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NEWSLETTER



2019 Elections: UN Stands with People of Nigeria, Commends Peace Committee

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Guterres Appoints Nigerian into Advisory Board on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse



The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mohamed Ibn Chambas, has re-emphasised the commitment of the United Nations to the people of Nigeria as the nation goes into the general elections. "The UN stands with the people of Nigeria at this critical moment, and always. We commend the National Peace Committee for this landmark event geared towards ensuring peaceful elections in Nigeria." He said at the 2nd Signing of the 2019 National Peace Accord by the presidential candidates held on 13 February 2019, at Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.

This 2019 elections, according to him, should once more reaffirm Nigeria's resolve to continue to be a regional and global leader. "That indeed is the reason why we are here today and let me once more congratulate all the candidates for the maturity demonstrated in being part of this historic event." Chambas said.

The Special Representative reminded the stakeholders that in any election, there would be a winner and a loser. Those who win, he advised, should show magnanimity and those who lose should gracefully accept defeat.

Chambas cautioned that there is no space for incitement to violence. "The only recourse is the legal processes as provided for by the legal instruments. The security forces, media, civil society, and indeed all stakeholders should continue to work hard to ensure a level playing field for all candidates." He added.

The Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of the United Nations, working closely with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU) and other members of the international community, to support the march of Nigeria towards a future of democracy, peace and prosperity.



Ms Joy Ezeilo

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has announced the appointment of a Nigerian, Ms Joy Ezeilo as a member of seven distinguished experts to serve on the newly established Civil Society Advisory Board on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Ms. Ezeilo is the Dean of Law, Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria and the National Chairperson, Sexual Assault Referral Network Nigeria. From 2013 -2016, she was a member of the Board of Trustees for the United Nations Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking.

The aim of the Civil...*Continue on page 5*

UN Sympathises with Victims of Deadly Fire Outbreak in Borno IDPs Camp



Left: Affected families walk through the ruins of their shelters. Right: Ruins of shelters destroyed by the fire incident in IDPs camp in Monguno town.

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, has expressed his sympathy for the thousands of people affected by a fire outbreak in a camp for internally displaced people in Monguno town, in northern Borno State on 7 February. The fire, which started in a family cooking area in front of a shelter made of straw, bamboo and plastic sheeting, swept through Stadium Camp, burning down more than 900 temporary shelters and claiming the lives of at least three people, including two children and one elderly woman.

Nearly 8,000 displaced people in the camp – who have been living in extremely overcrowded conditions – were affected, scrambling to find shelter and forced to sleep out in the open. The blaze destroyed most of their belongings, household items, and food, leaving a majority of the camp’s population in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

“The impact of the fire outbreak on the already fragile lives of thousands of vulnerable women, children and men is tragic. The United Nations and our partners extend our condolences to the families of the people who died and our deepest sympathies to the victims of the fire,” said Mr. Kallon. “The humanitarian community stands in solidarity with those affected. It is imperative to immediately identify additional land to build new shelters for the displaced people and decongest the existing camps.”

Many of the internally displaced people in Stadium Camp had fled Baga town, on the shores of Lake Chad, at the end of December 2018, following clashes between the military and non-state armed groups. This massive influx of people, all in need of shelter, food and other humanitarian assistance, has stretched the capacity of camps in Monguno, leading to congestion. This congestion heightens the risk of fire outbreaks with makeshift and temporary shelters built too closely together in the confined spaces.

UN Launches Training Centres, Foreigner Registration Pilot Site for Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS)

On 28 February 2019, IOM, the International Organization for Migration, launched the Nigeria Immigration Service Training Curriculum, and commissioned Personnel Training Resource Centers and Foreigner Registration Pilot Site at the headquarters of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) in Abuja, the country’s capital.

The training curriculum for the Personnel Training Resource Centers (PTRCs) was developed to enhance the capacity of the NIS personnel and to provide the required baseline knowledge in carrying out their duties efficiently and effectively.

“PTRCs are created to implement a new and comprehensive curriculum,” said Fernando Medina, IOM Nigeria Officer in Charge. “New curriculum is created in full compliance with other NIS educational and training programs, aiming to reach all NIS officers and boost their capacity to conduct their demanding and important role,”

After IOM evaluated the NIS training system in 2014, one of the main weaknesses identified was the overreliance on long courses at the NIS’ four training schools. Due to this, only a limited amount of personnel benefit from crucial training. Building on this evaluation, a new NIS Training Strategy was developed and implemented.

The programme enables NIS to offer continued core and upgraded training to all personnel regardless of rank or location of posting. In addition to Abuja and Calabar, four more PTRCs will be constructed in Kano, Akwaibom, Edo, and Ogun State Commands. “Immigration has changed to a global level, where officers no longer have training once or twice a year but rather have a con-



tinuous training,” said the Controller General Mohammed Babandede.

