES YOUTHS

Referring to the LASSMUN 2025 theme, “UN@80 – Dismantling barriers and charting a pathway to meaningful youth engagement for SDGs achievement” as timely in view of the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, the Resident Coordinator noted that the Pact for the Future was clear about the need for young people to be at the table, not as guests, but as decision-makers.

“Your journey starts now. Learn. Debate. Connect. And when you leave this conference, carry this fire forward.” He charged the LASSMUN delegates who were students of Lagos public secondary schools.

The Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Mrs Abisola Khadijat Dokunmu-Adegbite, who was also the Special Guest of Honour, urged the delegates to channel their energies in the right direction to make a difference in the society.

“Be bold, but not aggressive; be confident but not unruly. Don’t get tired. Don’t give up. Don’t flow with the tide, I charge you to stand out.” She further said that life would not give them what they deserved, but what they decided to achieve in their hearts.

Addressing the delegates and dignitaries, the President of the Sixth Session of the LASSMUN General Assembly, Grace Omowunmi Ogungbamigbe, identified some of the barriers facing young people as economic disparity and limited opportunities, persistent digital divide, social and cultural inequities, and limited access to education and skills development.

“As we approach the UN’s 80th anniversary, we must commit to dismantling these barriers and charting new pathways for meaningful youth engagement.” She said, “This requires a paradigm shift in our approach, moving beyond tokenistic gestures to genuine partnerships that empower young people to lead and innovate.

The President, therefore, called on member states, international organisations, civil society and the private sector to prioritise investments in youth education and skills development to equip them for the 21st century workforce.



The Tutor General and Permanent Secretary of Lagos Education District III, Dr (Mrs) Idowun Olufunke Oyetola, commended the United Nations for designing Model UN to broaden the horizon of participating students and to create more awareness of real life issues affecting the world today.

The Secretary General, LASSMUN Sixth General Assembly, Peter Alademehin, emphasised that the journey towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was a collective task with youth at the forefront. In the resolution presented at the end of the session by the rapporteur, Al-Amee Sowemimo, the LASSMUN General Assembly Called for inclusion of youth in decision-making and reminded the Member States that while education is a human right, millions of children of primary school age are still out of school around the world.

They further called on member states to give due consideration to advancing family-oriented policy development to fully benefit future generations.

“We, therefore, urge member states to play a central role in ensuring meaningful youth participation and leadership that makes young people and young people-led organizations have opportunities, capacities, and benefit from an enabling environment and relevant evidence-based programmes and policies at all levels.” The resolution stated.



UNICEF, EU, ILO STRENGTHEN NIGERIA'S SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS



At the result presentation in Abuja, CH stakeholders expressed concerns that Nigeria has continued to host the highest number of food insecure people globally, despite the improvement in the figures. ©FAO/David Tsokar

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), launched the "Supporting Sustainable Social Protection Systems in Nigeria" (SUSI) project. Funded by the European Union (EU), this project seeks to bolster Nigeria's social protection structures, ensuring more comprehensive coverage and aid for vulnerable groups across the country.

The SUSI project will focus on reinforcing policy frameworks, integrating financial mechanisms into national budgets, and enhancing the shock-responsiveness of social protection systems at both federal and state levels. The project will initially be implemented in Abia, Benue, Oyo, and Sokoto States.

At the launch event, Cristian Munduate, UNICEF representative in Nigeria, emphasized the critical role of robust social protection systems in safeguarding the rights and well-being of children and their families. "Social protection is a vital mechanism for reducing poverty and promoting inclusive development. With the EU's support and in collaboration with the ILO, we are committed to working with the Nigerian government to build a more resilient and effective social protection system," said Cristian.

In his remarks, the European Union Ambassador to Nigeria, Gautier Mignot, reiterated the EU's commitment to supporting social inclusion initiatives. "The EU remains dedicated to investing in Nigeria's social protection system as a means to reduce inequality and ensure that no one is left behind. This project aligns with our broader efforts to promote sustainable development and economic empowerment," he stated.

Highlighting the importance of policy and legal frameworks in sustaining social protection efforts, the ILO Country Director, Dr. Vanessa Phala, remarked, "This project will not only expand coverage for vulnerable populations but also strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks necessary for a sustainable social protection system in Nigeria."

The SUSI project aims to deliver key outcomes, including an improved National Social Register, enhanced capacity-building for policymakers, strengthened legal frameworks, and a more efficient Social Protection Management Information System.

Pledging the Nigerian government's commitment to the initiative, the Honourable Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, stated, "This partnership represents a significant milestone in our efforts to strengthen Nigeria's social protection system. By working together, we can create sustainable mechanisms that uplift vulnerable Nigerians and promote long-term economic stability."

The launch event had in attendance, top federal and state government officials, civil society organisations, and development partners, marking a new phase in Nigeria's social protection landscape and reinforcing the country's commitment to the well-being of its citizens.

IFAD HAILS CROSS RIVER'S AGRO TRANSFORMATION, COMMISSIONS AKPABUYO MARKET



IFAD Nigeria Country Director, Mrs. Dede Ekoue interacting with LIFE-ND beneficiaries at a fish hatchery facility in Calabar, Cross River State.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Nigeria Country Director, Mrs. Dede Ahoefa Ekoue, has lauded the Cross River State Office of the IFAD-supported Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprise for the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) for its exemplary leadership and project implementation during a two-day working visit to the state.

Ms. Ekoue, who had earlier participated in the ground-breaking ceremony of the Special Agro-Processing Zone at Adiabo in Calabar, commended the collaborative synergy between the Federal Government, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), and the Cross River State Government, stressing its importance to the success of the agro-processing hub.

Speaking to journalists, Mrs. Ekoue remarked, "The Cross River State Office has made a very laudable impression. They have surpassed the expectations and targets for the project, touching on all value chain commodities. This commendable performance has positioned the state as a beneficiary of additional funding and the second phase of the project."

A highpoint of her visit was the inspection of the 20-million-capacity fish hatchery at the state office, where she expressed satisfaction with the level of strategic engagement, particularly with incubatees and students from the University of Calabar and the University of Cross River State. She noted that the commitment of the team was vital to ensuring the sustainability of the LIFE-ND project.

