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NEWSLETTER



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Governors' Forum, EU, UN Move To End Gender-Based Violence In Nigeria



UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN in Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon (Left) and Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, at the UN House Abuja. 15 July.

To end all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) and the United Nations system in Nigeria have intensified stakeholders' engagements. On 15 July 2020, the Resident Coordinator of the UN system in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, received the Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, at the UN House Abuja, during which discussions centred around supporting the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to End all Forms of Violence against Women and Girls in Nigeria.

Dr Fayemi identified five areas of intervention by the Forum: To put in place a sex offender's register in each of the 36 States; facilitate the enactment /domestication of appropriate laws, notably the Child Rights Law and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law across all states; Establish Sexual Assault Referral Centers and shelters for women and girls in every states; intensify reorientation of values through public education to reverse the enabling environment that sustains culture of impunity; and establish empowerment initiatives for women and girls to reverse the dominant power relation that is at the core of the systemic gender inequalities in the Country.

"There is an urgent need for collaboration with the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative in order to achieve the five focus areas." He added.

Resident-Coordinator Edward Kallon, applauded the five-point agenda of the NGF on GBV and commended the Nigerian Governors' Forum for declaring a state of emergency on gender-based violence on 10 June, a declaration that has led to the passing of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP)...continue on page 2.

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It Is In Everyone's Interests that We Defeat #COVID19 Pandemic - Kallon



The Resident Coordinator of the UN system in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, has emphasised that it is in everyone's interests that COVID-19 pandemic is defeated in Nigeria. "The UN system is here supporting the people of Nigeria and will continue to collaborate with partners and the Government during this time of crisis and through the recovery process." He said at the handing over of the second consignment of +270 cubic meters of medical supplies to the Government of Nigeria, by the European Union Delegation and the United Nations in Nigeria.

Mr. Kallon also called on the people of Nigeria to lead and own the fight against COVID 19 by complying with preventive measures of hand washing, wearing of masks and social distancing. He emphasised that state authorities must lead by example...continue on page 2

It Is In Everyone's Interests that We Defeat #COVID19 (Continued from page 1)



The second consignment of +270 cubic meters of medical supplies donated to the Government of Nigeria, by the European Union Delegation and the United Nations in Nigeria.

...and hold institutions and organisations accountable, to ensure compliance.

The second consignment, which is part of the US\$ 22 million procurement of essential medical supplies for the COVID-19 response, approved by the EU and endorsed by the Nigeria/One-UN COVID-19 Basket Fund Board arrived at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja on Sunday, 26 July 2020. The over 270 CBM shipment consists of thousands of PPEs and hundreds of other medical supplies that will aid the provision of adequate healthcare for those affected by the virus.

In addition, the Government also received vital laboratory supplies and testing kits aimed at increasing the testing capacity and early detection of those affected by the virus across the country. The laboratory supplies and testing kits were procured through a supplementary budget – to help strengthen the One UN Nigeria response – funded by ECHO/EU.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the EU Delegation Mr. Alexandre Borges Gomes emphasised that the EU continues to support the Government of Nigeria in its

efforts to address the health impact and socio-economic challenges of the pandemic.

"The One UN COVID-19 response is an excellent example of international cooperation and collaboration in a time of crisis. While we are proactively addressing the impact of coronavirus in Nigeria, we are yet to conquer the COVID-19 pandemic. Through collaborative interventions, we continue to learn how to protect the vulnerable and rebuild our health sector better." said, Dr Osagie Ehanire, Honorable Minister of Health, Nigeria.

The UN, in collaboration with the Government of Nigeria, had on April 6 2020, launched the One UN COVID-19 Response Basket Fund. The Basket Fund serves as the One COVID-19 Financing and Investment Platform, through which different stakeholders (including UN, other multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as private sector donors, foundations and philanthropists) can channel their financial support to the multi-sectoral efforts of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 Response.

As of July 2020, the One UN COVID-19 response Basket Fund, had mobilised a total sum of US\$63.8 million.

NGF, EU, UN Move to End GBV (Continued from page 1)

..by two states: Bauchi and Akwa Ibom.

"This is a profound commitment by the NGF and Spotlight Initiative will engage at the technical level, to support and ensure the NGF's objectives of eradicating Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Nigeria are achieved." Mr Kallon emphasized.

Kurt Correls who spoke for the European Union on-line from the EU headquarters applauded the Nigerian Governors for declaring a state of emergency on GBVs and looked forward to working with the NGF at a technical level to find a lasting solution to GBV and other anti-social behaviors in the country.



UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN in Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon (Right) and Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, at the UN House Abuja. 15 July.

Kallon Calls For Citizen-centered Approach To Fighting Corruption

The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, has called for a people-centred approach in the fight against corruption in Nigeria such that the lives of citizens will be positively impacted. He made the call as he joined top ranking officials of the African Union and African Governments to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission at a Regional Webinar on Combating Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows.

Mr. Kallon, who acknowledged efforts of Nigeria in corrupt related convictions, especially in 2019 and repatriation of stolen funds from few jurisdictions, expressed belief that citizens should be put at the centre of the fight against corruption to make the efforts more impactful.

“Going forward, I would like to propose to you today an adjustment to our approach. It is our belief that we need an approach that puts citizens at the center of the fight against corruption. It is only when citizens see tangible progress directly

impacting their lives positively, that we can expect them to support the fight, to refuse to take part in corrupt practices

and to report corruption incidents whenever they become aware of them. In short, we need to do better in demonstrating the actual benefits of the fight against corruption.”

Drawing from the experience in Nigeria, the UN Resident Coordinator proposed four specific actions to tackle widespread small-scale bribery: enhancing the development impact of asset recovery, creating effective and responsive public complaints systems and improving transparency and communications in the fight against corruption.



EU, UN Highlight Strengthening Criminal Justice Response Across West Africa



On May 14, 2020, ten persons who allegedly hijacked a fishing vessel, Hailufeng 11, on May 14, 2020 are now standing trial at the Federal High Court in Lagos. This is the first ever trial of a piracy case in Nigeria, under the Suppression of Piracy and Other Maritime Offences Act of June 2019.

The Nigerian Navy carried out a rescue operation 140 nautical miles south of the Lagos Fairway Buoy on May 16, 2020. The 18 crew members were rescued, and the ten suspects arrested and arraigned on 13 July 2020.

Considering the importance of this trial, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) jointly highlighted their continued support to strengthening the criminal justice response across West Africa within the framework of the project Support to West African Integrated Maritime Security (SWAIMS).

Specific actions planned under the project to further support the implementation of the ECOWAS Maritime Strategy in the coming months include: provide comprehensive e-learning training platforms to maritime crime practitioners; donate video teleconferencing (VTC) and hardware equipment to ameliorate the quality of current and future trials of piracy and maritime crime cases; share technical expertise in drafting and applying legal procedures for maritime crimes; and assist in mitigating the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the maritime criminal justice systems in Nigeria and the other West African countries.

The UNODC and the EU remain committed to the fight against piracy and other maritime crime in West Africa and will continue to support Nigeria’s criminal justice response to maritime crime.

UN, Partners Engage On Critical Legislative Reforms In The Fight Against Corruption



On 11 July 2020, the Senate Anti-Corruption and Financial Crimes Committee in partnership with the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime gathered stakeholders from all three arms of Government as well as civil society to discuss the need for critical legislative reforms in the fight against corruption.

Under the chairmanship of Senator Suleiman Abdu Kwari the diverse group of representatives of anti-corruption agencies, parliamentarians, judges and members of civil society debated key issues which have occupied the minds of anti-corruption experts and the public alike in recent times. Discussion centered around three key topics: Does multiplicity of corruption related laws create obstacles in the fight against corruption? Do we need a legal basis for the improved management and disposal of seized and confiscated assets? And, is the independence as well as oversight of anti-corruption bodies sufficiently secured to ensure their effectiveness?

Cognizant that Nigeria had received recommendations as concerns all three areas during its review against the requirement of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, participants felt strongly that developing and finally adopting a legislative framework for the transparent and accountable management and disposal of domestically and internationally recovered funds should be prioritized by the National Assembly. In this context, many felt that the option of assigning such functions possibly to an existing public sector entity already engaged in the management of public assets should be explored also considering the proliferation of MDAs as well as fiscal challenges.

There appeared also an overarching consensus that the independence of existing ACAs needed strengthening, including enhanced security of tenure of the chairpersons, greater financial autonomy of the commissions and the establishment of strong and credible advisory boards.

Fighting The Pandemic Together

How Nigeria's IDPs are producing facemasks to help contain COVID-19



Photo: Aisha at work. Credit: COOPI/Ali Baba and Solomon Jatawa

Despite the coordinated efforts to contain the pandemic, COVID-19 infections continue to rise rapidly in Nigeria, reaching over 40,000 confirmed cases as at July ending, with over 800 deaths nationwide, according to figures from the National Centre for Disease Control. For internally displaced people a life dealing with conflict, danger and hunger is already difficult enough. Now the COVID-19 pandemic has added further pressures to their already fragile existence.