The NIS is collaborating with IOM to implement the strategy within the frameworks of “Training Strategy Implementation Programme” which is funded by the Governments of The Netherlands and Switzerland and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Alongside these training centers, Foreigner Registration Pilot Sites at the NIS HQ and Cross-River state, provide a fully electronic and automatic platform for registration of biographic and biometric data of all foreign nationals and ECOWAS citizens in Nigeria. As part of the MIDAS (Migration Information and Data Analysis System), new foreigner registration pilot sites are a shift from a completely manual process to a fully standardized and automated system.

Nigerian Women Leaders Call for More Involvement of Women to Promote Peaceful Elections

Women Leaders in Nigeria converged in Abuja to call for greater involvement of women to promote peaceful elections, as the country commenced to conduct its General Elections on 23 February 2018. The appeal was made at a forum jointly supported by UN Women, the African Union and the Embassy of Germany on 30 January, which brought together women leaders across public and private sectors, ahead of the launch of the African Women Leadership Network (AWLN) in Nigeria.

The forum gathered various actors including representatives of political parties, the security sector, the media, academia and civil society, to discuss their roles in promoting women's peaceful participation in the elections as candidates and voters.

With women and youth constituting more than half of Nigeria's voting population, and identified as most vulnerable in situations of violence, the need to prevent the growing scourge of gender-related violence in elections is of priority concern for women. Violence against women in elections is not just a personal violation of a woman's civic rights, but constitutes a systematic barrier to free, fair and inclusive democracy.

Nigeria has witnessed in recent months, increasingly visible cases of violence and disruptions of peace during the campaigns season across different political parties and within various electioneering activities across the country. As elections are the main vehicle by which leadership is established in a democracy, violence of any sort remains a danger to preserving and upholding the democratic life of any nation.

Speaking during the forum, the German Deputy Ambassador, Regine Hess said "the role of women in politics has to be strengthened. Women represent 50% of the Nigerian population – or even a little more. Participating in elections – as voters but also as candidates – is one way of making women's voices heard. Women have to be at the polls on February 16th and March 2nd!"

Deep-rooted patriarchal cultural patrons, high levels of poverty and illiteracy among women, as well as gender-based violence, are major obstacles to women's full political participation. At the same time, the perception that the realm of politics belongs only to men is still widespread. Women leaders in Nigeria are advocating for stronger measures to remove such obstacles to their full participation in the electoral process and the political sphere more broadly.

UN Women's Country Representative, Ms. Comfort Lamptey in her welcome statement, noted that "peaceful Elections devoid of all forms of violence can only happen when citizens fully understand how it impacts our progress as individuals, citizens and as a nation. Women need active roles in elections. We need women's full participation not only as voters but also in increasing women's access to leadership positions. Building sustainable peace requires commitment and strong partnership between the government, security sector, electoral bodies and the media to create a peaceful environment where the differences will be respected, and the focus must be the development of the country".

The Africa Union country representative, Dr Tunji Ashaolu emphasized the importance of involving women at all levels of decision making. "Women are not only at the centre of development but are central to the development of the continent". Dr Tunji called on all relevant stakeholders to follow the principle of the AU on democracy and governance to ensure that elections are not only free and fair but to make sure no citizen's life is put at jeopardy because of the elections, especially the lives of women and youths.

The African Women Leadership Network is an initiative that seeks to create space for African women to share leadership experiences and seeks to enhance the leadership of women in the transformation of Africa with a focus on governance, peace,



Ms Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, a pioneer of African Women's Leadership Network (AWLN) introduces the network to the audience

stability and development. It is a joint initiative of the African Union Commission and the United Nations, through the Offices of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, and UN Women. It is supported by the Federal Republic of Germany. It mobilizes African women leaders to play a significant role in the transformation of the continent, as aspired to in both the "Africa Agenda 2063" and the 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals. "The Africa We Want", envisions an Africa that is people-centered, with gender equality and where women are empowered and play their rightful role in all spheres of life.

UN, FG, Mark Radio Day, Train Radio Journalists

UN in Nigeria joined the rest of the world to celebrate the 2019 World Radio Day observed every 13 February. This year theme is "Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace", with special events held across the country.

In line with this year theme, UNESCO with the Federal Government and other stakeholders organized a one-day workshop for Radio journalists on Fair and Transparent Reporting: A Key to Sustainable Peace and Conflict Resolution. Over 70 media stakeholders and radio audiences were in attendance at the event, which took place at the National Commission for Collages of Education (NCCCE) Abuja, Wednesday, 13 February, few days before the presidential elections of 16 February 2019.

The event aims at using this year's World Radio Day celebration, to call on radio stations as well as other media professionals in the country to display the importance of radio as a force for civic participation and development as well as for celebrating humanity in its diversity.