"The climax of the visit was the commissioning of the IFAD-assisted open market at Urua-Ndung community in Akwa Ikot Effanga Clan, Akpabuyo Local Government Area. The community, which came out in large numbers to welcome the delegation, received high praise from Mrs. Ekoue for their grassroots-driven ideas aimed at livelihood enhancement.

This community has shown that development thrives when people take ownership. The open market initiative is a reflection of the LIFE-ND's vision of empowering communities to lead their transformation," she said. While paying a courtesy call on the Cross River State Commissioner for Agriculture and Irrigation Development, Hon. Johnson Ebokpo, Mrs. Ekoue thanked the state for its unwavering support, particularly in counter-funding and logistics, which are crucial for meeting project milestones.

"LIFE-ND is positioning youth and women in agribusinesses as gamechanger for agrifood system transformation" She noted.

The newly commissioned open market, comprising 14-unit stalls, a solar powered borehole, tank stands, toilet and four 2,000-litre GeePee tanks, was officially handed over to the Akpabuyo Local Government Council, represented by the Secretary, Ms. Juliet Bassey. She assured that the Council would partner with the community to maintain and expand the facility.

Traditional leaders, Chief Offiong Nyong and Chief Bassey Okon, expressed gratitude on behalf of the clan, noting that the new market, which significantly reduces a 10km commute to the nearest trading centre, would alleviate the burden of transportation and other logistical challenges.

Incubatees Josephine Dominic and Bassey Asuquo shared moving testimonies of transformation. "This project has not only taught us poultry and aquaculture skills but has transformed our lives. We now own land, motorbikes, and even vehicles—this is a life-changing experience," they said.



Cross River State Commissioner for Agriculture and Irrigation Development, Hon. Johnson Ebokpo, IFAD Nigeria Country Director, Mrs. Dede Ekoue, commissioning of the IFAD-assisted open market stalls at Urua-Ndung community in Akwa Ikot Effanga Clan, Akpabuyo, Cross River State.

COMMUNITY CASE WORKERS HELP REBUILD LIVES

In conflict-affected communities across north-east Nigeria, case workers are often the first line of support for vulnerable women, children and families. With care and compassion, they help survivors of violence and trauma to heal and rebuild their lives.



A case worker with Arichrisla at her home in Hong, Adamawa State. Photo: CPPLI

Reuniting a mother with her child

Arichrisla,* 23, was devastated when her ex-husband forcibly took custody of their two-year-old daughter. Years of physical and emotional abuse had taken their toll on Arichrisla, but losing her child pushed her to the brink. Her health deteriorated rapidly and she disengaged from community activities.

A friend eventually referred Arichrisla to the Hong Community Women and Girls Safe Space in Adamawa State, where she met a case worker from the Child Protection and Peer Learning Initiative (CPPLI), a national organization funded by the OCHA-managed Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (NHF). Arichrisla was welcomed with compassion and immediately offered counselling, giving her a safe space to share her painful situation and engage with other women and girls facing similar challenges. The peer-to-peer support sessions, group counselling, vocational skills training and recreational activities gave Arichrisla a sense of hope.

CPPLI also referred Arichrisla to a legal team regarding her custody issue. Three months later she was reunited with her daughter.

"I no longer feel sad; I feel well because I have my daughter back," she said.

Her case worker, Vawa Yakubu, said: "When Arichrisla was first referred to me, she was distressed and unsure how to proceed. Through focused counselling I helped her work through her situation and find a solution. Her participation in structured psychosocial activities in the safe space helped rebuild her confidence and resilience, aiding her recovery."

The case workers also help women to access vocational training to learn skills that can provide an income and rebuild their lives.

Gender-based violence and other forms of violence against women are prevalent in crisis-affected communities in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states, in north-east Nigeria. Women such as Arichrisla often have no place to turn for help, and support services are limited due to inadequate funding. But through NHF support, organizations such as CPPLI are helping to change lives.

A teenager's journey to community acceptance

Jaba* was only six years old when his village was attacked by Boko Haram, a non-State armed group in north-east Nigeria. Abducted and held captive for eight years, he was forced to serve as the group's messenger, cook and spy.

Early last year, age 14, Jaba was rescued by the Nigerian Army and returned to his family in Madagali Local Government Area, Adamawa State. But instead of a warm welcome, he and his family were shunned by their community, discriminated and isolated because of Jaba's association with Boko Haram. This made it difficult for him to attend school or participate in community activities.

Things improved when CPPLI took on Jaba's case. Their intervention began during a structured recreational activity in a child-friendly space established by CPPLI to promote social cohesion and community reintegration. A case worker offered psychosocial support and counselling to help Jaba regain his sense of self-worth.

"I was thinking of returning to the bush since no one wanted to associate with me," he recalled.

With CPPLI's support, Jaba enrolled in school, allowing him to connect with his peers, and his family received a grant to start a small business and earn a livelihood.

Community attitudes towards Jaba and his family began to change through continuous awareness activities promoting social cohesion and reintegration. Jaba and his family were gradually accepted again.

"I can go to school. I have friends. My parents are happy because the community supports us now. Thank you," said Jaba.

Last year, CPPLI helped reintegrate 52 children formerly associated with armed groups in Madagali and Michika. The children and their caregivers received psychosocial support, alternative learning opportunities and vocational training, providing them with skills to earn an income and rebuild their lives.

Babangida Umar, a community leader in Madagali, said: "The work they [CPPLI] are doing is truly changing the community, especially these children, whom we only associated with non-State armed groups. We thank you so much."



A case worker counsels Jaba at his home in Madagali, Adamawa State. CPPLI caseworkers help children formerly associated with non-State armed groups to reintegrate into their communities. Photo: CPPLI Nigeria

UN NIGERIA LAUNCHES WOMEN'S WELLNESS CENTER



In the quest to strengthen its duty of care for women's health in the workplace, the United Nations in Nigeria, on 30 April 2025, commissioned a Women's Wellness Centre at the UN Clinic in Abuja.