As a part of its COVID-19 response, the World Food Programme has scaled up its assistance to reach 1.8 million people in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states, where WFP is providing food and nutrition support to people affected by insurgency. A new livelihoods project in Yobe State, supported by WFP and its partner, Cooperation Internationale (COOPI), aims to help communities protect themselves from risk whilst enhancing their ability to support themselves financially. Nearly 400 displaced men and women have received basic training in tailoring to produce cloth facemasks, which they sell for a small profit.

Aisha Abdul Hamid is one of the tailors. Aisha, 42, is a widow and mother of five. Aisha was forced to leave her home in Gujba due to the insurgency, and currently lives in Abbari village in Yobe State. She and her children survive on food assistance from WFP.

Giving back to the community

For Aisha, becoming a member of the tailoring group is a way to be useful. She says: "We want to be part of the solution to this pandemic. We are also very happy for the opportunity to give back to the community that has been hosting us." The tailors were given training and capital to help them produce the face-masks, initially for free distribution to those deemed most at risk of the virus – the elderly, disabled and chronic poor. All masks are sterilized to ensure they are free from potential contamination before distribution.

Fit for use

The masks they produce have since gone on to be tested and certified by the local health authorities as fit for use in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Aisha explains: "WFP and COOPI helped us obtain official endorsement of our product's quality from the Health Ministry. With the directives from the Government on the

mandatory wearing of facemasks in the public places to prevent the spread of the Virus, now our product has a market." The tailors have produced over 3,500 non-surgical cloth facemasks based on an agreed price per product, subsidized by COOPI. Each individual tailor makes between 5-15 masks a day, with a profit of N50 on each facemask.

Self-reliance

The tailors also received training in community education – offering demonstrations on correct use of facemasks, the importance of handwashing, hand sanitization and social distancing. Thus, the project is not only helping stem the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is helping IDPs to become self-reliant and support themselves. Sarah Tanko, a widow and mother of four, is another successful participant in the tailoring programme. Sarah lost her home and property when armed fighters attacked her community in Askira-Uba, Borno State. She has been living in Yobe since over five years – and enrolled in the tailoring programme in 2019. With her starter-pack, Sarah is now also a successful tailor.

Sarah says: "With the tailoring refresher training, my skills have improved, and I own a tailoring shop with three apprentices. Thank you COOPI and WFP for giving me the opportunity to cater for my family without depending totally on food assistance."

Bolstering COVID-19 Surveillance In Lagos

Nigeria, one of the African countries with high number of COVID-19 cases, is strengthening disease surveillance to help stem the spread of the virus. In Lagos, which accounts for almost half of Nigeria's infections, the World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting the health authorities by mobilizing surveillance teams to help investigate and trace patients presenting COVID-19 symptoms at healthcare facilities.

They dig through hospital records every day looking for patients who may be showing COVID-19 and who may have been missed by hospital staff. Deployed in the 37 localities of Lagos state, they act as fresh eyes in medical centres and alert the state COVID-19 investigations teams once a case is identified. In Lagos 1408 health facilities are covered by the surveillance officers.



Dr Wesley Salifu, 27, a surveillance assistant in Lagos, takes a canoe to a riverine community in Ibeju Lekki area of Lagos. He is one of the 16 WHO consultants helping to find COVID-19 cases in health facilities in the state. Hundreds of health facilities are located far away from the Lagos metropolis. Dr Salifu visits at least six hospitals daily. To get to some far-flung communities, Dr Salifu is forced to take a rickety canoe or a motorbike. The likelihood of hospitals in rural, wetlands like Ibeju Lekki missing possible COVID-19 cases is especially high, Dr Salifu says. "Because these areas are prone to malaria and common cold which have similar symptoms to COVID-19, it's easy to mistake one for another."



Matron Kasali takes the blood pressure and the temperature of a patient at the Lagos General Hospital, Marina. Across hospitals and public spaces in Lagos, the blue and white coloured infrared thermometer has become a must-have instrument used to detect potential COVID-19 patients and book them for tests. As the country opens up its domestic airports after a March shutdown, authorities announced that strict prevention protocols, including temperature checks, will be followed before passengers can be allowed on flights.