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, in his welcome address applauded the organizers, stating that peaceful co-existence is a necessity for sustainable governance and development, as well as free and fair election, which all nations aspire to achieve.

The major highlights of the panel dialogue were based on the requirements of dealing with fake news and hate speech; by empowering media professionals and citizens to think critically, to create constructive media messages, to share information responsibly, to click and like wisely and to act unwaveringly to counter unwholesome messages and information especially during the election processes.

In other parts of the country, some campus and community radio stations joined in the celebration. Drawing attention to its unique values as a medium to reach the widest audience transforms and brings together people and communities from all backgrounds to foster positive dialogue for change, over 50 radio sets were presented to some active radio listeners across the country.

Renewed fighting is forcing thousands of Nigerian families to flee

In just a few weeks, an estimated 50,000 people have walked into already congested camps in Borno State in Nigeria's northeast



Left: WFP staff, cooperating partner, Acted, and a local community leader verifying the lists of new arrivals before starting distributions in Monguno. Right: Asma'u got separated from her husband while fleeing. She is hoping he will find her and their eight children in Gubio Camp.

The four women in the Aminu family are preparing a simple meal for dinner. Hundreds of Danwake, little flour balls, are boiling in pots of water over open fires. The room, which is inside a large makeshift construction housing other families, too, is filled with smoke. To feed the entire family the women need to cook for 30 people.

Just before dark, they will all gather to enjoy the food with a little tomato and chilli sauce in what has been their home in Gubio camp in Maiduguri since they fled their village of Doron Baga on 26 December 2018.

The village was attacked by a non-state armed group in a renewed wave of violence hitting Nigeria's northeast, which has been the epicentre of an atrocious conflict for 10 years.

"The children were crying because they were scared and hungry, and we were so afraid that the fighters would hear us," says Asma'u, the oldest daughter of the Aminu family.

Several towns and villages have been overrun and in some cases looted and burned down by fighters from non-state armed groups since late December 2018. In mid-January, a deadly attack on Rann, a town close to the border with Cameroon, forced humanitarian workers there to flee together with residents and displaced people.

There was further exodus from Rann — many crossing the border into neighbouring Cameroon — at the end of January after the security forces guarding the town left.

In Gubio camp, Mallam Aminu, the head of his large family, is almost crying when he recalls how they escaped their home. Adults and teenagers simply picked up the kids and ran. Some of the smaller children who could not keep up were put in a wheelbarrow.

Still in shock and not grasping that his life's work went up in flames as they were running away, Mallam Aminu is happy that they are all alive. To reach safety, they had to trek for three days through the bush, "For now, Gubio camp has become our place of revival," says Mallam Aminu.

About 50,000 people have been displaced because of this new spate of violence. They have flooded into already congested camps.

Many of these new arrivals have no option but to sleep under the open sky for a few days before moving into mainly ramshackle shelters. Having fled with almost nothing, hunger stalks many. The World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations frontline agency in the fight against hunger, is working round the clock to support needy families with food and nutrition.

Similar food assistance is taking place in other camps in Borno's main town Maiduguri to cover basic food needs as well as nutrition support for young children and pregnant or nursing women — on top of the regular distributions.

In Monguno, a town 130 km to the northeast of Maiduguri, WFP provided 11,000 people with sacks of beans, sorghum and followed up with e-vouchers for another 19,000 people who did not make the first distribution.

Maria Sani is one of the new internally displaced people in the northeast of Nigeria. She left her home in Baga, where she had a small but thriving clothes shop, and fled to Gubio camp with four kids. They walked for days before finally reuniting with her husband in Monguno town. The family moved to Maiduguri.

As the youngest child, Sagiru, is only one year old, WFP provided special nutrition support to keep the baby healthy.

"If WFP had not supported us with a food voucher and the extra nutrition, we would have died," says Maria, sitting in a shade in front of their tent.

There were two million IDPs in Nigeria before the recent upsurge in violence that is uprooting tens of thousands of people from their homes.

Nigeria's authorities are working to house all new arrivals, and new camps are being planned. It is a tough task. Some families say they sat in the sun, sometimes for days, before being allocated a shelter.

This has led to an upshot in makeshift homes developing into little settlements within camps and host communities. Family members or friends who already live in the camps often support the new arrivals until they are registered and eligible for assistance.

As conflict continues to drive hunger in Nigeria's northeast, with 1.7 million people dependent on food assistance for survival, there is need for more help. A food security assessment released in November 2018 indicated that without support, an additional one million people — 2.7 million in all — may be food insecure during the lean season later this year.

Every month, WFP supports over 700,000 people with food rations or cash, and provides preventive nutritional assistance to a quarter of a million pregnant/nursing women and children.