The Centre was jointly commissioned by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall, and the Country Representative of UN Women in Nigeria and the ECOWAS, Ms Beatrice Eyong.

"In UN Nigeria we walk the talk when it comes to being intentional about women's health," said the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall.

Ms Eyong said, "Today is a big milestone. We are witnessing an improvement of our services. And it is expected that this space that is created for women's wellbeing will be used by women. Thank you, Resident Coordinator, for your constant support for gender equality and women's empowerment."

The Centre aimed to improve women's access to healthcare, mobilize females to speak up about their health challenges and receive adequate support, improve awareness on how reproductive health challenges can be addressed to positively impact on women's productivity in the workplace and provide mental health support as women navigate through various stages of their reproductive cycle.

Despite some progress made in women's health in the past decade, women in work environments still face a lot of challenges attaining the highest possible standards of physical, reproductive and mental health including access to vaccines, comprehensive primary health care services, health promotion and diseases prevention.

The women's wellness center in the UN Clinic Abuja is established primarily to address this gap by providing reproductive healthcare services in the UN clinic, organizing health promotion activities and improving access to primary health care services.

Some of the services provided by the center include reproductive health education and counselling, family planning services, prescription and dispensing of oral, injectable and emergency contraceptives, routine health screenings, ultrasound scan services, vaccinations, routine pre-natal tests and mental health counselling.



YOUNG MINDS, BOLD IDEAS: REIMAGINING GENDER EQUALITY IN NIGERIA BY 2030

The UN auditorium buzzed with young voices and bright eyes looking to provide alternatives to development interventions in Nigeria as it concerns inclusion and equal opportunity. Young people had gathered from across Nigeria to re-imagine solutions on the behest of the UN, a powerful gathering designed not just to discuss change, but to spark it, equip it, and sustain it.

In a country where over 60% of the population is under 30, the future of gender equality depends on the energy, innovation, and leadership of young Nigerians.

This dialogue brought together vibrant voices, young activists, women with disabilities, grassroots organizers, creatives, academics, private sector professionals, and media influencers, united by a shared ambition to create a gender-equal Nigeria. During the event, these diverse young leaders reimagined what's possible and co-created solutions grounded in lived experience, urgency, and bold ideas.

Opening the workshop, UN Women Nigeria's Country Representative, Beatrice Eyong, set the tone with a call to action that was both hopeful and pressing. She urged participants to harness the power of technology and innovation to bridge gender gaps, challenge discriminatory norms, and reframe the future. Referencing the UN's Pact for the Future and key insights from the 68th Commission on the Status of Women, she reminded the room that 2030 is only five years away—and that young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow, but the disruptors and designers of today.

A defining moment came during a reverse brainstorming session, provocatively titled "How can we worsen the achievement of gender equality in Nigeria?" Facilitated by Andrea Scheibach, the exercise was both satirical and sobering. Participants identified barriers such as tokenism, the exclusion of women from leadership, economic disempowerment, and the normalization of gender-based violence, not as distant challenges, but as lived realities that must be dismantled with intention. The session flipped the traditional advocacy model on its head, helping participants gain clarity on what not to replicate, and fueling their determination to build something better.

Throughout the workshop, young people were not just engaged—they were in the driver's seat. In a session led by Oluwaseun Adetutu, UN Women's Programme Associate, participants examined real-world case studies that spanned women's economic empowerment, violence prevention, political participation, social norm change, and intersectional inclusion. What emerged were concrete, context-specific solutions—from the enactment of the Gender Equality Bill and the creation of a Women's Trust Fund, to expanding sexual assault referral centres in rural areas, integrating gender equality education in schools, and ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups such as women with disabilities, elderly women, and those living with HIV. The session affirmed what many already knew: that young people carry not just dreams, but the depth of understanding and strategic clarity needed to make those dreams real. They know the issues because they live them, and that lived experience is a powerful tool for designing what comes next.

Recognizing the central role of digital platforms in shaping culture and shifting norms, the workshop also dedicated time to building participants' skills in online advocacy. Communications professional Oluoma Ali and Dorene Onyia guided a lively discussion on what makes a message resonate—from the content and tone to the credibility of the messenger and timing of delivery. Drawing on viral moments like Banky W. breaking gender stereotypes in a household chore video, they showed how everyday acts can inspire extraordinary conversations. Participants left with practical strategies for using TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter (X), as well as insights on online safety and resilience in the digital space.

What made this workshop truly transformative was not just the content, but the commitment it ignited. This gathering reaffirmed a simple but powerful truth: to achieve a gender-equal Nigeria, we must invest in young people, not as beneficiaries, but as builders. When young minds are given the space to lead and the support to innovate, they don't just imagine a better future, they create it. 2030 may be just around the corner, but if this workshop is any indication, that future is already taking shape. It's bold, inclusive, and led by young Nigerians who are ready to make equality not just an idea, but a reality.



Group photo of participants at the GEWE Innovation workshop. Photo: UN Women Nigeria/Oluoma Ali

ESCALATING ADVOCACY FOR THE PASSAGE OF THE RESERVED SEATS BILL



Group photo of participants at the forum. Photo UN Women Nigeria/ Unwana Umosen

Critical situations require critical measures. The extreme underrepresentation of women in appointed and elected offices in Nigeria, with only about 4% women's representation in the parliament, requires a drastic intervention. After years of challenging socio-cultural barriers and inadequacies in the political and election processes, the women's movement in Nigeria began to push for a law that will reserve seats for women, thereby increasing the number of women in government and other leadership positions.

This forms the primary objective for UN Women's convening of a high-level stakeholder conversation on the Reserved Seats Bill. In the room sat women who had contested elections and lost—not for lack of competence but for lack of opportunity—alongside lawmakers, activists, journalists, civil society organizations, donor agencies, and women-led groups. United by a sense of urgency, participants examined the persistent challenges facing the bill and explored new strategies to secure its passage, marking a bold step toward addressing Nigeria's chronic underrepresentation of women in politics.

The bill is not just about numbers, it aims to deepen democratic practice, align Nigeria with its international obligations, and strengthen national development through broader representation.