Surveillance assistant, Bola Adelakun, 26, visits a maternal health facility in Ibeju Lekki, Lagos. On arrival, hospital record officers present their registers to the officer so she can go through them. She also asks them what difficulties they face in finding or monitoring COVID-19 patients. Some of the problems are that many patients don't wear face masks. The authorities encourage the use of masks, but health workers say many people are reluctant to follow prevention measures, while some do not believe that COVID-19 is real, hide symptoms and refuse to get tested. Average COVID-19 positivity rate in Lagos now stands at 24%. 17% in Lagos, This is almost five times more than three times the global average rate of 5%.



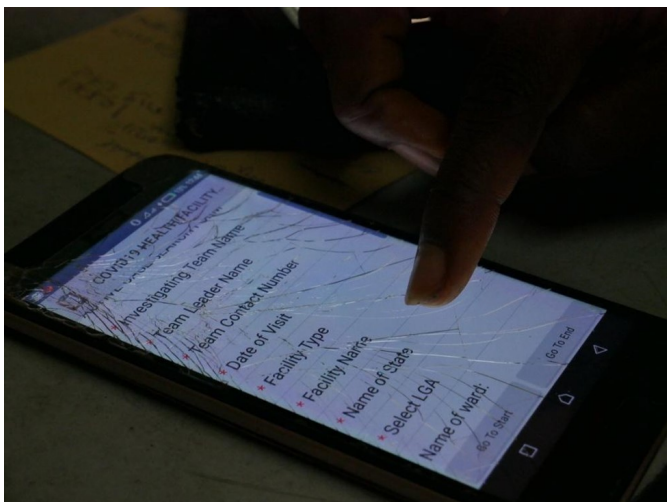
Jemilat Keshinro, a records officer at the Lagos General Hospital, Marina, holds up the hospital card of a suspected COVID-19 patient. Often, some patients exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms refuse to be tested after healthcare workers at the hospital have advised them to do so, she says. The records department contacts the state's rapid response team to investigate, track and test patients like that. Across Lagos' five testing laboratories, over 59 000 samples have been tested so far.

Continue on the next page...

Bolstering COVID-19 Surveillance In Lagos (Continued from page 4)



Record officers are in charge of monitoring the numbers of COVID-19 positive cases noted at the hospital. At the General Hospital, Marina, suspected COVID-19 patients are usually sent for testing at the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Yaba area of Lagos State. In other cases, rapid response teams are invited to the hospital. Testing in Lagos was initially restricted to travellers returning from hotspot countries and their immediate contacts. Now that the state has slipped into the community transmission stage, anyone showing symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, fever, loss of smell, loss of taste, chest pain or catarrh can be tested, according to WHO guidelines.



Surveillance officer Adalakun and other surveillance assistants use spreadsheet applications to report and trace suspected COVID-19 cases. A separate team of state and local government officers will follow up on cases found with sample collection. The decentralisation of the COVID-19 response in Nigeria has enabled greater fluidity, allowing people at the grassroots to access the care they need. However greater manpower will be needed as COVID-19 infections increase.



Lagos state authorities say they are determined to safeguard the lives of health care workers who risk getting infected in the line of duty. Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu announced that a COVID-19 allowance would be made available to emergency healthcare workers in the state. The governor also said health and life insurances have been procured for health workers. By 21 July 2020, a total of 720 635 health workers were infected in the state.



Surveillance officer Adalakun heads out of the Lagos State General Hospital, Marina. While the day's work is done, the rounds will continue the next day. Lagos state government continues to ease restrictions on travel, businesses and schools and it is feared that COVID-19 cases will rise. Surveillance teams continue to play an important role in supporting the state in curbing COVID-19 spread. "All the teams are doing well, starting from the national level to the various state governments," says Dr Clement Nwaeke, the WHO National Surveillance Officer. "WHO is always there by their side and the Local Government Areas are also helping out. What is needed now is sustaining the tempo of what we are already doing."

Special Feature

UN, Leveraging On HIV Assets To fight COVID-19 in Nigeria



Nigeria's COVID-19 Response Leadership and the UN Country Team

Nigeria witnessed its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on 27 February 2020, when an Italian citizen arriving in Lagos from Milan later tested positive for the virus. The confirmation of the first case led to the immediate activation of the National COVID-19 Emergency Operation Center by the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC) Director General, Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, and the subsequent formation of an inter-ministerial committee by the Health Minister, Dr Osagie Ehanire. On 17th March 2020, a Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 Response (PTF) was established, led by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr Boss Mustapha. The PTF's first task was to develop a National COVID-19 Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Response Plan to serve as a framework for stakeholder agencies and organizations to work together to prevent the spread and mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

The United Nations in Nigeria also swung into action, utilizing the UN's existing structures under the Partnership Framework and the Humanitarian Response Plan to align the UN response to the National COVID-19 response efforts, with the Resident Coordinator, Mr Edward Kallon, designating the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) mechanism as the system's decision-making structure for COVID-19. WHO was designated the technical lead on the UNCT's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Dr Fiona Braka, Acting WHO Representative, served as the UN representative in the PTF.