WFP has been providing food and nutrition assistance to conflict affected families, including new arrivals, in Nigeria through contributions from: Canada, DFID, ECHO, Finland, Germany, Norway, USAID, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

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Improving livelihoods of women in North East Nigeria

The excitement in the room could be felt miles away, as 300 women gathered in Maiduguri to receive Improved Parboiling Technology (IPT) kits to enhance the quality and quantity of rice that is been locally produced by women.

Bintu Bani, 40, an internally displaced woman who now lives in Old Maiduguri with her 10 children, left her home Dikwa four years ago due to the Non-State Armed Group (NSAG) insurgency. She is among those who have benefitted from a three-day training on Improved Parboiling Technology (IPT) supported by UN Women in partnership with Search for Common Ground and funded by the Government of Japan.

According to UN OCHA, In 2019, 7.1 million people (2.3 million girls, 1.9 million boys, 1.6 million women and 1.3 million men) are in need of humanitarian assistance in north-east Nigeria as a result of a crisis that is now in its tenth year. Disruption of livelihood, food security and weakened basic services and protection mechanisms are among the main challenges confronting the affected populations. Many women are now single heads of households and sole decision-makers due to kidnapping, death or separation from their spouses.

Pre-existing gender inequalities resulting from unequal access to opportunities have contributed to the limited access to resources and skills among women and girls, which have in turn increased their vulnerability and exposure to abuse, including sexual exploitation. Those in inaccessible areas lack access to food, supplies and services, are at high risk of experiencing abuse, and are not able to engage in their normal livelihood activities such as farming and trade due to limited movement associated with insecurity. - UN OCHA

"We walked three days before getting to El-Miskin camp, in old Maiduguri, where we received some assistance brought to the camp. In 2018, I was selected to be trained on a new method of parboiling rice and now I am very good at it"

IPT is an improved system of parboiling paddy which lays emphasis on the use of steam rather than soaking the paddy in water. This is achieved using a device known as false bottom to prevent the contact between the paddy and the water.

Rice processing at the small-scale level is dominated by women, who usually buy paddy, parboil and mill for the sustenance of their households. The primary concern of these women is first and foremost food security for their immediate household.

"The lack of livelihood opportunities is a contributing factor to sexual and gender-based violence at the IDP camps," says Lilian Ngusuur Unaegbu, UN Women Programme Coordinator on Gender and Humanitarian Action. She says providing women with the opportunity to earn a living is an important step that will help them fend for themselves in the camp and when they go back home.

A Training of Trainers (ToT) was carried out to build the capacity of conflict affected women in the Internally Displaced Person's (IDP) camps and host communities in Borno and Yobe States, to enhance the quality of the locally milled rice through the false button method, thereby improving the market value of the milled rice. After the training, the women were divided into groups that have been registered into cooperatives to facilitate team work and ownership in producing and selling their high-quality parboiled rice in the local market.

"I have even trained women in my cooperative; about 20 of them. We will use the starter kits to continue to do the processing business. UN Women and Search for Common Ground have helped us a lot, they have trained us and given us a new skill and now we can stand on our own, we will not be begging or asking anybody for money anymore" says Bintu Bani.

Tamwakat Golit, Search for Common Ground Project Manager says that the starter kits distributed will support women to start



Bintu showing the final produce during the IPT training

up businesses, to help them obtain a means of livelihood for themselves because a skill is not enough but with the starter kits they can start rice processing businesses.

Providing for her family is everything for Rebecca Ibrahim, a 35 year old mother of two, and an IDP who left Gwoza and now resides in Jere Local Government Area (LGA), El-Miskin camp. Like Bintu, Rebecca was also trained on IPT and her cooperative group received a starter kit thereafter. "We were trained on rice parboiling skills to help empower us so that we can sustain our families. We were selected and trained so that we too can train other women in our cooperative. This new method is very easy and even simpler than the old method we knew. After we were trained we have practiced, and our own and the processed rice is looking very fine and attractive like the Dangote rice (foreign rice)".

The registered cooperatives will help to consistently supply buyers in the local market with quality rice. Being in a cooperative will also help the women to agree on prices that will work for them as well as facilitate members' access to financial support from financial institutions.

Nigerian appointed into UN Advisory Board...Continued from page 1

...Society Advisory Board on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, is to foster closer interaction with civil society and external experts and organizations as part of the United Nations efforts to combat sexual exploitation and abuse.

The functions of the Board include advising the Secretary-General on ways to strengthen preventive measures and accountability mechanisms to address sexual exploitation and abuse by both United Nations personnel and non-United Nations forces operating pursuant to a Security Council mandate. Members of the Board serve in their personal capacity and will not receive any compensation or remuneration.

Other members of the Board are Ms. Rosa Freedman (UK), Mr. Pablo de Greiff (Colombia), Ms. Adrijana Hanušić Bećirović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid (Morocco), Mr. Vitit Muntarbhorn (Thailand) and Mr. Muna B. Ndulo (Zambia).