Opening conversations revisited the heart of the Bill, its purpose, benefits, and the misperceptions that continue to stall its progress. Stakeholders agreed that the proposed legislation holds transformative potential for Nigeria's political landscape. However, they also acknowledged that financial concerns, political resistance, and societal misconceptions about women's roles in governance continue to fuel opposition.

One of the forum's most critical reflections was on the Bill's previous rejection in 2021. Participants pointed out several lessons learned, including the lack of coordinated advocacy, weak engagement with lawmakers, and poor communication strategies. Many noted that the advocacy at the time relied too heavily on argument rather than persuasion and failed to present the Bill's relevance to Nigeria's economic and democratic goals. These lessons became a springboard for developing a more strategic roadmap moving forward.

As part of the new advocacy strategy, stakeholders proposed a comprehensive engagement plan targeting key players across political, institutional, and social sectors. From members of the National and State Assemblies to traditional rulers, religious leaders, market women associations, and media influencers, each group was identified for tailored advocacy efforts. The plan includes assigning specific states to different civil society clusters to ensure accountability and consistent follow-up.

Recognizing the media's power to shape public opinion, participants called for targeted media sensitization campaigns. Training sessions for journalists were proposed to ensure accurate, positive coverage of the Bill and to counter misinformation. At the same time, citizens must be actively engaged, as the bill represents a step toward inclusive democracy that ultimately benefits both the people and the nation. Stakeholders hope this approach will inspire grassroots support and a strong sense of national ownership.

The forum also spotlighted ongoing advocacy efforts. The Side-by-Side Campaign continues to promote women's political participation through social media, while television engagements on NTA and AIT are creating space for national dialogue. Radio programs across the six geopolitical zones are also helping to sustain public discourse on women in politics and legislative reform.

In closing, the stakeholder forum affirmed that the Special Seats Bill represents a landmark opportunity to correct historic imbalances and move Nigeria closer to true democratic inclusion. Noting that success will require unity, strategy, and the collective will to advocate differently and more effectively. With the right approach, the passage of the Bill is within reach—and with it, a stronger, more representative Nigeria.

IOM COMPLETES SOLARIZATION OF ALL HUMANITARIAN HUBS IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA



Installed solar panels on the roof of the Humanitarian Hub in Maiduguri. Photo: IOM/Elijah Elaigwu 2025

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has successfully completed the solarization of all nine UN humanitarian hubs in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria, marking a major milestone in the transition to sustainable and efficient energy solutions in humanitarian operations.

This achievement underscores IOM's commitment to promoting environmentally responsible practices and reducing the carbon footprint of humanitarian activities in conflict-affected regions, in line with both global and national ambitions.

The solarization project, IOM's largest ever globally, began in 2024 and involved the installation of hybrid Solar Power Supply Systems (SPS) including 2,000 solar panels with an overall capacity of 1,250 kWp at hubs located in Maiduguri, Bama, Banki, Damasak, Dikwa, Gwoza, Monguno, and Ngala. To date, this initiative is the most expansive solar effort within Nigeria's humanitarian sector to date.

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What emerged were concrete, context-specific solutions—from the enactment of the Gender Equality Bill and the creation of a Women's Trust Fund, to expanding sexual assault referral centres in rural areas, integrating gender equality education in schools, and ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups such as women with disabilities, elderly women, and those living with HIV. The session affirmed what many already knew: that young people carry not just dreams, but the depth of understanding and strategic clarity needed to make those dreams real. They know the issues because they live them, and that lived experience is a powerful tool for designing what comes next.

Recognizing the central role of digital platforms in shaping culture and shifting norms, the workshop also dedicated time to building participants' skills in online advocacy. Communications professional Oluoma Ali and Dorene Onyia guided a lively discussion on what makes a message resonate—from the content and tone to the credibility of the messenger and timing of delivery. Drawing on viral moments like Banky W. breaking gender stereotypes in a household chore video, they showed how everyday acts can inspire extraordinary conversations. Participants left with practical strategies for using TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter (X), as well as insights on online safety and resilience in the digital space.



The IOM solar panel battery room at the Humanitarian Hub in Maiduguri ensures efficient energy storage and uninterrupted power supply. Photo: IOM/Elijah Elaigwu 2025



The IOM solar panel battery room at the Humanitarian Hub in Maiduguri ensures efficient energy storage and uninterrupted power supply. Photo: IOM/Elijah Elaigwu 2025

NIGERIA, IFAD, DEC SIGN MOU TO BOOST FARMERS' FINANCIAL INCLUSION



L-R Mrs Helen Abah, Executive Director, DEC, Mr Musa Seriki VCDP National Rural Finance Officer and Mrs Vera Onyeaka-Onyilo, Knowledge Management and Communications Advisor at the MoU signing ceremony held in Bauchi.

In a bid to improve financial inclusion of farmers, the Federal Government of Nigeria and International Fund for Agricultural Development -Value Chain Development Programme, FGN/IFAD-VCDP, and Development Exchange Centre (DEC) Thursday, signed a Memorandum of Understanding, MoU, to boost farmers' financial inclusion.

The signing was done in Bauchi State at the headquarters of DEC, a non-for-profit microfinance institution where the DEC, signed on behalf of DEC, while the National Programme Coordinator, NPC, Dr Fatima Aliyu, signed on behalf of VCDP.

It was made known by Dr Aliyu who led the VCDP delegation to DEC that objective of the VCDP is increased incomes, enhanced food security and reduced vulnerability for smallholder farmers, particularly women and youths in the participating nine States of Anambra, Benue, Ebonyi, Enugu, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun and Taraba States with 135, 000 farmers as direct beneficiaries and over 1 million farmers as indirect beneficiaries are currently under the programme, which will end by 2027.

Dr Aliyu who was represented by VCDP National Rural Finance Officer, Mr Musa Seriki stated that the partnership with DEC started when VCDP and DEC signed the first MoU in December 2021 adding that the partnership has been successful with VCDP farmers accessing loans and other financial services from DEC.

She said: "We are happy with the results from our partnership with DEC. Over 2,000 of our farmers are accessing financial services with DEC".