UNAIDS day-to-day work in facilitating, linking and bringing government and different stakeholders together to respond effectively to HIV was acknowledged as a springboard to guide the multisectoral coordination of UN support around the COVID response. UNAIDS' overall contribution to the COVID-19 response through the one UN system is multidimensional:

UNAIDS proactively mobilized, in support of the One-UN response, its political capital and goodwill in the country, particularly among friends and partners in the national HIV leadership and key HIV donors, especially the US Government and Global Fund. Consequently, more resources have been brought to bear, communication across stakeholders has been stronger, coordination of the response has continuously improved, and everyone involved has shown greater accountability.

On 23 March 2020, the UN Resident Coordinator convened a high-level meeting at the UN House with the national leadership for COVID-19 and key bilateral donors on COVID 19 coordination,



Frontline health personnel at the UN Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) Facility in Abuja. Photo: UNIC/ Oluseyi Soremekun

where UNAIDS presented historical lessons learned at both the global and country levels regarding coordination and management experiences of the HIV epidemic. This led to a strong consensus and adoption of "Four Ones" guiding principles of engagement for national authorities and partners to prevent, prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic: i) One National COVID-19 Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Response Plan; ii) One COVID-19 National Coordinating Authority with a broad-based multi-sector mandate; iii) One COVID-19 Monitoring and Evaluation System for tracking and reporting progress; and iv) One COVID-19 Financing and Investment Platform.

Health Minister Ehanire was pleased with this framework, stating, "We really like the idea of the 'Four Ones' principles. It will help a lot to simplify and clarify roles, responsibilities and relationships, including within government." The PTF National Coordinator, Dr Sani Aliyu, was particularly excited by the 'fourth one', adding that "As a government, we will not have the time and capacity to manage individual donor requirements and engagements. We trust the UN to play this role on our behalf."

UNAIDS highlighted to the national leadership, the impact of COVID-19 not only among people living with HIV and key populations in the country, but also among the general population, including the poor in particular. The National Coordinator of Network of People living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (NEPWHAN), Mr Abdulkadir Ibrahim, emphasized this support, saying "UNAIDS regularly coordinated with the networks since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, providing technical guidance and ensuring synergy with the efforts of the government."

Special Feature

Leveraging On HIV Assets To fight COVID-19 in Nigeria *(Continued from the last page)*



R-L: Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr Edward Kallon; Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Hajiya Sadiya Umar Farouk; Minister of State for Health, Dr Olorunnimbe Mawmowora; and the Minister of Aviation, Alhaji Hadi Sirika; sign the document for official hand over of the medical supplies to the government.



A shipment of essential medical supplies procured by the EU and the UN in Nigeria., in support of the government of Nigeria.

The UN Country Team fully supported the Resident Coordinator in highlighting shortcomings of the COVID-19 response and making recommendations to the government to address them. Instances included: scaling up testing; limiting movements within and between hotspot states; ensuring a lockdown that did not target poor people; discouraging hospitals from turning away patients presenting a fever, and adopting a policy of wearing face masks while out in public places. UNAIDS also closely worked with UNDP to support the coordination between the UN system and the government and facilitated formal handover of \$ 2 million worth of medical commodities to the Government, ensuring the supplies and equipment were prioritized for use in public health facilities and by health care workers.

The UNDP Representative, Dr Mohamed Yahya, played a critical role in the establishment of the Basket Fund (currently valued at approx. \$65 million), working closely with the Resident Coordinator, Mr Edward Kallon, and Dr Erasmus Morah, UNAIDS Country Director. Together with UN Women and UNFPA, they ensured that the Basket Fund financing platform placed “people” and “communities” at the center of its financing of COVID-19 interventions. Working collaboratively, the UNCT was able to mobilize US\$ 6.5 million for civil society and community engagement, including women and youth-led accountability forums, social protection interventions for vulnerable households and documentation of community best practices.

In acknowledging the efforts made by UNAIDS to support the COVID response, the Resident Coordinator, Mr Kallon highlighted, “The lessons of the global HIV response are in line with the UN Reform agenda in Nigeria,” He further stated that “Consequently, the COVID-19 Basket Fund has been designed to serve within the One COVID-19 Financing and Investment Platform through which the different stakeholders can channel their contributions to the multisectoral efforts of the country.”