The establishment of the Board is an important element in the Secretary-General's strategy outlined in his 2017 report Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse: a new approach (A/71/818), to improve the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

UN, AGIP-Eni Expand Water Access to IDPs and Host Communities

Humanitarian support to conflict affected populations in the Northeast Nigeria in the last decade by United Nations (UN) agencies have come in diverse ways. With many displaced persons returning, assistance is shifting towards sustainable livelihood support activities from the initial livelihood recovery interventions.

The Access to water project seeks to put beneficiary communities on the path to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1-No poverty, 2 – Zero hunger, 5 – Clean water and sanitation, 13 – Climate action and 17 –Partnership for the goals, by providing water to conflict affected populations for both domestic use and agriculture purposes.

Facilitated by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with Oil giant Eni through their Nigerian conglomerates Agip oil company limited, Agip Energy and Natural Resources (Nigeria) Limited, Nigerian Agip Exploration Limited, the project is being implemented in response to government's request to oil companies to support the Presidential initiative on the Lake Chad.

The water project aims to increase access to safe, affordable clean water and to reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity in the North East. Ten (10) boreholes have been planned for construction in the first phase of this project and are to be sited in different locations where persons displaced by the protracted conflict in the northeast are hosted including selected communities in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The FAO Representative in Nigeria, Suffyan Koroma at the commissioning of the Waru borehole said "the plan is to ensure that displaced persons and host communities have access to safe and adequate water for use in the households and for agriculture. This collaborative effort is geared towards guaranteeing sustainable food and nutrition security to the beneficiary community".

To support the effective implementation of the project, FAO



The FAO Rep Suffyan Koroma (Middle) assisted by Eni representative and other partners commissions one of the boreholes in Abuja.

technical expertise, existing presence and knowledge of the terrain were put into use in identifying the areas for interventions and other technical support in the execution of the Project.

Barely a year after the agreement was signed, eight boreholes have been constructed or are near completion for the use of IDPs and host communities in FCT and Borno state. Three boreholes powered by photovoltaic system and equipped with Reverse Osmosis (RO) system completed in different settlements in the FCT (one was commissioned last year) and five in Borno state, sited in Biu, Bama Chibok, Damboa and Gwoza have now be drilled, functionally tested and now awaiting official commissioning.

While on inspection and assessment visit to the borehole sites in Northeast, the FAO team met a highly elated community, bursting with unpretentious gratitude. In Chibok, the Local Government Chairman Alhaji Ibrahim commended the initiative, noting that the intervention is timely, as the dry season is at its peak. "People are coming from long distance places to fetch water from this borehole for domestic use especially, we are truly grateful", he said.

Let's Recognize the Power of Radio to Promote Dialogue and Peace – Guterres

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has underscored the power of radio as a mass medium of communication. "On this World Radio Day, let us recognize the power of radio to promote dialogue, tolerance and peace," he said in his 2019 World Radio Day message.

In the message read on his behalf by the National Information Officer of the UN Information Centre (UNIC) Nigeria, Oluseyi Soremekun, at the Award event organised by the National Broadcast Academy in Lagos, the Secretary General noted that radio is a powerful tool.

"Even in today's world of digital communications, radio reaches more people than any other media platform. It conveys vital information and raises awareness on important issues. And it is a personal, interactive platform where people can air their views, concerns, and grievances. Radio can create a community." Mr Guterres added.

Explaining the rationale behind the choice of 13 February for World Radio Day, Dr Soremekun said, "During its 67th Session, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 13 February, the day United Nations Radio was established in 1946, as World Radio Day."

He explained that the 2019 Theme: 'Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace', took its roots from the Sustainable Development Goal 16 and provided a platform for dialogue and democratic debate over issues, such as migration or violence against women, and could help to raise awareness among listeners and inspire understanding for new perspectives in paving the way for positive action.



National Information Officer of the UN Information Centre (UNIC) Nigeria, Oluseyi Soremekun, presents the message of the UN Secretary General.

Speaking, the Director of the National Broadcast Academy, Engineer Ajibola Abiola, noted that radio is still the most dynamic, reactive and engaging medium there is, adapting to 21st century changes and offering new ways to interact and participate. "Radio provides the diversity of views and voices needed to address the challenges we all face."

New Project Aims to Scale Up Reintegration Assistance to Returnees in Nigeria

Leaving is hard. Sometimes coming home is harder. Especially for irregular migrants who bear the shame of failure for not confirming popular myths of faraway streets paved with gold. “When I came back, my family deserted me because their hope of having a child in Europe was dashed. My friends rejected me because I didn’t tell them I left Nigeria. My wife ran away with my kids because she thought I would never amount to anything,” recalled Adeola as he received his business skills training certificate in Benin City, Nigeria.