"The MoU we just signed with DEC will be for a period of two years 2025-2026 and we are looking forward to more results as we have expanded the scope of the partnership to cover three more states of Anambra, Ebonyi and Enugu that were not covered in the initial MoU signed in 2021".

"Thanks to the Federal Government and IFAD for an extension of the programme by another two years, which made VCDP come back for the extension of this MoU, with DEC".

The VCDP NPC also disclosed that, "from the commencement from the partnership four years ago, the programme has succeeded in improving financial inclusion for greater number of farmers who have accessed financial services such as loans, savings, financial literacy trainings and the farmers did not default in paying back the loans".

In her remarks, the Executive Director, DEC, Mrs Helen Abah, made it known that IFAD is a trusted partner of DEC and they did not hesitate with signing a MoU with VCDP having collaborated with closed IFAD Projects-RUFIN and CASP previously.

Mrs Abah acknowledged the MoU between VCDP and DEC had been successful.

She added that, "Through the support of VCDP, we developed 5 financial products along rice and cassava value chains and we have disbursed N400 million naira to over 2,000 VCDP beneficiaries. Initially, we covered 5 VCDP states, however, with this new MoU, we will extend our coverage to 3 other states, Anambra, Ebonyi and Enugu because of the successes recorded in the 5 states."

"Through this partnership, we have been able to reach poor and vulnerable farmers in areas in which ordinarily we do not have our coverage with the farmers receiving financial services to support their farming activities".

Mrs Abah disclosed that VCDP beneficiaries that have been supported are in DEC's database and DEC would continue to extend financial services to them after VCDP's exit.

She said: "we are strategizing and putting systems in place that even after the exit of the VCDP, we will sustain what we have started so the VCDP beneficiaries will continue to have opportunities to receive financial services from our organisation".

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY 2025: ADVANCING NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC DEV'T THROUGH MUSIC



L-R Mr. Oluwatobiloba Moody, Director WIPO Nigeria Office; Mr. Cobhams Asuquo, Nigerian Music Producer and WIPO CLIP Champion; Mr. Mohammed Malik Fall, UN Asst. Secretary General and Resident Coordinator, UN Nigeria; and Dr. John Asein, Director General, Nigerian Copyright Commission

The WIPO Nigeria Office commemorated the World Intellectual Property Day 2025, themed "IP and music: Feel the beat of IP," from April 25 to 26, with two events that spotlighted the vital role of Nigeria's music industry in driving economic development in the country.

This year's World IP Day underscores how creativity and innovation, backed by IP rights, keep a thriving music scene that benefits everyone, everywhere. The first event, a high-level roundtable titled "The Music Industry as a Catalyst for National Development Opportunities and Challenges," brought together key stakeholders—including policymakers, artists, and legal experts—to examine how the Nigerian Music industry, supported by a robust IP system can propel sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

Mr. Malick Fall, UN Assistant Secretary General and Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, emphasized that for Nigerians, music is more than entertainment. He cited that it is also a force for social transformation and a contributor to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. He highlighted the sector's potential to create jobs, promote cultural identity, and empower youth and marginalized communities.

Mr. Oluwatobiloba Moody, Director of the WIPO Nigeria Office, emphasized that for the industry to achieve its potential, there is a need for effective IP systems that ensure that everyday artists can reap the due rewards from their creativity. He put forward that this year's World IP Day asks us to explore how we can create a thriving music scene that benefits everyone everywhere.

Speaking from the national front, the Honourable Minister of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy, Ms. Hannatu Musa Musawa, represented by Mr. Habib Hashim Habib, expressed that the exponential growth of the Nigerian Music Industry, with revenues exceeding N7 billion in 2024, underscores the importance of effective IP protection in ensuring that Nigeria's music industry achieves its potential. Dr. John Asein, Director-General of the Nigerian Copyright Commission, further stressed the importance of this year's World IP Day theme in propelling structures that enable individual artists and creators to earn from their craft. A panel discussion with representatives from the private and public sectors further emphasized the need for more accessible legal frameworks, capacity building, and greater collaboration between public institutions and private creatives.

The World IP Day 2025 celebration concluded with a hands-on masterclass led by renowned music producer and WIPO CLIP (Creators Learn IP Platform) Champion Cobhams Asuquo. His session, "IP and the Music Business," offered young artists essential tools for navigating the business side of music, including contract literacy, copyright registration, royalty management, and strategies for monetizing creative works in a digital era.

WIPO Nigeria's World IP Day 2025 celebration effectively highlighted how aligning intellectual property with the development of the creative economy can unlock the full potential of Nigeria's creative sector. It reaffirmed IP as a key enabler of innovation and inclusive economic growth, essential for achieving Agenda 2030.



UNESCO TRAINS NIGERIAN CIVIL SERVANTS ON AI, DIGITAL GOVERNANCE



The world is increasingly digital. As technology reshapes societies, governments are accelerating digital transformation to understand better and serve their citizens. A 2021 UNESCO survey found that 90% of African countries, including Nigeria, wished for support for AI capacity-building for civil servants.

In Nigeria, the digital transformation effort is guided by the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy. The strategy is a 10-year plan built on eight pillars to drive Nigeria's digital transformation. It prioritizes digital literacy and skills across all sectors, making digital proficiency a fundamental requirement for public sector employees.

Last February, UNESCO helped Nigeria take a step further on this journey. In collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Development and the Ministry of Information and National Orientation, UNESCO leveraged its Framework on AI & Digital Competencies for the Public Sector to train civil servants from both ministries.

In two sessions, UNESCO held training for 80 civil servants. Each training session equipped 40 senior and junior civil servants, respectively. Based on the UNESCO Framework, the expert trainers Dr. Raymond Onuoha and Dr. Gabriel Akinremi delivered a blend of multidisciplinary skills covering the management of digital projects, abilities to design public services with digital technologies, such as AI, and knowledge of governance, such as data openness, data protection, and cybersecurity.