Of note among UNAIDS’s value addition to the COVID-19 response, has been harnessing the vast HIV infrastructure in the country from national authorities and laboratories and logistical networks, to civil society, community groups and partnerships across the country at all levels. Explaining the need to integrate HIV and its vast infrastructure and community health workers across the country, the UNAIDS Country Director, Dr Erasmus Morah emphasized that “We must leverage on HIV assets on the ground, including not just the laboratory facilities but the community health workers and volunteers. To fight COVID-19 effectively we will have no choice but to engage communities to own the response and put people at the center.” A joint effort of US

Government, NACA, UNICEF, UNAIDS and PTF were able to map and subsequently initiate the process of engaging some 100,000 community health care workers and volunteers, with at least 17,500 of these directly associated with HIV.

UNAIDS Nigeria recognizes that COVID is far from over, cases have been steadily rising and as of June 30, 2020, the country crossed the bar of 25,000 cases and 590 (3%) fatalities, while carrying out over 138,000 tests across the country. As part of the front-line workers, UN staff have not been spared. In support of the firm position of the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr Edward Kallon, that the UN “must stay open for business and deliver for the people,” the UNCT and the UN COVID-19 Duty of Care Coordinators, Ms Ulla Mueller (UNFPA Representative) and Mr Frantz Celestin (IOM Chief of Mission) had strongly advocated the necessity of establishing a UN COVID-19 isolation and treatment center as an extension of the UN Clinic, as a critical duty of care condition for staff, together with their dependent family members. The expanded UN Clinic and center for COVID-19 isolation and treatment was opened on 28 April by Mr Kallon. Since then, the UN family has had 93 staff members infected with two fatalities in the early days, but none since the establishment of the Center, which has discharged 62 out of 87 admissions as of 19 July 2020

Moving forward with the COVID-19 response, in addition to the continued engagement in support of the Presidential Task Force, the UN country team, is gearing-up to support Nigeria through the UN “Offer plus” that focuses on immediate and medium-term measures that enable the design of appropriate interventions that would help achieve post COVID-19 socio economic recovery. The immediate interventions contribute to risk mitigation by providing safety nets for the vulnerable through measures such as cash transfers; while the medium-term measures contribute to socio-economic recovery from the impact of the pandemic. In addition, rapid assessments, policy briefs are developed to have a cohesive and holistic response to support the government.



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Clean Water, Hygiene And Sanitation: Crucial To Contain COVID-19 Among IDPs In Northeast Nigeria



COVID-19 continues to disrupt the health, public life and livelihoods in Africa's most populous country. As the disease continues to spread in northeast Nigeria, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is extending its water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) operations to reduce the spread of the virus.

A new IOM project will help prevent and control COVID-19 infections in three areas in Borno State with high concentrations of displaced persons; areas also deemed high-risk for disease spread.

In Borno, the largest state in the region, about 80 per cent of the estimated 840,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) live in makeshift and temporary shelters in overcrowded conditions where physical distancing is difficult, if not impossible.

Moreover, despite the pandemic, attacks by non-state armed groups in the north-east are ongoing, including in areas close to humanitarian operations. On 2 July, an attack in Damasak claimed the lives of two civilians, including a five-year old child, and damaged a humanitarian helicopter.

On 14 July, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control had recorded 591 confirmed cases and 35 associated deaths in Borno, where a decade-long humanitarian crisis has left 1.8 million people displaced and 10.6 million in need of assistance. The impact of an outbreak among the displaced populations in this area could be devastating.

"Without the availability of sanitation facilities and hygiene materials, IDPs are extremely vulnerable to disease transmission," said Teshager Tefera, IOM Nigeria WASH Programme Manager. "Our teams continue working alongside displaced communities to bring clean water to camps and nearby settlements, but more needs to be done."

Services will reach an estimated 420,000 IDPs in 120 camps and nearby communities in Maiduguri, Konduga, and Damasak municipalities in Borno State. The project will supply clean and safe water, as well as 22,000 hygiene kits with soap, buckets, and other items, to populations at risk.

On average, IOM supplies two million liters of water per day to 113,500 people in Borno where torrential rains and flooding have caused substantial damage to latrines, showers, handwashing stations and solar panels. The funding will allow IOM to train and mobilize displaced communities to repair and maintain these facilities and construct an additional 1,040 handwashing points using foot-operated water taps and soap dispensers to avoid contact with surfaces.