“But here I am now. IOM just rekindled my hope,” he added. On 7 February, Adeola, together with 20 other migrant returnees, attended a graduation ceremony marking the end of a four-day business skill management training, aiming to equip returnees with basic knowledge and skills on how to manage and run a small business.

The launch event ran parallel to the first state-level coordination meeting in Benin City, Nigeria to launch a project aimed at enhancing the protection and reintegration of returnees who were assisted back to Nigeria between January and February 2018 through an initiative by President Muhammadu Buhari.

The project, funded by the Government of the United Kingdom, and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the Federal Government of Nigeria, aims to strengthen the capacity of state and non-state actors in Lagos, Edo and Delta states to provide sustainable reintegration support to returned migrants, including vulnerable groups. The most vulnerable 1,700 returnees will receive socio-economic reintegration assistance and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

In total, IOM has provided business skill management training for 550 beneficiaries under this new project.

“The UK Government is very happy to be supporting IOM in its mission to protect and rehabilitate returned migrants to Nigeria, including victims of trafficking, from Libya,” said Debbie Palmer,



A returnee receives his business training diploma. Photo: IOM/Jorge Galindo

Head of Office, DFID Nigeria. The event was organized by IOM in collaboration with the National Commission for Refugees Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI).

Senior federal and state government representatives, including the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, NCFRMI, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking, Nigeria Immigration Service, as well as representatives from nongovernmental organizations and civil society convened at the meeting to identify gaps, challenges and priorities, and discuss a way forward to strengthen state-level coordination.

The 24-month project Protection and Reintegration of Nigerian Migrants Returned from Libya under the Federal Government of Nigeria-Facilitated Chartered Flights, complimentary to programmes such as the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration.

UN Nigeria and Kenya Jointly Mark Int’l Mother Language Day



Director of UN Information Centre (UNIC) Nigeria, Ronald Kayanja (2nd from the right) anchors the video conference

Towards encouraging linguistic diversity and multilingual education, the UN Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos Nigeria, collaborated with UNIC Nairobi Kenya, via a video link, to commemorate the 2019 International Mother Language Day. The dialogue which involved 20 students with 10 distinct mother tongues, emphasised the importance of mother languages to people’s identity, communication, social integration, education and development.

Receiving the students from three secondary schools, the Director of UNIC Lagos, Mr Ronald Kayanja, noted that the collaboration between UNIC Nigeria and its counterpart in Kenya was to develop greater awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions

between the two countries and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

According to him, Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. “They transmit and preserve traditional knowledge and cultures in a sustainable way. We must preserve our mother languages.” He explained.

It was so instructive and exciting as the Nigerian students shared their linguistic diversity with the Kenyan team: The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 (No Poverty) was said in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba languages while the Nairobi team provided the Swahili language translation. According to the students

According to the Deputy Director of UNIC Nairobi, Mr Newton Kanhema, in Swahili, ‘No Poverty’ means ‘Hakuna Umaskini’. Other words which the Nigerian participants learned were ‘Hello’ which in Swahili means ‘Habari yako’ while the response is ‘Nzuri’ which means ‘Good’.

Similarly, the Nairobi participants learned that ‘No Poverty’ means ‘Ba Talauci’ in Hausa language; ‘Ise buse’ in Yoruba language and ‘Enweghi Idaogbenye’ in Igbo language. The dialogue also explored the basic greetings in the various languages.

In line with the advice of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services which encouraged people around the world to state their favorite proverb in their mother tongue, a few proverbs in local languages were discussed: “A child who refuses the wise counsel of his parents, will be taught a hard lesson by outsiders”; “No one beats his chest with a finger”; among others.

Taking Action to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation by 2030

Mary Oloiparuni was 13 when she was mutilated. Restrained in a doorway early one morning in her home, she was cut, bled profusely and experienced agonizing pain. The scarring she endured then continues to cause her pain today, 19 years later. It has made giving birth to each of her five children an excruciating and harrowing experience.

Mary is not alone. At least 200 million girls and women alive today have had their genitals mutilated – suffering one of the most inhuman acts of gender-based violence in the world.

On the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, we reaffirmed our commitment to end this violation of human rights, so that the tens of millions of girls who are still at risk of being mutilated by 2030 do not experience the same suffering as Mary.

This effort is especially critical because female genital mutilation leads to long-term physical, psychological and social consequences. It violates women's rights to sexual and reproductive health, physical integrity, non-discrimination and freedom from cruel or degrading treatment. It is also a violation of medical ethics: Female genital mutilation is never safe, no matter who carries it out or how clean the venue is.

Because female genital mutilation is a form of gender-based violence, we cannot address it in isolation from other forms of violence against women and girls, or other harmful practices such as early and forced marriages. To end female genital mutilation, we have to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and work for women's social and economic empowerment.