Digital competencies development must become our top priority because the success of government projects relies heavily on the competencies of public sector officials – their capacity to develop enabling frameworks, to anticipate technology trends, to mitigate the ethical- and human rights-related risks, to understand the development of digital platforms.” — Joshi Manish, Representative of UNESCO Abuja Head of Office and Representative

This training was part of the UNESCO Programme on AI and Digital Transformation for the Public Sector. In early 2021, UNESCO identified three barriers governments need to overcome to enjoy digital transformation:

- Cultural and organizational barriers: Resistance to experimentation, innovation, and little leadership support hinders digital transformation in government.
- Data and infrastructure barriers: Limited IT investment, inaccessible datasets, and immature data management and governance hinder national digital transformation.
- Human resource capacity: Gaps in AI and digital skills are worsened by low investment in digital, data, and IT training, along with poor adaptation of procured technologies to organizational needs.

...Continue on the next page

As a response, the Programme aims to equip the public sector with the expertise to integrate digital and AI solutions responsibly. The Framework on AI & Digital Competencies for the Public Sector serves as a knowledge basis to advance this objective. Still, every public organization has need of its own that require tailor-made responses.

Before the trainings, UNESCO listened to 330 civil servants across the Ministry of Youth Development and the Ministry of Information and National Orientation in Nigeria to understand the priorities of each institution towards their digital transformation. For example, we learned that most civil servants in these institutions see improved efficiency as the main benefit of using AI in the workplace. This is closely followed by improved quality of public services.

Based on findings like this, UNESCO tailored a training curriculum to tackle the needs voiced by the institutions. The training leveraged a mix of methods, such as case studies, hands-on exercises, and theoretical discussions, to cover topics like Open Data and Open Government, Fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence, Data Protection and Privacy, Digital Transformation and Governance Strategies in the Public Sector, and Cybersecurity Fundamentals.

"This training has provided me with deeper insights and actionable steps on how AI can be institutionalized in the Nigerian government workplace." — Lamu Longkat Dennis, Asst. Director, Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation

With this practical engagement, the workshop allowed participants to develop actionable strategies for their respective ministries. Following the training, UNESCO continues to support the ministries by co-design a roadmap for upskilling their civil service with AI and digital transformation competencies.

"It was a privilege to attend the Capacity Building workshop on Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence organized by UNESCO where we delved into a range of topics and subtopics like Open Data, Open Government, Data Protection, Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence and I'm glad to say it was an educative and an enriching experience." — Oyeyemi Tunji, Principal Program Analyst, Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation

Ultimately, the training is a new step towards the accomplishment of Nigeria's National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy. Through expert-led sessions, participants explored critical topics in the digital space and AI. As a direct outcome, participants committed to sharing the acquired knowledge by organizing in-house training sessions and collaborating on digital matters. The initiative marks another milestone in UNESCO's efforts to ensure that AI and digital transformation serve as a force for good, empowering public institutions to embrace digital transformation while safeguarding human rights and ethical standards.



FROM INDIFFERENCE TO IMPACT: UNODC'S #BEWILDFORNATURE INSPIRES NIGERIA'S FUTURE WILDLIFE CHAMPIONS



Godwin Lasisi, a #BeWildForNature champion.



Zulaikha Omayoza, a #BeWildForNature champion

Until last year, Zulaikha Omayoza had barely given wildlife a second thought. Like many young Nigerians, the plight of pangolins or the vanishing habitats of elephants felt distant - something for textbooks or TV screens. But everything changed when she joined UNODC's #BeWildForNature initiative, a youth-focused campaign aimed at sparking a new wave of wildlife advocates across the country. What began as a casual interest soon became a mission.

Inspired, informed and determined to take the message to the grassroots, Zulaikha stepped beyond social media advocacy and into the real world – visiting students at Remo Secondary School in Ogun State. Her goal was not to just talk about wildlife, but to spark curiosity, empathy and a sense of responsibility in young minds who may have never thought about the animals disappearing around them.

"I led a team of 17 volunteers to Remo Secondary School, Sagamu, Ogun State, where we engaged 500 students in conversations about wildlife conservation. We reinforced our message by distributing over 500 biodiversity stickers, ensuring that the awareness lived beyond our words."

Art for Wildlife Advocacy

In a rural community in Abuja, Nigeria's federal capital, another story was unfolding. Godwin Lasisi, a young advocate also trained and mentored under the #BeWildForNature initiative, used art to raise awareness on wildlife crime and conservation in Tudun Wada community. Godwin taught children and young people how to create timeless art pieces with the use of recycled plastic waste.

"Storytelling through visual arts has always been an integral part of my life, but it was through UNODC's #BeWildForNature that I saw the suffering of wildlife through the lens of public health and a changing climate. As a visual artist, I realized that where words falter, art speaks; it paints the pain of the planet and the hope still left."

The Elephant in the Room: Wildlife Crime in Nigeria

Behind these efforts lies a harsh reality: Nigeria has become a major hub in the global illegal wildlife trade. The 2024 UNODC World Wildlife Crime Report and the Organized Crime in Nigeria: A Threat Assessment 2023 indicate that illicit trafficking of wildlife and forest products constitutes a major threat to Nigeria's rich ecosystem and biodiversity, as well as to sustainable development and socio-economic growth. Over the past decade, the country has consistently ranked among the top five countries as both a source and destination of illegal wildlife products.

Though many Nigerians may see other issues as more pressing, criminal networks are quietly exploiting the country's rich ecosystems - looting its natural resources and pushing Nigeria closer to an uninhabitable future for current and future generations.

From pangolin scales and ivory to endangered birds, traffickers exploit porous borders and limited enforcement to smuggle valuable species across continents. The environmental loss is staggering, but so is the social cost – including the loss of livelihoods and an increase in instability, conflicts and poverty.

Wildlife may be shrinking, but Nigerian youth are rising to meet the urgency of the problem. Through UNODC's #BeWildForNature – which puts young people at the heart of biodiversity - they are being educated, engaged and provided with the skills and resources they require to galvanize action towards saving our biodiversity. Youth champions like Zulaikha and Godwin are building bridges between communities and conservation, using storytelling, creativity and passion to protect Nigeria's biodiversity.