To complement these activities, IOM field workers are training local camp residents on risk communication and community engagement, reaching close to 20,000 people through door-to-door awareness raising.

"Even though I am blind, I always pay attention to the hygiene promoters who tell us how to properly wash our hands to avoid the virus. I spend most of my time at home, so I always look forward to their visits," said Lariya Magaji, an 89-year old woman living with her granddaughter in Stadium Camp in Maiduguri.

To avoid mass gatherings, information will be shared also via loudspeakers mounted on tricycles to reach high numbers of IDPs in camps without exposing them to risks.

Recently, IOM Nigeria launched its COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan with a request of USD 19.3 million to mitigate the pandemic's socio-economic impacts and ensure the continuity of life-saving assistance in emergency settings.

"This is our largest WASH donation since the programme began in Nigeria in 2018, and it arrives at a time when these services are most needed," said Franz Celestin, IOM Nigeria Chief of Mission. "The support from OFDA will help ensure the sustainability of our life-saving activities in Borno," he added.

The USD 6.22 million project Strengthening COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in North-east Nigeria Through Targeted Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Activities, funded by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), will be implemented over a twelve-month period.

Former Almajiri Children Empowered For A New Future



Empowering young people in Nigeria. UNICEF Nigeria/2018/Esiebo

“I want to be responsible when I grow up. My aspiration is to attend formal school, acquire skills and work in trading, farming or the transport business.”

15-year-old Mohamed’s aspirations are not unusual. Like most young people in Nigeria and around the world, he dreams of creating a better life for himself and his family. But young Mohamed has had an unusual start.

A product of the “Almajiri” system, Mohamed has never received a formal education. Instead, he spent his formative years in traditional Islamic education, where children – mostly boys – spend part of their days memorizing the Qur’an and the rest of the day on the streets, begging for food.

In May 2020, the Governor of Kano State in northern Nigeria, where a large number of Almajiri children live, formally abolished the traditional system in the State. Governor Abdullahi Ganduje said that all Almajiri children should be enrolled in formal education.

Despite its noble beginnings, today, the Almajiri system is characterized by social exclusion, chronic poverty and perpetual abuse. Churning out large numbers of young people with no formal education or employable skills, the system poses daunting social and economic challenges to the government and the people themselves.

Neglected, stigmatized and vulnerable to abuse, 60 percent of Almajiri boys never return home. They are left to fend for themselves and little is known about what happens to them after leaving the system.

16-year-old Abdulkarim, another young Almajiri, has now left the system and speaks of the life he looks forward to without being excluded because of his background. He wants to acquire business skills that can better prepare him for a career in entrepreneurship like his peers who went through formal schooling.

“I want to attend school like other young people. I want to acquire skills in trade and commerce and connect with other

young people in the same kind of business that I will do after school.”

For former Almajiri children like Mohamed and Abdulkarim, the Generation Unlimited (GenU) platform can help. GenU is a multi-sector partnership that supports young people between the ages of 10 and 24 to bridge the transition from education and training to employment and entrepreneurship. It brings together public and private partners - and young people themselves - to identify and capitalize on opportunities created by programs that support better outcomes for young people.

UNICEF, UNDP, ILO and private sector partners in Nigeria, under the GenU partnership, explore how Almajiri children who have left the system can be reached with life skills, learning opportunities and practical training that can empower them to find employment and a better future.

Harnessing the sense of unity and solidarity cultivated in the Almajiri system, these young people can benefit from collective training that prepares them for steady employment. Through public and private sector partnership, these apprenticeship trainings can be aligned with current and future market needs for low-medium skilled labour, including recycling systems, brick building, tailoring and other sustainable local business.

Structured entrepreneurial training will equip former Almajiri children with the necessary skills and mindset to identify and launch new ventures - while also creating a pool of trained people the private sector can tap into for skilled labour.

Former Almajiri children show a notable commitment to acquiring knowledge and attending formal schooling through a system that will ensure they acquire the right skills for effective employment in adulthood that goes beyond menial jobs that pay less than the national minimum wage of 30,000 naira.

UN Supports Nigerian Government In The Fight Against COVID-19



UNHCR procured and dispatched 300 Refugee Housing Units to Maiduguri to serve as isolation facilities for COVID-19 Cases

From 22 April 2020 when the first COVID-19 index case was reported in Borno State, UNHCR has worked with the Federal and State governments to implement hygiene and social distancing measures to prevent community transmission and increase awareness among IDPs, returnees and host communities members on COVID-19 pandemic. As of 24 July, three months later, 611 individuals including IDPs have tested positive to COVID 19 with 35 deaths in Borno State.