In 2015, world leaders overwhelmingly backed the elimination of female genital mutilation as one of the targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is an achievable goal, and we must act now to translate that political commitment into action.

In Nigeria, the most recent Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2016-2017) showed some decline in the incidence of FGM; 18.4% of women aged 15-49 years now undergo FGM, a decrease from 27% in 2011. But this number is still too high.

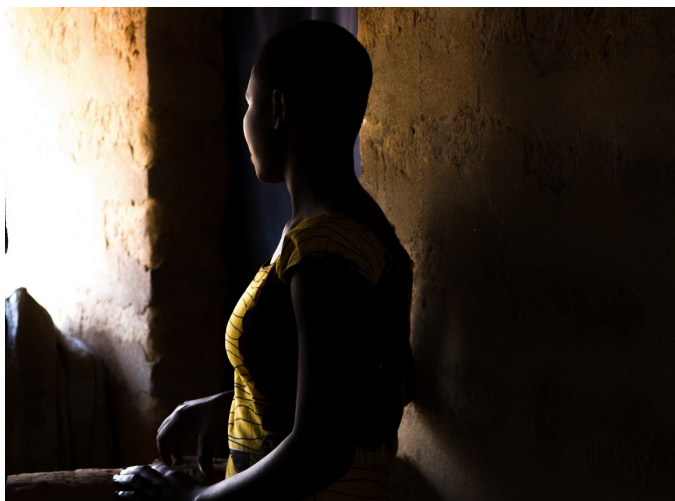
At the national level, we need new policies and legislation protecting the rights of girls and women to live free from violence and discrimination. Governments in countries where female genital mutilation is prevalent, including Nigeria, should develop national action plans to end the practice. To be effective, their plans must include budget lines dedicated to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health, education, social welfare and legal services.

At the regional level, we need institutions and economic communities to work together, preventing the movement of girls and women across borders when the purpose is to get them into countries with less restrictive female genital mutilation laws.

Locally, we need religious leaders to strike down myths that female genital mutilation has a basis in religion. Because societal pressures often drive the practice, individuals and families need more information about the benefits of abandoning it.

Thanks to hard work by UNICEF and partners in Nigeria, the barrier against discussing FGM publicly has been broken. Religious leaders, community stakeholders and young people now speak out against this practice. As a result, last year, more than 309 communities publicly declared the abandonment of the practice.

Public pledges to abandon female genital mutilation – particularly pledges by entire communities – are an effective model of collective commitment. But public pledges must be paired with comprehensive strategies for challenging the social norms, practices and behaviours that condone female genital mutilation. Testimonials by survivors like Mary help to build understanding of the practice's grim reality and long-lasting impact on women's



Mary Oloiparuni . Photo: UNICEF Nigeria/2017/Owoicho

lives. Advocacy campaigns and social media can amplify the message that ending female genital mutilation saves and improves lives.

Thanks to the collective action of governments, civil society, communities and individuals, female genital mutilation is in decline. But we are not aiming for fewer cases of this practice. We are insisting on zero.

A Statement by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Edward Kallon, Marking One Year Since the Killing of Aid Workers in Rann, Borno State

Today marks one year since the deadly attack on Rann town in Borno State, that claimed the young lives of three dedicated aid workers, who were providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to thousands of internally displaced people there.

Doctor Izuogu Anthony Onyedikachi, Emmanuel Yawe Sonter, and Ibrahim Lawan were working in challenging and remote conditions in north-east Nigeria, just eight kilometres from the border with Cameroon, and faced personal hardship, living away from their families.

The attack on 1 March 2018 sent shockwaves through our community of aid workers from the United Nations and non-governmental organisations. Any time violence claims an innocent life, it affects us all.

But even more so when it robs us of young and talented professionals, full of hope and promise, dedicated to serving their fellow countrymen and women. That is a shock that strikes at the very core of our humanity.

Non-state armed groups also kidnapped three female aid workers in this attack. Saifura Hussaini Ahmed Khorsa and Hauwa Mohammed Liman, both midwives, were executed by their captors in September 2018 and October 2018 respectively. Alice Lokshah, a nurse and mother, is still being held. The United Nations calls for the immediate release of Alice, and for her safe return to her family.

Today is a day of mixed emotions for everyone involved in humanitarian work. We remember those we lost as a result of the attack on Rann. In their memory we also celebrate the strength, resilience and compassion of the humanitarian spirit.

We honour our departed friends for their sacrifice, courage and selfless service. The most meaningful tribute to the lives of these aid workers is to carry on their work with conviction in the humanitarian principles we stand for and uphold.