LET'S BE VIGILANT AND WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE JUSTICE AND DIGNITY FOR ALL – UN



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Mohamed Malick Fall

UN Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator
in Nigeria

on International Day of Reflection



On the 31st anniversary of the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres has called on all stakeholders to be vigilant and work together to build a world of justice and dignity for all, in memory of all victims and survivors of the Rwandan genocide.

"On this day of remembrance, let's commit to be vigilant and to work together to build a world of justice and dignity for all in honour of all the victims, and survivors of the genocide in Rwanda." He said in his message delivered by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall.

Guterres urged all States to deliver on commitments made in the Global Digital Compact to tackle online falsehoods and hatred, to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, and to become parties to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide without delay.

"We must learn from the terrible history of the genocide in Rwanda, and act to stem the tide of hate speech, stop disunity and discontent mutating into violence, uphold human rights, and ensure accountability." He added.

Every year, on or around 7 April, the United Nations organizes commemorative events at its Headquarters and at UN offices around the world. At a [#Kwibuka](#) 31 observance in Abuja, organised by the Rwandan High Commission in Nigeria, and attended by diplomats, UN agencies, government officials, and the Rwandan community, participants honoured the genocide victims and reflected on lessons to combat hate and prevent future atrocities.

The UN system was represented by the UN Women Country Director to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Beatrice Eyong.

Rwandan High Commissioner, H.E. Amb. Christophe Bazivamo urged commitment to the 1948 UN Genocide Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 2150. He called for unity, truth, and justice to ensure a future free from hate.

The solemn event included candle lighting, prayers, and moments of silence to remember the victims.



UNODC HOSTS FIELD DIALOGUE TO BOOST UN RESPONSE TO ORGANIZED CRIME IN NIGERIA

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) convened a pivotal Field Dialogue in Abuja, bringing together UN agencies and national counterparts to chart a coordinated response to the growing threat of transnational organized crime (TOC) in Nigeria and the West African region.

The meeting was opened by the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Mohammed Malick Fall, and chaired by UNODC Country Representative, Mr. Cheikh Toure. Representatives from UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, UNDSS, IOM, UNFPA, WIPO, OHCHR, UNEP, FAO and NDLEA participated, underscoring the UN system and Nigeria's commitment to collaborative action.

In his opening remarks, Mr Fall stated, "I stand before you as the Head of the UN family in Nigeria, underscoring our shared awareness that Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) poses a significant threat to the work of every UN agency. It undermines our collective efforts across various sectors and impedes our achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals."

Stressing the importance of the gathering and why Nigeria must lead the fight against TOC, Country Representative of UNODC, Mr Cheikh Toure added, "TOC in Nigeria manifests in diverse and interconnected forms: drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms smuggling, cybercrime, illicit financial flows and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, to name a few. These crimes are not isolated; they thrive in environments where corruption erodes governance and insecurity restricts access. For instance, banditry and terrorism in the Northwest and Northeast, coupled with kidnapping for ransom, create no-go zones that limit our programmatic reach."

Also speaking, Dr Ibrahim Abdul, Director, Assets and Financial Investigation, NDLEA, equally emphasized, "Criminals have become technologically adept. For a like this help us understand their tactics better and stay ahead of them."



This Field Dialogue forms part of a global UN initiative launched by UNODC Headquarters following discussions in October 2024 within the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), the UN's principal platform for system-wide policy coherence and coordination on TOC issues, particularly across the UN system. Recognizing TOC as a major threat to peace, security, and sustainable development, the UN is working to develop a unified conceptual framework and enhance inter-agency coordination.

Field Dialogues are being held in key regions - Southeast Asia, the Andes, and Nigeria - to identify gaps, leverage expertise, and develop integrated strategies. Insights from these dialogues will inform the upcoming HLCP meeting in New York later this year.

Nigeria's strategic position in West Africa, coupled with vulnerabilities to human trafficking, arms smuggling, illicit financial flows, and counterfeit medicines, places it at the center of this effort. During her recent visit, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed reaffirmed Nigeria's pivotal role in tackling transnational organized crime at both regional and global levels.

UNMAS SCALES UP MINE ACTION AS EXPLOSIVE THREATS RISE IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA



Cross section of Mine Action Partners having a roundtable discussion on way of strengthening partnership for effective mine action.

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) has significantly intensified its operations in Northeast Nigeria in response to the rising number of explosive ordnance (EO) incidents amid ongoing population returns. Between January and April 2025, UNMAS recorded 149 EO incidents in Borno State, including 139 civilian casualties. Improved explosive devices (IEDs) accounted for the 66 percent of incidents (98 incidents) with Konduga, Gwoza, Gujba, Bama, Dambao, and Biu Local Government Areas (LGAs) the most affected. These incidents predominantly occurred along critical supply routes and in areas where internally displaced persons (IDPs) are returning and significantly impede humanitarian access and community reintegration efforts.

In this high-risk environment, UNMAS has amplified its explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) programs, deploying trained national NGOs to deliver culturally-adapted safety messages through interactive sessions in IDP camps, host communities, and educational facilities. The organization has expanded its reach through local language radio broadcasts and targeted distribution of information materials, while simultaneously providing explosive ordnance awareness training to humanitarian workers operating in contaminated areas.

Between October 2024 and March 2025, with support from the UK Integrated Security Fund (ISF), UNMAS conducted four Training-of-Trainers (ToT) programmes for Nigerian security forces. These sessions equipped 72 personnel with the skills to independently deliver EORE in high-risk communities across Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States, as well as in other vulnerable regions beyond Northeast Nigeria. The strategic value of this capacity-building effort was clearly demonstrated during the government-led relocation of IDPs from Gubio Camp in March 2025.

With humanitarian actors denied access to the camp ahead of the relocation to Kukawa LGA, personnel from the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), trained under the UNMAS programme, served as the sole providers of life-saving risk education. Their ability to deliver critical safety messages under restricted conditions not only safeguarded vulnerable civilians but also underscored the programme's success in fostering a nationally embedded, scalable response.