Long before the index case appears in Borno, the State Government and United Nations had taken a proactive approach by providing guidelines on key activities to implement in the prevention and response of COVID-19. UNHCR engagement includes efforts to address protection and operational challenges as well as health support measures put in place to support the Nigerian government in the process of IDP camp decongestion and relocation of the vulnerable population.

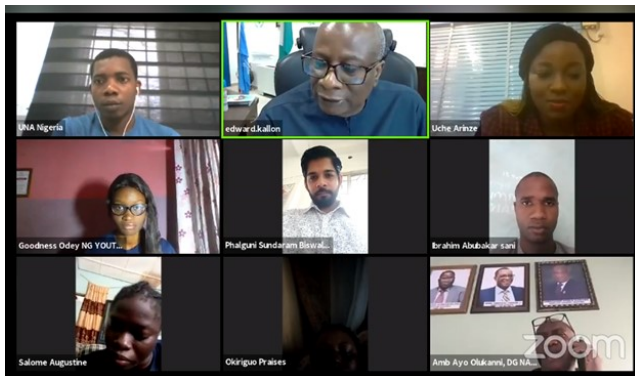
Although international borders are officially closed to curb the spread of the pandemic, cross border movement continues. For the past few months, UNHCR ensures border monitoring with the support of six (6) border Area Nurses and eight (8) protection Monitors. They are tasked among others to conduct borders monitoring in Damasak, Banki, Ngala entry points with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, as well as, temperature screening and health-related data collection, referral of suspect cases, and information sharing with the COVID-19 Surveillance Task Force. However, the lack of isolation /quarantine centers continued to be a hindrance. In its absence, people continued to move about without being subjected to a period of quarantine of at least 14 days in an accommodation pre-approved for the purpose.

To respond to this gap, UNHCR procured and dispatched 300 Refugee Housing Units to Maiduguri to serve as isolation facilities for cross border population at the entry points of Banki, Damasak, Dikwa, and Ngala. Part of the Housing Units will be used to decongest some of the overcrowded reception/transit centers in IDPs camps.

The Refugee Housing Unit is a self-standing, sustainable, and durable shelter, designed through a collaboration between UNHCR, the social enterprise Better Shelter and Ikea Foundation'. It is composed of several basic elements such as a lightweight steel frame, roof, and wall panel, floor cover, solar energy system (lamp and telephone charger), and an innovative anchoring system.

On 18 July, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator/ Resident Coordinator (HC/RC), Mr. Edward Kallon, during his official visit to Maiduguri, handed over 48 Refugee Housing Units to FHI 360 to be used as isolation centers at the entry points in Banki, Damasak, Dikwa, and Ngala.





Captions, from left to right in a clockwise direction

1. UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN in Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon (4th from the left) and Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, (5th from the left) and others at the UN House Abuja. 15 July.
2. UN Resident and Humanitarian-Coordinator Edward Kallon (Right) on a courtesy visit to the Theatre Commander of Operation Lafia Dole, Maj. Gen. Farouq Yahaya (2nd from the right) in Maiduguri..
3. As part of activities to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Nigeria Mr. Edward Kallon today engaged with young people in Nigeria at the UN75 Virtual Youth Dialogue. 22 July.

Editor: Oluseyi Soremekun (UNIC)

Editorial Team: UNCG members— Ronald Kayanja (Chairman) - UNIC; Charity Warigon (WHO); Eliana Drakopoulos, Geoffrey Njoku & Oluwatosin Akingbulu (UNICEF); Rupa Bhadra (UNAIDS); Ngele Alli & Rejoice Emmanuel (UNDP); Vanessa Curney & Kori Habib (UNFPA); Pius Udo & Wura Ladipo-Ajayi (ILO); Husam Eldin Suliman, Gabriel Adeyemo (UNHCR); Mercedes Alfa & Maimuna Aboki (UN Women); Jorge Galindo & Mariam Owoeye (IOM); David Tsokar (FAO); Olushola Macaulay (UNESCO); Sylvester Atere (UNODC); Chukwuemeka Ezekiel (UNIDO); Eve Sabbagh, Leni Kinzli & Abiodun Banire (UNOCHA); Chi Lael, Kelechi Onyemaobi and Adedeji Ademigbuji (WFP); Katrien Nollen (UNMAS).

Advisory: United Nations Country Team (UNCT)

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