Community Informants Yield Results in Surveillance for Suspected Polio In Hard-To-Reach Areas

Engagement of community informants for Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance has yielded positive impact in Borno State. Following nearly a decade of insurgency, many local government areas (LGA) in Borno State have become access-compromised, making it difficult for the local population to access basic health services and quality healthcare. Infants have been one of the main victims of this situation as health workers in some areas have been unable to distribute vaccines or provide much needed routine immunization services. In this context, children are particularly at risk of vaccine-preventable diseases such as polio.

Key to rapidly detecting any poliovirus that might be circulating, and thereby enabling a rapid outbreak response, is the timely detection and investigation of all cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) – in other words, any child who develops sudden weakness of the limbs. Such AFP surveillance is the backbone of the global polio eradication effort. However, the current insecurity across the North East has made it challenging to carry out effective identification of all AFP cases and thereby, fully verify the absence of poliovirus in the area.

Broadening the base of persons actively searching for AFP As surveillance officers cannot access certain areas, local residents are engaged and trained to help support strengthening of disease surveillance in hard-to-reach areas.

From 31 January till 31 December 2018, the community informant initiative has helped to significantly strengthen the disease surveillance capacity in key areas, including hard-to-reach areas.

“This year, a total of 17 AFP cases have already been reported from hard-to-reach settlements while one out of the 17 AFP cases is from a hard-to-reach settlement in the Lake Chad Islands,” states Dr Sule Mele, the Executive Director, State Primary Health Care Agency, Borno State, Nigeria.

He further proffered that “It is therefore imperative that we continue to sustain the progress achieved in AFP surveillance in insecure areas, through the use of community informants as this strategy also opened a window of opportunity of providing additional basic maternal and child health interventions to these underserved/vulnerable populations.”

Expanding the results for priority disease notification

Building on this success, WHO and its partners will continue to support Nigeria in sustaining this work and ensure that all AFP cases are detected. “As a key partner of Nigeria in the effort against polio, WHO is committed to sustaining and expanding the hard-gained progress achieved in surveillance in hard-to-reach areas” says Dr Clement Peter, Officer in Charge (OIC), WHO Nigeria.

In addition to its support to the community informant initiative, WHO will aim at expanding AFP surveillance network in the region notably through the sustained integration of Mobile Hard-to-Reach teams into surveillance activities.

Engaged local informants have also been very helpful in monitoring other IDSR diseases such as measles, whooping cough, Tuberculosis (TB) and meningitis. The community informant initiative was made possible with active support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).



DSNO investigating 1st AFP case detected from inaccessible area of Borno

Who Supports Government to Mitigate Measles, Rubella Outbreaks Nationwide

As Nigeria experiences measles and rubella outbreaks, the World Health Organization (WHO) has constituted, in collaboration with the Nigerian government, an Emergency Preparedness and Response team to mitigate further spread of measles and rubella in the country.

Presently, a measles outbreak is occurring in 22 Local Government Areas (LGAs) across five Nigerian states namely Borno, Yobe, Katsina, Ogun and Rivers State. The most affected State is Katsina where 11 (50%) of the 22 affected LGAs are located while the cases of measles in Ogun State cases occurred in LGAs (Ipokia and Yewa North) sharing international border with Benin Republic. Those two LGAs in Ogun State are also experiencing a rubella outbreak.

Measles (or rubeola) is a highly contagious viral disease. It remains a key cause of death among young children most especially the under five years in Nigeria, despite the availability of a safe, free and effective vaccine.

To prevent measles outbreaks in children, measles vaccination was introduced into the routine immunization schedule. Vaccines are administered at 9 months of age for under one-year-old children

and second opportunities provided during measles follow-up or catch-up campaigns.

In Nigeria, the Government conducted measles campaigns across the 774 LGAs in the 36 states and FCT in a staggered manner.

Measles campaigns were conducted in the Northern States during November 2017 and in the Southern States in March 2018. The LGAs currently affected by the outbreak were also covered by these campaigns with a total of 942,164 (95%) children vaccinated out of a target of 1,008,970 under five children targeted in these LGAs.



A little boy suffering from Measles

PHOTO NEWS



Captions, from left to right and top to bottom:

1. L-R: Special Representative of UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel (SRSG) Mohamed Ibn Chambas and Former Liberian President, Dr Mrs Sirleaf Johnson at the Peace Accord signing ceremony by the Presidential candidates in the 2019 elections in Abuja.
2. Candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) President Muhammadu Buhari (4th left) and his Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) counterpart, Former Vice President, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku, exchange pleasantries while other dignitaries and members of the Peace Committee look on during the signing ceremony of the Peace Accord by the Presidential candidates in the 2019 elections held in Abuja.
3. Women in politics—(L-R) Chika Kumle, Pauline Tallen and Zainab Sulaiman Umar benefitted from capacity-building by UN Women ahead of the 2019 elections in Nigeria. Photo: UN Women/Nathan Ali



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