The April 4 observance of the International Day for Mine Awareness in Maiduguri further underscores these efforts, uniting government partners and humanitarian actors under the theme "Safe Futures Starts Here". As highlighted in the UN Secretary-General's statement, this year's theme reminds us of "the critical role of mine action in rebuilding shattered communities, supporting survivors, and forging peace." Even after conflicts end, explosive remnants of war continue to threaten lives and livelihoods, lurking in fields, roadways, and homes. The Secretary-General reiterated the United Nations enduring commitment to mine action and its frontline personnel. Year after year, courageous UNMAS staff and partners work tirelessly to locate and clear these deadly hazards, deliver risk education, conduct threat assessments, and help communities live, work, and move safely, often at great personal risk, as demonstrated most recently in Gaza.

As UNMAS continues to balance emergency response with long term capacity building, the organization emphasizes the urgent need for sustained support to protect vulnerable populations and enable safe, dignified returns across Northeast Nigeria. UNMAS extends its sincere gratitude to its donors, ECHO, the Government of Japan, UKAID, and USAID, for their continued support, which makes these lifesaving interventions possible.



EORE sessions for girls in Bindigari primary school, Damaturu LGA on pictures/ Photo.Credit: CENSCOPE

WE CAN HARNESS THE PROMISE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT – FALL



United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall, addressing the audience.

At the launch the Counter-terrorism CT TECH+ initiative organised in collaboration with the UN Office for Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) in collaboration with Interpol and funded by the European Union, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall has called on all stakeholders to harness the promise of technology as a force for development, peace, security, and human dignity.

Fall explained that CT TECH+ sought to expand focus to selected partner countries, including Nigeria, and emphasizes strengthening legal, policy, and operational capacities to counter the misuse of technologies such as artificial intelligence, OSINT, the Darknet, and virtual assets.

He acknowledged that “Let us be clear: the same technology that terrorists use to coordinate attacks can also be used to detect, disrupt, and dismantle their operations. But this requires vigilance, innovation, and cooperation across borders and sectors.”

According to him, this is why the CT TECH+ initiative is not just a project—it is a platform for action, a commitment to strengthening Nigeria’s resilience to the digital threats of tomorrow while upholding the values that unite all.

The Resident Coordinator extended his deep gratitude to the Government of Nigeria for hosting this important meeting and for reaffirming our shared commitment to a future free from terrorism. We look forward to learning from the bright minds and innovators of this vibrant and technically literate society—and to building the tools, systems, and trust needed to prevent and counter terrorist threats.

The Coordinator of the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Office of the National Security Adviser (NSA), Maj.-Gen. Adamu Laka, said Nigeria has adopted the Counter Terrorism Technology (CT-TECH+) initiative to enhance its capacity to secure the country and the Sahel region.

Laka said that technology has ushered the world into a new era where global citizens now find themselves living in two interconnected realms, the physical world and the digital domain.

He said as innovation continues to evolve and new technologies emerge at an unprecedented pace, it converges vast opportunities and also complex, dynamic, and ever-changing risks.

He further said that the digital age had opened a gateway for terrorists to exploit emerging technologies from artificial intelligence to autonomous technologies, encrypted communications, and blockchain-based financial tools, among others.

“More recently, we witnessed a disturbing trend where terrorists use commercial drones for surveillance over military deployments and even more concerning, these same drones have been weaponised to deliver explosive payloads.” He disclosed.

CT TECH+ is a two-year joint initiative that aims to strengthen the capacity of partner states, including Nigeria, to respond effectively to the growing threat of terrorism facilitated by new and emerging technologies.

OHCHR STRENGTHENS POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND JUSTICE SECTOR OVERSIGHT

Strengthening Human Rights Oversight: OHCHR Nigeria Leads Key Engagements on Police Accountability and Trial Observations

In April 2025, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nigeria advanced its support for national efforts to improve institutional accountability through two major capacity-building workshops in collaboration with national and international partners.

These engagements targeted two critical pillars of the justice system, police oversight and trial observation. These activities highlighted OHCHR's continued commitment to human rights protection, institutional reform, and stakeholder coordination in Nigeria.

Improving the Quality of Terrorism Trial Observations

The OHCHR partnered with the European Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for a workshop focused on enhancing the practice of terrorism trial observations on 8-10 April 2025. The workshop gathered observers from the December 2024 Kainji trials, as well as representatives from the NHRC, Ministry of Justice, Legal Aid Council (LACON), and International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA).

Participants shared firsthand experiences from observing the Kainji trials, offering insights into challenges encountered, good practices adopted, and recommendations for improving trial observation processes. Discussions explored methodologies for ensuring impartial and rights-based monitoring, as well as tools for documenting and translating observations into accessible, actionable reports for key stakeholders in the judicial and human rights systems. The workshop also emphasised the role of observation in ensuring fair trial standards, particularly in sensitive national security cases, and discussed how trial monitoring contributes to systemic reform and public confidence in the rule of law.

Enhancing the Oversight Mechanisms of the Nigerian Police Force

As part of its mandate to support and strengthen the capacity of the police oversight mechanisms in Nigeria under the PBF Project, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) developed a Training Manual on Enhancing Police Oversight. This manual which provides a structured and context-specific resource for building the knowledge, skills, and coordination necessary for effective police oversight in Nigeria was formally reviewed and validated on 23 April.

As a follow-up to the validation exercise, OHCHR on 24 and 25 April convened a two-day training workshop to pre-test the training manual through an interactive and participatory training process. The workshop brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from the Police Service Commission, National Human Rights Commission, Police Internal Oversight Units, Civil Society Organizations, and academia to apply, critique, and refine the manual in a real-world training environment.

Participants acknowledged ongoing challenges, such as fragmented coordination among departments, poor communication, and a lack of tracking or closure on referrals and drew on lessons from the End SARS investigation, reiterating the need to rebuild public trust, especially among youth and vulnerable groups. The importance of engaging with the public, sustaining human rights training and fostering leadership continuity within oversight bodies were identified as essential next steps for sustainable reform.



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ADVISORY United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Nigeria

All correspondence should be directed to **The Editor, UN Nigeria Newsletter: United Nations Communication Group (UNCG) c/o United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Abuja** (unic-abuja@un.org)